

2025 annual report to the Community

Mount Barker High School

Mount Barker High School number: 0783

Partnership: Heysen



School principal:

David Garrett

Date of endorsement:

29/05/2026



Government
of South Australia
Department for Education

Context Statement

Mount Barker High School caters for students from 7-12. At the time of this report, the enrolment in 2025 is 1061. Mount Barker High School is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage. At the time of this report, the school population includes 3% Aboriginal students, 42% students with disabilities, 1% children/young people in care. Further information about the school is available on the school's website (including its context statement), as well as the My School website.

Data Source: Department for Education data holdings from Mid census captured in AUGUST 2025.

Principal's Report

We are now well into improving our school guided by the five goals of our strategic plan

Goal 1 Build a strong school culture

In 2025 we continued strengthening our organisation and operation by reviewing policies and procedures. This included reviewing our House System informed by Student Wellbeing and Engagement Collection (WEC) data which indicated a need to strengthen student belonging and connection with adults. Improving house and school culture was a high priority for the house team, which streamlined how the team works together to support student wellbeing, attendance and engagement. We also redeveloped the Wellbeing Science program to increase students' capabilities to improve their own wellbeing.

Using student and parent opinions was a high priority. Students participated in Department for Education (DfE) forums supporting the South Australian Strategy for Public Education. Student forums were also used during the house and timetable reviews. Parents provided feedback through the DfE Parent Survey, a SAPOL cyber-safety session, the timetable review and a uniform survey. After reaching a low point in 2023, with only an average 52% of parents responding positively to survey questions, in 2025 parent positive responses trended up to 55%, with 11 out of 14 question sets improving since 2024. The greatest increase in positive parent responses concerned the school's culture.

The 2025 Staff Perspective Survey highlighted opportunities to build greater trust and transparency. In response, the leadership team increased sharing information, explaining decisions and involving staff more in decision-making. Staff indicated they welcomed higher expectations of their practice and more feedback on teaching, which led to changes in performance development planning and accountability.

Goal 2 Become a high performing school

The 2025 Year 12 cohort was Mount Barker High School's highest achieving group for many years. Seventy-one percent of students achieved A and B grades, the highest proportion for at least 13 years. Our highest achieving student, Raya Villafania, received three A+ with Merit grades and a raw ATAR of 96.85, which rose to the maximum ATAR of 99.95 with bonus points. Raya has been accepted into Adelaide University to undertake a Bachelor of Laws (Honours) double degree. Our next challenge is to reduce the gap between A and B results compared with the rest of the state.

In 2025 we strengthened processes to support student learning by reviewing key policies and procedures. An important change that included staff, student and parent consultation was reviewing the timetable to develop a model, to be implemented in 2026, that would increase the number of times that subject teachers would have with their classes each week from 2 to 3.

The Completion Policy was revised to ensure more students meet assessment checkpoints so they receive feedback before submitting tasks to improve their level of achievement and ability to meet deadlines. We also revised our Attendance Policy and Procedure to maximise time students spend at school so they can improve their learning.

Our Academic Integrity Policy was updated to support the ethical and effective use of AI.

We continued to refine Positive Behaviour for Learning procedures continue to foster quiet, settled classrooms focused on learning. This was supported by improved use of Daymap to record and track behaviour, with more streamlined communication with parents. There was a 13% decrease in take homes, suspensions, exclusions.

Significant work was also done in the senior school to build a culture of aspiration and high achievement, with greater acknowledgment of students who achieved high ATARs, as well as increasing the access of senior students to Flinders University programs such career counselling, Inspire Mentoring and the Flinders University Assessment Centre.

Goal 3 To use high quality curriculum and teaching practices

In 2025 we changed how we organise year 7s after using the model that was initially introduced in 2022 when year 7s first came to high school. Students were placed in core groups that stayed together for all subjects. Teachers reported that students staying together improved their transition.

In 2025 we introduced the Pedagogy for Impact Model (PIM) to improve consistency in how teachers organise and teach their classes. While individual teaching styles and subject requirements will always vary, our aim is to increase consistency in key

classroom processes and the use of high-impact teaching strategies across the school. The PIM identifies these practices, which have been a focus of professional learning during 2025, along with increased accountability for their use.

Another focus for whole-school professional learning was preparation for the South Australian Curriculum, which must be ready for full implementation by 2027. Curriculum leaders have been involved in DfE curriculum forums to support this work.

Goal 4 Have a supportive and inclusive learning environment

One indicator of our school's complexity is the percentage of students identified in the annual Nationally Consistent Collection of Data for Students with Disability (NCCD), as well as the funding we receive through the Inclusive Education Support Program (IESP). Both relate to students who have additional learning needs, but are not in the disability unit or special classes. While we cannot guarantee the accuracy of data prior to 2024, 40% of our student population were identified in 2024, increasing to 44% in 2025.

IESP funding increased from \$691,962 in 2022 to \$2,201,480 in 2025. This supported establishing the Learning Hub to assist students to develop executive functioning skills and strengthen their engagement with subject content and classroom learning. Funding also supported employing a special education teacher and additional classroom SSOs to work with students individually or in small groups, as well as Connect Classes, literacy and social intervention programs, with contributions to VocOn and the Adelaide Hills Vocational College.

In 2025 we refined VocOn as our Tailored Learning (TL) approach for middle school students. TL funding was used to employ a B1 leader and a youth worker. VocOn aims to improve attendance, participation and achievement for students with significant barriers to schooling by providing a more flexible and supportive learning environment. This includes personalised learning plans, flexible scheduling, hands-on learning and mentoring, and on building supportive relationships. Through these approaches, and keeping links with mainstream classes, VocOn builds resilience, motivation and a renewed commitment to learning.

A highlight for the Adelaide Hills Vocational College was commencing Expeditionary Learning (XP) with the Department for Education. Students led the organisation of a community event for RUOK Day that was attended by 800 people.

To improve student transition, primary teachers were offered release days to meet with our staff to provide information about individual students.

Goal 5 Develop quality resources and facilities

Significant self funded work was completed to upgrade facilities. This included upgrades to the Hall, East Wing, Tech Studies, Library, Music, VocOn facility and Staff Room. Year 7 play equipment was installed along with new water fountains. Improvements were also made to access and yarding at the farm.

The access road and drop off for the disability unit was completed. A ramp was constructed to provide safe access between the Disability Unit and the main building, with a playground to provide equipment for HMIEC students to de-escalate and spend break times. Work commenced on sealing the access driveway to the Disability Unit along the edge of the oval.

A \$9m capital works development was nearing the end of the planning phase. It was put on hold at the beginning of 2026. The \$9m development was to include:

- re-roofing the original school building
- a covered outdoor learning area and two modular classrooms adjacent to the farm
- refurbishment and reconfiguration of food technology learning areas
- review of the breezeway upgrade student toilets and the distribution of lockers
- undertake a planning exercise for potential facility upgrades in the future.

The Department of Transport and Infrastructure (DIT) compulsorily acquired land adjacent to the roundabout on Wellington and Flaxley Roads, with negotiations occurring for DIT to construct a new carpark and entrances at the front of the school. This would result in a reduction of 12 carparks so a new entrance and 14 space car park to be constructed off Maldon St were planned as an offset. Preparatory work on the front carpark commenced just as the school year ended.

School funded improvements included recarpeting some areas of the school, refurbishing the learning hub and special options rooms, painting the hall and tech studies as well as improvements to the farm. Planning was also underway for other developments to commence in 2026, that have been put on hold.

Governing Council Report

Valerie Bubner

It has been my honour and privilege to serve on Governing Council as Chairperson in 2025 at Mount Barker High School, in what can only be described as a year of truly extraordinary evaluation, change and positive development of policy and leadership. To be a part of this process within our roles as Governing Council members has led to a deeper understanding of and participation in the school community, all with the aim to support a successful school experience for Mount Barker's students and their families.

There are many paths to a successful experience for our students, whether it is the remarkable academic journey our 2025 Mount Barker High School Dux, Raya Villafania went on to achieve an ATAR of 96.85 or the VET pathways that enabled 24 of our students to

navigate and achieve their SACE. In total over 98% of our students completed their SACE. Our educators are to be commended for the diversity of pathways and opportunities they provide our students to achieve their goals and dreams.

As a governing council we are incredibly proud of our inclusivity and accessibility for all learners. Our HMIEC students' diverse range of programs and recently upgraded inclusive spaces, our students accessing the Voc On and Adelaide Hills Voc College programs, and students accessing our Learning Hub program, are all supported by our specialist staff in these spaces, who have a huge amount of faith in our students' abilities and desire to achieve their goals and qualifications. Mount Barker High School is very fortunate to have such passionate educators and support staff.

Successful school experiences at Mount Barker also develop within the myriad of extra programs our students can participate in; SRC, First Nations students' cultural workshops, sports, breakfast club, annual quiz night, the much-loved ski trip, involvement with our international student program, Vex robotics teams, Ag farm student representation at the Royal Adelaide Show, music ensembles including vocal and stage band, and of course our arts students' showcase evening, just to name a few. Congratulations to all our students who committed their time and enthusiasm to creating and taking up these extra opportunities, and to the teachers who dedicate extra time to supporting these students.

Attending our 2025 Presentation Night in November was a privilege, and my first experience of seeing just how many different awards our school has available for all areas of achievement, including for students who show generosity of community spirit and leadership. Our students' academic achievements are inspiring, but in addition to this it was wonderful to see our school motto "Not for Ourselves Alone" so well-reflected in many of the qualities that students received awards for.

Our 2025 school governing council meeting highlights are many – we particularly enjoyed having a series of guest speakers from our education staff in 2025, to give the governing council the opportunity to learn more about our curriculum areas and approach to learning; in 2025 we had highly informative presentations from Kate Hynes (English, Language, Literacy and Learning Area Leader), Nick Sward (Senior School), and Heath Masters (HASS and Cross-curricular learning).

In addition to curriculum presentations, we also experienced an enlightening visit by the Timetable Review Committee, as they delivered their findings for the future benefit of our students and families. The recommendation to change to an innovative new timetable after using the three lesson per day model we have had since Covid times, was significant and required a Governing Council vote to go ahead. After school community consultation around the reasons why the new timetable would be of huge benefit to our students, the timetable change was voted through unanimously in November. I feel this was one of the strongest ways the Governing Council supported our educators and students in 2025, and commend the review committee, particularly Kirsten Wissell, Shaun Bell and Ben Howard for their dedication in communicating the importance of the review findings.

The timetable review was one of many policy reviews under the Whole School Improvement initiative, begun in earnest in 2025 at Mount Barker. The House review was another that the governing council again strongly supported our leadership's expertise and findings for. I cannot overstate how hard all staff have worked in 2025; the extraordinary evaluation, change and positive development of policy and leadership I mentioned above required an incredible amount of commitment.

In 2025 the governing council has been supported by a number of forums run by Educators SA at Hindmarsh. These collaborative and informative evenings are offered throughout the year on various topics designed for supporting School Governing Council Chairs and Councillors in their role as co-leaders in school governance; myself and Michelle Muller attended several forums including "Building Communities to Support Positive Relationships" and "School Funding – How it Works". These forums had many notable guest speakers including the Minister for Education and were a valuable networking opportunity to meet and discuss issues with other school governing council members and Chairs from across the state.

A new Mount Barker initiative in 2025 has been to seek stronger ties with our local primary schools, and this has started well with myself and Principal David Garrett and teacher Kerry Woods-Bellman attending several local primary school governing council meetings as an introduction, with the intention of continuing this practice and strengthening relationships every year following.

In term 2 the Minister for Education announced changes for governing council constitutions in secondary schools; as a result of these changes we were transitioned to a new constitution that now includes two compulsory student members. This made no difference to our regular meeting lineup of incredibly devoted student members (extras by proxy) Austin, Carlie and Nye. The governing council highly valued these students' contributions and commitment to our meetings. It was excellent timing for the Minister to recognise how valuable student agency in governance is.

2025 saw our Governing Council enter a huge year of advocacy following on from 2024, for the best outcomes possible for our school community regarding the DIT Adelaide Road Roundabout Upgrade Project. A significant and disruptive project designed to improve traffic infrastructure, the original roundabout design would see quite a lot of negative impact on our school entrances, heritage gates, and loss of many front carparking spaces. The School Governing council spent over 12 months advocating via letters to DIT, Department for Education and Department for Housing to seek appropriate offsets for the loss of carparking space, and the working group including myself, David Garrett and Chris Stone negotiating with the design team how to best accommodate changed entrance points and connecting roads. Advocacy is still in progress and we remain in communication with DIT as the construction phase is beginning.

I must acknowledge that the Chairperson’s role at Mount Barker High School is extremely well supported by Executive and Admin staff; most notably our Principal David Garrett, our Business Development Manager Chris Stone and our Deputy Principal Cara Fiebig. I truly appreciate this remarkable team’s dedication to the governing council, their transparency, knowledge and guidance have been essential to ensuring the smooth running of meetings and events.

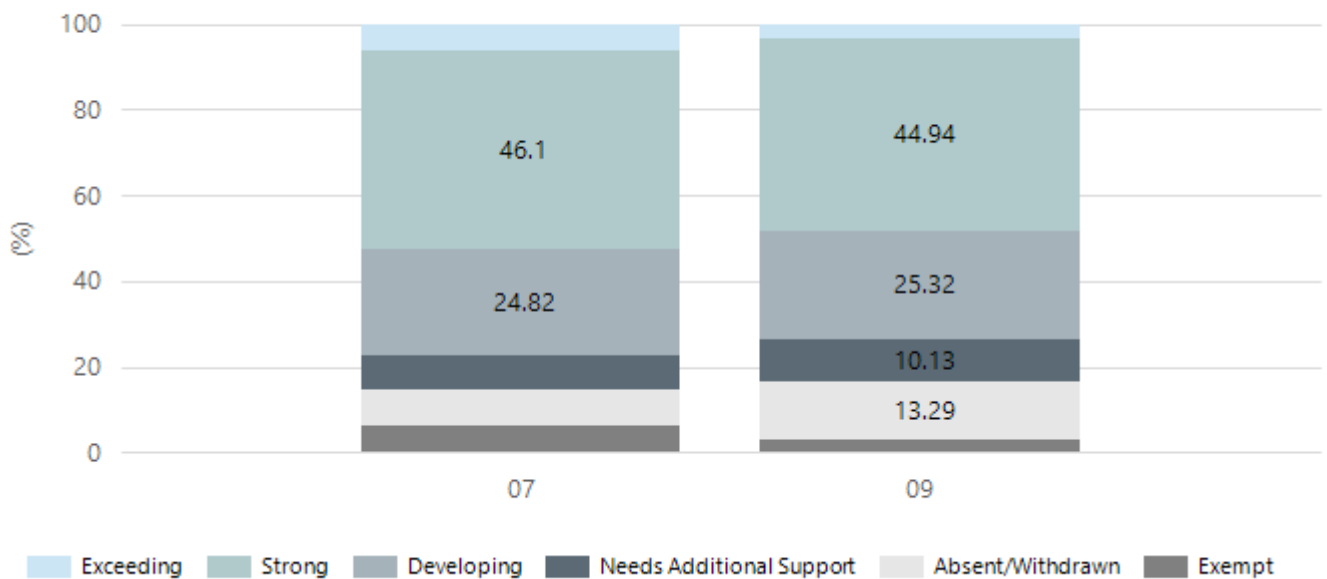
A couple of things I have taken away from the abovementioned forums is that on school governing council we must take off the parent hat we wear for our children, and wear the hat that is best for serving and representing our entire school community, so, “Not for Ourselves Alone”. The other thing that stuck with me is that we as a governing council should aim to leave the school in a better position than we found it. I believe that our collaborative efforts this year have served Mount Barker High School well in this regard. Thank you for the privilege of chairing in 2025.

Performance Summary

NAPLAN Proficiency

In 2023 the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) - a Commonwealth Independent statutory authority - announced changes to NAPLAN performance reporting. The new approach replaces the previous numerical NAPLAN bands and the national minimum standard.

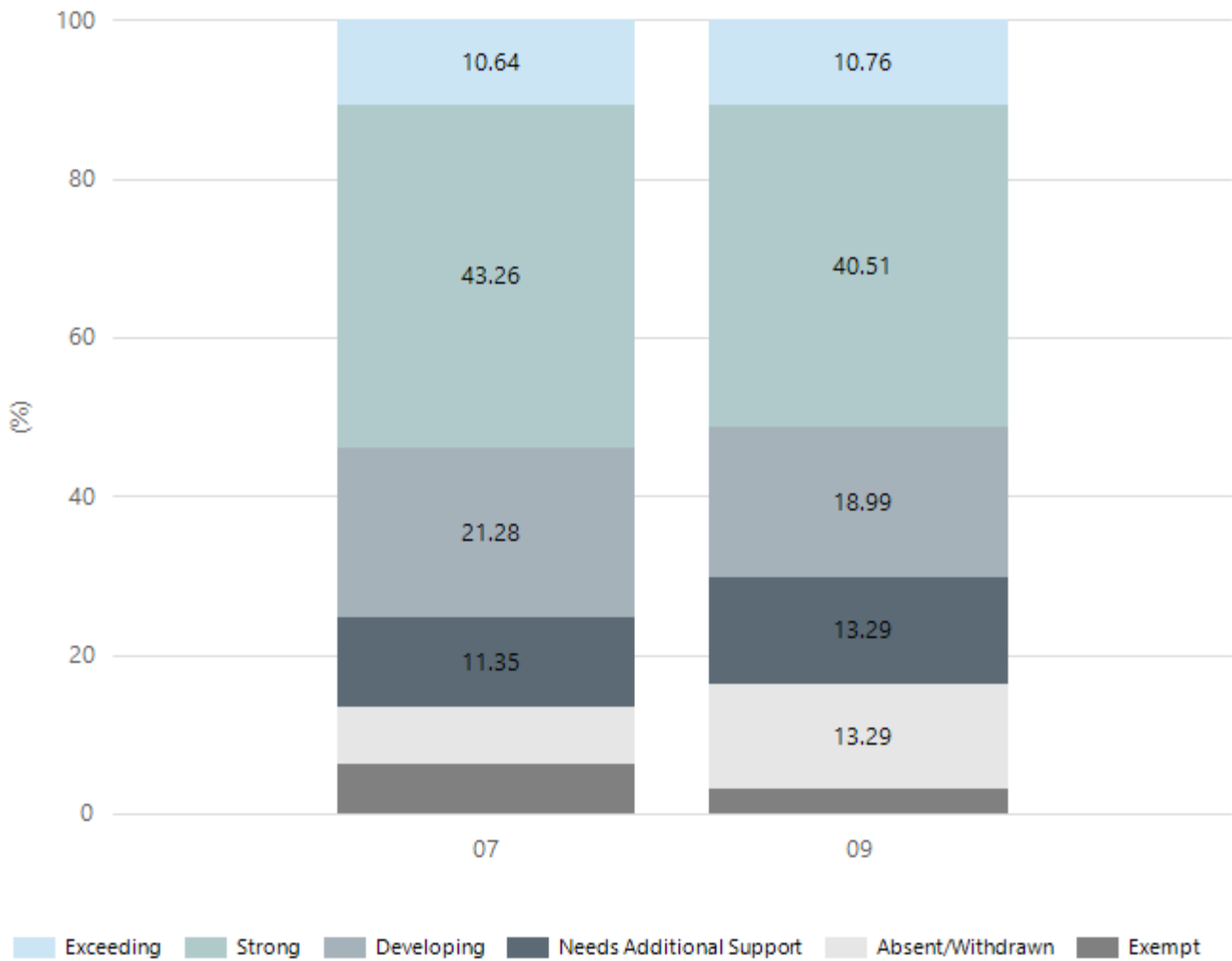
Numeracy



Year Level	07	09
Exceeding	9	5
Strong	65	71
Developing	35	40
Needs Additional Support	11	16
Absent/Withdrawn	12	21
Exempt	9	5
Total	141	158

Data Source: Department for Education Assessment Data Holdings, 2025. If there are less than 6 students who sat NAPLAN in a school, no information will be shown. If a year level has less than 6 students, that year level will not be shown in NAPLAN results.

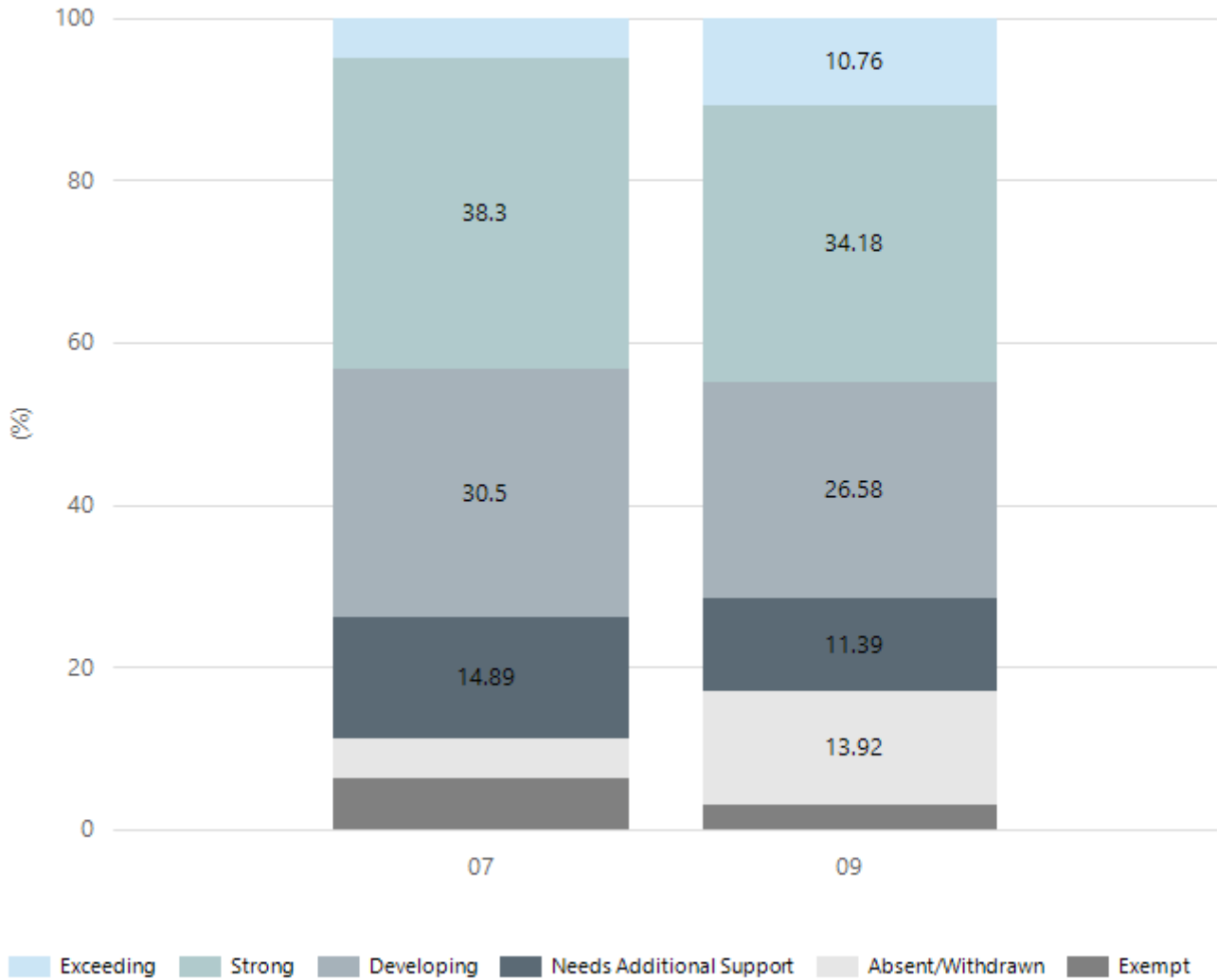
Reading



Year Level	07	09
Exceeding	15	17
Strong	61	64
Developing	30	30
Needs Additional Support	16	21
Absent/Withdrawn	10	21
Exempt	9	5
Total	141	158

Data Source: Department for Education Assessment Data Holdings, 2025. If there are less than 6 students who sat NAPLAN in a school, no information will be shown. If a year level has less than 6 students, that year level will not be shown in NAPLAN results.

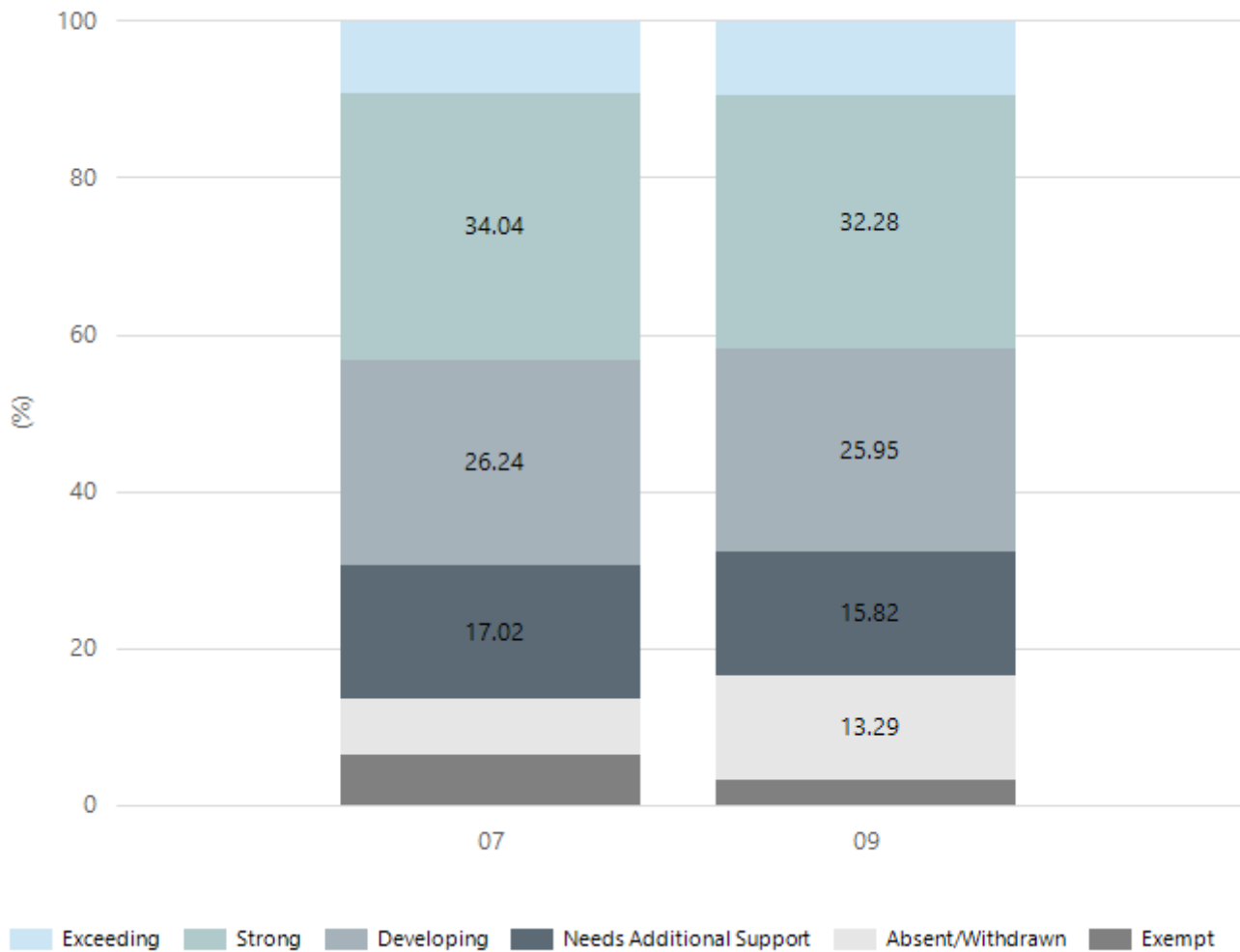
Writing



Year Level	07	09
Exceeding	7	17
Strong	54	54
Developing	43	42
Needs Additional Support	21	18
Absent/Withdrawn	7	22
Exempt	9	5
Total	141	158

Data Source: Department for Education Assessment Data Holdings, 2025. If there are less than 6 students who sat NAPLAN in a school, no information will be shown. If a year level has less than 6 students, that year level will not be shown in NAPLAN results.

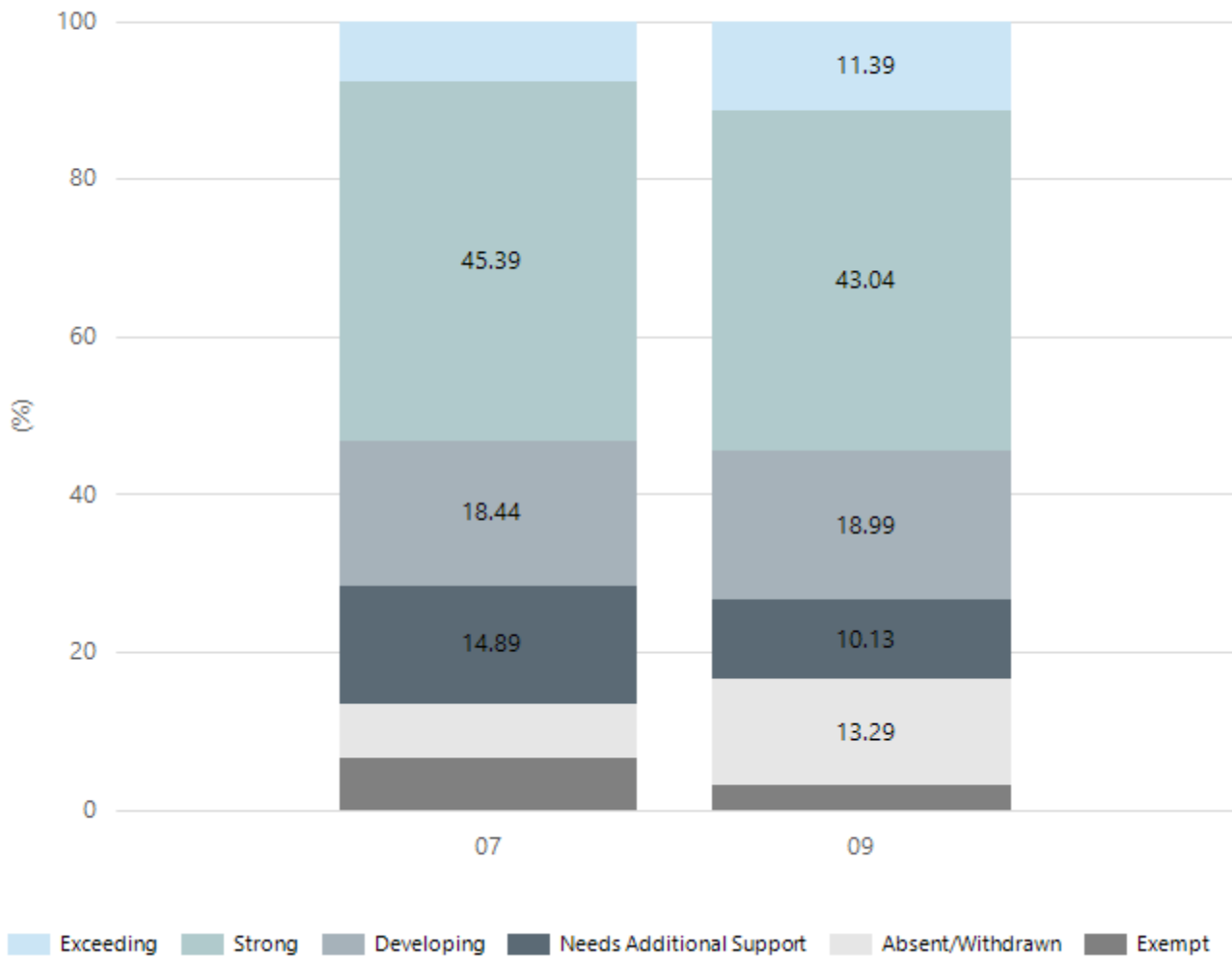
Grammar



Year Level	07	09
Exceeding	13	15
Strong	48	51
Developing	37	41
Needs Additional Support	24	25
Absent/Withdrawn	10	21
Exempt	9	5
Total	141	158

Data Source: Department for Education Assessment Data Holdings, 2025. If there are less than 6 students who sat NAPLAN in a school, no information will be shown. If a year level has less than 6 students, that year level will not be shown in NAPLAN results.

Spelling



Year Level	07	09
Exceeding	11	18
Strong	64	68
Developing	26	30
Needs Additional Support	21	16
Absent/Withdrawn	10	21
Exempt	9	5
Total	141	158

Data Source: Department for Education Assessment Data Holdings, 2025. If there are less than 6 students who sat NAPLAN in a school, no information will be shown. If a year level has less than 6 students, that year level will not be shown in NAPLAN results.

South Australian Certificate of Education - SACE

SACE Stage 2 Grades - Percentage of grades that are C- or above for attempted SACE subjects

2022	2023	2024	2025
99%	97%	97%	99.27%

Data Source: SACE School Data Reports, as of February 2025 for 2022-2025. When there are less than six students, no data is supplied. Due to rounding of percentages, total results may not add up to 100%.

SACE Stage 2 Grade Distribution

Grade	2022	2023	2024	2025
A+	0%	1%	1%	1.83%
A	7%	5%	6%	5.86%
A-	13%	12%	9%	12.82%
B+	15%	14%	13%	15.02%
B	18%	15%	17%	18.13%
B-	15%	14%	17%	17.40%
C+	13%	15%	18%	15.75%
C	14%	16%	12%	9.52%
C-	2%	5%	4%	2.93%
D+	1%	1%	2%	0.18%
D	0%	1%	0%	0.18%
D-	0%	1%	1%	0.37%
E+	0%	0%	0%	0%
E		0%		0%
E-		0%		0%

Data Source: SACE School Data Reports, as of February 2025 for 2022-2025. When there are less than six students, no data is supplied. Due to rounding of percentages, total results may not add up to 100%.

SACE Completion - Percentage of completers out of those students who had the potential to complete their SACE in October that year

2022	2023	2024	2025
100%	98%	98%	98.18%

Data Source: SACE School Data Reports, as of February 2025 for 2022-2025. When there are less than six students, no data is supplied. Due to rounding of percentages, total results may not add up to 100%.

Year 12 Students undertaking Vocational or Trade Training (VET)

	2023	2024	2025
Percentage of Year 12 students undertaking Vocational Training or Trade Training	28.41%	32.50%	31.48%
Percentage of Year 12 students attaining a Year 12 certificate or equivalent VET qualification	97.78%	97.56%	98.18%

Data Source: School supplied data

School Attendance

Year Level	2023	2024	2025
Year 07	85.9%	86.1%	87.8%
Year 08	84.2%	84.9%	81.6%
Year 09	82.5%	83.3%	85.0%
Year 10	82.9%	81.8%	84.6%
Year 11	80.7%	81.7%	79.1%
Year 12	79.3%	79.9%	79.9%
Secondary Other	83.5%	77.6%	83.2%
Total	82.7%	82.7%	82.8%

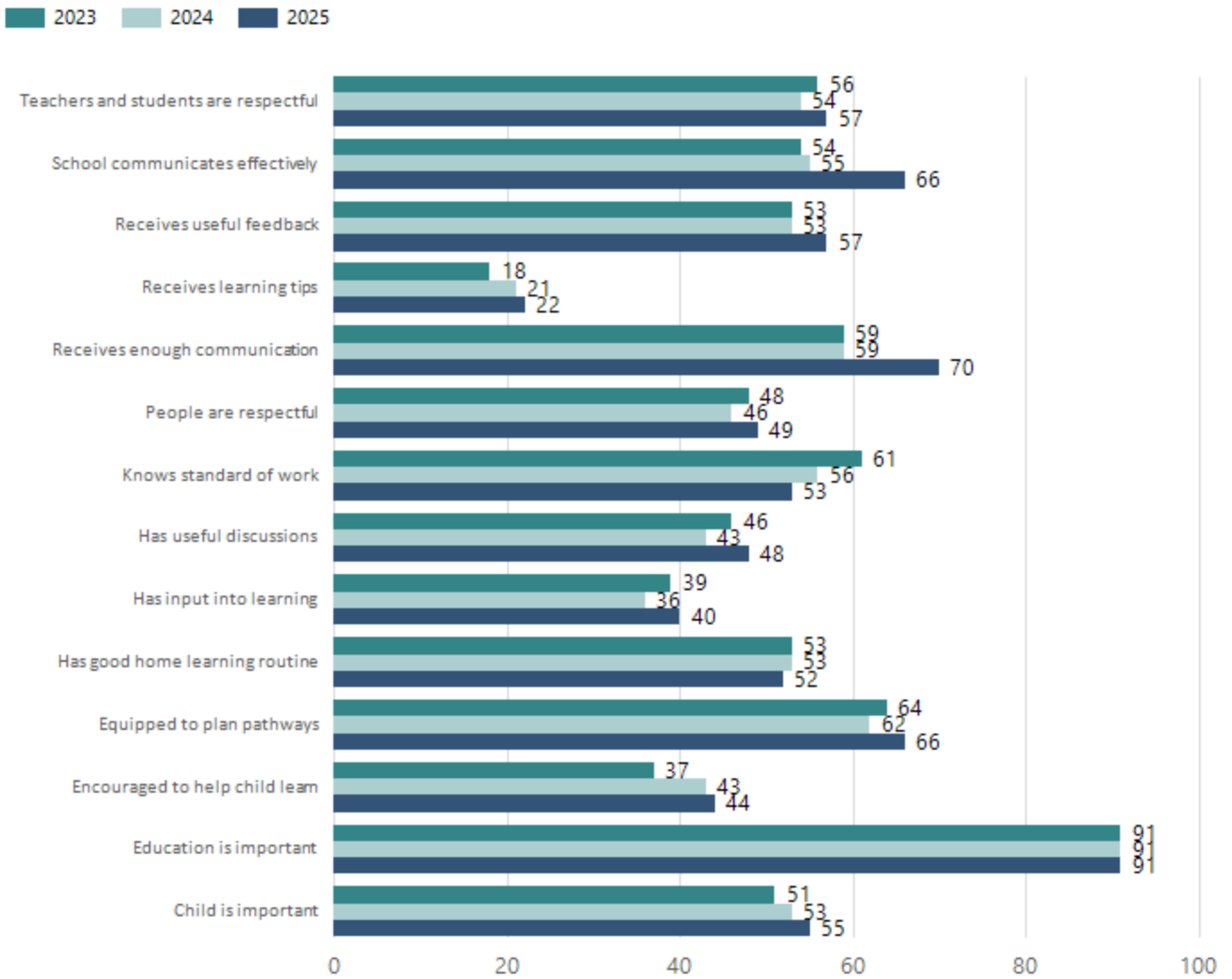
Data Source: Department for Education Attendance Data, Semester 1 Report 2025. A blank cell indicates there we no students enrolled. 'Primary Other' includes students enrolled in specialised education options. 'Secondary Other' includes students who have already spent a year at Year 12 and elected to undertake further study at Year 12.

Attendance Comment

In South Australia, all children and young people must be in school from 6 years to 16 years old. They must attend a government or non-government school full time. From age 16 to 17 however, young people must attend school or an approved learning program (such as an apprenticeship, traineeship, accredited course or university). Schools and parents must encourage and support students to come to school every day. Parents and caregivers must make sure their child is enrolled in a school, and attends school all day and everyday it is open, unless a child is sick or has an approved exemption. Teachers and leaders actively follow up when a student misses school, including recording all absences and non-attendance. All schools in South Australia have local attendance procedures governed under the Education and Children's Services Regulations 2020.

School Parent Opinion Survey Results

Proportion of agree/strongly agree response(%)



Data Source: 2025 Department for Education Parent Opinions Survey, Term 3 2025.

Intended Destination

Leave Reason	Number	%
IS - INTERSTATE	21	16.0%
NG - ATTENDING NON-GOV SCHOOL IN SA	4	3.0%
U - UNKNOWN	102	78.0%

Data Source: Department for Education Destination Data Report, 2025. Data extract term 3 2025. Data shows recorded destinations for students that left the school in the previous year. Data is uploaded by schools in term 3 and may not reflect final or total figures at time of report creation.

Highest Qualifications held by the teaching workforce and workforce composition

All teachers at this school are qualified and registered with the SA Teachers Registration Board.

Qualification Level	Number of Qualifications
Bachelor's degrees or Diplomas	44
Postgraduate Qualifications	38

Data Source: Data extracted from Mandatory Workforce Information Collections as on the last pay date of June 2025. As self-reported by staff in the system.

Please note: Data includes staff who are Actively employed and on extended paid leave. Please note only the highest qualification of the Teaching staff is reported. Excludes any number of other certifications earned.

Workforce composition including indigenous staff

	Teaching Staff		Non-Teaching Staff	
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Full-Time Equivalents	1.0	74.9	0.7	37.2
Persons	1.0	81.0	1.0	44.0

Data Source: Data extracted from Mandatory Workforce Information Collection as on the last pay date of June 2025.

Please note: Data includes staff who are actively employed and on extended paid leave. "Indigenous category" is self-reported by staff in the system.

Financial Statement

Funding Source	Amount
Grants: State	\$ 17088308.00
Grants: Commonwealth	nil
Parent Contributions	\$ 511282.00
Fund Raising	\$ 6838.00
Other	\$ 26798.00

Data Source: School supplied data.