



ST JAMES
THE APOSTLE
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



MELBOURNE
ARCHDIOCESE
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

St James the Apostle School

Hoppers Crossing North

2022

Annual Report to the School Community



Registered School Number: 1829

Table of Contents

Contact Details2

Minimum Standards Attestation2

Governing Authority Report.....3

Vision and Mission.....4

School Overview.....5

Principal’s Report6

Catholic Identity and Mission.....7

Learning and Teaching.....9

Student Wellbeing13

Child Safe Standards.....16

Leadership17

Community Engagement.....21

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Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Andrea Richards, attest that St James the Apostle 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 2017 (Vic)*, except where the school has been granted an exemption from any of these requirements by the VRQA
- Australian Government accountability requirements related to the 2022 school year under the *Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth)* and the *Australian Education Regulations 2013 (Cth)*
- The Child Safe Standards as prescribed in both Ministerial Orders in effect in 2022:
 - Ministerial Order No.870 - Child Safe Standards, Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools, in Semester 1, 2022;
 - Ministerial Order No.1359 - Implementing the Child Safe Standards, Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises, in Semester 2, 2022.

18/03/2023

NOTE: The School's financial performance information has been provided to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and will be available for the community to access from their website at www.acnc.gov.au

Governing Authority Report

In 2022, Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) delivered its inaugural strategic plan, *MACS 2030: Forming lives to enrich the world*.

At the heart of this bold and ambitious strategic plan is a common purpose - “Forming lives of faith, hope and love in the light of Jesus Christ” - that gives MACS and its network of schools a common direction.

This new purpose speaks to the role of our schools as a place for students and their families to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth.

The strategic plan also establishes a common vision, “Every student is inspired and enabled to flourish and enrich the world”, and outlines the initiatives that will make our purpose and vision real across four pillars:

- Inspired by faith
- Flourishing learners
- Enabled leaders
- Enriched communities

These four pillars are foundational to the distinctive educational experiences we offer. Our common purpose and vision will guide and sustain the high-quality Catholic education our 16,000 dedicated staff continue to provide to the 113,000 young people in our care.

Alongside the strategic plan, School Advisory Councils are now in place to engage parents, communities and parishes in the life of the school and provide support to principals on school matters. Combined with a strong focus on Working Together in Mission with our Parish Priests, this will ensure that we unite around our common purpose.

Enrolments continue to increase in the growth areas of Melbourne’s north and west where MACS opened two new primary schools. MACS was also excited to welcome a well-established combined level primary/secondary school in Malvern into our organisation.

We are very grateful for the support we have received from some 300 school communities throughout 2022. We look forward to further strengthening those partnerships as we work together to deliver an education that inspires young people to enrich the world.

Yours sincerely

Edward Simons

Acting Executive Director

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd

Vision and Mission

Vision:

As a Catholic learning community of hope, inspired by the Gospel, we are empowered to embrace excellence through innovation.

Mission:

We aim to impart Catholic beliefs, values, practices and traditions within a faith-filled community.

We strive to create a love of learning while building our identity within the context of the Parish community.

We aim to be living examples of that Faith, fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of each person.

We work in partnership together striving to strengthen our communication through involvement of all in our community in collaborative and co-operative decision-making, working towards common goals.

We value the gifts and talents of each member, which are shared and nurtured in an accepting and safe environment.

In striving for excellence in education at St James the Apostle School we encourage children to take pride in themselves and their achievements.

We are committed to maintaining and developing our resources and school environment.

We appreciate that we are on a journey, supporting and encouraging each other as we grow and meet new challenges. In welcoming the future we are building on our past.

Together we strive to learn with strength and in gentleness.

School Overview

St James the Apostle Primary School is a Catholic Parish Primary School that strives to create an atmosphere that nurtures faith, creates a love of learning and builds an identity within the context of the Parish community.

The school first opened on the site of St Peter Apostle Primary School in early 1982 and later in the year moved to its current site on Derrimut Road. The first Principal was Sr Marlene Monahan. Although the school first opened in 1982, the parish of St James the Apostle was not established for another six years.

Hoppers Crossing North is part of a quickly developing area on the western outskirts of Melbourne. The school services Hoppers Crossing North, as well as the growing suburbs of Tarneit and Truganina. The area that St James the Apostle covers is now large and connected to metropolitan Melbourne, however the early parent community was concerned about the isolation and lack of facilities in the area.

Our children and their families come from a diverse range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. As is the case in many mortgage belt areas of Melbourne, families are often separated from their extended family by great distances.

We have straight grades at all levels from Year Prep through to Year Six.

The Parish of St James the Apostle was born in 1989 and our school became an important element of this new parish identity. The first Parish Priest was Fr Peter Ray.

Today our parish model reflects our on-going efforts to build a collaborative community for our families, where we share a common faith and belief in God, which is demonstrated in our daily lives. Parental involvement is an integral part of the partnership we build with families at St James the Apostle and their contributions are encouraged in all areas of school life.

We strive to create an atmosphere that nurtures our faith, creates a love of learning and builds our identity within the context of the parish community. We aim to build a community based on equality and respect to promote a sense of belonging, friendship and co-operation. We work in partnership together, striving to strengthen our communication through involvement of family members, students and staff in collaborative and co-operative decision-making, working towards common goals. All in our community are responsible for the achievement of this ideal.

Principal's Report

In 2022, St James the Apostle School students had their first full year back from remote learning during COVID and were able to use the newly refurbished areas and the renovated learning community near the Play Plaza. Camps and excursion recommenced, and the positives gains learned during remote learning were integrated into onsite classes.

In term one, St. James undertook our School Review Process that occurs every 4 years. The review focused on the 5 spheres of:

- Religious Education
- Learning and Teaching
- Student Wellbeing
- Leadership & Management
- School Community

The external reviewer was Dr. Mary Lovelock. During the review Dr. Lovelock facilitated two very important tasks:

1. That St. James the Apostle Primary School was compliant under the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA),
2. That all stakeholders were able to give input regarding the strengths and challenges that St. James faces. As a consequence of the review, the next 4-year School Improvement Plan was developed.

The school community was able to come together to celebrate our sacramental program gathering in the church with our students' families to continue their child's faith journey.

The School Advisory Council was created and invitations were sent out to the school community inviting parents to be members. The School Advisory Council, with six parent members met regularly throughout the year.

Finally, in 2022 Mary Abbott, Principal of St. James the Apostle for the last 5 years, retired mid-year and David Hurn who was the Deputy Principal became Acting Principal in Term 3 before moving onto a principal position at another school in Term 4. On David's departure, Renae Stone, Deputy Principal then took on the role of Acting Principal in Term 4 and a new Principal was appointed in Term 4 for the 2023 school year.

Catholic Identity and Mission

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To strengthen and implement the school's Catholic Culture in its vision, pedagogy and contemporary practice in dialogue with the parish community:

- To maximise learning growth for all learners
- To promote the importance of wellbeing for all members of the school community
- To use evidence-based teaching strategies when delivering learning opportunities

Achievements

- Strengthening of curriculum planners used by teachers to plan units of work, based on MACS Religious Education Framework and the mandated text *To Know, Worship and Love*.
- Consideration of learners' diverse needs, including the plurality of religions, when developing Religious Education units in line with the school planner and system Framework.
- Facilitation of planning by the Religious Education Leader, with particular focus on the importance of Catholic Tradition in developing units and how the *Pedagogy of Encounter* could be built into units of work.
- Provision of professional readings from journals and other high-quality sources to develop teachers' knowledge of the Catholic faith and contemporary pedagogy.
- Strengthening the work of Religious Education Leaders across the parish primary schools through regular meetings, including with our Parish Priest.
- Provision of professional learning, both in person and online, in the areas of scripture, Catholic tradition and liturgy.
- Family faith development workshops continued online, with families in Years 3, 4 and 6 engaging with Catholic tradition in the context of the sacraments of initiation.
- New family faith workshops were introduced for families with learners in Years Prep, 1, 2 and 5.
- School communication, including e-news and social media, included information from the parish and opportunities for families to learn more about Catholic tradition.

VALUE ADDED

- Sacraments of initiation were celebrated across the school
- Social justice projects were planned and carried out by different year levels:
 - Year 6 running the Mission Market for Caritas Australia and Paulist Missionaries
 - Year 4 organising a special fund-raiser day for Catholic Mission during Socktober

- Year 3 developing a year level walkathon for Project Compassion
- The Year 5 learning community developed and led their own version of the Scriptural Stations of the Cross for the school community.
- Staff and learners were invited to celebrate liturgies across the year, including for the beginning of the year and end of the year.

Learning and Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To maximise learning growth for all learners to achieve success in a contemporary and innovative environment of high expectations and continuous improvement:

- To maximise learning growth for all learners
- To promote the importance of wellbeing for all members of the school community
- To use evidence-based teaching strategies when delivering learning opportunities

Achievements

Learning and Teaching

- Introduction of the Intervention Framework Professional Learning with all staff
- Staff skilled to implement Mini-Lit intervention with learners who require additional support

Italiano

- Running of school Italian Day, celebrating all things Italian, including a dance presentation
- Daily italiano lessons run by Italian Language Assistant and classroom teachers
- Employment of Italian Languages Leader, Language Assistant and Italian Learning Team of staff
- Collaboration and professional learning with Languages Coach from Melbourne Archdiocese Schools
- Continuous staff professional learning in teaching and learning italiano in the classroom

English

- Participation in community projects including:
 - National Simultaneous Story time
 - Premier's Reading Challenge
 - Prime Minister's Spelling Bee
- Professional learning and introduction of structured, systematic and synthetic phonics in Years P-2
- Increase awareness of phonics in spelling in Year 3
- Introduction of Discovery to build oral language skills and inquiry skills in Prep

- Introduction of DIBELS Literacy testing in Prep - Year 6, including staff professional learning
- Implementation of Progressive Achievement Tests Reading Comprehension (PAT-RC) - Adaptive from Years 1 - 6

Maths /STEM

- Hosting a STEM family night for learners and families
- Year 6 learners participating a Grand Prix STEM excursion
- Implementation of Progressive Achievement Tests Mathematics (PAT-M) - Adaptive from Years 1 - 6

Inquiry based learning

- Engagement with consultant to strengthen practices in planning and delivering student centred inquiry based learning in Prep - 6
- Successful in obtaining a Victorian Garden Awards grant to support the Kitchen Garden program
- Links with the council and the wider community to improve kitchen garden program, including Year 3 learners visiting the Victorian Flower and Garden Show and council incursion on composting

Sport / PE

- Participation in school, district and regional sports including:
 - Athletics
 - Swimming
 - Cross-country
- Year 3 and Year 4 learners participating in intensive swimming program
- SRC led and run tabloid sports day
- Prep - 6 immersion into Surf Lifesaving program through school incursion

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Year 3 NAPLAN

NAPLAN data from 2021 and 2022 shows

- Improvement in all areas, with a higher increase in the area of Spelling.

Year 5 NAPLAN

NAPLAN data from 2021 and 2022 shows

- Improvement in Reading, Writing and Spelling
- Slight decrease in achievement in the areas of Grammar and Punctuation, and Numeracy.

We have extensive, specific and strategic intervention programs in place for students with identified needs. These programs have supported students to demonstrate progress. Educational programs are reviewed in a timely manner to ensure that student learning is monitored and progresses.

When creating learning goals and targets for learners we use many sources of data, including:

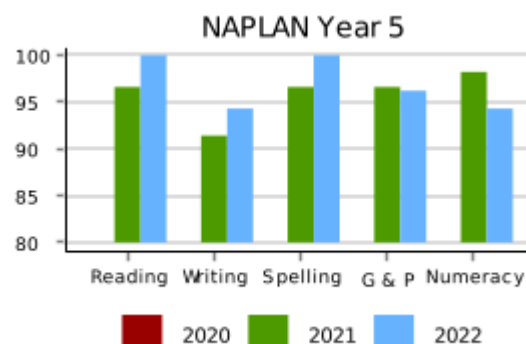
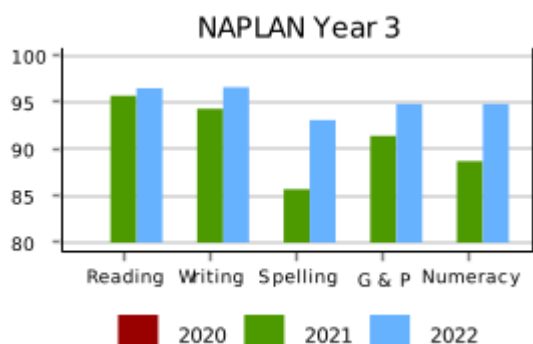
- NAPLAN
- Teacher and parent conversations
- Moderation of work samples
- Specialist or allied health reports and information
- Formal and informal testing before, during and after learning
- Notes from Intervention programs, such as Mini-Lit.

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2020	2021	2020 – 2021 Changes	2022	2021 – 2022 Changes
	%			%	
	*		*		
YR 03 Grammar & Punctuation	-	91.4	-	94.8	3.4
YR 03 Numeracy	-	88.7	-	94.8	6.1
YR 03 Reading	-	95.7	-	96.5	0.8
YR 03 Spelling	-	85.7	-	93.1	7.4
YR 03 Writing	-	94.3	-	96.6	2.3
YR 05 Grammar & Punctuation	-	96.6	-	96.2	-0.4
YR 05 Numeracy	-	98.2	-	94.3	-3.9
YR 05 Reading	-	96.6	-	100.0	3.4
YR 05 Spelling	-	96.6	-	100.0	3.4
YR 05 Writing	-	91.4	-	94.3	2.9

* There are no NAPLAN results to report in 2020 as the Australian Government decided that due to the COVID-19 pandemic NAPLAN Assessments would not take place.

** Data cannot be reported for this year as the number of students that sat the test was below 5 and the data has been suppressed for privacy reasons in accordance with the ACARA NAPLAN data reporting provisions.

*** No students sat the NAPLAN tests in this year level and in one or both of the relevant years.



Student Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To develop a culture where wellbeing is integral to learning and consciously connected to student achievement:

- To develop connections with members of the local community
- To deepen pedagogical and content knowledge

Achievements

- The four school expectations connected to Positive Behaviour for Learning (We are safe, we are learners, we are respectful and we are responsible) reinforced through whole school messaging and learning experiences.
- Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) as a whole school approach continued in the language and learning experiences at school. The learners revisited PBL lessons linked to the Behaviour Matrix when returning to school at the beginning of the school year, and throughout the year, to reinforce the expected behaviours.
- Inquiry learning in Term 1 focussed on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL).
- Data on student behaviour collected throughout the year.
- PBL lessons, linked to the Behaviour Matrix taught during the year.
- Student Representative Council members (leaders from Years 3-6) led different aspects of school communication.
- Staff professional learning in Child Safety, Mandatory Reporting - including the PROTECT Protocol (Victorian Government) and Reportable Conduct.
- Staff completed first aid training in the following areas: CPR, anaphylaxis, asthma and diabetes.
- Transitions from kindergarten to Prep, and Year 6 to Year 7 supported.
- Prep transition support included kinder visits and three orientation sessions.

VALUE ADDED

- Positive Behaviour for Learning lessons connected to the Behaviour Matrix.
- SRC met regularly throughout the year. They discussed issues in the school and created actions to address these.
- The SRC organised and ran a school tabloid sports day in Term 4.
- Prep transition program

STUDENT SATISFACTION

The 2022 MACSSIS student data suggests the following:

- 73% of students in Years 4 to 6 feel that their teachers have high expectations of them as learners, including the high expectations of effort, understanding, perseverance and persistence.
- 70% of students had a positive mindset about themselves as learners.
- 65% of students feel valued as members of the school community.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

From 2018 'schools needed to advise parents/guardians of unexplained absences, on the same day, as soon as practicable, including for post-compulsory aged students.' (DET, 2018).

Based on DET's Attendance Guidelines (2018), parents/guardians have the responsibility to:

- Ensure their child attends school and to provide an explanation for their child's absence from school, and the principal must record in writing the reason (if any) given by the parent
- Inform the school in advance of upcoming absences
- Ensure a child's education and wellbeing are supported by communicating openly with the school where a child has an ongoing medical condition that may result in ongoing absences or medical appointments during school hours (p.9).

The school sent out an SMS on the morning of an unexplained student absence to the parent/guardian and asked parent or guardian to reply to the school SMS to confirm the message has been received. If student absenteeism increased, or if student absenteeism remained unexplained, the School followed the DET Attendance Guidelines - Every Day Counts. Unexplained absenteeism was followed up by home group teachers and deputy principals.

AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL	
Y01	87.0%
Y02	88.7%
Y03	88.3%
Y04	89.2%
Y05	87.3%
Y06	89.3%
Overall average attendance	88.3%

Child Safe Standards

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To further develop a Child Safe school.

Achievements

- Staff training plan for each school term to focus on Child Safety, including addressing the principle of inclusion, revisiting school policies and procedures, revisiting the PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to all Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools protocol, Reportable Conduct and Child Safety risk management concerns. Staff completed the Victorian Government Mandatory Reporting eLearning module.
- Copies of photo identification for all staff taken to accompany Victorian Institute of Teaching registration and Working with Children Checks. This included emergency teachers.
- All volunteers and contractors are required to have a current Working with Children Check. They were also required to sign the school's Code of Conduct. This included all the contractors associated with the school's building works.
- Clear message of St James' zero tolerance to any form of child abuse and the importance of child safety advertised in recruitment of staff.
- Staff recruitment processes involve referee checks, involving a focus on child safety.
- Communication with the school community about child safety issues, and reminders about child safety issues, including the car park, were included in the various school communication platforms.
- From 1 July 2022, the school took action on meeting the requirements of the new 11 Child Safe Standards, a part of the new Victorian Government Ministerial Order (No. 1359). The 11 Child Safe Standards replaced the previous 7 Child Safe Standards.
- The school informed the school community, including the School Advisory Council, volunteers and staff of the updated information and principles in the new standards.

Leadership

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To develop and sustain a strong Performance and Development Culture (PDC) across the school:

- To build assessment-capable learners
- To deepen pedagogical and content knowledge

Achievements

- Leanne Lourey was appointed English Leader and was able to assist staff with planning activities for remote learning and when returning to on-site learning.
- David Hurn, Deputy Principal, in his role as the Learning & Teaching Leader engaged the services of Deb Vietri to work with Year 3 to 6 staff on Inquiry. Much of this work was done remotely.
- John Hein, Mathematics Leader, moved during the year to another school. Leanne Lourey took on this role. With John leaving the Leadership Team saw an opportunity for staff to be part of leadership at St James. Support roles for English and Mathematics were advertised internally and Rebecca Kerr (English) and Shannon Attard (Mathematics) were appointed to a POL 1 position and given a day a week release to work with Leanne and staff.
- Michael Polh, Religious Education Leader, continued to plan activities with staff online and in person to prepare for the sacramental program. In his other role as ICT Leader, Michael ensured that clear communication was sent to staff regularly during remote learning.
- All teaching staff attended an online Annual Review Meeting which enabled them to reflect on 2021 particularly through remote learning.
- Teachers participated in various Professional Learning activities both on- and off-site or online.
- The school has maintained its financial viability.
- The school has maintained low class sizes in 2021 to assist learners throughout remote learning and when returning to on-site learning.
- A 2021 Annual Action Plan was developed from the 2019 - 2022 School Improvement Plan.
- Timetable organisation enabled teams to plan together each week. This timetable also accounted for part-time staff availability to ensure they could plan with their team fortnightly. This was important in providing consistency across the year levels but also to maintain connectedness during remote learning.
- Staff Meetings and PLT meetings were timetable weekly and always had a professional learning focus.
- Resources are provided for each year level teaching team to engage in a day of planning for the forthcoming term, facilitated by the learning leaders.

EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Description of Professional Learning undertaken in 2022

- Leaders Conference
- Western Region Diversity Leader Networks
- Western Region Principal Networks
- Western Region Deputy Principal Networks
- Western Region Wellbeing Networks
- Western Region Mathematics Networks
- Western Region Literacy Networks
- Western Region Religious Education Leaders Networks
- Western Region Technology (WesTech) Networks
- Pathways to Principalship PL
- Visible Learning PL - All staff
- Lent with Rev Dr Elio Capra
- Governance Meeting
- Principal briefings
- COVID planning PL
- NAPLAN online PL
- Learning Support Officers (LSO) Meetings
- Finance Meetings - Marion Spratling
- ROSAE PL - Christie Maloney
- EAL Curriculum PL – Leanne Lourey
- Deb Vietri – Inquiry – Years Prep to Six
- Disability Standards – all staff
- NCCD moderating
- School Advisory Council forum
- Level 2 CPR training
- Anaphylaxis management training
- Asthma training
- Diabetes training
- Emergency Management Training online – All staff
- Mandatory Reporting

Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2022	62
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1200

TEACHER SATISFACTION

The annual survey of staff MACSSIS 2022 (Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools - School Improvement Survey) showed a small decline in each of the domains. In particular:

- Feedback: Perceptions of the amount and quality of feedback staff receive.
- Instructional Leadership: The extent to which the school leaders set the conditions for improving teaching and learning at the school.
- Professional Learning: Perceptions of the quality and coherence of professional learning opportunities.

These three areas are of particular focus in the 4 yearly 2023-2026 School improvement Plan.

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE

Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	63.3%
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ALL STAFF RETENTION RATE

Staff Retention Rate	70.3%
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TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	21.4%
Graduate	7.1%
Graduate Certificate	7.1%
Bachelor Degree	85.7%
Advanced Diploma	14.3%
No Qualifications Listed	3.6%

STAFF COMPOSITION	
Principal Class (Headcount)	4.0
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	53.0
Teaching Staff (FTE)	44.6
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	25.0
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	19.3
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0.0

Community Engagement

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To promote and strengthen the collaborative partnership between home, school, Parish and the wider community to support learning and wellbeing:

- To develop connections with members of the local community

Achievements

- The school was able to recommence many of the school community events and connections that were paused during COVID.
- The Parents and Friends Committee (P&F) met regularly throughout the year.
- The P&F meetings were made up of P&F office bearers, general members, principal and deputy principals. The P&F fundraising efforts included icy poles, Boston buns and Subway orders.
- The P&F organised and ran the Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day stalls and raffles, and their Christmas raffle.
- School communication methods included email, school Facebook page, phone calls, Seesaw announcements, the large electronic sign in the school carpark and school newsletter.
- Family workshops, including sacramental workshops were held onsite or online using Google Meet.
- School assemblies and celebrations, including liturgies, were held throughout the year.
- The STEM party night was very well attended.
- The Mothers' Day morning tea and Fathers' Day BBQ breakfast was also very well attended.

PARENT SATISFACTION

The 2022 MACSSIS family data suggests the following:

- 64% of families perceive that the school meets their child's developmental needs
- 76% of families perceive that the social and emotional learning climate of the school is positive
- 65% of families perceive that quality of communication between school and families is timely and frequent.