

St. Elizabeth's Primary School Dandenong North

REGISTERED SCHOOL NUMBER: 1762

2013

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY



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Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Christine Ash, attest that St. Elizabeth's Primary School is compliant with all of the requirements for the minimum standards and other requirements for the registration of schools as specified in the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) and the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007 (Vic), except where the school has been granted an exemption from any of these requirements by the VRQA.

23 May 2014

Our School Vision



St. Elizabeth's Parish School is a Catholic Parish Primary School striving to make faith real in the world for all within our care. Parents and Staff support our students to grow to their full potential as active participating members of the faith community following Christ's example.

Our educational purpose is to meet the needs of the current generation by supporting all our students to become independent and self-motivated. We encourage them to be learners who have a deep understanding about themselves, others and the world around them. We strive to develop their capacity to build and maintain relationships and actively and positively contribute to the global community.

As teachers we see ourselves as a community of lifelong learners committed to the provision of innovative learning opportunities for every student. We believe that focussed teaching brings about powerful learning. We take advantage of contemporary tools and learning environments to support the provision of relevant, rich and personalised learning opportunities.

School Overview

Located in the South Eastern Zone of Catholic Education, St Elizabeth's Parish School in Dandenong North is bordered by the suburbs of Wheelers Hill, Rowville and Noble Park and was built in 1977 with support from the Presentation Sisters.

The Dandenong North community is characterised by cultural and socio-economic diversity and this is reflected in our school community. An analysis of intake data shows we have many nationalities represented in our school family and the socio- economic and cultural diversity of the school represents both our strength and our challenge. Families come to St Elizabeth's because they want their children to learn to be people of Faith and integrity; happy, independent and successful in making the most of their skills and talents and committed to being active citizens of the world. Many parents make significant commitments to send their children to a Catholic School and at St Elizabeth's we value that commitment.

The very strong partnership we have developed between the Parish and School enables the participation in the celebration of Liturgy to be an essential and regular feature of school curriculum. We celebrate the life of the school community and the life of our faith community together.

The main school building is a brick construction built in 1977 with additions added as our needs changed. Our recent additions which were funded under the Federal Government 'Building the Educational Revolution' Project. We have transformed our learning and teaching environment so that we can offer personalised, contemporary learning to all our students.

"Continuous learning with clear purpose and connection to the real world is critical to developing the capabilities, dispositions and literacies required to live full lives in diverse communities and deal with issues and change in the twenty-first century."

(MCEETYA, 2005a, pg.5)

To ensure that their learning is seamlessly linked to the real world we have focused on providing children with facilities which enhance their interaction with the community beyond the school now and establish connections that will serve them well into the future.

Principal's Report

St Elizabeth's has developed quite a reputation as an excellent school for contemporary learning. We are of course also known as being witness to the Beliefs, Traditions and Rites of the Catholic Faith although we also respect those of other faiths who come to enroll their children so that they receive a spiritual education. Many people involved in education visited us over the 2013 year; coming because they had heard that we are a school developing and reviewing the best of current practices to give our students every chance to be successful in their lives. At St Elizabeth's we not only focus on teaching students so that they can earn a living in an ever changing world but we are also trying to make sure that they have what John in his gospel called a 'full life'.

The staff started the year with Mass with the Parish Community. We are commissioned by the parish to teach in the name of Jesus and we accepted that calling throughout the year. We believe a full life means teaching children knowledge, skills and understanding about their spiritual life as well as their academic, physical, emotional and social learning. We are gradually extending our Religious Education Program reaching out to all our families from Foundation to Year 6. Faith is a lifetime experience and we want to support parents in faith education throughout the time that their child/children attend our school and equip them with knowledge that they will need as their children move beyond our school.

Our school places a great deal of emphasis on resourcing programs and practices to support the wellbeing of Students. We always begin our school year with SWEL week and everyone enjoys the Footsteps program. The 'You can Do It program' is well embedded into our school culture and it supports the Adlerian approach to wellbeing that is pivotal in our thinking and behaviours

All the children are "Screened" using diagnostic testing which showing us the strengths of each individual student as well as the areas that need support. At St Elizabeth's we all see ourselves as learners. And our Teaching and Learning Coordinator continually leads us in the development of a contemporary approach to teaching and learning seeking better ways to support our students. At the same time, we continue to keep those elements of teaching and learning that stand the test of time.

Our NAPLAN tests continued to show our students are succeeding in Mathematics and Literacy, especially given the high number of Non-English speaking students in our community.

Overall, our results are not achieving our stated goals of improving student outcomes but we are not falling either. We appear to be holding a pattern of

results across the school with some very slight gains but also some very slight drops. These may be attributed to different groups of students. The 5 year trend results show a similar pattern over the last 5 years



School Education Board Report

This year we have seen iPads that are part of the 1:1 program go between school and home and this is working smoothly.

There are quite a few people that I would like to thank. Firstly Janine Phillips, who has been part of the board for 7 years. Thank you your time and input has been greatly appreciated.

Other Board members in 2013 were Claude Fazio, Pina Martino, Maria Popowycz and Maria Pizzirusso. Their contribution has been greatly appreciated and I wish you all the best for the future.

Patrick Ferdinands also served on the Board in 2013 and will continue in 2014. I want to thank Patrick for his continuing service.

Finally I would like to thank you all for trusting me with this position on the Schools' Education Board. It has been a wonderful journey and an experience that I have really enjoyed.

I have learnt how to work with members of the board, to discuss and refine issues that occur during the year and hope the changes are for the betterment of the school, teachers, and students.

Sue Hatley-Smith

School Education Board Chairperson.

Education in Faith

Our Goal for this sphere in 2013 was to improve student engagement and understanding in RE and to strengthen our links with Parish. To this end we have reflected on our practice in using contemporary learning practices, strategies and tools to integrate Religious Education as part of our other curriculum domains whilst still ensuring that those units that cannot be integrated are treated as a 'stand-alone' series of lessons. In 2013 we explored the use of e-learning tools in the school to ensure our RE lessons connect to the real life of our students. E-learning tools, also give us greater resources in terms of access to art, music and texts that support the RE program and the To Know Worship and Love texts. Alongside this we continued to offer parents and students a rich program of liturgy and information nights leading to F- 6 Sacramental program within a Parish Context. Parents were surveyed after these information nights and were overwhelmingly supportive of the program.

We developed our work in Social Justice knowing that a Christian life has to lead to action. The Mini Vinnies students were enriched by the work of the Nazareth Cluster program where the Mini Vinnies of Nazareth College, St Simon's, St Gerard's, St John Vianney's and St Justin's Wheelers Hill worked together and led the school in the support of the Dandenong Homework Group. An excellent night was hosted at Nazareth College where all the students celebrated their shared endeavours and we had a guest speaker from the Social Justice Commission of the Catholic Archdiocese. He led the participants and their parents through a series of activities designed to show us the need for programs that deliver social justice to others who are not as fortunate as we are.

We also participated in the Catholic Identity Project and although we only received a few surveys from Parents, the staff input combined with the parent input has allowed us to gain some understanding of the perceptions about our Catholic faith as a community. We are clearly recognized as a Catholic School and our students particularly showed a lived reality of what faith means in this day and age. The surveys identified that we need to continue to support our community to move beyond their literal beliefs and move to a post critical belief stage where the focus is on the relevance and meaning of Christ's teachings for the way in which we live out our lives in the light of our faith.

Highlights of 2013:

Provided Sacramental Programs for students receiving the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation.

We also provided Faith Education Formation sessions for Parents and Guardians in Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation.

Commissioned staff to their work in Catholic Education

Provided extra-curricula activity sessions for students in Yrs F-3:

- Preps in Pyjamas
- Yr 1 Good Shepherd Experience
- Renewal of Baptism for Yr 2's
- Eucharist and reconciliation Activities for Yr 3

We continued to support the Mini Vinnies Group and they had an evening Presentation as part of the Nazareth Cluster project.

Held Liturgy meetings with staff and Catholic Identity Coordinator and our Parish Priest

Celebrated the Liturgical year with the Parish in regular Level Masses,

Welcomed new Families and Visitors in prayer

Participated in Social Justice Projects such as the Mini Vinnies support for the Dandenong Homework Club and the Christmas Shoebox Appeal and Project Compassion.

Welcomed Bishop Elliott to interview and confirm our Confirmation candidates.

Learning & Teaching

Our Teaching and Learning Goal in 2013 was to improve student learning efficacy and engagement and to improve Literacy and Mathematics Standards. We wanted our students to be interested in their learning, to enjoy and to improve their learning outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy. We began 2013 as we always do with 'screening'. All the children were tested using diagnostic testing that shows us the strengths of each individual student as well as the areas that need support or extending.

Our NAPLAN results confirmed that given the work we do with children from many language and cultural backgrounds we are delivering a very sound educational program. NAPLAN tests Yr. 5 show that in 2013 in the area of Reading we scored 496 on the scaled scores which was 6 points below the average for the state. Our Writing was slightly below the State median and in Spelling and also in Punctuation and Grammar, we performed exactly the same as the State.

In Maths we were disappointed that our school's score was 475 compared to the State's score of 492. This may be related to the high number of students at our school with a Non English speaking background who find the language of numeracy a challenge rather than the Maths itself being the challenge.

In terms of a comparison to the previous year, students showed a small decline in achievement in Reading and Writing, they were similar in Spelling and Punctuation and Grammar and there was a slight fall in Numeracy. This may be related to the different group of students. The drop is a very small variable. The variable between the 2 years is greater in maths than literacy but we are still only talking about a .05% difference which is not statistically significant.

In Yr. 3, the Reading median scores for 2013 we scored exactly the same as the state, in writing, we scored above the state, in spelling too we achieved above the state median and in Punctuation and Grammar we scored exactly the same as the state. In Numeracy we scored 396 against the states median of 406.

Overall, the trend over the three year period 2011-2013 shows our results are not achieving our stated goals in the School Improvement Plan of *improving student* outcomes in all areas but we are not falling either. We appear to be holding a pattern of results across the school with some very slight gains but also some very slight drops. These may be attributed to different groups of students. The 5 year trend

results show a similar pattern over the last 5 years.

In the School Improvement Surveys for 2013, student engagement reached 86% for the students on their motivation to learn, a drop of 3% since last year. However, parents put the figure slightly lower at 78% compared to 82% the previous year. Students rated their Learning Confidence and Stimulating Learning at the same level as the previous year but also perceived that Classroom Behaviour was significantly improved. Parent's perception was that of a slight improvement in the level of Classroom behaviour. Staff perception was an overall improvement over 2012 with the biggest rises in the 2013 data being in Teacher Confidence, Engaging Practice and Quality Teaching. This is a tribute to the work that teachers at this school have engaged in to understand Contemporary teaching practices based on current research.

We continued to participate in the Contemporary Learning Research Project funded by the Catholic Education Office Melbourne and began the first year of our 1:1 e-Learning program. Students and Teachers were very excited and perhaps somewhat nervous about learning how this connection to an e-learning tool can transform learning and teaching. During the year however, nerves were replaced by a willingness to embrace new ways of learning and teaching and although the program demanded a financial commitment from home and school, the costs are outweighed by the advantages of a tool that can consolidate routine tasks and broaden horizons in every direction. We have been very conscious of the demands regarding cyber-safety but we operated from a position that it is better to explore with knowledge about safety and protocols than leave students to manage the access to technology by themselves without adequate knowledge. At the end of 2013, the students in Yrs. 5 & 6 presented a powerful argument for why we need to continue this program to the incoming Yr. 5's and their parents. The students were also 100% supportive of iPads as the preferred e-learning tool.

At St. Elizabeth's we place a high value on the Professional Learning of our staff. Throughout 2013 all staff participated in Professional Learning whether it be Walker Learning Approach, Lane Clark, First Aid ~ Anaphylaxis and Asthma, Contemporary Learning Research Project, Professional Action Research Teams, Reading Recovery, Multi-Modal, eSmart or attending the Staff Conference, VCACPSP Conference, 21st Enhancing learning with Technology. Their attendance at Professional Learning is dependent upon their and their students' needs. The average cost of this is over 2013 per teacher was \$3211.00

Student Wellbeing

Our school places a great deal of emphasis on resourcing programs and practices to support the Wellbeing of Students. Our Goal in this sphere in 2013 was to strengthen student's connectedness to teachers, peers and learning. We always begin our school year with SWEL week and everyone enjoyed the Footsteps program. Dance is one of the mandated areas of Curriculum but for most children it is also a time of great fun.

The 'You can Do It program' is well embedded into our school culture and it supports the Adlerian approach to wellbeing that is pivotal in our thinking and behaviours. New staff received training in this approach at the beginning of the year and all current staff had a refresher course. We use Restorative Practice procedures to help children make amends after poor choices lead to problems and that was also covered in the training sessions.

We have an outside professional who continued to work with some of our students as part of the On-Psych Scheme, who have been given referrals through the Government's Mental Health Plan.

Overall, parents rated the school's performance in Student Wellbeing slightly lower than the previous year and student's scored their emotional wellbeing in a similar manner but their relationships with teachers stayed the same as 2012.

A key strategy last year to improve the sense of wellbeing with students was to support teacher initiative and leadership in this area. Ms Joyce Lynch and Ms Tanya Zonneveldt initiated a proposal to have a Student Wellbeing Team to assist Ms Nan Perazzo. They met with Nan once a term to explore programs and to discuss strategies. Out of this group came the move to strengthen and deepen our buddy program so we applied to become part of the Alannah and Madeleine Foundation and were given a grant to support the Better Buddies Program. This was introduced in Term 4 and will be part of our work in 2014.

Mr Dean Andrew, our PE teacher also initiated several after-school sports programs which supported the development of team spirit and physical skills and gave children an opportunity to make friendships beyond their year level. These extra curricula activities are great enrichers of student wellbeing.

We have also continued our close relationship with Nazareth College and every week during from the middle of Terms 1 to the beginning of Term 4 VCAL

students come and work with our staff and students. Our children see the Nazareth students as great role models.

Our Insight SRC survey shows us that our student satisfaction continued to be high. Our 2013 student satisfaction scores reflect the student teacher relationships, learning confidence, connectedness to peers and student safety are on par with the previous year, students perceived an improvement in student behaviour but a slight drop in their emotional wellbeing and motivation.

Student attendance during 2013 averaged 92.36% across the school. Where a student has continuous absences without notifying the school the Student Welfare Officer contacts the parents/ guardians to offer support and to explain the importance of consistent school attendance.

Highlights of 2013:

Gave Priority to Wellbeing with a Deputy Position allocated to Student Wellbeing. Continued to deliver the You Can Do It program. Trained all staff in Adlerian practices and skills. Offered Before and After School care through Youth Leadership Victoria. Supported Parent and Friends initiatives such as Mother's Day and Father's Day stalls. Held a celebration for Dad's with a Pancake Breakfast and for Mums with a Cup Cake Day. Continued our use of the process of Restorative Justice. Provided Cyber Safety, Blogging Information sessions and Literacy Training as well as Level Information sessions to parents. Participated in the regional interschool sports competition. Held a Carols by Candlelight Celebration. Ran after school sessions in sports including 'Net Set Go', Milo Cricket and Netball. Offered Instrumental Programs in Keyboard and Guitar. Offered a week of relationship building activities in Week 1 term 1. Provided every learning Community with a Garden Box. Hatched chickens and looked after them as hens! Continued to monitor playground incidents and tracked student behaviour on and off the yard. Facilitated Parish Community events such as the Dinner dances. Year 5 and 6 students attended a 2 day camp at Sovereign Hill. All levels attended excursions and held incursions including visits to Edithvale life-Saving Club, the Zoo, The Maze, and many more interesting places. Incursions explored art and science and dance to name a few.

Leadership & Management

Administration is a partnership between the schools' leadership team and our Office staff. Our Office staff continue to provide great service to the school community. During the audit of our school, our auditors find very few matters that need our attention, this is a testament to the wonderful work done by our Office team. The school has sound financial systems in place and is managing to keep buildings, programs and resources maintained.

During 2013 we had a major focus on renovating the toilet facilities for students. This was done in stages and cost approximately \$120,000. We also began planning for future developments in the library and Foundation areas.

The Parents and Friends purchased a new piece of adventure playground equipment during 2013. The whole school community supports the Parents and Friends who work within the school, not only fund raising but creating a sense of welcome and being real witnesses to our Catholic faith in their actions. The cost of installing the equipment and providing mulch and surrounds was covered by the school. The back area of the school has been landscaped as the sleepers were no longer safe. And the second half of that project will be completed in 2014. We installed totem poles and the children used them as supports for construction play.

The School Education Board has been a very productive and cooperative group. Led by Susan Hatley-Smith, this group has been involved with many changes and improvements. They worked together to validate school Policies and Practices, the School Education Board was a strong sounding board for parents' input into our decision making in 2013. I particularly want to thank Ms Janine Phillips who served as Parish Representative for the last 7 years. Janine has been a very generous member of our community and we thank her for this.

The Goal for Leadership and Management during our 2010-2014 School Improvement Plan has been to develop a contemporary approach to Professional Learning. In addition to attending professional learning provided by experts and the Catholic Education Office, our staff has been involved in the Contemporary Learning Research Project as well as in-house research projects to tackle issues that were identified as being of specific interest. Teachers also tracked their own performance using Learning Intentions as well as video evidence of their progress as part of their Pre and Post Annual Review Meeting.

We continued professional learning with a 2 day program with Lane Clark and also received regular mentoring from mentors with the Walker Learning Approach. Professional Learning is a huge part of our work and becomes critical in helping staff prioritize what we should be focusing our energies on and what we can outsource.

Teacher satisfaction is measured annually in the school Improvement Survey. In 2013 all areas measuring staff satisfaction were either the same or improved on the results from the previous year. Improved areas included teacher's understanding of their roles, teachers confidence in being empowered to do their work, their perception of Work Demands and understanding of Curriculum.

In December 2013, with the help of professional movers, we transferred the locations of our Foundation classroom with the Library. Our aim was to create library resources around the school with a self- serving kiosk and a small central library which we are calling 'The Nook'. Ms Martin and an amazing team of very generous helpers encoded all the resources using the RFID system. This will allow our students to be independent borrowers and resources are now located within their learning areas in the red and green book boxes. Unfortunately just when we needed to switch on the system at the end of 2013, the new kiosk was found to need a new part and it had to be shipped here. The launching of our new system has had to be delayed until 2014. The Foundation students will now have a very generous learning environment in which to learn and as we find out how well that space works for learning in 2014, we will begin to plan for the installation of a wet area and other facilities which will support student's learning.

School Community

Our Community Coordinator is a pivotal person in our work with community. In 2013, Ms Trixie Martin continued her valuable work encouraging and supporting members of the Parents and Friends Group and the school community in general. The Parents and Friends Association has been very active in our community and they contributed in so many ways. The P and F organisation has many members and this year it continued to provide an enthusiastic welcome to all new members of our community.

Parent satisfaction with the school was measured in the School Improvement Survey and showed a very high score in all areas with the majority of scores being in the 70-80% range however, it was slightly lower than 2012 except for Social Skills and Classroom Behaviour which improved.

Fundraising is important but more importantly, the Parents and Friends Association, like the School Education Board members are the leaders in our community. By their generous service they remind us that parents are the first educators of their children and our role as a school is to work alongside our parents and guardians to assist them to educate their children for a life lived to the full.

Our school was built to respond to the needs of our Catholic Parish and we continued in 2013 to serve that need. We valued the many opportunities we had to celebrate with our wider parish community and we are grateful for Father Tadeusz Ziolkowski's contribution to the success of our school.

Financial Performance

REPORTING FRAMEWORK	MODIFIED CASH \$
Recurrent income	Tuition
School fees	6597.00
Other fee income	133433.00
Private income	58345.00
State government recurrent grants	712128.00
Australian government recurrent grants	2212839.00
Total recurrent income	3123342.00
Recurrent Expenditure	Tuition
Salaries; allowances and related expenses	2131748.00
Non salary expenses	591288.00
Total recurrent expenditure	2723035.00
Capital income and expenditure	Tuition
Government capital grants	0.00
Capital fees and levies	288019.00
Other capital income	20000.00
Total capital income	308019.00
Total capital expenditure	183019.00
Loans (includes refundable enrolment deposits and recurrent, capital and bridging loans)	
Total opening balance	110000.00
Total closing balance	55000.00

Note that the information provided above does not include the following items:

System levies charged to individual schools, intra-systemic transfers and diocesan supplementary capital fund (SCF) supported borrowings for primary schools. The information provided is not comparable with other educational sectors. This VRQA template is not comparable to the ACARA school-level income reporting requirements which are to be reported on the MySchool website. ACARA school level reporting requirements will require system level income from Government grants and some private income to be allocated by school. This will be a small adjustment in relation to the total level of school resources. At this stage, recurrent income from Government sources, school generated income and capital expenditure are to be reported by schools. Additionally when assessing the private income of the school include both recurrent and capital school fees.

Future Directions

St. Elizabeth's school recognizes the speed of change that is part of the 21 Century human experience. Our workplaces, our homes, our relationships are all subject to the stress and challenges of meeting these changes. Our work will continue in monitoring research into best practices in contemporary learning and we will continue to put a great emphasis on Professional Learning for our staff.

We are mindful that change places enormous stress on people and so Student Wellbeing and connections to our school community and beyond will continue to be of the utmost priority. We are committed to supporting our students to face the future with confidence. We aim to provide them with the attitudes and skills and qualities that enable them to be independent self-motivated and responsible citizens.

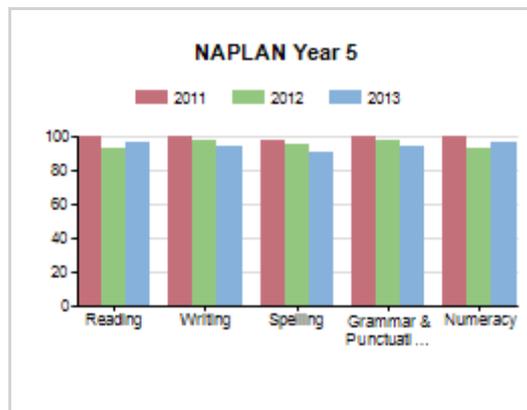
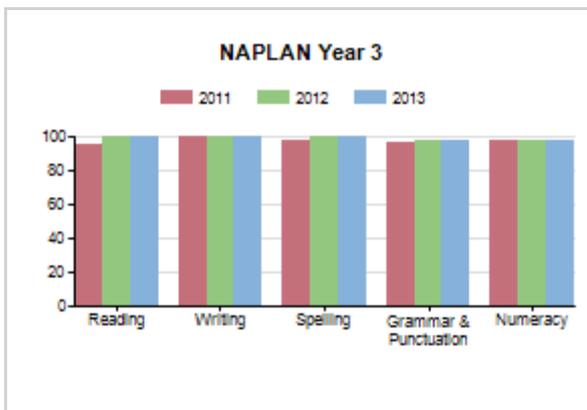
Our building will continue to change to meet the needs of our learners. We aim to create an environment where indoor and outdoor play is possible as an essential part of learning especially for our youngest students. We want our library to be a welcoming space available to parents and children before, during and after school times.

We will continue to witness our Faith and to teach the Good News of the Gospel in language and experiences that are real and sustainable.

VRQA Compliance Data

E1298 St Elizabeth's School, Dandenong North

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2011	2012	2011–2012	2013	2012–2013
	%	%	Changes	%	Changes
			%		%
YR 03 Reading	94.9	100.0	5.1	100.0	0.0
YR 03 Writing	100.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
YR 03 Spelling	98.3	100.0	1.7	100.0	0.0
YR 03 Grammar & Punctuation	96.6	98.1	1.5	98.1	0.0
YR 03 Numeracy	98.3	98.1	-0.2	98.0	-0.1
YR 05 Reading	100.0	92.9	-7.1	96.4	3.5
YR 05 Writing	100.0	97.6	-2.4	94.7	-2.9
YR 05 Spelling	98.1	95.2	-2.9	91.2	-4.0
YR 05 Grammar & Punctuation	100.0	97.6	-2.4	94.7	-2.9
YR 05 Numeracy	100.0	92.9	-7.1	96.4	3.5



AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL	%
Year 1	91.45
Year 2	91.72
Year 3	94.18
Year 4	93.97
Year 5	92.50
Year 6	90.36
Overall average attendance	92.36

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE	
Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	93.99%

STAFF RETENTION RATE	
Staff Retention Rate	88.00%

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS	
Doctorate	0.00%
Masters	8.33%
Graduate	12.50%
Certificate Graduate	0.00%
Degree Bachelor	41.67%
Diploma Advanced	4.17%
No Qualifications Listed	29.17%

STAFF COMPOSITION	
Principal Class	3
Teaching Staff (Head Count)	23
FTE Teaching Staff	19.520
Non-Teaching Staff (Head Count)	9
FTE Non-Teaching Staff	6.351
Indigenous Teaching Staff	0