

2023 Annual Report to the School Community

School Name: Aurora School (5511)



- all teachers at the school meet the registration requirements of the [Victorian Institute of Teaching \(VIT\)](#)
- the school meets prescribed Minimum Standards for registration as regulated by the Victorian Regulation and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) in accordance with the [Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic\)](#) (this includes any exemption granted to this school by the VRQA, for the most recent calendar year, in relation to minimum student enrolment numbers and/or the curriculum framework requirement to deliver a languages program)
- the school meets the requirements of the Child Safe Standards as prescribed in [Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools \(PDF\)](#).

Attested on 22 March 2024 at 02:24 PM by Vicki Main (Principal)

- This 2023 Annual Report to the School Community has been tabled and endorsed at a meeting of the school council and will be publicly shared with the school community

Attested on 22 April 2024 at 10:40 AM by Lisa Moxon (School Council President)

How to read the Annual Report

What does the 'About Our School' commentary section of this report refer to?

The 'About our school' commentary provides a brief background on the school and an overview of the school's performance over the previous calendar year.

The 'School Context' describes the school's vision, values, and purpose. Details include the school's geographic location, size and structure, social characteristics, enrolment characteristics, and special programs.

The 'Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes, and student engagement' section allows schools to reflect on highlights related to implementation of and progress towards the School Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan, and efforts to improve student learning, wellbeing, and engagement.

What does the 'Performance Summary' section of this report refer to?

The Performance Summary includes the following:

School Profile

- student enrolment information
- the school's 'Student Family Occupation and Education' category
- a summary of parent responses in the Parent Opinion Survey, shown against the statewide average for Specialist schools
- school staff responses in the area of School Climate in the School Staff Survey, shown against the statewide average for Specialist schools

Learning

- English and Mathematics for Teacher Judgements against the curriculum

Engagement

Student attendance and engagement at school, including:

- how many exiting students go on to further studies or full-time work

Results are displayed for the latest year and the average of the last four years (where available).

Key terms used in the Performance Summary are defined below:

NDP and NDA

'NDP' refers to no data being published for privacy reasons or where there are insufficient underlying data. For example, very low numbers of participants or characteristics that may lead to identification will result in an 'NDP' label.

'NDA' refers to no data being available. Some schools have no data for particular measures due to low enrolments. There may be no students enrolled in some year levels, so school comparisons are not possible.

Note that new schools only have the latest year of data and no comparative data from previous years. The department also recognises unique circumstances in Specialist, Select Entry, English Language, Community Schools and schools that changed school type recently, where school-to-school comparisons are not appropriate.

What is the 'Towards Foundation Level Victorian Curriculum'?

The Victorian Curriculum is assessed through teacher judgements of student achievement based on classroom learning.

The 'Towards Foundation Level Victorian Curriculum' is integrated directly into the curriculum and is referred to as 'Levels A to D'.

'Levels A to D' may be used for students with disabilities or students who may have additional learning needs

'Levels A to D' are not associated with any set age or year level that links chronological age to cognitive progress (i.e., there is no age expected standard of achievement for 'Levels A to D').

Updates to the *'Performance Summary'* in the 2023 Annual Report

Reporting on the following measures has been updated in the 2023 Annual Report to align with changes to departmental and public reporting products.

Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey, School Staff Survey and the Attitudes to School Survey

The calculation of the percentage endorsement for all survey measures has been revised to no longer include skipped responses. This applies to all survey measures reported in the Performance Summary. The change to the calculation reduces the negative impact of skipped responses on school results, particularly where there were a small number of respondents to the survey.

Additionally, the Parent Satisfaction measure has been revised to use the percentage endorsement of the 'General School Satisfaction' factor of the Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey only. Previously, this measure reflected an average of multiple factors in the survey. The change to reporting a single factor is consistent with how Parent Satisfaction is reported to schools and in other public reports.

About Our School

School context

Aurora School aspires for excellence in early childhood for children who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deafblind and their families and supports communication for lifelong learning.

Our aim is to immerse children in a language-rich, warm and encouraging environment where they have the opportunity to develop language, speech, listening and communication.

We are a bilingual setting that uses both English and Auslan, the language of the Deaf community. We value both Auslan and English equally, and acknowledge and value the language that parents use with their children at home.

The school's core values of Community, Curiosity, Perseverance and Respect underpin all that we do. Aurora School offers optimal learning environments to children who are deaf and deafblind, from diagnosis to 7 years old across Victoria.

We work in partnership with families, building on children's individual needs, strengths, and competencies to support them to reach their full potential.

We offer Early Intervention, Early Education and an inclusive Community Kindergarten.

Our highly trained team of professionals (65 staff equivalent to 49.2 full-time) includes Teachers of the Deaf, Teachers, Early Childhood Educators, Deaf Educators, Teacher Assistants, Speech Pathologists, Social Workers, Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, an Audiologist, Physiotherapist and a highly supportive administrative team.

In December 2023 Aurora School had 45 children enrolled in the onsite program at Blackburn South, 257 families in Early Intervention across the State, and 20 children, who are hearing, in the Community Kindergarten.

Aurora's main campus is located at 96 Holland Road, Blackburn South. Early Education, Early Intervention East and the Community Kindergarten are located at this address. Early Intervention West is located on the grounds of Furlong Park School for the Deaf.

Children who are Deaf and Deafblind, and their families, across the State of Victoria, can access Aurora programs.

Departmental transport is available for children from southern, northern and eastern regions attending the Early Education program.

Limited onsite accommodation is available for country children and their families who access the onsite Early Education programs.

All children who attend Aurora School Early Intervention and Early Education programs are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. The children who attend Aurora school do not receive PSD funding.

Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

Learning

The Department of Education's 2023 Priorities stated that all schools would continue to focus on student learning and student wellbeing.

In relation to student learning, staff at Aurora School have continued to develop their teaching practices and improve and strengthen their knowledge and skills. This has enabled us to meet DE's Key Improvement Strategy (KIS) related to learning which states: "KIS 1a Learning - Support both those who need extra support and those who have thrived to continue to extend their learning."

Meeting this KIS has taken place through a culture of collaboration and collective responsibility. All staff work together to support each other, improve the fidelity of programs and develop resources in both English and Auslan, to ensure they extend the learning for each child. Staff continue to consider and effectively use high-impact teaching strategies in response to children's and families learning needs. All staff members investigate and understand the learning and wellbeing needs of the children by analysing data to design stimulating teaching and learning programs.

The 'in-house' staff opinion survey demonstrated very positive responses in relation to curriculum development in the areas of: collaborative work in planning and documentation of the curriculum; monitoring of children's learning growth; and the use of reflective practice to monitor the effectiveness of teaching practice. This survey also indicated the need for further 'peer observation' opportunities to continue to improve performance.

Examples of specific programs that have supported this KIS include:

- Continuation of the Auslan Co-ordination role to support fidelity of the bilingual program in Auslan and English
- Monitoring of all children through the Cottage Acquisition Scales for Listening, Language and Speech (CASLLS)
- Further development of the Fingerspelling Our Way to Reading Program (FOWTR)
- The continuation of the Early Years Auslan Language Program in our Community Kindergarten

Wellbeing

In relation to student wellbeing, creating a positive and engaging school environment and culture to support optimal learning, is Aurora School's focus for children, families and staff. This links directly with DE's 2023 Priorities Goal and the specific Key Improvement Strategy (KIS) 1b: Wellbeing - Effectively mobilise available resources to support students' wellbeing and mental health, especially the most vulnerable.

Children's and families' wellbeing has been prioritized during 2023 at Aurora and we aim to ensure the children's diverse needs are evaluated in a timely, proactive and strategic manner to enable us to support and respond to their individual learning and wellbeing needs.

Our tiered supports include the teachers and education support staff, the admin and leadership teams and the wider allied health teams. More specific and targeted supports are available through our psychologists & social workers. In addition, play therapy for children experiencing short or long-term trauma is also available.

As per our Strategic Plan, we plan to continue to strengthen the engagement and wellbeing of every child through:

- improved parent/carers participation as active partners in their child's learning and development
- building a whole school approach to the development of the well-being of children and
- exploring and developing wider community partnerships to optimise the support and pathways for every child

Engagement

Aurora School staff work together in collaboration with young children and their families to develop programs and experiences that are interesting, personally relevant, and appropriately challenging. Aurora School, as a supportive and inclusive school, has plans in place to deliberately foster connectedness and engagement, especially for those children and families who are at risk of falling behind, or disengaging with our support programs.

This links directly with DET's 2023 Priorities Wellbeing Goal and the specific Key Improvement Strategy (KIS) 1b: Wellbeing - Effectively mobilise available resources to support students' wellbeing and mental health, especially the most vulnerable. Children's and families' engagement and wellbeing has been prioritized during 2023 at Aurora. Individual Learning Plans clearly demonstrate that staff are alert to the engagement and wellbeing needs of individual children.

We ensure we are aware of children's absences and our leading teachers, learning specialists, social workers and psychologists are responsible for checking in with families and providing additional support needs as required. Staff also establish and sustain culturally respectful partnerships with all children, families/carers and communities by ensuring a shared understanding of cultural norms and protocols. The Family Partnership Model of practice is used by the Early Intervention Team. This model provides an evidence-informed framework for working effectively in partnership with families. The EI Leadership Team supports fidelity of this model across the Early Intervention program through supervision and mentoring.

Other highlights from the school year

Other Highlights of 2023 included:

- Our Annual Family Picnic
- Working with Aunty Irene across two terms to build connections with our local Indigenous Community culminating in a Smoking Ceremony
- Swimming, golf and gymnastics programs for our Foundation children through the Sporting Schools Grants
- Starting the Journey Program for new EI families
- School Transition Programs
- Connecting with St Luke's Primary School through a 'buddies' program - to continue in 2024
- Visit from the Early Childhood Minister and Local Parliamentary member

Financial performance

The Financial processes and Internal Controls at Aurora School are exemplary. Expenditure is constantly monitored and best value and prices are sourced. We operated with a planned deficit and maintained a sound financial position throughout 2023.

Aurora School continually aims to improve children's outcomes by ensuring our children and staff are well resourced and supported. Improving, upgrading and maintaining the building and equipment continued to be our priority in 2023.

We were very fortunate to have received an allocation of \$1.8M from the State Government in 2022. This has enabled us to work

with the Victorian State Building Authority (VSBA) and their appointed architects WHDA to develop a 10 year Master Plan for Aurora School and also to upgrade our Central Playground. Following an audit in 2021, the VSBA were required to ensure access compliance with all ramps and stairs at the school. This included the replacement of the ramp between the main building and the community kindergarten with steps and an external lift, and providing hand rails where appropriate. The total cost of this work, paid for by the VSBA, is \$500,000. This work was finally completed at the end of 2023 and keys handed over for the lift.

The school also received the following additional funding from Local, State, or Commonwealth Grants:

- Sporting Schools Grants (\$1500) in terms 1 and 4 to enable classes to attend Gymnastics Programs;
- Job Access Employee Assistance Funding provided up to \$12,000 per deaf staff member for interpreting services;
- Equity funding (\$10,162) enabled additional staffing in EI to support Team Leaders to ensure additional supports for vulnerable and disengaged families and the continued rollout of Zones of Regulation and Play Therapy(\$10,162) programs in EE.

Performance Summary

The Performance Summary for government schools provides an overview of how this school is contributing to the objectives of the Education State and how it compares to other Victorian government schools.

All schools work in partnership with their school community to improve outcomes for children and young people. Sharing this information with parents and the wider school community helps to support community engagement in student learning, a key priority of the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes 2.0 (FISO 2.0).

Refer to the 'How to read the Annual Report' section for help on how to interpret this report.

SCHOOL PROFILE

Enrolment Profile

A total of 271 students were enrolled at this school in 2023, 125 female and 146 male.

4 percent of students had English as an additional language and 3 percent were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Overall Socio-Economic Profile

The overall school's socio-economic profile is based on the school's Student Family Occupation and Education index (SFOE).

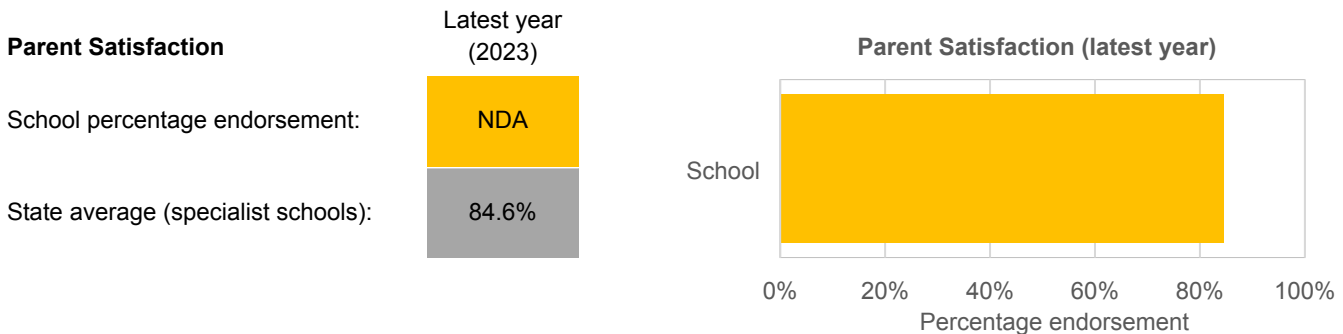
SFOE is a measure of socio-educational disadvantage of a school, based on educational and employment characteristics of the parents/carers of students enrolled at the school. Possible SFOE band values are: Low, Low-Medium, Medium and High. A 'Low' band represents a low level of socio-educational disadvantage, a 'High' band represents a high level of socio-educational disadvantage.

This school's SFOE band value is: Low - Medium

Parent Satisfaction Summary

The percentage endorsement by parents on their General School Satisfaction, as reported in the annual Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey.

Percentage endorsement indicates the percent of positive responses (agree or strongly agree) from parents who responded to the survey.

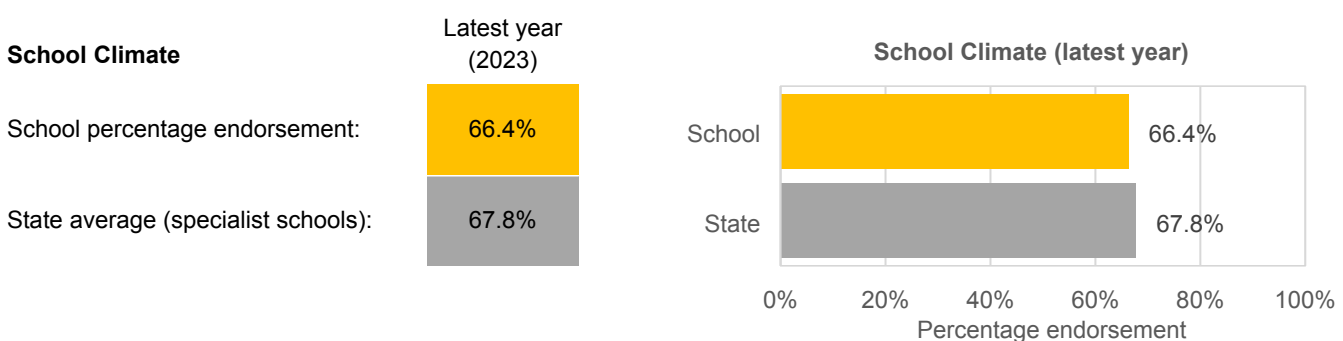


School Staff Survey

The percentage endorsement by staff on School Climate, as reported in the annual School Staff Survey.

Percentage endorsement indicates the percent of positive responses (agree or strongly agree) from staff who responded to the survey.

Data is suppressed for schools with three or less respondents to the survey for confidentiality reasons.



LEARNING

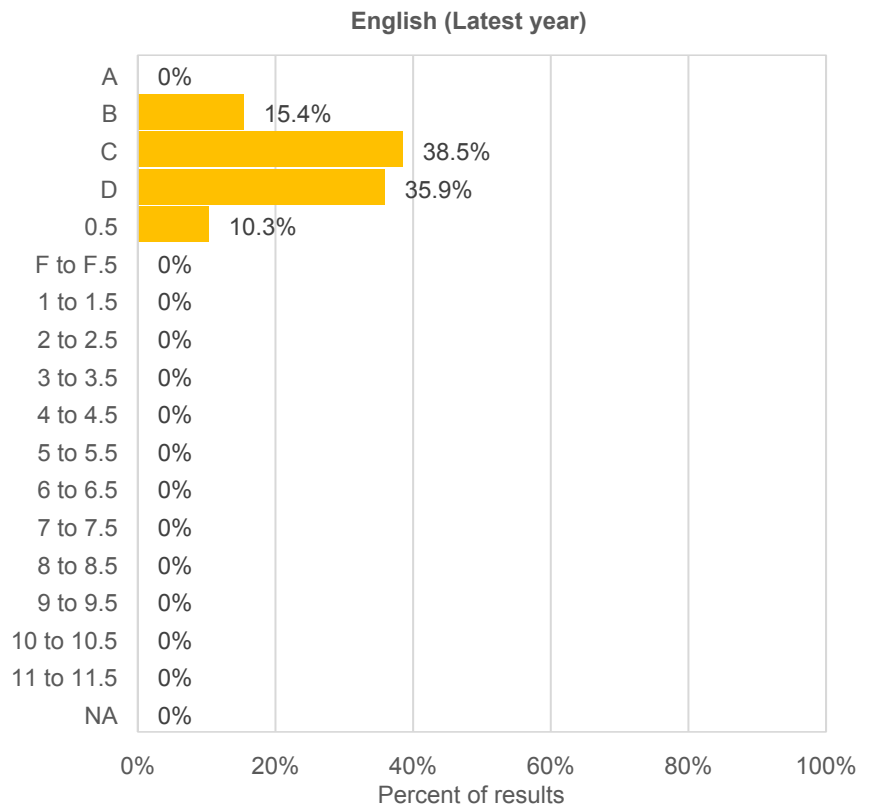
Teacher Judgement of student achievement

Percent of results at each achievement level in English and Mathematics.

English

Achievement Level	Latest year (2023)
A	NDA
B	15.4%
C	38.5%
D	35.9%
0.5	10.3%
F to F.5	NDA
1 to 1.5	NDA
2 to 2.5	NDA
3 to 3.5	NDA
4 to 4.5	NDA
5 to 5.5	NDA
6 to 6.5	NDA
7 to 7.5	NDA
8 to 8.5	NDA
9 to 9.5	NDA
10 to 10.5	NDA
11 to 11.5	NDA
NA	NDA

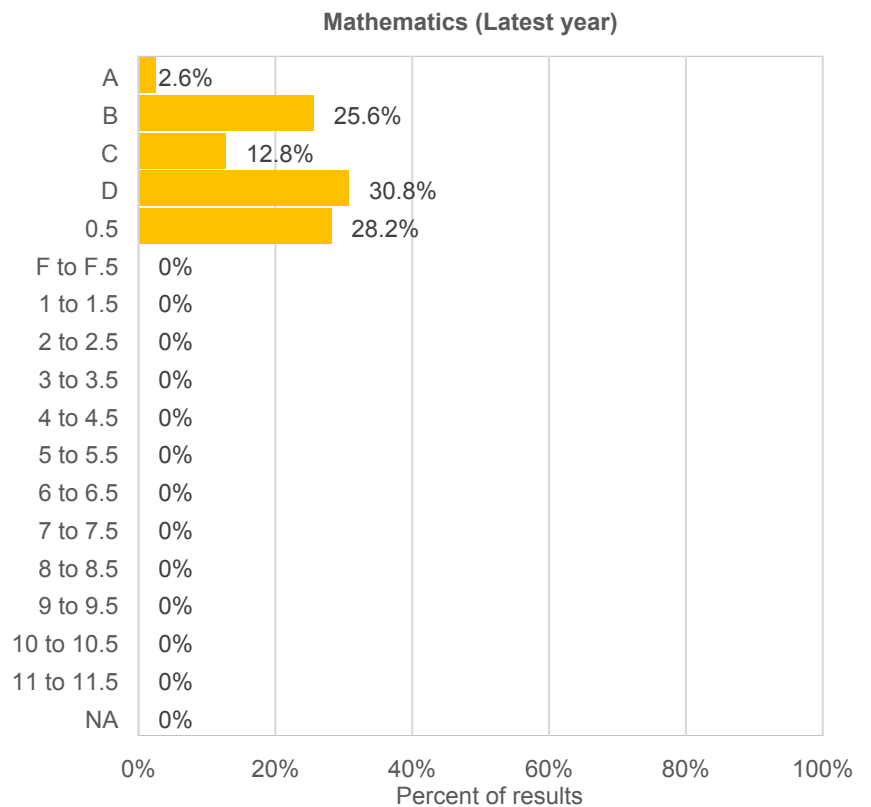
Achievement Level



Mathematics

Achievement Level	Latest year (2023)
A	2.6%
B	25.6%
C	12.8%
D	30.8%
0.5	28.2%
F to F.5	NDA
1 to 1.5	NDA
2 to 2.5	NDA
3 to 3.5	NDA
4 to 4.5	NDA
5 to 5.5	NDA
6 to 6.5	NDA
7 to 7.5	NDA
8 to 8.5	NDA
9 to 9.5	NDA
10 to 10.5	NDA
11 to 11.5	NDA
NA	NDA

Achievement Level



ENGAGEMENT

Average Number of Student Absence Days

Absence from school can impact on students' learning. Common reasons for non-attendance include illness and extended family holidays.

Student Absence	2020	2021	2022	2023	4-year average
School average number of absence days:	2.2	2.6	4.4	4.3	3.4

Students exiting to further studies or full-time employment

Percentage of students going on to further studies or full-time employment.

Note: This measure refers to data from the previous calendar year. Data excludes destinations recorded as 'Unknown'.

Student Exits	2019	2020	2021	2022	4-year average
School percent of students with positive destinations:	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Financial Performance and Position

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - OPERATING STATEMENT SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER, 2023

Revenue	Actual
Student Resource Package	\$5,413,052
Government Provided DET Grants	\$733,912
Government Grants Commonwealth	\$0
Government Grants State	\$35,650
Revenue Other	\$122,474
Locally Raised Funds	\$12,037
Capital Grants	\$0
Total Operating Revenue	\$6,317,125

Equity ¹	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	\$10,162
Equity (Catch Up)	\$0
Transition Funding	\$0
Equity (Social Disadvantage – Extraordinary Growth)	\$0
Equity Total	\$10,162

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package ²	\$5,639,747
Adjustments	\$0
Books & Publications	\$737
Camps/Excursions/Activities	\$14,232
Communication Costs	\$23,214
Consumables	\$95,546
Miscellaneous Expense ³	\$43,658
Professional Development	\$71,822
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	\$132,578
Property Services	\$104,332
Salaries & Allowances ⁴	\$124,829
Support Services	\$157,901
Trading & Fundraising	\$2,340
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$56,775
Travel & Subsistence	\$35,873
Utilities	\$37,777
Total Operating Expenditure	\$6,541,363
Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit	(\$224,238)
Asset Acquisitions	\$94,079

- (1) The equity funding reported above is a subset of the overall revenue reported by the school.
- (2) Student Resource Package Expenditure figures are as of 16 Feb 2024 and are subject to change during the reconciliation process.
- (3) Miscellaneous Expenses include bank charges, administration expenses, insurance and taxation charges.
- (4) Salaries and Allowances refers to school-level payroll.

FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

Funds available	Actual
High Yield Investment Account	\$513,194
Official Account	\$50,881
Other Accounts	\$0
Total Funds Available	\$564,075

Financial Commitments	Actual
Operating Reserve	\$136,200
Other Recurrent Expenditure	\$7,635
Provision Accounts	\$0
Funds Received in Advance	\$11,348
School Based Programs	\$184,116
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	\$0
Cooperative Bank Account	\$0
Funds for Committees/Shared Arrangements	\$0
Repayable to the Department	\$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement < 12 months	\$230,000
Capital - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$0
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$99,390
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	\$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$30,000
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Total Financial Commitments	\$698,689

All funds received from the Department of Education, or raised by the school, have been expended, or committed to subsequent years, to support the achievement of educational outcomes and other operational needs of the school, consistent with department policies, School Council approvals and the intent/purposes for which funding was provided or raised.