

2025 School Resourcing Model funding enhancements

Information about the Better and Fairer Schools
Agreement

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1. Introduction

The Better and Fairer Schools Agreement (BFSA) sees a commitment from the Australian Government and Northern Territory (NT) Government to increase funding for the NT Government schooling system to 100% of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) by 2029.

The NT also made a commitment under the BFSA to implement the recommendations from the review of effective enrolment. This includes a move to funding based on enrolment, simplifying and making enhancements to the School Resourcing Model (SRM), making improvements to budget management and a range of initiatives to enable successful implementation in 2025.

In 2025, \$110 million in additional funding has been invested in the government school sector, including a direct increase to the SRM in accordance with the agreed principles of: equity, efficiency, transparency, simplicity, consistency and certainty.

This will lead to more students funded, by moving to enrolment-based funding, at the highest per student rate in Australia and will support improving school attendance, boosting literacy and numeracy and providing pathways to employment.

2. Enrolment-based funding

2.1. Why are we changing to an enrolment-based measure?

As part of the NT's commitment under the BFSA, the NT will move from effective enrolment to an enrolment-based funding methodology from 2025.

An enrolment-based approach is anticipated to simplify funding processes, foster fairness across the NT and empower schools to confidently hire more permanent staff, which is crucial for maintaining staffing continuity and improving student engagement and learning outcomes.

The transition to an enrolment-based measure will also include simplifying and making enhancements to the SRM, making improvements to budget management and a range of initiatives to enable successful implementation in 2025.

The move to funding based on enrolment means schools will need to focus on improving the attendance and engagement of all enrolled students.

2.2. What enrolment count will be used?

From 2025, the enrolment count for a funding year will be the average of enrolments in Week 4, Term 1, prior year, and August Age Grade Census, prior year.

More information on enrolment-based funding can be found in the School resourcing model - overview and information guide.

2.3. Will you apply this enrolment count to all aspects of school funding going forward?

From 2025, this enrolment count measure will be applied to the Student Needs Based Funding Formula (SNBFF), including the school size supplement, secondary size supplement and homeland learning centres supplement.

Exceptions to this are:

- special schools and annexes – which will be based on August Age Grade Census of the funding year
- Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) supplementary, substantial and extensive funding – which will be based on the August Age Grade Census of the prior year
- NCCD high extensive funding top up – which will be based on August Age Grade Census of the funding year
- Distance education schools – which will continue to be based on August Age Grade Census of the prior year, though based on full time equivalent (FTE). For further information, refer to 2.10. What does it mean for dual enrolments?

A review to evaluate the effectiveness of this enrolment count measure will occur during 2026 and 2027.

2.4. Why was this enrolment count chosen?

When determining the most appropriate enrolment count measure, the following were considered:

- ensuring the enrolment count was close to the funding year's average enrolments, so that it aligned with the resourcing needs of a school

and

- there was consistency in the enrolment count year on year, to provide schools with better funding certainty.

By using prior year enrolments, the need for the release of preliminary and final funding rounds is removed and allows school funding to be released once per year, in the year prior, providing greater funding certainty for schools and supports development of budget planning and resource allocation to achieve school improvement plans. Refer to section 4. Once a year funding release for further details.

A review to evaluate the effectiveness of this measure will occur during 2026 and 2027.

2.5. The enrolment count is based on the previous year's enrolment, what happens if my enrolment in the current year is different to the previous year?

Where a school experiences a significant and sustained increase in student enrolments during the funding year, which has resulted in additional costs for resources, for example. teaching staff, an application for financial support may be made. The usual requirements for applications for financial support would still apply, including that this additional expense is impacting the school's ability to maintain quality education programs.

The Application for financial support - guidelines and procedure has been updated and can be referred to for further details.

2.6. What will it mean for a school now that it is funded on enrolment?

Schools will now be funded based on the students they have enrolled rather than based on an attendance factor. This will mean there will be a significant funding uplift for schools in the NT, particularly for schools that previously had low attendance and the greatest levels of disadvantage.

Improving student attendance and engagement provides the foundation for achievement and success in education and post school pathways. These resources can support schools in improving attendance and engagement of all enrolled students.

Student Engagement Programs and Services team has developed new resources to support schools in their planning and preparation for 2025. This includes:

- defining roles and responsibilities at school, region and system levels in relation to improving attendance and engagement
- expanding and diversifying the school workforce to ensure school level roles and responsibilities are fulfilled
- identifying and developing attendance and engagement strategies, programs and initiatives.

In 2025, schools are being supported to expand and diversify their workforce to ensure school led attendance and engagement roles and responsibilities are fulfilled.

Refer to Raising school attendance in eLearn for further information.

2.7. What does it mean for special schools or annexes?

The enrolment count measure for special schools and annexes will be based on August Age Grade Census enrolments in the funding year rather than the new enrolment count measure.

As such, when funding is released in the beginning of Term 4 of the prior year, funding will be based on August Age Grade Census enrolments of the prior year. This funding will be adjusted in Semester 2 of the funding year for any increases or decreases in August Age Grade Census enrolments in the funding year.

2.8. What does it mean for NCCD funding?

The enrolment count measure for NCCD funding for supplementary, substantial and extensive levels of adjustment will be based on August Age Grade Census enrolments of the prior year rather than the new enrolment count measure to better reflect student need.

For NCCD high extensive funding, schools will continue to receive their NCCD funding for extensive level of adjustment based on the prior year August Age Grade Census, as part of the school funding release in the beginning of Term 4 in the prior year. In Semester 2 of the funding year, schools with students requiring high extensive levels of adjustment will receive an NCCD high extensive funding top up adjustment. This adjustment is based on current funding year August Age Grade Census data.

2.9. What does it mean for distance education schools?

The enrolment count measure for distance education schools will continue to be based on August Age Grade Census enrolments of the prior year, though based on FTE, rather than the new enrolment count measure.

2.10. What does it mean for dual enrolments?

Where students are enrolled at more than one school, each school will receive funding for the student. From 2025, funding will be based on FTE, rather than headcount.

There are allowed circumstances for a student's total FTE across schools to be greater than one, for example, undertaking a special program at a separate school or undertaking distance education. The business rules for these circumstances are provided in the Age Grade Census Guide.

3. Per student rate

3.1. Has there been an increase to the per student base rate?

Yes. In 2025 the per student base rate has increased by \$444, from \$7,669 to \$8,113, refer to Table 1 for a summary of the change in rates. This increase is a result of:

- \$414 - additional funding to support schools with increased costs associated with salaries and allowances under various Enterprise Agreements and increases in operational costs due to Consumer Price Index (CPI)
- \$30 - distribution of budget previously held for centrally funded vehicles through the SNBFF. Refer to section 8. Centrally Funded Expenses for further details.

Table 1: Summary of the change in rates

	2024 rate	2025 rate	Change
Per student base rate	\$7 669	\$8 113	\$444
Universal Students with Disability	\$720	\$720	\$0
Special schools & annexes per student adjustment rate	\$50 528	\$53 251	\$2 723
NCCD:			
Supplementary	\$1 278	\$1 347	\$69
Substantial	\$3 621	\$3 816	\$195
Extensive	\$5 432	\$5 725	\$293
High extensive	\$21 303	\$22 451	\$1 148

3.2 How was the per student base rate increase calculated?

An estimated cost increase of 5.39% was calculated based on applying:

- 4.3% indexation to employee costs for educators
- 4.53% increase to employee costs for classroom teacher salary structure changes
- 2.5% indexation to employee costs for non-educators
- 3% CPI for remaining costs.

As costs were estimated to increase by 5.39%, the per student rate was increased accordingly at 5.39%, or \$414.

For the \$30 increase from the distribution of budget previously held for centrally funded vehicles through the SNBFF, refer to section 8. Centrally funded expenses.

3.3 Why was the per student base rate increased?

The per student base rate has been increased to:

- ensure schools have sufficient funding to meet costs arising from CPI, including increased salaries for educators and administration staff under the relevant Enterprise Agreement
- ensure the equitable distribution across all schools of budget previously held for centrally funded vehicles.

4. Once a year funding release

4.1. What is once a year funding release?

From 2025, schools will receive one annual funding allocation at the beginning of Term 4 of the prior year.

Previously, preliminary funding was released at the end of Term 3 of the prior year and finalised at the end of Term 1 of the funding year.

4.2. Why are we only releasing funding once a year?

A once-a-year funding release provides greater certainty and stability to support planning for the following school year. It will also reduce administrative burden for schools, regions and the system, simplifying the process without compromising funding to schools.

School funding will be based on enrolment and will be sufficient to meet the needs of their student cohort.

4.3. What if my school situation has changed significantly since the release of funding?

Where a school experiences a significant and sustained increase in student enrolments during the funding year, which has resulted in additional costs for resources, for example, teaching staff, an application for financial support may be made. The usual requirements for applications for financial support would still apply, including that this additional expense is impacting the school's ability to maintain quality education programs.

The Application for financial support guidelines and procedure has been updated and can be referred to for further details.

4.4. Will there still be Semester 2 adjustments?

With the once-a-year funding release, many of the adjustments previously made in Semester 2 of the funding year have been incorporated into the funding release at the beginning of Term 4, with the exception of NCCD high extensive funding and targeted funding for special schools and annexes.

NCCD high extensive top up funding will be provided in Semester 2 based on current, funding year, August Age Grade Census data.

Targeted funding for special schools and annexes will be adjusted in Semester 2 of the funding year to reflect current, funding year, August Age Grade Census enrolments.

5. Preschool funding

5.1. Why is preschool funding being separated?

From 2025, preschool funding will be isolated in the SNBFF from transition to Year 12 schooling. This separation is for visibility purposes only in preparation for future reforms in relation to preschool delivery and funding. Schools are to still treat their total school funding amount as a whole school budget and will continue to manage their budget as a whole.

5.2. How was the amount for preschool funding calculated?

Under the SNBFF, preschool funding will be calculated using a separate methodology, which is essentially a simplified approach compared to the methodology for transition to Year 12 school funding.

Preschool students receive funding through three components: a base rate, an Aboriginality weighting for eligible students and a size supplement. The level of preschool funding is sufficient to ensure that schools can meet the requirements of the National Quality Framework (NQF) and provide 600 hours of quality play-based education and care over the calendar year, or 15 hours per week – 0.6 FTE.

The preschool enrolment count is the same as the new enrolment count measure for transition to Year 12 schooling, that is the average of enrolments in Week 4, Term 1, prior year, and August Age Grade Census, prior year.

The 2025 preschool base per student rate is \$6,245.

More information on preschool funding can be found in the School resourcing model - overview and information guide.

5.3. Why is the per student rate for preschool funding lower?

The preschool per student rate takes into consideration that students are funded for 15 hours per week, or 0.6 FTE.

5.4. What if the funding for preschool isn't sufficient?

It should be noted that though visibility has been provided on funding for preschool, schools are to still treat their total school funding amount as a whole-school budget and continue to manage their budget as a whole.

The preschool funding methodology should generate sufficient funding for staff, student operational costs and classroom materials for the cohort being serviced. This includes ensuring that the funding is aligned to the staffing requirements under the NQF.

Where required, a school may access support from their Assistant Director School Financial Improvement in managing its school budget and this may also include support with preparation of an application for financial support where it is determined that a school's ability to maintain quality education programs will be impacted.

6. Targeted programs

6.1. Why was targeted program funding reviewed this year?

The BFSA committed the NT to implementing the recommendations from the review of effective enrolment. One of the recommendations from this review was to identify opportunities for inclusion of targeted program funding and other central costs, grants and programs into the SRM as it was acknowledged that to have an equitable needs-based funding model, all resources, where possible should be allocated through the SNBFF. This will be an ongoing process and targeted program funding will be regularly reviewed going forward and moved into the SNBFF where possible to provide equity and consistency.

6.2. What are the changes to targeted programs?

There is no change for programs that support cohorts or student needs that are not addressed by the SNBFF and there are some continuing targeted programs that will have a funding uplift to improve services. These targeted programs will remain funded separately while further work is undertaken to integrate them into the SNBFF in later years. All continuing targeted programs have program statements that support schools in understanding the expectations, roles and responsibilities in delivering the programs and increasing transparency regarding funding outside of the SNBFF.

Some targeted program funding is now included in the SNBFF, providing ongoing embedded funding and ensures the NT has an equitable needs-based funding model. This is especially the case for programs that support enrolled disengaged students now that schools will be funded based on enrolments.

It was also identified that there were some targeted programs that were historical, time limited or no longer active and a decision has been made to not continue with separate targeted funding for these programs.

The expectation is that schools will continue to operate programs that are responsive to the needs of its students.

6.3. Why did some funding for targeted programs cease this year?

Some of the reasons for not providing separate funding for some targeted programs were:

- funding is now provided through the SNBFF, rather than separate targeted program funding to ensure an equitable needs-based funding model
- historical arrangements that have not been reviewed in the current context
- time limited arrangements that were due to end
- the programs were no longer active.

The expectation is that schools will continue to operate programs that are responsive to the needs of its students.

6.4. What are program statements?

Where there is a need for a targeted program, it is important that schools understand why they are receiving this funding, hence there will now be program statements attached to all targeted programs.

These statements will make clear expectations, roles and responsibilities in delivering the programs and provide increased transparency regarding funding outside of the SNBFF.

The program statements are available to all schools on the Policy and advisory library Allocation of school funding page.

6.5. Will there be more changes to targeted programs?

All continuing targeted programs will be reviewed regularly going forward and moved into the SNBFF where possible to provide equity and consistency.

7. Maintenance of higher funding in Central region

7.1. Why is there additional funding being provided to the Central region?

The On Country Learning Measure (OCLM) was a \$40 million initiative announced as part of the 2023-24 Federal Budget under the Better, Safer Future for Central Australia plan. This measure was designed to improve engagement and education outcomes in both government and non-government schools across the Central region of the NT.

The BFSA specifies that funding levels provided to government and non-government schools in 2024 through the OCLM announced as part of the plan for a Better, Safer Future for Central Australia, will be maintained from 2025.

As such, there is an expectation that the capacity of schools to implement programs should not diminish from 2024 to 2025 and as a result, additional funding has been provided to schools in the Central region to ensure maintenance of funding levels in 2025.

This maintenance funding will mean schools will be able to maintain and build upon work commenced in 2024 under the OCLM.

7.2. How long will the Central region get this additional funding for?

Under the BFSA, the commitment is for this level of funding to be maintained from 2025.

The Australian Government's OCLM funding was originally intended to get schools in the Central region closer to 100% of the SRS. As the NT schooling system gets closer to 100% of the SRS leading up to 2029 and the level of school funding increases, the level of maintenance funding required for the Central region is expected to decrease correspondingly. By 2029, when the NT schooling system will be at 100% of the SRS, there will no longer be a requirement to provide maintenance funding, noting there may be instances where some schools will not require maintenance funding sooner than 2029.

7.3. How was the additional maintenance funding calculated?

The BFSA requires the NT to maintain the existing levels of OCLM funding from 2024 into 2025.

As such, schools in the Central region will receive their funding for the year, which will include an uplift from moving to being funded on enrolment and indexation. If this uplift amount is less than the 2024 OCLM funding amount, a BFSA maintenance amount will be provided.

Essentially, the BFSA maintenance amount equals:

- 2024 OCLM amount
- Less: 2025 funding uplift – includes enrolment funding uplift.

Figure 1: Illustrative example



This methodology ensures that funding levels for each school in the Central region remains unchanged in 2025.

Exceptions to this methodology are:

- Schools that have had a funding uplift that has resulted in funding that is higher than 2024 funding levels, including OCLM funding. In this instance, the school has received the higher funding level amount in 2025 rather than being restricted to 2024 funding levels.
- Where a school is no longer receiving separate targeted program funding as the program is no longer operating, this funding component has been discounted from the BFSA maintenance amount.
- Indexation on targeted program funding that is not driven by student enrolments have not been added to the 2025 funding uplift amount and as such, the BFSA maintenance amount has not been discounted by indexation on these targeted programs.

7.4. What happens to my 2024 On Country Learning Measure funding if it is underspent at the end of the year?

Any unspent Australian Government funded OCLM funding at the end of 2024 will be carried over into 2025 for schools to continue spending against. Note that these funds are to be spent in line with your School Action Plan which are aligned to the 6 OCLM priority areas and will need to continue to be separately managed and reported on.

Any 2024 Australian Government funded OCLM amounts that were being held in a school's department held cost centre and is underspent at the end of 2024 will be carried over and will continue to be held in the school's department held cost centre and cannot be transferred to school bank accounts.

8. Centrally funded expenses

8.1. Why were centrally funded expenses reviewed this year?

The BFSA committed the NT to implementing the recommendations from the review of effective enrolment. One of the recommendations from this review was to identify opportunities for inclusion of targeted program funding and other central costs, grants and programs into the SRM as it was acknowledged that to have an equitable needs-based funding model, all resources, where possible, should be allocated through the SNBFF. This will be an ongoing process and other central costs, grants and programs will continue to be reviewed for inclusion into the SRM, and where possible, the SNBFF, going forward.

8.2. What are the changes to centrally funded expenses?

To provide consistency and equity in the treatment of vehicles across all schools, where school vehicle costs, excluding principal executive contract vehicles, have been centrally funded, this will be transferred back to schools. The budget previously held for centrally funded vehicles, excluding principal executive contract vehicle, has been distributed across all schools through the SNBFF from 2025.

There will be an ongoing process to review other central costs, grants and programs for inclusion into the SRM, and where possible, the SNBFF.

8.3. Why are there no longer centrally funded vehicles – excluding principal executive contract vehicles?

It was identified that there were inconsistencies in the treatment of vehicles across schools, with the majority of vehicle costs being funded by schools and a small portion funded centrally which was not equitable. Distributing the funding through the SNBFF will provide greater equity and consistency across the system.

Vehicle costs are reasonable for schools to plan and predict and will provide schools with the autonomy to decide what vehicles are required.

8.4. What happened to the funding for centrally funded vehicles?

The budget previously held for centrally funded vehicles, excluding principal executive contract vehicles, has been distributed across all schools through the SNBFF from 2025. This is made up of:

- an increase in the base per student rate by \$30
- an increase to the school size supplement of up to \$6,842
- an increase in the remoteness weighting as follows:
 - category 2 – increased from 0.03 to 0.06
 - category 3 – increased from 0.05 to 0.08.

More information on remoteness weightings can be found in the School resourcing model - overview and information guide.

Additional funding has also been provided through targeted funding for homeland learning centres' travel for select hub schools which previously had their targeted funding offset for centrally funded vehicles.

8.5. What is the policy for vehicles in schools?

Work has commenced on formalising a policy on vehicles in schools which will take into consideration occupational health and safety of staff in schools and the context and needs of schools in various locations. There will also be a move to have all vehicles leased from NT Fleet going forward. Further communications will follow at a later date.

8.6. Will there be more changes to centrally funded expenses?

There will be an ongoing process to review other central costs, grants and programs for inclusion into the SRM, and where possible, the SNBFF.

9. Funding for students with a disability

9.1. Are there any changes for students with disability funding?

In 2025, there is:

- no change to the universal student with disability funding of \$720 per funded enrolment
- indexation of 5.39% has been applied to the following rates:

Table 2: Funding rate changes for students with disability

NCCD level of adjustment	2024 rate	2025 rate	Change
Supplementary	\$1 278	\$1 347	\$69
Substantial	\$3 621	\$3 816	\$195
Extensive	\$5 432	\$5 725	\$293
High extensive	\$21 303	\$22 451	\$1 148

Table 3: Funding rate changes for special schools and annexes

Special schools and annexes	2024 rate	2025 rate	Change
Special schools & annexes per student adjustment rate	\$50 528	\$53 251	\$2 723

The enrolment count measure for NCCD funding and special schools and annexes have changed in 2025. Refer to section 2. Enrolment-based funding for further details.

With the move to funding based on enrolment and once a year funding, schools will be funded for the funding year based on the new enrolment count, with noted exceptions. The move to enrolment-based funding means Professional dialogue funding will no longer be provided.

More information on students with disability funding can be found in the School resourcing model - overview and information guide.

10. Transition funding

10.1. Why are some schools getting transition funding in 2025?

The various changes made to the School Resourcing Model in 2025 is the first stage of changes that will occur as the NT Government schooling system moves towards 100% of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) by 2029.

The changes that have been made are generally interconnected and the department wanted to ensure that no schools are disadvantaged by these changes and that they have the resources to continue to operate and deliver quality education programs. As such, where required, a school has been provided with transition funding in 2025 where it has been determined their ability to maintain their operations may be impacted.

10.2. How was transition funding determined?

An assessment was made on all schools where their funding increased by less than 5.39% and was not as a result of changes in enrolments, students' needs profile or programs that had changed.

Exceptions to this were:

- schools in the Central region, who are subject to discrete funding maintenance required under the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement. Refer to section 7. Maintenance of higher funding in the Central region for more information
- special schools
- distance education schools.

Where it was determined that a school required transition funding, the funding amount was based on what was required to ensure a school received a funding increase of at least 5.39%. Noting that transition funding was not provided for immaterial amounts, for example \$10,000 or 1% of total funding.

11. Financial policy changes

11.1. Department held funds

11.1.1. What happens if I don't spend all my department held funds during the year?

Schools should continue to focus on spending all their current year funding on their current students.

Where schools are unable to spend all their school funding in the current year, from the end of 2024, there will be no change. Existing arrangements will continue where schools will automatically carry over into 2025 their underspends in their department-held cost centre.

From the end of 2025, schools will receive their new funding allocation for the year and any school underspends in department-held cost centres from the previous year will not be carried over into the next year at the school level. Instead, these underspends will be carried over and managed as a collective and

will continue to be used for the benefit of students and schools. The Chief Executive may approve the carry over at a school level rather than as a collective in exceptional circumstances.

Refer to the Surplus and deficit policy for further information.

11.1.2. What happens if I overspend my department held funds during the year?

Where schools overspend in their department held funds at the end of 2024, there will be no change. Existing arrangements will continue where schools automatically carry over into 2025 their overspends in their department-held cost centre.

From 2025, any school overspends in department held funds within the approved budget range will not be carried over into the following year. Where a school overspends in department held funds outside of the approved budget range, the overspend, in its entirety, will be carried over into the following year in the school's department held cost centre. Refer to Surplus and deficit policy for further information.

Where required, a school may access support from their Assistant Director School Financial Improvement in managing its school budget and this may also include support with preparation of an application for financial support where it is determined that a school's ability to maintain quality education programs will be impacted.

Note that with the move to enrolment-based funding, the department will assess deficits at the end of 2024, in particular, where these deficits have arisen over a number of years. This assessment will determine if the earlier funding methodology had an impact on these deficits and, with consideration of the school's consolidated financial position, whether additional financial support is required. Schools will be notified where it is determined additional financial support is required.

11.1.3. What is an approved budget range?

Schools are asked to operate within their annual budget for the year and spend their current year funding on their current students in the year.

A school is considered as managing within their budget at the end of the year if their end of year result is within the approved budget range.

The approved budget range is:

- +/- \$50,000 of school funding amount - for schools with school funding under \$8 million
- +/- \$100,000 of school funding amount - for schools with school funding of \$8 million and over.

Worked example:

A school has school funding of \$2 million. As such, their approved budget range would be \$1.95 million - \$2 million less \$50,000, to \$2.05 million - \$2 million plus \$50,000.

If the school ended the year with total expenditure of \$2.02 million:

- they would be considered as managing within budget for the year, as \$2.02 million is within the approved budget range of \$1.95 million to \$2.05 million

and

- the \$0.02 million overspend – \$2.02 million expenditure less \$2 million funding, would not be carried over into the following year as the school managed within budget.

If the school ended the year with total expenditure of \$2.06 million:

- they would not be considered as managing within budget for the year, as \$2.06 million was not within the approved budget range of \$1.95 million to \$2.05 million

and

- the \$0.06 million overspend – \$2.06 million expenditure less \$2 million funding, would be carried over into the following year as the school did not manage within budget.

Refer to the Surplus and deficit policy for further information.

11.1.4. Why have you introduced an approved budget range?

With the NT's tight fiscal environment, there is a focus on ensuring every dollar of funding is activated. The aim of having an approved budget range is to ensure all school funding is being spent during the year to improve student outcomes.

Due to the variability and unpredictability of some expenditure, schools may choose to budget conservatively to ensure they do not go over their budget. This has historically led to a large number of schools being underspent at the end of the year. It is expected that the additional investment into the education system from the BFSA benefits students and improve outcomes and this cannot happen with the trend of underspending.

The introduction of an approved budget range is to provide schools with an assurance that they can budget to fully expend their school funding amount for the year, rather than be conservative, and that if this results in a slight overspend due to unexpected circumstances, the school will not be penalised and would be considered as managing within their budget. Any overspends, provided the school finishes the year within the approved budget range, will not be carried over into the following year.

11.2. Cash guidance

11.2.1. What are the guidance amounts for recommended cash?

Guidance on recommended cash to be taken by schools remains at 10% of student and targeted program funding and 100% of facility funding. The process for requesting a higher amount also remains the same.

Refer to the School cash policy and guidelines for further information.

11.2.2. What has changed?

There has been no change to cash guidance amounts.

Processes relating to cash guidance has now been formally documented into a consolidated policy focused on school held funds, the School cash policy and guidelines.

11.2.3. What if I need more than the recommended amount?

The process for requesting a higher amount remains the same as the process in 2024. Schools should seek advice from their Assistant Director School Financial Improvement in the first instance and the process has now been formally documented in the School cash policy and guidelines.

11.2.4. Where do I go for more information?

Refer to the School cash policy and guidelines for further information. You may also contact your Assistant Director School Financial Improvement for support.

11.3. Future year reserves

11.3.1. When should I have future year reserves?

Schools may allocate some of its current cash to save for significant projects or purchases, with the overall aim to improve student outcomes. These projects must fall into one of the following categories:

- buildings
- equipment
- furniture
- grounds and playgrounds.

Future year reserves should only be created or added to, after funds have been allocated to meet the operational needs of the school in the current year.

Refer to the School cash policy and guidelines for further information.

11.3.2. What has changed?

The key change is future year reserves are to be spent in four years, previously 5 years, unless there are exceptional circumstances, with greater clarity provided on what happens when funds are not spent within the required timeframe.

New processes have also been implemented to support monitoring and reporting of future year reserves. These processes include naming conventions for reserves and approved categories for future year reserves.

The policy and processes relating to future year reserves has now been formally documented into a consolidated policy focused on school held funds, the School cash policy and guidelines.

11.3.3. Why did we review the future year reserves policy?

With the NT's tight fiscal environment, there is a focus on ensuring every dollar of funding is activated. There are currently large school bank balances across schools and these changes aim to ensure school funding is being spent on improving student outcomes.

11.3.4. Where do I go for more information?

Refer to the School cash policy and guidelines for further information. You may also contact your Assistant Director School Financial Improvement for support.

11.4. School Resourcing Fund

11.4.1. When does the School Resourcing Fund apply?

The School Resourcing Fund policy has been in place for several years and will be applied to schools from the end of 2024.

The School Resourcing Fund contribution will be calculated after schools finalise their end of year audited financial statements in late March 2025 and schools will be notified of their contribution amount if they are required to contribute.

11.4.2. Why are we enacting the School Resourcing Fund now?

With the NT's tight fiscal environment, there is a focus on ensuring every dollar of funding is activated. There are currently large school bank balances across schools and these changes aim to ensure school funding is being spent on improving student outcomes.

11.4.3. What happens to the funds in the School Resourcing Fund?

As outlined in the policy, these funds will continue to be used for the benefit of students and schools with identified needs.

11.4.4. Will this impact my school's operations or ability to fund future projects?

The School Resourcing Fund identifies a portion of a school's unspent and uncommitted school held funds School Resourcing Model Management System Resourcing Fund – policy and guidelines.

Schools will continue to receive their new funding allocation, based on enrolment, each year, that is aligned with the resourcing needs of the school for the year. Any committed funds, such as fundraising, self-generated funds, for example OSHC or canteen, and future year reserves will not be impacted as they are excluded from contribution calculations.

11.4.5. Can I plan for a School Resourcing Fund contribution in my 2025 annual budget plan?

Yes, schools can calculate their expected contribution early and add this as a variation in their School Resourcing Model Management System (SRMMS) annual planning scenario for 2025.

11.4.6. What is happening with the School Resourcing Fund in 2025?

During 2025, schools should:

- use the current year's funding on its current student cohort
- maintain its cash benchmark and continue to monitor and manage its budget within the approved budget range

and

- implement plans to complete any future year reserves projects.

The current School resourcing fund policy will be reviewed in early 2025 in the context of the recent changes to the SRM and to identify opportunities to simplify and strengthen the process. Schools will be consulted as part of this review.

12. Planning process and support

12.1. What is the purpose of an annual planning scenario?

Schools will be developing their 2025 Annual School Improvement Plan (ASIP) in Term 4, which will include addressing the 2025 school priorities:

- Government and system priorities:
 - swimming and water safety for years 1 to 6
 - implementation of the year 1 phonics check
- School improvement priorities – aligned with government priorities
 - strengthening instruction - boosting literacy and numeracy
 - engaging children and young people in learning – raising attendance
 - increase in NTCET completions.

The annual planning scenario will support schools in resourcing their priorities outlined in their ASIP, while ensuring they continue to operate within budget and spend their resources on their current student cohort to meet student needs.

From 2025, schools will be funded based on enrolment which may result in a funding uplift. Schools will need to take this into consideration when planning how they will spend their funding.

12.2. When are annual planning scenarios due?

Schools' 2025 annual planning scenarios are due for submission through the SRMMS by 30 November 2024.

12.3. What annual planning support is available?

A series of workshops are being held in Term 4 for principals and business managers, in particular there will be opt in budget planning workshops offered for each region. More information on dates and times will be provided shortly.

The Assistant Director School Financial Improvement is also available for annual planning support, please contact school.finance@education.nt.gov.au.

Region	Phone
Barkly	(08) 8944 9498
Big Rivers	(08) 8972 5314
Central	0409 200 339
Darwin	(08) 8901 4959
East Arnhem	(08) 8944 9267
Top End	(08) 8944 9283

12.4. Additional contacts

For school funding or general SRMMS queries, please contact your Assistant Director School Financial Improvement in the first instance.

The focus of retaining our teacher workforce at the system level remains a priority. If you require support in attracting teachers, workforce planning or reporting teacher vacancies, please contact the Talent, Attraction and Recruitment team at ctattraction.doe@education.nt.gov.au.

13. Related policy and resources

Age Grade Census Guide – <http://ed.ntschoools.net/padm/bic/Pages/AGCollections.aspx>

Application for financial support - guidelines and procedure – <https://elearn.ntschoools.net/policies/5652>

Raising school attendance – <https://elearn.ntschoools.net/supporting-staff/student-inclusion-and-engagement/student-engagement-programs-and-services/raising>

Policy and advisory library – <https://elearn.ntschoools.net/policy-and-advisory-library>

School cash policy and guidelines – <https://elearn.ntschoools.net/policies/6427#resources28975>

School resourcing fund policy and guidelines - <https://elearn.ntschoools.net/policies/6550>

School resourcing model - overview and information guide – <https://elearn.ntschoools.net/policies/5078>

Surplus and deficit policy – <https://elearn.ntschoools.net/policies/6427#resources28975>

Acronyms	Full form
ASIP	Annual School Improvement Plan
BFSA	Better and Fairer Schools Agreement
CPI	Consumer Price Index
FTE	Full time equivalent
NCCD	Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability
NQF	National Quality Framework
NT	Northern Territory
OCLM	On Country Learning Measure
PAL	Policy and advisory library
SNBFF	Student Needs Based Funding Formula
SRM	School Resourcing Model
SRMMS	School Resourcing Model Management System

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Contact details	Financial Services, Department of Education and Training – school.finance@education.nt.gov.au
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