

# 2024 Annual Report to the School Community

School Name: Vermont South Special School (5025)



- 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 04 April 2025 at 02:42 PM by Jane Henderson (Principal)

- As executive officer of the school council, I attest that this 2024 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 04 April 2025 at 02:43 PM by Jane Henderson (Principal)

# HOW TO READ THE ANNUAL REPORT

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## 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.

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## 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').

## About Our School

### School context

Vermont South Special School is a centre of excellence located in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. The school is a primary specialist setting for students with an intellectual disability (Full Scale IQ between 50 - 70) with many students also exhibiting other diagnosed disabilities and medical conditions. Our students come from seven local government areas and are transported to school by bus. We liaise closely with Heatherwood School where many of our students transition for their secondary education.

Our vision at Vermont South Special School is to empower students to reach their personal best and it is our mission to provide students with the best possible foundation in life through a well-rounded education. Our strategic goals are to maximise student learning growth and wellbeing. Our values are learning, respect, responsibility, and resilience.

In 2024, 149 students were enrolled, with 5% identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and 10% coming from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Our Student Family Occupation and Education Index (SFOE) was 0.3874, meaning the school had a low to medium level of disadvantage compared to other schools. The school had 62 staff members consisting of 2 Principal class, 27 teachers (FTE 24.8) and 32 Educational Support Staff (FTE 26).

At Vermont South Special School, students learn in a calm, supportive and inclusive environment. We follow the Victorian Curriculum and use an evidence-based teaching model, where students are guided through the learning process. Students are provided with explicit instruction and opportunities to work both collaboratively and independently. Our students learn best through visuals, hands on materials and specific feedback. Students' interests are incorporated in their learning, and they are encouraged to reflect on and articulate their thinking. All students have an Individual Education Plan. Interactive goals enable students to track their progress and feel a sense of empowerment and achievement. Literacy and numeracy skills are a priority and are developed through targeted small group teaching at each student's point of need. Students also enjoy a range of specialist subjects; Science, Library, Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Physical Education and the Kitchen Garden Program.

Throughout 2024, an occupational therapist, physiotherapist, speech pathologists, nurse and reengagement officers also supported students' additional needs.

At VSSS we take every opportunity to celebrate and foster a love of learning.

### Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

#### Learning

2024 survey results were at a high level with a 91.2% positive endorsement for 'Parent Satisfaction' in the Parent Opinion Survey compared with the state average for specialist schools

of 85.4%. Positive endorsement for 'School Climate' in the School Staff Survey was 91.3% compared with the State average for specialist schools of 67.7%. In addition, positive endorsement for 'Differentiated Learning Challenge' in the Students Attitudes to School Survey was 97% compared to 88% for similar schools. These exceptional results reflect the strong culture at Vermont South Special School and our focus on continuous improvement.

In 2024 we focused on improving the structure of our reading lessons, ensuring lessons began with a phonics warm up, followed by the learning intention and explicit teaching of reading and comprehension strategies. In maths we engaged Michael Ymer, a maths expert to provide whole school professional learning. This provided the impetus to create a bank of curated maths resources, with curriculum links and instructions on how to further differentiate learning and support teachers to plan and deliver more targeted and engaging maths lessons. Whole school moderation in maths and writing were conducted and PLC inquiries focused on developing success criteria to improve student voice and agency in their learning. In addition, three teachers completed the Local Leaders' course at the Academy of Teaching and Leadership to build their capacity to become section leaders in 2025, and 2 teachers engaged in practicums related to obtaining their Master of Special Education.

'Towards Foundation Level Victorian Curriculum' provides students with special needs access to Levels A to D content descriptors and standards. These levels focus on progressing students from pre-intentional to intentional engagement in learning and supporting them to develop independence as they progress towards the learning described at the Foundation level. In English teacher judgment of student achievement placed 54% of students between level A-D, 33% between levels 0.5 – 1.5 and 13% between year 1 and halfway through year 3. In maths teacher judgment of student achievement placed 42% of students between level A-D, 39% between levels 0.5 – 1.5 and 19% between year 1 and halfway through year 3. These are indeed exceptional results!

## Wellbeing

Student wellbeing continued to be a priority in 2024. As a School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) gold accredited school we focused on providing a consistent, positive, equitable and safe learning environment where all students could thrive. The Personal and Social Capabilities curriculum was explicitly taught with sequenced lessons focusing on following our school expectations and routines as well as developing self-awareness and regulation skills. The 'Stop, Walk, Talk' antibullying program supported students to have agency in stopping when there is a problem, walking away and seeking help. Students also participated in a range of activities during the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence. The Student Attitudes to school survey indicated a 96% positive endorsement for 'Managing Bullying' and a 98% positive endorsement for 'Sense of Inclusion'.

In 2024 a range of lunchtime clubs were offered and the new synthetic turf proved popular for the students wanting to participate in the basketball club. Additional supports for our tier 2 and 3 students included small group and individual sessions with the occupational therapist and physiotherapist to develop play skills and functional communication. We also provided 1:1 support for a number of students who presented with challenging behaviours.

A trained therapy dog handler with her therapy dog Harriet, was employed two days a week in 2024 to support student wellbeing. Tier 2 and 3 students had scheduled time with Harriet each week.

Efforts were made to reduce interruptions and support calmer classrooms by employing a runner to take students who were being picked up early or arriving late due to therapy and medical appointment to and from class. On average daily behavioural referrals dropped from 12 at the beginning of 2024 to 5 by the end of term 4.

These initiatives all combined to support student wellbeing and learning.

## Engagement

The school continued to focus on increasing school attendance in 2024. Attendance awards were given out weekly at assemblies, families were followed up and support was provided to address school refusal and attendance barriers. In 2024 our average number of days absent increased by 1.8 days compared with 2023 due to increased illness and extended family holidays. Despite this it was pleasing to note that 26% of our student's attendance was 95% or higher compared to 17% for similar schools and that 44% of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander attendance was above 90% in 2024.

Student Support Groups meetings were held three times throughout the year focusing on developing an Individual Education Plan for each student, communicating progress and addressing each student's specific needs. Numerous care team meetings were held to support students in out of home care and students with complex needs.

The 2024 Parent Opinion Survey results showed a 93% positive endorsement for 'Student Connectedness'. Events held throughout the year, were aimed at increasing the partnership between parents and the school. Events included the opening of the new \$10.108 million building, the school's 50th Anniversary, Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day open mornings, Book Week activities, swimming and gymnastics programs, athletics, carols and family picnic and graduation. In addition, a range of workshops were offered to parents.

Our focus on student voice and agency in 2024 resulted in an increase in student leadership opportunities from 8 to 16 with the introduction of Sports and Sustainability captains. School leaders also had the opportunity to make a scarecrow for the kitchen garden at Government House, tour the staterooms and meet the Governor of Victoria. They also played a prominent role in school assemblies, the opening of the new building, our 50th Anniversary and a visit from the Premier, Jacinta Allen.

Camps, excursions, sporting clinics together with the bike education, shopping, canteen and recycling programs were just some of the opportunities offered in 2024 to support students to generalise their learning, build confidence and increase their engagement. The 2024 Student Attitudes to School Survey indicated a positive endorsement of 93% for students' 'Sense of Connectedness' and 98% for their 'Sense of Inclusion'.

## Other highlights from the school year

Highlights included the opening ceremony for our new \$10.108 million state of the art building and the unveiling of our Indigenous sculpture. This was marked by a smoking ceremony, speeches and a special morning tea.

We also celebrated our 50th year Anniversary on Saturday 23rd of March. It was wonderful to have so many past and present families, students and staff attend. Tours were held and a delicious afternoon tea provided. The afternoon culminated with a whole school performance, speeches and the cutting of the anniversary cake. It was wonderful to have Michael Sukkar, the Federal Member for Deakin and John Mullahy, the State Member for Glen Waverley attend the event.

## Financial performance

Vermont South Special School ended the year in a sound financial position resulting in a surplus of \$766,920. All funds received from the Department, or raised by the school have been expended or committed to subsequent years to support the educational outcomes and other operational needs of the school; consistent with Department policies and the priority initiatives identified by the School Council. Funds were used to refurbish the foundation classrooms, paint the interior of the senior building and exterior surfaces of the foundation and junior building. In addition, new interactive tv's were purchased for classrooms across the school.

Equity funding was used to support tier 3 students whilst the Tutor Learning Initiative (TLI) funds enabled additional staff to be employed to support students in reading and maths. The casual relief budget enabled teachers to be released for planning, assessments, professional development, and to cover absences due to leave and illness. The Sporting Schools grants were used to run a range of sporting clinics, and the Out of Hours School Care grant was used to deliver the holiday program.

**For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at  
[www.vermont-south-ss.vic.edu.au](http://www.vermont-south-ss.vic.edu.au)**



# 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 149 students were enrolled at this school in 2024, 50 female and 99 male.

10 percent of students had English as an additional language and 5 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.

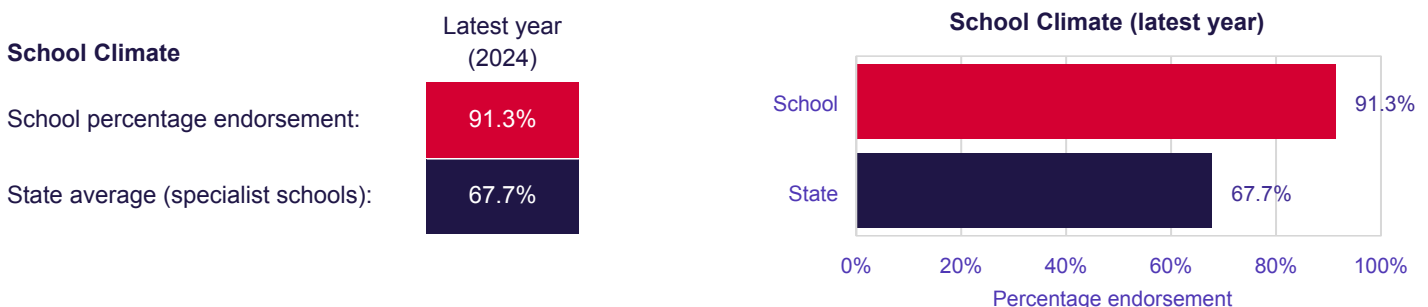


### School Staff Survey

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.



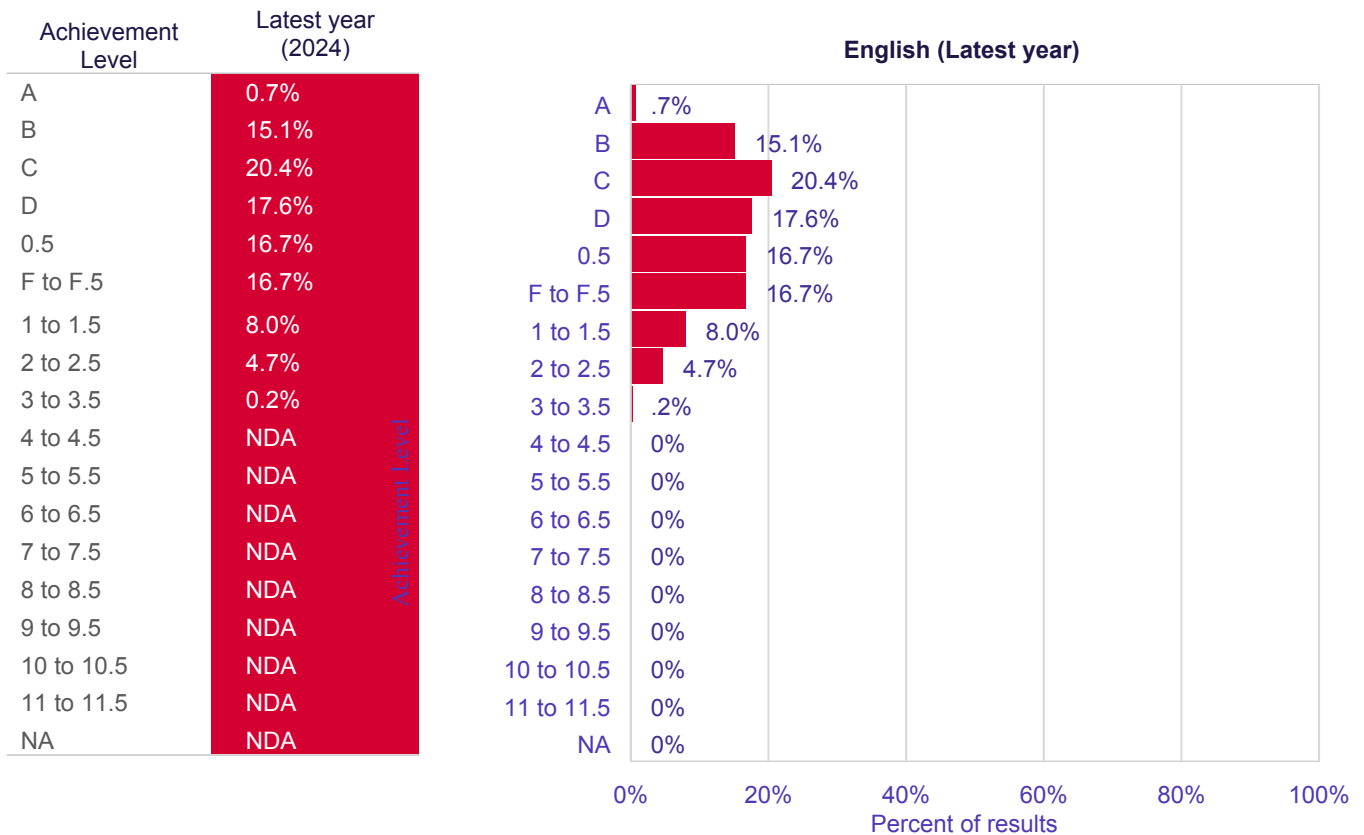


## LEARNING

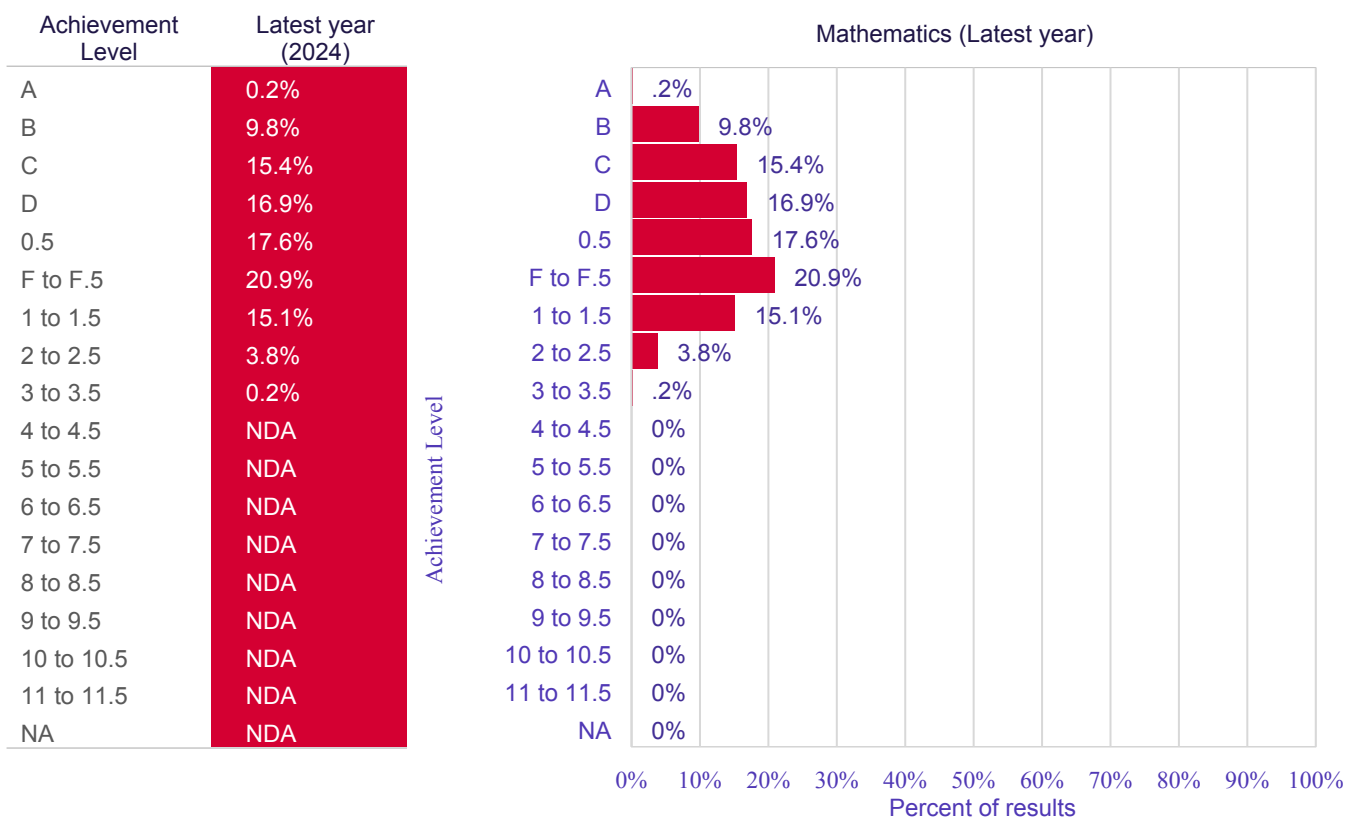
### Teacher Judgement of student achievement

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

#### English



#### Mathematics



## 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	2021	2022	2023	2024	4-year average
School average number of absence days:	20.8	17.9	27.3	29.1	23.8

### 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	2021	2022	2023	2024	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 2024

Revenue	Actual
Student Resource Package	\$6,652,855
Government Provided DET Grants	\$1,205,219
Government Grants Commonwealth	\$2,773
Government Grants State	\$0
Revenue Other	\$32,809
Locally Raised Funds	\$76,239
Capital Grants	\$0
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$7,969,894</b>

Equity <sup>1</sup>	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	\$41,626
Equity (Catch Up)	\$0
Equity (Social Disadvantage – Extraordinary Growth)	\$0
<b>Equity Total</b>	<b>\$41,626</b>

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package <sup>2</sup>	\$5,612,861
Adjustments	\$0
Books & Publications	\$4,593
Camps/Excursions/Activities	\$51,180
Communication Costs	\$7,135
Consumables	\$105,619
Miscellaneous Expense <sup>3</sup>	\$63,028
Professional Development	\$24,318
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	\$397,690
Property Services	\$221,792
Salaries & Allowances <sup>4</sup>	\$502,189
Support Services	\$100,247
Trading & Fundraising	\$45,834
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$14,934
Travel & Subsistence	\$0
Utilities	\$51,553
<b>Total Operating Expenditure</b>	<b>\$7,202,974</b>
<b>Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit</b>	<b>\$766,920</b>
<b>Asset Acquisitions</b>	<b>\$104,440</b>

- (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 2025 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 2024

<b>Funds available</b>	<b>Actual</b>
High Yield Investment Account	\$352,534
Official Account	\$74,459
Other Accounts	\$0
<b>Total Funds Available</b>	<b>\$426,993</b>

<b>Financial Commitments</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Operating Reserve	\$265,019
Other Recurrent Expenditure	\$25,804
Provision Accounts	\$0
Funds Received in Advance	\$56,000
School Based Programs	\$80,000
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	\$0
Cooperative Bank Account	\$0
Funds for Committees/Shared Arrangements	\$0
Repayable to the Department	\$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement < 12 months	\$70,000
Capital - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$129,931
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$65,258
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	\$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
<b>Total Financial Commitments</b>	<b>\$692,012</b>

*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.*