



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

SPECIAL SCHOOL ANNUAL CENSUS

2023/2024

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETION

IMPORTANT: Please note ONLY schools NOT on the Primary Online Database (POD) should complete and return the census form.

SEPTEMBER 2023

Special School Annual Census 2023/2024

Instructions for Completion of Special School Annual Census

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Introduction

From 2009/2010 onwards Statistics section dispensed with paper Census forms and is now using a spreadsheet form for the Special School Annual Census. This method of collection has benefits for both Statistics section and the school. The spreadsheet form automatically adds up totals for each table, and cross-checks totals across tables. Any errors are flagged on the Error-check table, which will allow for errors to be discovered and corrected before the form is returned to Statistics section, thereby dispensing with the need to contact schools later in the year to correct errors on the form.

Any returns received with errors still visible in red text on the ERROR-CHECK area of the form will not be processed and will be returned to the school for correction.

Please note, as in previous years, schools are reminded that pupils retained on the school register for the purpose of compliance with the Education and Welfare Act, 2000, but who are no longer in attendance at the school on 30th September, 2023, must not be counted towards valid enrolment and therefore should not be included on the Census form.

From 2010/2011 onwards schools are required to print out a signature page from the Census forms and return this duly signed by both the School Principal and the Chairperson/Manager of the Board of Management and returned to the Statistics section of the Department. Delays in returning same may result in delays to payments to schools.

The Department greatly appreciates the efforts of schools to complete this Census. The overwhelming majority of schools take great care to complete the forms in a timely and accurate manner. Please note that the total number of pupils submitted in this enrolment return (as distinct from other information provided in the Census) will be used to calculate the staffing and grant allocations for your school. It is therefore very important to ensure, in particular, that the total number of pupils enrolled as of 30th September is accurate. However, the Department will examine and refer to An Garda Síochána, any deliberate overstatement of pupil numbers for the purpose of claiming additional resources from the Department.

Schools are reminded that with the introduction of the spreadsheet format of the Primary School Annual Census there is **no separate salary return collection from Schools Division in Athlone.**

Section 1 – Downloading and Returning the Form

Accessing the Special School Annual Census Form

The form is available for downloading from the Department's website. It is in Microsoft Excel format.

- Go to the following link on the Department's website:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/service/c7c45-census-national-school-annual-census-return/>

If you click on the link labelled "Special School Form", this should either download the form for you, or bring up a box asking where you would like to save the file. Choose where you would like to save it and click **Save**.

The form is now saved on your PC and can be completed at your convenience.

If you do not have Excel and require an OpenOffice version of the Census form please e-mail us at statistics@education.gov.ie and we will forward the appropriate form to you.

Opening and Viewing each Table in the Form

Whenever you wish to complete the file, go to where it is saved on your PC (This could be in the **My Documents** folder, on the desktop or in any other folder you specified while downloading the form).

Double click on the file to open it; the cover page is displayed.

At the bottom of the screen are a number of tabs displayed with the names of the rest of the tables: **SCHOOL DETAILS, RS1-B, ENTRANTS, LEAVERS, RS1-C**, etc. Clicking on the tabs will bring you to the corresponding tables which must be completed.

The layout of the form is very similar to last year and to the previous paper forms. Therefore most of the tables should look very familiar.

Returning the Form to Statistics Section

When the form has been fully completed (additional help and instructions as well as solutions to common errors and problems are given in the following pages) and the checklist on page 7 has been fully completed, the form can be returned to Statistics section by email.

Please do not return the form to Statistics section with errors still marked in red text on the ERROR-CHECK area of the form, as the form will be returned and will not be processed until all errors have been corrected.

The e-mail address is statistics@education.gov.ie

The form should be attached to the e-mail and sent. If you are unsure how to put an attachment onto an e-mail, please consult your e-mail providers' **Help** section.

Please ensure that you have entered our e-mail address correctly before returning the form. Where possible please ask your e-mail provider for a delivery confirmation, and please keep a copy of the sent e-mail in your e-mail account. Statistics section will e-mail back to confirm receipt of your returns. If you do not receive this e-mail within 24 hours of submission please contact Statistics section.

Any comments that you wish to convey about your return can be included in the Optional Questions section of the form. As with last year, we will endeavour to use these comments to improve the collection of this vital data.

Final Checklist before Returning the Form

Before returning the form to Statistics section, please ensure that the following checklist is adhered to:

1) All tables have been completed:

School details

RS1-B (**RS1-B**)

Entrants Table (**ENTRANTS**)

Leavers Table (**LEAVERS**)

RS1-C (**RS1-C**)

Nationality Table (**NAT**)

Book Rental Scheme (**BOOK RENTAL**)

Optional Questions (**OPTIONAL QS**) Note - these are not obligatory

Signature (**SIG**)

2) Error-checking: Please ensure that the text of all of the error-checks on the **ERROR CHECK** table is green and that the check shows "ok" or a similar message. Any messages in red text are errors. A brief description of the error will be provided. Please go back and correct the error in the tables. Once the error has been corrected the relevant message will disappear and be replaced by an "ok" message in green text.

Please do not return this form to Statistics section if there are outstanding error messages, as the form will be returned and will not be processed until the error is corrected. Correct information must be provided before validated final figures can be arrived at for allocations and grant payment purposes.

3) Correct e-mail address: If you intend to return the form via e-mail please ensure that you have entered our e-mail address correctly before returning the form. Where possible please ask your e-mail provider for a delivery confirmation, and please keep a copy of the sent e-mail in your e-mail account. Statistics section will e-mail back to confirm receipt of your returns. If you do not receive this e-mail within 24 hours of submission please contact Statistics section. Schools are encouraged to use Esinet to return completed forms where possible as this is a safe way of ensuring the Department has received the form.

4) Signature Page: Please print off the Signature tab and post it, duly signed by both the School Principal and the Chairperson/Manager of Board of Management, to us at:

Statistics Section

Department of Education

Block 2

Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

By returning this page you are confirming that the information is correct and as stated in your return.

NOTE: Do not print and return any other page of the form. If you experience difficulties printing the Signature tab you can print, complete and return the copy of the Signature page which has been included on page 15 of this document. Note that delays in returning the signed form may result in delays to payments to schools.

Section 2 - Completing the Form

SCHOOL DETAILS

This is the first table in the form.

Please choose your roll number, school name and address from the drop down list in the green box.

Please enter the principal's name in the box provided by clicking on the box and typing the name.

Please enter a contact telephone number and e-mail address. These will be used to contact the school if we have any queries with your return. The Department does not currently have a record of e-mail addresses of National Schools therefore we have introduced a question on the School Details page to give us permission to keep the e-mail address provided on a database of school's contact details. Please select 'NO' if you do not wish the Department to keep a record of the e-mail address you have provided. Please note that giving us permission to record your e-mail address does not mean that all future correspondence from the Department will be via e-mail.

RS1-B

Click on the **RS1-B** tab at the bottom of the screen. To fill in the form, for each class type (special class type and Traveller classes), please choose the class designation from the drop-down list for each class entered. Then please fill in the corresponding figures in columns (D) and (E). A row must be filled in for each class.

For schools with Traveller classes only, please choose **8: Members of the Traveller Community** from the drop down list and fill in the relevant figures in columns (D) and (E).

ENTRANTS TABLE

Click on the **ENTRANTS** tab at the bottom of the screen.

Please fill in the form by clicking on the boxes and typing in the relevant numbers. Totals will be calculated automatically in the yellow boxes, and cross-checked automatically against other tables.

If there are no entrants to the school please tick the box provided and give a brief explanatory note in the **NOTES** area.

LEAVERS TABLE

Click on the **LEAVERS** tab at the bottom of the screen.

This is the leavers table. The format is the same as last year.

Please fill in the form by clicking on the boxes and typing in the relevant numbers. Totals will be calculated automatically in the yellow boxes.

If there are no leavers from the school please tick the box provided and give a brief explanatory note in the **NOTES** area.

RS1-C

Click on the **RS1-C** tab at the bottom of the screen. This table has not changed from previous years. Please fill in the form by clicking on the boxes and typing in the relevant numbers. Totals will be calculated automatically in the yellow boxes. Please ensure that the total number of pupils on **RS1-B** corresponds with the total number of pupils on **RS1-C**.

NATIONALITY

Click on the **NAT** tab at the bottom of the screen.

This is the pupil nationality table. You are requested to fill in the nationality of pupils by broad geographical area.

Please note that it is understood some schools may not have exact data for this table, and there is no requirement for schools to conduct additional data collections in order to provide this information. We require only the best estimate of nationality where the relevant data is not available at school level.

Please fill in the form by clicking on the boxes and typing in the relevant numbers. Totals will be calculated automatically in the yellow boxes, and cross-checked against the other tables. Please ensure that the number of pupils returned in this form (including the **OTHER NATIONALITIES/NATIONALITY UNKNOWN** categories) is the same as the total number of pupils in your school.

Nationality can be defined as “The fact of being a citizen of a particular nation”. The EU definition of “citizenship” is as follows: “citizenship” means the particular legal bond between an individual and his or her State, acquired by birth or naturalisation, whether by declaration, choice, marriage or other means according to national legislation.

The EU 15 comprises the countries before enlargement of the EU on 1 May 2004, i.e. Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Portugal, United Kingdom.

The EU 13 is defined as the 10 accession countries that joined the EU on 1 May 2004, i.e. Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, and includes the 2 new accession states that joined the EU on 1 January 2007, i.e. Bulgaria and Romania and Croatia who joined on 1 July 2013.

BOOK RENTAL

Click on the tab at the bottom of the screen entitled **BOOK RENTAL**.

Please click **Yes** or **No** if your school will operate a textbook rental or loan scheme in the 2023/24 school year.

Having considered representations from a number of bodies regarding the high cost of textbooks and school uniforms, the Minister for Education has decided to promote the establishment of book rental or loan schemes as a means of alleviating the financial burden on families. The Minister wishes to establish the number of schools which operate book rental schemes so as to inform how policy may be developed in this area. Responses to this question will identify schools which operate book rental or loan schemes.

OPTIONAL QUESTIONS

Click on the tab at the bottom of the screen entitled **OPTIONAL QS**. These questions are not obligatory but we encourage all schools to take the time to fill them in if at all possible. This gives schools the opportunity to provide feedback to the Department, report any difficulties in completing the form and give suggestions for further improvements. A report of comments received on the 2010/2011 Census and the time taken to complete the census can be viewed on the Department's website at [Department of Education and Skills - - Report on 2010-11 optional questions](#)

SIGNATURE

When you have completed the **Special School Annual Census Return**, this page should self-populate with your school's roll number and total enrolment as of the 30th September 2023. Please check these are correct. As noted earlier, the Signature page should be printed, signed by both the School Principal and the Chairperson/Manager of the Board of Management and returned to the Statistics section of the Department at the following address:

Statistics Section
Block 2
Department of Education
Marlborough Street
Dublin 1

Delays in returning same may result in delays to payments to schools. Schools with difficulty printing from Excel/OpenOffice can print out a blank Signature page, which has been included at the end of this document.

Section 3 – Error-checking and Troubleshooting

ERROR-CHECK TABLE

A: School Details: Roll Number

This checks that the school roll number has been selected in the **SCHOOL DETAILS** tab. This check should read “ok” in green text before the form is returned to Statistics section.

B: RS1-B/RS1-C Check

This cross-checks the total number of pupils listed on **RS1-B** against those on **RS1-C** to ensure that the total number of pupils has not been mistakenly entered on either table.

C: Entrants Table Filled in

This checks that the **ENTRANTS** table has been filled in. Schools that do not have any entrants should provide a brief note in the **NOTES** section of the **ENTRANTS** tab.

D: Leavers Table Filled In

This checks that the **LEAVERS** table has been filled in. Schools that do not have any leavers should provide a brief note in the **NOTES** section of the **LEAVERS** tab.

E: Nationality/RS1-B Cross-check

The total number of pupils in the **NAT** table must be the same as the total number of pupils on form **RS1-B**. If these numbers are not the same an error message will be displayed in red text. Please correct any errors and ensure that the error message displays “ok” in green text before returning the form to Statistics section.

F: RS1-B Consistency Check

This check ensures that the **Special Need Type** is selected for each class.

G: Book Rental Scheme

This checks that either **Yes** or **No** has been selected for the question on whether the school will operate a textbook rental or loan scheme in the 2021/22 school year. Please ensure to select **Yes** or **No** as appropriate.

Troubleshooting/Common Problems and Solutions

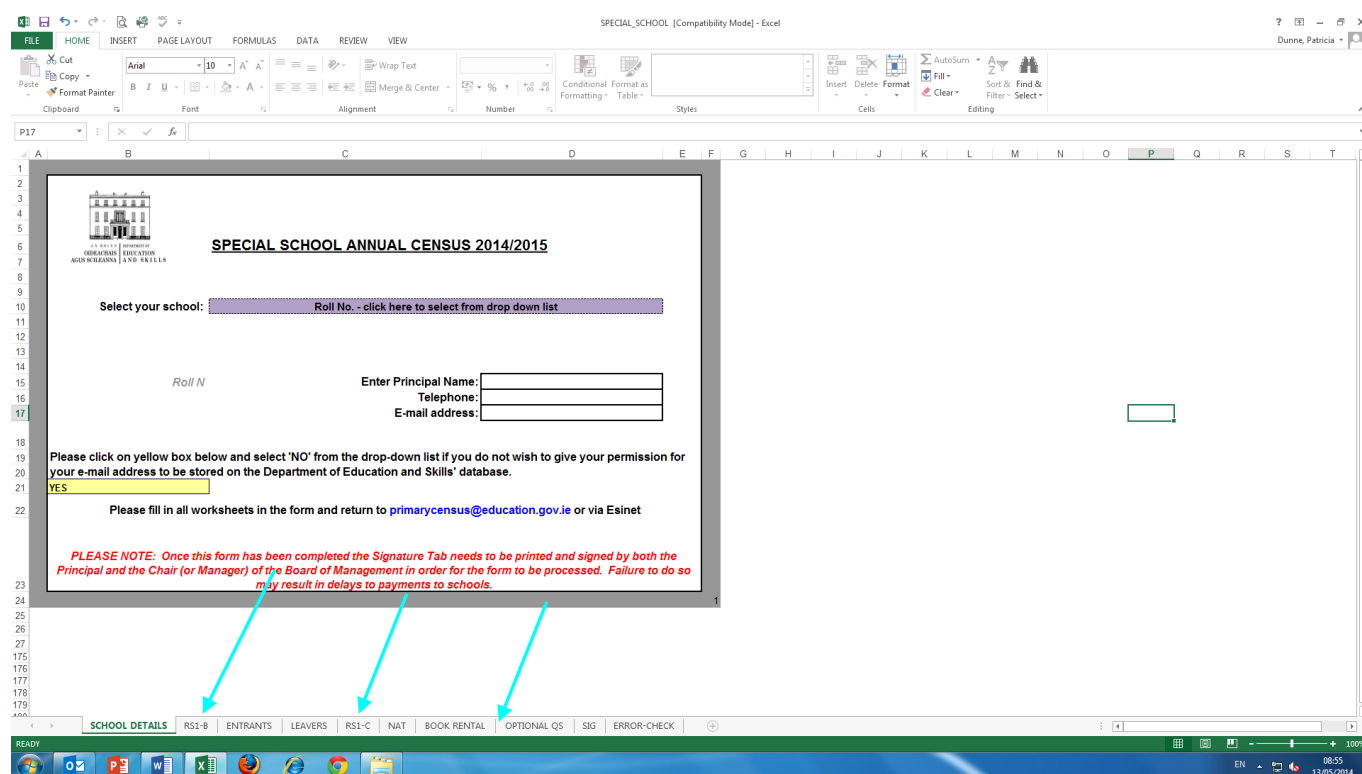
The following are the answers to some common queries and problems. **Please check this area before contacting Statistics section with any queries.**


Q: I can only see the first page of the form, where are all the other tables?

A: When you first open the form you will see the **School details** page, where you enter your school's roll number and summary totals. At the bottom of the screen you will see a series of tabs entitled **SCHOOL DETAILS, RS1-B, ENTRANTS, LEAVERS, RS1-C** etc. Clicking on these tabs will take you to the relevant table.

Q: I cannot see the tabs at the bottom of the screen.

A: If on initial opening of the form you cannot see these tabs at the bottom of the page, go to the menu commands on the top left of the screen and click on **View**, then select **Full Screen** from the drop-down menu. For those using Windows Vista, click on **View** and select **New Window**. This should correct the screen and allow the tabs to be seen.



If this does not correct the problem then ensure that the spreadsheet program is maximised. At the top right of your screen you will see the following icons: 

The middle icon is the “maximise” icon. Click it to maximise the screen. You should now be able to see the tabs at the bottom of the screen.

Q: How do I select my roll number on the School Details Page?

A: Click on the green box on the screen which says **Roll No. - Click here to select from drop-down list**. After clicking, a small arrow will appear on the right hand side of the green box. Click on this arrow and you will see the beginning of the list of roll numbers. Using the up and down arrows scroll through the list until you come to the roll number for your school, and click on it. (Note the roll numbers are in numerical order, so roll numbers beginning with “19...” or “20...” are down toward the end of the list). The roll number will now appear in the green box. If you are using an Apple Mac computer you may not be able to view all roll numbers. If you cannot view your roll number please type it into any available space on the School Details page.

Q: I have errors that are still showing up despite trying to fix them. Is there just something wrong with the form?

A: The errors will only be displayed if there is a genuine mismatch between two or more of the tables. The most common errors are a mismatch between **RS1-B** and **RS1-C**, so please ensure you have the same totals in both tables.

The error message will give an indication of where the error lies. Consider changing an entry in one of the affected tables to see if that resolves the error.

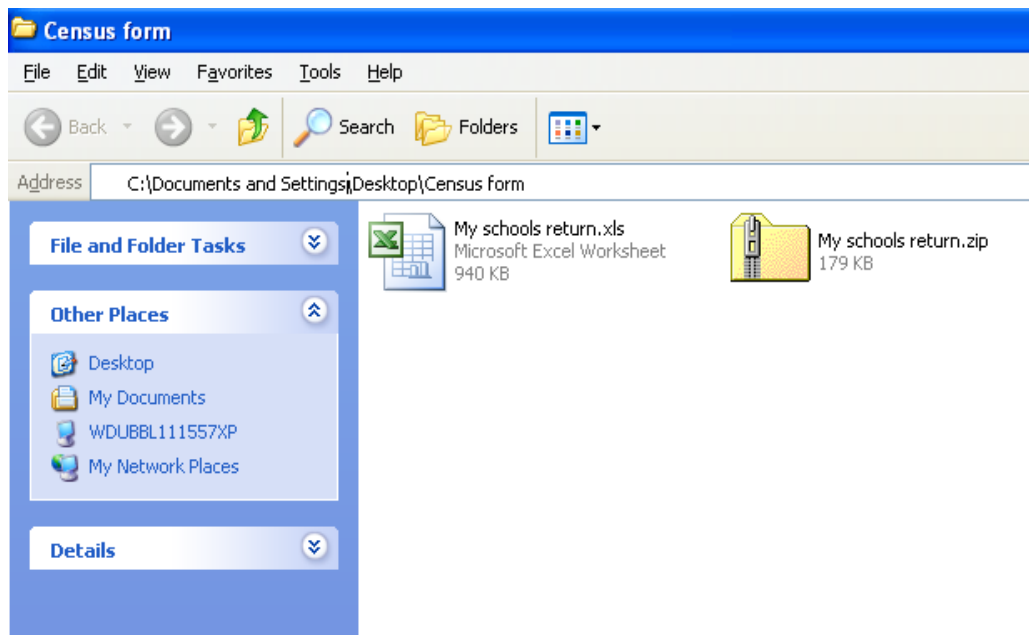
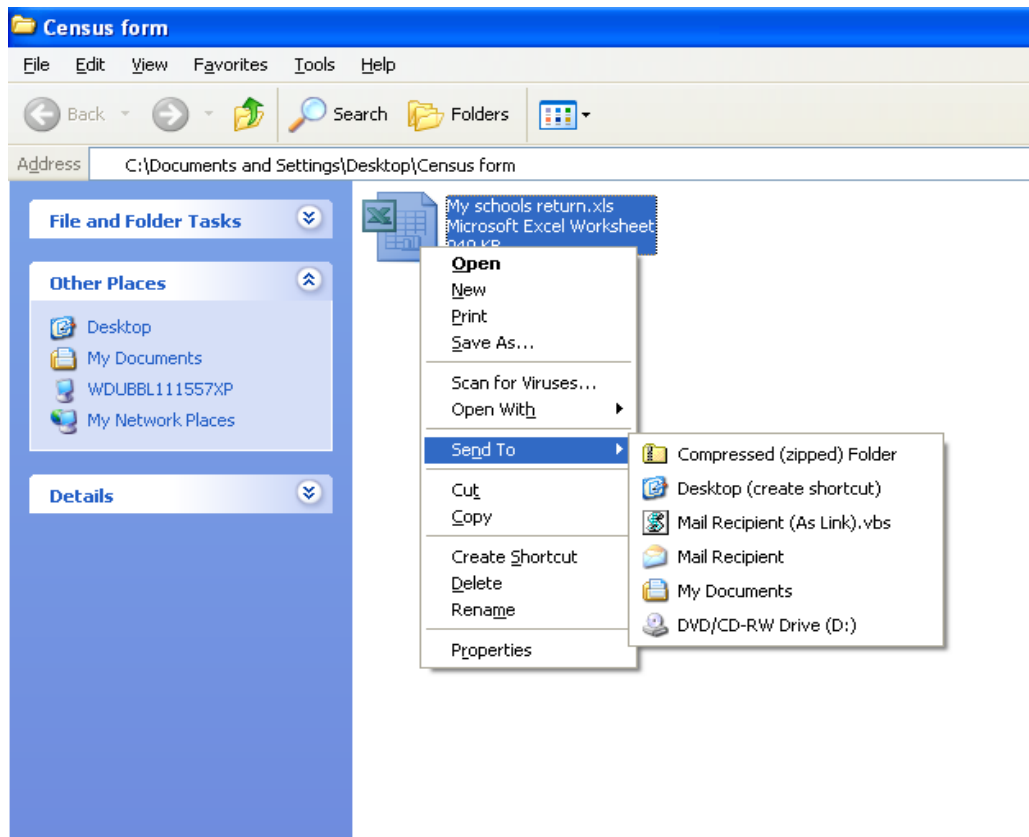
Q: My school's internet connection is slow; will this affect my ability to fill in and return the form?

A: Internet connection is only required when downloading the form and e-mailing it back to Statistics section. Once the form is downloaded to a PC it can be fully or partially filled in and saved, without the need to access the internet. Also, the overall size of the form has been minimised in order to facilitate timely downloading and attaching of the form to an e-mail even in areas with slower connections.

Some schools with satellite broadband or slower internet connections may find that it may take a number of minutes to attach the form to the e-mail when e-mailing their return back to the Department.

The time taken to attach the form may be reduced by compressing the file and returning it to the Department in compressed form. To do this:

- 1) Go to where you have the form saved on your PC (Desktop, My Documents or wherever you have chosen to save it). **Note that the form should not be open at this time.**
- 2) Right click on the form. A menu will appear, as shown in the images overleaf.
- 3) Scroll down the menu to the “Send to...” option. A sub-menu will appear.
- 4) Click on “Compressed (zipped) folder”. A file will appear in the folder with the extension *.zip. This file will be much smaller and will take less time to attach to an e-mail.



Section 4 Signature Page

SPECIAL SCHOOL ANNUAL CENSUS 2017/2018

Once the Special School Annual Census form has been completed this page should be printed and then signed by both the School Principal and the Chairperson (or Manager) of the Board of Management (BOM) for returning to the address below:

Statistics Section
Department of Education and Skills
Block 2
Marlborough Street
Dublin 1

Note that delays in returning this page (duly signed) may result in delays to payments to schools

Roll No. Roll N	Boys	Girls	Total Number of Pupils
TOTAL PUPILS (as of 29/09/17)	0	0	0

As with previous years schools are reminded that pupils retained on the school register for the purpose of compliance with the Education and Welfare Act, 2000 but who are no longer in attendance at the school on 30 September, 2015 must not be counted towards valid enrolment and therefore should not be included on the Census form.

<p>I certify that the particulars set forth in this return are correct.</p> <p>Signature of Principal Teacher:</p>	<p>I have examined this return and believe that the particulars set forth are correct.</p> <p>Signature of Chairperson (or Manager) of BOM:</p>
<p>School Name and Address:</p>	<p>Address:</p>
<p>School Telephone Number:</p>	<p>Telephone Number:</p>
<p>Date:</p>	<p>Date:</p>