

VicHealth Ideas Partnership Project

Name: BREAKS project

Bicycle Recycling and Engagement for Active Kids at
Schools

Project manager: Dr Cranky's Ltd

Project term: July 2020 to June 2023

(originally July 2020 to June 2021)

End of project report.

15 July 2023



The BREAKS project is a VicHealth Ideas Partnership project which achieved its aim to get more kids and families riding by overcoming knowledge, social connection, and resource barriers. It did this by partnering local councils with Dr Cranky's and engaging with school communities to recycle bicycles and distribute them to those who need them.

Despite CoVid pandemic interruptions - which saw schools grounds closed and the project interrupted and extended by two years - the project was successful or partially successful in meeting most of its stated goals. More importantly, the project allowed the partners to recognise weaknesses in the initial model and develop and implement alternatives. One of these – the School Bike Check model – seems to be better at delivering to a larger number of schools, partners, and families.

The project wanted to establish and support volunteer-run “Bicycle Hospitals” at 16 schools with 12 sustained beyond the project. These offered training, free repairs, parts, recycled bikes, helmets, and locks to those that needed them along with teaching and support for fixing and giving out bikes. This was not successful due to the difficulty of recruiting and retaining school parent volunteers to independently run the program at schools. This key weakness of the Bicycle Hospital model was exposed by the project and exacerbated by the pandemic and current cost of living pressures on families that may require both parents to be in paid work.

Of the 29 schools engaged across 15 council areas (7 inner metro; 5 outer metro; 3 regional)

- 1 started a Bicycle Hospital which is still running with support.
- 8 started Bicycle Hospitals but did not become sustainable to run independently.
- 5 had no operations or sessions other than a trial session.
- 5 made contact or expressed interested but did not proceed further.
- 4 were schools with pre-existing Bicycle Hospitals that restarted after April 2022.
- 6 schools ran Bike Check sessions in partnership with local council or Bicycle Network.

Table – School engagement, outcomes, and activity (operations performed)

	Total	Bicycle Hospitals					Bike Check Sessions
		Newly established	Started, not established	Trail session only	Contact but no sessions	Re-established after CoVid	
Schools	29	1	8	5	5	4	6
Operations performed	1000	36	475	24	5	194	256

Table: Location of councils engaged

	Total engaged	Inner Metro	Middle Metro	Regional
No. of Councils	15	7	5	3

In addition, bikes were recycled and delivered to refugee families and others in need outside of schools, especially during the pandemic (the “Remote Operations” model). Bikes were also provided to a sporting club (Collingwood Basketball Club) for children needing transport to training and school.

The project:

- increased physical activity amongst school children and their families as they had working bicycles to ride:
 - o an estimated 123,000 extra rides a year generated – more than expected.
 - o and 711 bikes repaired – less than expected.
- helped overcome health inequities by giving bikes to those who could not afford them:
 - o 239 bikes recycled and given to new owners – less than expected.
- promoted active transport by being a visible, school-connected initiative and built community connections across socio-economic groups in schools:
 - o 2203 people engaged across schools including volunteers, recipients, family members school staff – more than expected.

Table: Activity results of the project against goals.

No. of extra bike rides generated per year		No. of bikes repaired		No. of bikes recycled and given to new owner		No of people engaged	
Goal	Result	Goal	Result	Goal	Result	Goal	Result
112,000	123,000	1200	711	720	239	1320	2303

School communities contributed volunteer hours and unwanted bikes but in a limited way due to the pandemic and lack of parent volunteers. Dr Cranky's provided training, equipment and support plus developed a range of online resources. Local councils facilitated access to schools and linked them to their existing active transport programs plus helped develop and refine new models of delivery.

Key points:

- The BREAKS project is a VicHealth Ideas Partnership project run by Dr Cranky's with primary schools and local councils.
- The project started in July 2020 and was original planned to finish in June 2021. CoVid pandemic interruptions saw it extended twice to June 2023.
- The project trialed three delivery models:
 - The **Bicycle Hospital model** which aimed to set up independent bicycle workshops at primary schools that would be run by parent volunteers to repair and recycle bikes.
 - though this model delivered good outcomes it proved unsustainable on a large scale due to the difficulty setting and sustaining independently run Bicycle Hospitals
 - 14 schools trialed the model but only one became sustainable.
 - 4 pre-existing Bicycle Hospitals were able to be restarted and continue running.
 - The **Remote Operations model** was set up during the pandemic to try to repair and recycle bikes for those in need in the midst of social distancing.
 - Tool kits were provided to volunteers who could fix bikes at home and then lock them at schools to be picked up by those in need. Donations were also done remotely to the school gate.
 - This model had limited success though it did allow some continued connection with volunteers and school communities.
 - The **School Bike Check model** where Dr Cranky's provided free bike safety checks over two days and four sessions for schools in the lead up to Ride2School day.
 - This model proved more successful than expected with a large number of students and families taking advantage of the service and recycled bikes provided to those without a bike.
 - The model might serve as a better way to deliver repairs; recycled bikes; and generate more bike rides over a larger number of schools and communities.



Photo: Handing over bikes to needy family outside Albanvale PS – the Remote Operations Model in action after social distancing rules were relaxed.

Key metrics

Engagement

- 29 schools engaged.
- 15 councils engaged including 5 outer metro councils, 3 regional councils and 7 inner or middle metro councils.
- 2151 individual people engaged.

Operations

- 1000 operations conducted of which:
 - o 711 bike repairs
 - o 239 recycled bikes given to new owners.

Riding

- 123,000 extra rides generated a year
- 12.6 extra rides a month on average generated by recipients (both based on 48 follow up survey responses)

Materials and services provided

- o 169 helmets provided.
- o 166 locks provided.
- o 311 bells, 55 stands, 66 handlebar grips, 13 new saddles, 3 sets of pedals, 58 sets of reflectors, installed.
- o 156 chains oiled, 192 tyres pumped, and 57 brakes adjusted.

Demographics of recipients

- 31% of recipients were female.
- 47% of recipients were aged 5-9 years old.
- 35% of recipients were aged 10-14 years old.
- 8% of recipients were adult.
- an estimated 72% of recipients were of non-European background. The majority being of African or Indian background.

The impact of the CoVid Pandemic

The project began its set up work from July 2019 with connection and coordination with councils and schools. Pilot schools were selected, and initial sessions conducted in February 2020. The project was set for roll out to another 5 schools when the pandemic hit, halting all work and access to schools.

The pandemic prevented non-school staff from attending schools from March 2020 to March 2022. For some schools this extended out to June 2022 as there was a gradual reopening of schools to parents. The BREAKS project was extended twice to take into account these disruptions.

During this time, Dr Cranky's lost contact with some schools and most parent volunteers, some of whom had left schools as their children had graduated in the intervening period. Others had moved to other areas.

From April 2022 the project scope allowed including the restarting of lapsed school Bicycle Hospitals that had stopped operations due to CoVid restrictions.

Post the pandemic there was pressure for workers to return to the office. This was followed by an increase in cost-of-living pressures on families with parents are under pressure to be in paid work. Both these factors may have contributed to difficulty with finding and retaining parent volunteers at schools

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Report against key nominated goals:

Establish enduring relationships with six local councils to establish and support bike hospitals at schools in their jurisdictions.

The project held operations in schools in 15 local government areas. Of these there has been enduring relationships with seven councils to varying degrees: Merri-bek; Darebin; Stonnington; City of Yarra; Wyndham, Greater Shepparton and Ballarat.

Establish 16 school bike hospitals at primary schools.

The project established or trialled Bicycle Hospitals at nine schools. In addition, four schools restarted their Bicycle Hospitals that has been inactive during the pandemic.

12 bicycle hospitals remain sustainable beyond the life of the project.

Only one new Bicycle Hospital has remained sustainable beyond June 2023. Four pre-existing Bicycle Hospitals were able to be re-established and remain ongoing.

Develop supporting material to support ongoing independent operations of school Bicycle Hospitals.

Various supporting materials were developed including to aid the set-up of Bicycle Hospitals. These include information packs and policy and procedures. Chief amongst these was the development of 32 training videos on YouTube which proved very popular and are viewed over 7000 times a month.

Each Bicycle Hospital will, on average per year, deliver to the local school community:

- **40 repairs and safety checks, and**
- **60 recycled bikes**

Since the project was interrupted several times, we are reporting on totals over the length of the project and for all schools with more than one operation for this goal. On average each school delivered:

- 42 repairs and safety checks
- 10 recycled bikes.

Each will be run by at least two parent volunteers contributing on average 2 hours per week.

This has only been achieved at four schools (one new and three restarted) on an ongoing basis.

Report against key metrics.

Number of schools engaged.

29 schools were engaged of which:

- 4 were restarted schools after April 2022. Flemington PS; St Kilda PS; Clayton North PS; Trinity Catholic PS.
 - 5 had no operations or sessions other than a trial session. Brunswick Secondary College; Ardmona PS; Wilmot Rd PS; St Mels PS; Guthrie St PS.
 - 5 made contact or expressed interested but did not proceed further. Caledonian PS; Galilee PS; Jells Park PS; Glenroy PS; Albanvale PS.
 - 8 started Bicycle Hospitals but did not become sustainable. Dallas Brooks PS; Davis Creek PS; Saltwater P-9 College; South Melbourne Park PS; Brunswick North West PS; Sydenham Hillside PS; Woodville PS; Boroondara Park PS.
 - 1 started a Bicycle Hospital which is still running with support. Bellbridge PS, Hoppers Crossing.
 - 6 schools ran Bike Check sessions in partnership with local council or Bicycle Network. Bell PS; Kingsbury PS; St Raphael's PS; Echuca East PS; Toorak PS; Armadale PS.
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- Number of councils engaged - 15.
 - 7 Inner: Merri-bek (Moreland); Darebin, Stonnington, Port Phillip; City of Yarra; Moonee Valley, Boroondara.
 - 5 Outer: Wyndham, Brimbank, Hume, Brimbank; City of Monash.
 - 3 Regional: Greater Shepparton, Campaspe (via Bicycle Network), Ballarat (via ReCranked, no schools engaged).

Key targets

720 children on recycled bikes

Result - 239 children on recycled bikes which is the sum of bikes given or traded in for another bike.

112,000 extra bike rides a year by bike recipients.

Result - 123, 008 extra rides a year generated.

1200 bikes recycled or repaired.

Result - 950 bike or scooters of which 711 were repairs and 226 were recycled to new owners and 13 were traded bikes. In addition, 29 operations were for giving a helmet or lock only and 19 bikes were salvaged for parts for a total of 1000 operations exactly.

1320 people engaged across schools - volunteers, recipients, family members school staff.

Result -2203 unique contacts including: 1517 contacts receiving a bike repair or otherwise; 634 donating or giving something; 52 staff, volunteers, or partner organisation staff.

What did we learn?

Three delivery models:

- The school Bicycle Hospital model
 - The Remote Operations model
 - The School Bike Check Model
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The school Bicycle Hospital model



Pictures from various Bicycle Hospitals. Clockwise from upper left: Davis Creek PS – a parent volunteer with his children; A happy helper at Davis Creek PS; The initiation session at Sydenham Hillside PS – only one session was possible before restrictions; Woodville PS a mother and her children after getting their bikes fixed; Woodville PS – showing a potential parent volunteer how to adjust the brakes.

The project aimed to establish parent run Bicycle Hospitals at school that would, after establishment, sustain themselves with some regular support from Dr Cranky's. Bluntly, it failed to do so and it exposed a critical weakness in the model.

Though there was engagement with 22 new schools through the project and initial trial sessions at several schools, few were able to continue without full supervision. Three or four garnered more than one parent volunteer but these were lost with the start of pandemic restrictions and did not return. Restrictions were, gradually, lifted. Restarting Bicycle Hospitals and engaging parent volunteers proved very difficult after pandemic restrictions were lifted and that persists to this day.

Lack of reliable parent volunteers at schools made this initial model (the Bicycle Hospital model) unviable. CoVid restrictions of parent access to schools and then, after restrictions were lifted, pressure to return to workplaces and cost of living pressures exacerbated lack of parent volunteers. This may have happened without CoVid, but the pandemic brought this weakness to the fore.

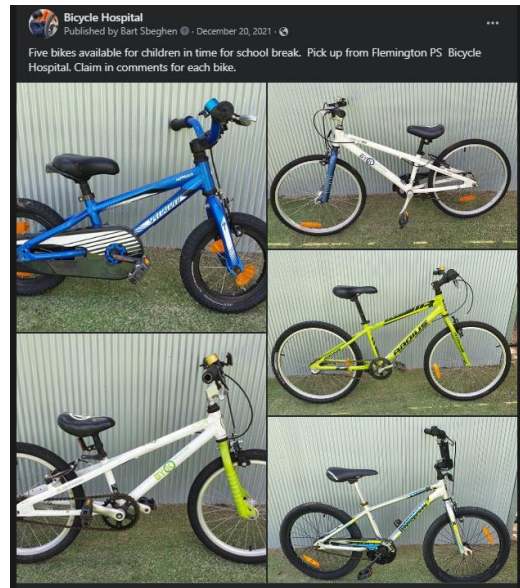
Before starting the BREAKS project, Dr Cranky's was supporting up to 15 Bicycle Hospitals at schools with varying success. With the right amount of school and parent support the Bicycle Hospitals are able to repair or recycle up to 8, but usually around 4, bikes a week with two or three parent volunteers. The challenge has always been recruiting and retaining the parent volunteers. The model relies on one or two key people and if they leave or move on then finding new parents is difficult. The project made this weakness clear, especially with the post-pandemic conditions.

When Bicycle Hospitals are running, the results in terms of rides generated, bikes recycled, and contacts made are very good. But the resources and time required to set up and maintain a school Bicycle Hospital mean it would be difficult to roll out in the number of schools to make a more widespread impact.

The Remote Operations model



Pictures clockwise from upper left: Dropping bikes to a refugee family at Albanvale PS; A screenshot of a Bicycle Hospital Facebook post showing the bikes available for pick up and calling on people to claim them (and follow social distancing rules); Communication materials to explain the Remote Operations models to schools and potential volunteers.



The Remote Operations model was developed to allow the project to continue providing recycled bikes and repairs during pandemic social distancing restrictions. It was also an attempt to recruit volunteers that might go on to volunteer at schools when restrictions lifted.

Under this model four bikes were repaired, and 35 bikes recycled outside of schools. There were also up to 30 bikes recycled at Flemington PS, but these have been counted against that school's Bicycle Hospital.

A YouTube channel (Dr Cranky's Bikes for Kids) was also developed under the restrictions to support training of volunteers. There were also some zoom sessions conducted with Stonnington and Knox councils but these, also, were not counted towards the project.

The School Bike Check Model



Pictures from upper left: The set up at Toorak PS with a bike about to be given to a young girl; a paid casual staff working at St Raphael's PS with a "customer" waiting and a long line of bikes ready to be checked; the Bike Hospital signs for schools with the offer of a "Free Consultation" used by Darebin council to promote the sessions.

In the lead up to Ride2School Day in 2023, the sustainable transport team at Darebin City Council contacted Dr Cranky's looking for a project to engage with school communities in their area. The outcome was the School Bike Check model.

Under this model, council engaged Dr Cranky's to conduct bike safety checks at selected schools that showed engagement around active transport. A before school and after school session was conducted on two separate days a fortnight apart at each school. Students and families were able to bring their bikes to the sessions at the school to get them checked for safety. Recycled bikes were made available for those who did not have a bike and people were also encouraged to donate their unwanted and unused bikes. Parent volunteers were also sought.

This model was different to the others as it was a service provided to the schools rather than trying to establish a school based self sufficient model with parent volunteers. Council contributed to the costs and Dr Cranky's provide paid casual staff to run the service.

The sessions proved to be more popular than planned with the staff almost overwhelmed with the demand. We expected about 10 people per session but there were up to 50 per session and it took several hours to get to all the bikes by which time school had started in the morning sessions.

Apart from the three initial schools in Darebin the model was also delivered in two schools in Stonnington and, in partnership with Bicycle Network, a school in Echuca. These six schools over 14 sessions generated 256 operations – over a quarter of the operations for the whole project. This included 210 repairs and 42 recycled bikes to new owners. Despite the lower level of connect with the school community the limited number of follow up surveys (n=3) indicated that the model generated a high level of extra rides by participants.

The model seems to overcome the reliance on school volunteers and allows the model to be rolled out more easily. It does, however, require funding of paid staff and resource, which in these cases, came from local council and other partners. It also does not foster school self sufficiency but could be the steppingstone for some schools if it allows initial engagement with the school that could see the set-up of a longer-term Bicycle Hospital.

School Name	Council Area	Left Operations	Pralls	Open To	Side In	Left or Helmet	Helmet	Lefts	Left Age	0-4yo	5-9yo	10-14yo	15-17yo	Adult	Age Not Given	Male	Female	%Female	African	Indian	Asian	European	Indigenous	Unique Contacts Rec'd	Unique Give	Ave Rides Pk Up	Weighted Ave Pk Up	Ave extra rides/month	Survey responses	Survey Rides/Mth Diff	Weighted Ave Extra Rides	Extra Rides/Year Total
Flemington Primary	Moonee Valley	61	12	38	0	0	11	10	9	4.9%	41.0%	6.6%	4.9%	18.0%	24.6%	29	17	37%	9	3	8	24	0	92	26	4.8	222	20.0	1	60	20	12,480
St Kilda Primary Sch	Port Phillip	19	12	5	2	0	0	1	0	5.3%	47.4%	31.6%	0.0%	15.8%	0.0%	14	5	26%	0	3	0	16	0	38	15	13.0	247	20.0	1	18	20	4,560
Clayton North Prima	Monash	111	28	67	3	13	45	44	0	4.7%	57.0%	18.7%	0.0%	19.6%	0.0%	67	41	38%	38	19	40	9	0	188	43	5.6	604	21.5	12	99	258	28,638
Trinity Catholic Sch	City of Yarra	3	0	3	0	0	2	1	0	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3	0	0%	0	0	2	1	0	6	2	1.3	4	0.0	0	3	0	-
Dallas Brooks Prime	Hume	62	42	4	5	3	21	15	8	10.7%	26.8%	51.8%	0.0%	0.0%	10.7%	35	15	30%	37	13	0	0	0	83	39	6.1	351	11.8	8	54	94	7,614
Davis Creek Primary	Wyndham	278	263	7	2	4	14	13	2	2.7%	49.0%	37.4%	0.0%	4.3%	6.6%	206	52	20%	96	131	1	11	0	324	146	15.8	3852	10.0	12	265	130	33,120
Saltwater P-9 Colleg	Wyndham	55	49	3	0	3	4	9	0	2.0%	39.2%	43.1%	0.0%	11.8%	3.9%	33	18	35%	10	15	4	20	0	84	40	14.4	720	9.0	2	53.00	18	5,940
Bellbridge Primary	Wyndham	36	32	4	0	0	5	5	0	0.0%	58.3%	38.9%	0.0%	2.8%	0.0%	25	11	31%	13	1	0	22	0	53	25	11.6	418	16.0	4	32.00	64	6,912
Bell Primary School	Darebin	57	53	4	0	0	2	1	0	3.5%	56.1%	33.3%	0.0%	5.3%	1.8%	38	19	33%	0	0	2	55	0	106	52	8.8	499	0.0	0	57.00	0	-
Kingsbury Primary St	Darebin	35	21	14	0	0	7	4	0	0.0%	53.6%	42.9%	0.0%	3.6%	0.0%	17	11	39%	7	0	5	16	0	56	23	5.2	146	0.0	0	35.00	0	-
St Raphael's Primar	Darebin	42	33	9	0	0	5	5	0	0.0%	59.0%	41.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	23	16	41%	0	0	0	39	0	78	32	9.6	373	0.0	0	42.00	0	-
Echuca East Primary	Campaspe	73	66	5	0	2	9	12	0	0.0%	34.7%	43.1%	0.0%	2.8%	19.4%	45	28	38%	1	0	0	59	13	136	61	10.0	728	11.0	2	71.00	22	9,636
Toorak Primary Scho	Stonnington	18	10	7	0	1	4	4	0	0.0%	77.8%	16.7%	0.0%	5.6%	0.0%	10	8	44%	2	3	0	13	0	34	16	5.6	100	20.0	1	17.00	20	4,320
Armadale Primary St	Stonnington	31	27	3	0	1	2	4	0	6.5%	58.1%	29.0%	0.0%	3.2%	3.2%	18	13	42%	1	2	1	27	0	62	29	3.2	100	0.0	0	31.00	0	-
Collingwood AllStar	City of Yarra	7	0	7	0	0	0	7	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7	0	0%	7	0	0	0	0	2	6	0.0	0	0.0	0	7.00	0	-
Outside	Various	39	4	35	0	0	28	24	0	6.1%	24.2%	24.2%	18.2%	27.3%	0.0%	15	17	53%	18	2	0	11	0	52	18	1.8	60	18.0	2	37	36	8,424
South Melbourne Ps	Port Phillip	11	11	0	0	0	0	1	0	0.0%	63.6%	0.0%	0.0%	36.4%	0.0%	8	3	27%	0	1	0	10	0	22	11	14.7	147	1.0	1	9	1	132
Brunswick North We	Merri Bek	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3	3	50%	1	0	0	5	0	12	6	15.3	92	0.0	0	6	0	-
Sydenham Hillside	Brimbank	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0.0	0	0.0	0	1	0	-
Brunswick Secondar	Merri Bek	9	8	0	1	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	66.7%	11.1%	22.2%	0.0%	8	1	11%	1	0	0	8	0	18	9	19.8	178	0.0	0	8	0	-
Woodville Primary S	Wyndham	25	19	4	0	2	7	3	0	0.0%	36.0%	60.0%	0.0%	4.0%	0.0%	15	10	40%	0	1	5	19	0	40	17	9.8	226	3.3	2	22	10	1,000
Boroondara Park Pri	Boroondara	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	-
Wilmot Rd Primary S	Wyndham	7	7	0	0	0	0	1	0	0.0%	57.1%	42.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6	1	14%	2	3	0	2	0	14	7	4.3	30	0.0	0	6	0	-
Ardmona Primary Sc	Greater Shepparton	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2.0	2	10.0	0	0	10	120
St Mels Primary Sch	Greater Shepparton	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2	1	33%	0	0	0	3	0	3	1	28.0	28	0.0	0	2	0	-
Guthrie St Primary S	Greater Shepparton	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4	0	0%	0	0	0	4	0	2	2	20.0	60	4.0	0	3	4	192
Caledonian Primary	Port Phillip	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	-
Gallilee Catholic	Port Phillip	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	-
Jells Park Primary Sc	Monash	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1	0	0%	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0.0	0	0.0	0	1	0	-
Glenroy Central Prin	Merri Bek	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	-
Albanvale Primary S	Brimbank	4	1	3	0	0	2	2	0	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	2	2	50%	2	0	0	2	0	8	4	5.0	20	0.0	0	4	0	-
Total		1000	711	226	13	29	169	166	19	3.1%	46.7%	35%	1%	8%	6%	635	292	31%	246	197	68	376	13	1517	634	10.1	9207	12.6	48	943	707	123,088
	Averages/school	41.7		9.96															25%	20%	7%	38%	1%	2151								

Picture: Screenshot of the data table for the project