SCHOOL COUNCIL REPORTS

AUGUST, 2015

Vision

“The Berwick Fields School Council is striving for a forward thinking team who share ideas and experiences by undertaking meaningful projects alongside the students and wider school community”

Mission

To create a learning environment which allows for our school community to continually grow and develop so that all members have an opportunity to achieve their best.

Values:

Respect, Co operation, Friendliness and Enthusiasm.

➢ Managing self and relations with others

Principles

Values

• The school’s values need to be reflected in the way individuals interact.

Culture

• The school environment must positively influence the development of social competence. Success is defined as achievement of personal best.

Links

• Individuals are empowered by understanding the links between learning, thinking, emotions and behaviour.

Self

• Personal responsibility for each person’s own wellbeing is fostered.

Prevention and Safety

• People who work in safe and secure environments have the best chance to develop a positive mindset and attitude.

This report focuses on Student Welfare, Staff Welfare, Parent Welfare, Annual Implementation Plan, Integration Program, Occupational Health and Safety and Uniform.
Health and Wellbeing Team Meetings
The Health and Wellbeing Team has met in Term Two on a couple of occasions. Everyone on the team is enthusiastic about the health and wellbeing of all students, staff and families in our school community. Earlier in the term the meeting consisted of the team looking more closely at effectiveness of our current Wellbeing programs that we support and promote within our school.

Connect Groups
Connect groups have continued again into Term Three. We have seen some great progress with our students in our Connect program with the consistency of having just one regular Chaplain. We distributed feedback forms to our previous group participants and we received some really great feedback in relation to the effectiveness of the Chaplaincy program in Term 2. Kylie has started her new groups now and they are now well and truly settled into the new program. Kylie is working steadily with 45 students in various groups through Prep – Grade 6. Also we have Captain Eric working with a specialised Boys Group of 12 Grade 4 boys on Fridays. This group is working on social and emotional skills, team work etc through hands on activities.

CHIPS Chaplaincy
We had our CHIPS Mill Valley Ranch Away day in Term 2 on June 22nd which was attended by 16 of our students. The day was fantastic and all of the kids had a really fun day out!

Student Behaviour
Our Rethink database shows the collection of behavioural incidents occurring across the school resulting in a Rethink, Timeout or Warning. Our data related to behaviour management reflects the work that our classroom teachers and yard duty teachers put into making our learning and playing spaces as safe and effective as possible. The following strategies are in place to improve the behaviour of students at Berwick Fields:

- School Values of Respect, Friendliness, Cooperation and Enthusiasm
- You Can Do It! Foundations of Organisation, Getting Along, Persistence, Resilience and Confidence
- Encouraging our children to be ‘Cool Calm Kids’ in all situations by using the ‘3 Step Telling Rule’ and other strategies from the Bully Busters program and to problem solve with the 4 Steps of Communication
- Behaviour Management Plans for student identified ‘at risk’

The following graphs give an indication of our comparisons between Semester One & Semester 2 school behavioural incidents (to date).
One of the goals in Health & wellbeing is to continue to build the capacity in our classroom teachers when working through discipline scenarios with our students and maintain consistency of wellbeing processes across the school. We hope to continue to develop their confidence and bank of strategies for problem solving, effective, communication to all parties through Restorative Practices.

**Student Support Group Meetings (SSG)**
As we approach the mid way point of term 3 we currently have Lara and our teachers and Education Support (ES) staff working through and convening the Student Support Group meetings for the families of our students funded through the Program for Students with Disabilities. These meetings have involved evaluating students’ previous goal achievement and setting future goals for students focussing on their individual learning needs. Following the SSGs we have sought feedback from all parties involved about the effectiveness of this process to inform our future meetings.

**Student First Aid Training**
On Tuesday 28th and Wednesday 29th July, all classes participated in a 45 minute Student First Aid session which was provided to us free of charge. This was a wonderful age related learning opportunity, targeted at building their awareness in being able to:
- identify emergency situations,
- call for help,
- keep themselves safe
and for the senior students, basic information regarding CPR.
Mindfulness _ Michael Shaw
For the next 7 weeks each Tuesday our Grade 5 students will be involved in a speciality program that is to be delivered by Michael Shaw (Bully Busters) our presenter. It is aimed at improving student’s mindfulness of social situations and has some elements of meditation. It will run in the immersion room for groups on Tuesdays. This was a free program offered to us as a pilot program.

Buddy Bear Program
This term we are having 3 more Buddy Bear chairs being made to add to our playground areas. As part of the Grade 6 giving back program they have developed a training video and will be circulating our playgrounds and classrooms teaching other students how to effectively use the Buddy Bear stops. We are looking to have our Buddy Bear Day where we all dress up in purple on Friday 4th of September if that is approved by school council? It is of no cost to the students they simply wear purple to school on the Friday. Our idea is to have the Buddy Bear Day connected to the Open Night and use the costume that we hire to promote the program to our families.

Mandie Boelen, Kerrie Romey, Lara Schendzielorz, Carol Baillie and Chantelle Pereira.
Health and Well Being Leaders

➢ Enabling individuals and groups to act effectively in the world

Principles

Community Building
• Building links with your community strengthens access to additional learning opportunities.

Contribution
• To ensure learners have a purpose for learning we need to provide them with opportunities to use their new knowledge, skills and personal qualities to make a difference to our society.

Social Intelligence
• The school actively contributes to the development of human and social capital in the community in order to support student learning.

Partnerships
• Parents and adult advocates are seen as partners in their children’s learning and are encouraged to engage themselves in understanding the nature of learning and the complexities of schooling.
• Students are seen as active partners in Learning and Teaching.

Team Action Learning
• Professional Learning teams are used to provide the structure which significantly contributes to a learning community culture within the school.
Commitment
- The school community is committed to students and their learning and are of the belief all people can learn.

This report focuses on Professional Development, Community Involvement & Building, Personal/Professional Development Planning, Parent Participation, Publicity, Student Leadership Development and Professional Learning Teams.

Vision: We are striving to build positive relationships that embrace and connect within and beyond our school community.
Mission: To make links and develop partnerships within the school and wider community so that the contributions we make are of value.

Community Connections – A day in the garden collaborating with Boeing and the SAKG Foundation

More than 25 volunteers from Boeing Aerosstructures Australia and the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden (SAKG) Foundation joined students and staff for a working bee in the school’s garden. The teams worked to refresh the vegetable planter boxes and prune the fruit trees that supply the school’s kitchen.

“**The program is a fantastic way to introduce our over 1100 students to fresh produce, teach them how it is grown and how to cook healthy, natural meals from an early age**” Berwick Fields Primary School program co-ordinator Donna Figlostone said.

“It was fantastic for our staff and students to interact with Boeing employees, and we were able to achieve significant progress in further developing the garden.”

Boeing Aerosstructures Australia managing director Mike Dickinson said his company had been "humbled" by the way the Berwick Fields students took to the activities.

Family Engagement –

The Parents Victoria Annual Conference is on August 26th. We are looking to send a couple of parents along to participate in this valuable event. So far, no one has taken up the offer so the door is open to all.
The Father’s Day sub-committee is getting ready for this event (Sep 2nd) which will run akin to this year’s Mother’s Day. All previous unsold items will be donated to all classrooms and used for a ‘pampering’ experience. New items bought this year will be sold on the day and any left overs sold on Friday 4th of Sep, after school.

10th Anniversary Celebrations

Our first meeting took place on Thursday 30/07 with a healthy representation of teachers and parents who mapped out events to be celebrated throughout 2016, starting with a carnival/fete in March. The oval has been booked with Casey Council and the paperwork to follow. Our next meeting will take place on August 13th at 3.30
pm in the staffroom. We are still looking for more people interested in joining a group who to ‘drive/commit’ to a project, or two.

**Community Singing Group –**

The inaugural meeting saw eighteen parents and their children join in the singing group. Lots of fun and beautiful tones were experience on Friday afternoon. We are still looking to add more members and welcome all staff, parents and friends who would like to share in the community spirit. We meet in the PAC, for a quick cuppa, at 3.30 for an hour each Friday afternoon.

**Kinder to Prep Transition –**

Our transition program continues to grow in strength. The visits to the library have concluded now as have those in the Prep classrooms. These activities have, once again, been a success thanks to the wonderful work carried out by the library staff and classroom teachers. In the next couple of months the kinder groups will be able participate in both garden and kitchen activities where they’ll be treated to engage with more ‘hands on’ opportunities. In addition, the Math’s Mentors will be taking a number of our grades across to work 1:1 with the kinder children and enjoy a variety of ‘Pizza Math’s activities.

**Primary to Secondary Transition –**

Kambrya College will offer extra sessions, starting earlier that the prescribed time, to students who have additional needs. This is to help with addressing any identifiable issues and aid with the year 6 – 7 transition. Kambrya College is also engaging with our Grade 5/6 students with a free band concert to be held in the PAC this month as well as hosting our students to see their stage show, ‘Aladdin’.

**School Grounds for Learning –**

Students have worked creatively and collaboratively by waterproofing and painting all the suggestion boxes for our school community to use in the yard. Russell, our friendly maintenance staff member, will work his magic by adding posts and adapting the boxes so that they can stand strategically in the school grounds for individuals to post their comments/suggestions. With the help of the JSC the mail will be collected in a timely manner and together with SGFL suggestions acted upon.

**Work Experience**

Concluded for this year.

**JSC –**

To be presented at Monday’s School Council meeting.

**Book Week – 17/08 – 21/08**

The JSC members have been busily organising Book Week asking the community to donate any books they no longer want which will then be distributed to support families and community centres around the City of Casey. The week will culminate in a free ‘dress up as your favourite book character day’ which will be linked at no cost.

**Food Drive – Berwick Food Pantry 27/07 – 14/08**
JSC Rep has the opportunity to visit the Berwick Food Pantry which is located across the road at the Berwick Church. The students are collecting non-perishable goods and will deliver it to the Berwick Church of Christ to be distributed to local families.

**Policies**
In conjunction with the Community Development Learning Community we have been reviewing relevant policies for council approval. The Communication Policy and Community Consultation Policy are tabled in next week’s meeting agenda for School Council to approve. Thereafter, the following policies will be submitted to School Council for approval.

- Family Involvement
- Fundraising
- Professional Development
- Sponsorship
- Student Leadership

It is envisaged that two policies will be tabled at each of the future Council meetings, this year.

_Suzy Gaymer_
Community Development Leader

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**Essential Learnings**
Together We Achieve

➢ Understanding the world in which we live in

**Principles**

**Responsibility**
- Give the learner increasing responsibility and ownership for their learning.

**Future**
- Learning is increasingly global, adaptable to change and enabled by technology.

**Learning**
- Knowledge, skills and behaviours need to be developed within and across disciplines in order to prepare students for success.

**Authenticity**
- School learning must be connected to life and career learning.

**Monitoring**
- Accurate monitoring and assessment of progress is essential.
Pedagogical Intelligence

- If you know 'how to learn' then this knowledge can be applied to a variety of situations.

This report focuses on: VELS Implementation, Literacy (including Early Years), Numeracy (including Early Years), Middle Years, Learning Technologies, Environmental Education, Extended Learning, Annual Implementation Plan and Special Programs.

Grade Professional Learning Teams

Foundation

Term 3 will be very busy for our Preps. We will be starting our swimming program in week 4. This will run over Tuesdays and Thursdays for four weeks. We are all very excited to go swimming and have been busy preparing for this big event. We have discussed how we can be organised during swimming by writing lists of what we need to remember to bring along. We have also discussed the importance of our other You Can Do It! values. The swimming program is a wonderful teaching opportunity for these values as they will be essential for a happy and successful time! We are looking forward to supporting our students to increase their independence, confidence, resilience, persistence and organisation during the swimming program.

This Term our Preps will also experience their very first school Mini Fete. We have all been working hard to prepare for our stalls and the fete experience. Being our very first Mini Fete, we will be preparing our students with the skills needed to have a happy and fun time! We will be role playing shops so students have the experience of being a shop keeper and customer, looking at the Mini Fete catalogue to make wish lists and plans of what we would like to buy, familiarising ourselves with the school map so we know where certain stalls and activities are on the day, identifying coins and experiences with money to support students in handling money on the day. We are looking forward to supporting our Prep students in this meaningful and authentic learning experience!

We have also just celebrated our 100 Days of School! From our very first day we have been counting each day of school and tracking it with a sticker. Our 100th day was Friday 31st July. We celebrated with games and activities all based on the theme ‘100’. Some activities included recording how many star jumps, sit ups and push ups you can do in 100 seconds, making a tall tower with 100 cups, making a structure with 100 Lego pieces, making a 100 Days Crown and writing about what you will look like or do when you are 100 years old.

In Mathematics this term Preps are focusing on numbers 11-20 (recognising, counting collections and sequencing). We are also focusing on Measurement including Length and Height, Mass and Capacity. To improve our teaching capacity and our professional knowledge we have committed to using part of our PLT meetings to moderating some student Maths assessments. Our purpose in doing this is to ensure we create rich discussion about our Maths teaching and our students learning and also to ensure we all have the same understandings of Maths assessment. In English this term we have a focus on Phonemic Awareness including identifying initial, medial and final sounds in words. We are also continuing our focuses on learning reading strategies and learning to write through meaningful experiences (such as writing recounts and lists about swimming, 100 Days of School and Mini Fete and writing personal responses to the texts we view and read). Our Term 3 inquiry topic is ‘Under the Sea’. Students will gain an understanding of how actions and changes can affect ocean life now and in the future. We are also continuing our learning of Japanese. This term we are revising our greetings and counting to ten as well as focusing on saying ‘My name is…’; ‘I am….. years old’ and learning the names of colours in Japanese.
In Term 3, PLT1 are doing their integrated unit “From the Farm to the Table.” We intend to look at the topic from the science based angle of “change” – i.e. how our food is grown, cultivated, processed and prepared. As part of this unit, the Year 1s will be involved in planting crops in the garden – with the aim of having a harvest (and a food celebration) towards the end of the year. The children will also be learning about “taking responsibility” for their crops by maintaining their grade’s patch. As this is an integrated unit, The children will have the opportunity to develop their knowledge of procedural texts by engaging in some cooking and science based activities using different foods. Similarly, in mathematics, the children will have the opportunity to develop their understandings of money at the Commonwealth Bank Dollarmite Incursion and whole school Mini Fete. We also intend to develop the children’s understanding of measurement and capacity through our gardening and food based activities. Finally, the highlight in Week 7, the Grade 1s will get to go to Chesterfield Farm and see how food is produced on farms first hand. Among other things, the children will get to see cows being milked and ride on a tractor. This will enhance the children’s understandings about food and farming and will be an exciting and positive learning experience that they’ll remember this year!

Term 3 looks to be a busy working term for PLT 2. Each class is busy preparing their stall for the Mini Fete and many of us are collaborating with our buddy grades to do this. We’re using our powers of persuasive and transactional texts to inform the school community of our school. Our knowledge of Australian currency is being developed each day at school so that we can decide how to spend our money at the Mini Fete.

We are also learning about how our past affects our future with a focus on households. We began this inquiry by having an ‘olden days’ gallery where students saw how household objects have changed over time. We are learning about what households were like in past centuries and what they look like today. This information will be used to help us make predictions about what households in the future might be like. Students have been very inquisitive as to how food was cooked without electricity and how people cleaned their clothes without a washing machine! This eye opening inquiry is showing us just how difficult life must have been in the past! As we look towards the end of the year, we will begin making plans for the Grade 2 sleepover and the possibility of a curriculum linked excursion in Term 4.

Term 2 finished off very well in Grade 3. We had some major highlights including the excursion to the Melbourne Museum, where we were specifically investigating the topic of indigenous Australians. We also set up an Aboriginal Expo in the final week of term so that students could showcase their Aboriginal shelters, boomerangs, slide shows and various art works. We opened up all our classrooms for an afternoon and many parents and grandparents took the opportunity to come along and see the displays. The boys and girls were also given the chance to visit each other’s’ grades to view the work. The feedback we received from the students was that they enjoyed this topic very much and judging from their writing reflections at the end of the term, they learned a great deal too.

Something that worked very well for us throughout Semester One was our rotating groups. Students went to different teachers within our area to work on Performing Arts, Creativity and Design, and Science and Technology. We all agreed to continue this and in Semester Two we are offering Science, Japanese, and Destination Imagination. This is a program introduced to us by Kate Malone and involves students in activities requiring team building and problem solving skills. Students are given challenges to complete which require them
to find solutions to a given situation. They need to use team work and creativity to solve each challenge. Students are only limited by their own imaginations.

This term, our inquiry unit focuses on creativity and design with students coming up with their own invention either to solve a problem, create something new, or make an improvement to an existing idea. Students will be required to: 1. Document their idea, 2. Research their market, 3. Make a prototype (eg, do a drawing or make a 3D model), 4. File a patent, 5. Market it and 6. Assess the effectiveness of their idea. We are all very enthusiastic about this topic and had a lot of fun developing the concept during planning day.

A couple of other big events will be coming up for us this term. This includes Hoop time, the Mini Fete and of course the Grade 3 camp to Phillip Island. A special thanks to Danni Hoffinger for all the time and effort she has put into the organisation of the camp. We have also just completed our student-led conferences where we were all very proud of how well our students explained to their parents, “How am I taking responsibility for my own learning?” This was our guiding question.

Like last term, we have had another change to staffing within the Grade 3 area. We were sad to lose Fiona Lardner who made many wonderful contributions to our team. We wish her well and hope she enjoys her well-earned long-service leave. We welcome Emily Danby as Fiona’s replacement and just as Sharon Anamalay and Kate Malone did last term, Emily has already slotted in seamlessly to our team culture. Great job, Emily! I would like to extend my congratulations to all PLT 3 teachers and support staff, including Mercedes Barany and our fabulous mentor, Anita Green, for the enthusiastic and highly professional way they go about their business on a daily basis. It is a fantastic team to work with!

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**Grade Four**

**Luke Batchelor and Hayley Adie**

The big idea at the heart of Grade Four’s learning this term is ‘How do we rely on each other?’ The thematic focus of the unit revolves around an analysis of living things and the environments they inhabit. Students have begun exploring a variety of scenarios that examine the materials of our Earth and how they are used. This has challenged students to make connections with the interrelationship all living things share. This has led to some powerful learning about how they can implement change and have a tangible effect on their surroundings. Their investigations in this area will be supported by their learning in English, as students develop an understanding of how to persuade an audience, distinguish between fact and opinion and refine their ability to research and summarise texts from a variety of sources. Students will create a combination of persuasive and informational texts as well as poetry to apply the skills and techniques learned in texts that highlight how we rely on each other.

In Mathematics students will be furthering their understanding of computation by examining in more detail multiplication elements with a specific focus on multiplicative reasoning. They will continue to build upon existing knowledge and begin to apply this across a variety of open ended tasks. Geometric reasoning will be examined as students get hands on with perimeter, area, volume and capacity. Problem solving concepts and strategies are being revisited and extended, with students actively engaging in tasks that continue to foster critical thinking and the application of a variety of plausible strategies. Students will also begin their exploration of chance factors and money as we anticipate the up-coming Mini Fete.

With a successful camp to Sovereign Hill, an excursion to Werribee Zoo in the coming weeks, the Mini Fete and a thought provoking Inquiry focus; Term 3 in Grade Four is shaping up to be extremely exciting!

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**Grade Six**

**Sam Knight**
It’s been another busy term for PLT6 with our Grade 6 students now less than two terms away from their big transition to secondary school. Students attending independent schools have places confirmed and places at state secondary schools will be communicated to parents later this month.

This term the Grade 6s are undertaking an inquiry around the questions ‘What is my impact on the world?’ and ‘Is there a better way?’ to learn about sustainability and our impact on the environment. A highlight of this unit will be our excursion to Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve on Monday 17th August where the students will undertake a field trip, learn about the habitat at the reserve, the impact on the helmeted honeyeater population in the area and be involved in a habitat restoration project – planting a full suite of plants to restore an endangered ecological community essential for the survival of the helmeted honeyeaters. We are fortunate to have the opportunity to partner with the volunteer group heading up the habitat restoration project and a big thanks goes to Ben Boersma for great networking at the Zoos Victoria Hall of Fame dinner. They are excited to be working with us and about positive impact such a large group can have by working together planting vegetation and we are excited by the many, many learning opportunities afforded to our students – what a great partnership!

Our team captains are excited to be heading up a new Health and Wellbeing initiative at Berwick Fields and have been working hard with Wayne Spilsbury and Dale Mills to create a promotional video to share with students across the school. Beginning in mid term 3, Grade 6 students will be rostered on to man the Buddy Bear Program ‘friendship seats’ around the school and offer support and assistance to younger students in the playground who experience conflict or need help finding someone to play with. They will receive basic training from teachers about how they can help with simple issues and when to refer the matter to a yard duty teacher. By wearing a purple vest, they will be them recognisable as ‘on duty’. It has been great to have so many community members involved in this project so thanks to the many people who have supported its development and implementation.

At the end of last term we celebrated two wins at the interschool sports Lightning Premiership Competition, the boys soccer and girls netball. Congratulations to those teams for progressing to divisional. Term 3 brings a new selection of interschool sports which the students are most excited about! This semester they have the choice of cricket, volley stars, rounders, soft ball and basketball. They spend one hour a week this term training, two hours per week next term playing ‘practise matches’ against other schools and then roughly two thirds of students participate in the Lightning Premiership round robin day in late term 4 determining the winner in our district in each sport. The Lightning Premiership teams are selected based on active participation, good sportsmanship and general school behaviour – a great motivator to do the right thing and try one’s best! We would also like to congratulate Lorenzo from 6G for being selected to represent Victoria at the National Rugby Championships in Darwin in August. What an achievement – well done Lorenzo!

This term we are farewelling our teacher of 6B, Jess Norder, as she embarks on the adventure of being a new mum! We wish her and Marco well on the safe arrival of their baby and look forward to meeting their little one soon. To replace Jess for the remainder of the year, we welcome Emily Roberts, a new teacher to our school. We look forward to getting to know Emily as we make the most of the final semester of primary school and set our students up for success into the future.

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**Specialist Programs**

**Kitchen**

Leanne Vancuylenberg and Emma Griffiths

This term has seen the commencement of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen program for Grade 5’s and the Grade 4 students. The students have been busy developing their goals that they wish to work towards during their
kitchen classes, discussing the format of the program and participating in activities to develop their awareness of the role of safety procedures in the kitchen.

All grade 5 classes are experiencing 2hr. weekly kitchen classes. Menus are being run fortnightly on even weeks, with this week being the commencement of the menu program. The students will be working in their groups under the guidance of a volunteer who will be acting as their ‘cooking mentor’ and watching out for their safety as they consolidate their knife and utensil skills. Master classes are held on odd weeks and during these sessions the focus is on skill development. Most students are demonstrating enthusiasm towards the program and they are showing an interest in learning about new foods and cooking techniques.

Some master classes will include:
- Cheesy Vegetable Muffins
- Vegetable Burgers
- Pastry dishes
- Pumpkin, Sweet Potato and Leek Soup
- Potato & Rosemary Pizza

Grade 4 students also participating weekly for 1 hour. With the focus being still on the development of their skills and learning the names and uses of kitchen utensils and equipment. As a result all sessions are Master Classes.

Some master classes will include –
- Kebabs
- Various Salads
- Vegetable Stir Fry
- Muesli Bar Slice
- Savoury Scrolls

Last Monday saw us participate in catering for the Community Working Bee that involved volunteers from both Boeing and the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation spending the day working in the garden. Special mention must go to the students in grades 5A, 5B and 5C who helped prepare Mini Quiches that were served for the Morning Tea. The students in 5C then used their Monday kitchen lesson time to not only complete their own menu but also to cater for the 30 adults who sat down to a scrumptious lunch prepared by the students using fresh vegetables that had been harvested from the garden.

Anyone who has participated in a ‘kitchen class’, will know first hand that the success of such a program would not be possible without the support of a team of dedicated volunteers. We now have approximately 20 volunteers who assist with one and in some case two classes each week. Our volunteer group is made up of parents, grandparents and SSOs from within the school.

We have received many positive and encouraging comments from parents who tell us that their children are sharing their kitchen experiences at home. Many children are cooking on the weekend because they want to share with their families some of the meals that they have enjoyed in kitchen class.
The kitchen atmosphere is continuing to be one of great excitement and enthusiasm. It is enormously gratifying for us to work in an environment where children are experiencing success on a daily basis and developing a real sense of achievement as their dishes are served and enjoyed by others.

**Garden**

With the assistance of various staff members working a roster to look after the chickens during the school holidays they were well cared for and despite going through a period when they weren't laying eggs we are now enjoying a resurgence in egg production. The chickens are a highlight for all the students and they delight in being able to recognise and name any of the chickens on display.

As we are commencing the start of this term with a new group of students, we renew their garden licences with a focus on safety in the garden and using the tools correctly. The students complete a practical test on the correct use of a wheelbarrow and a tool test (orally for Grade 4 and written for Grade 5) that focuses on the names of various tools, what they are used for and how to use them safely in the garden. Due to a few timetable interruptions, we have needed to extend the normal two week program over the first three weeks.

During last term Stephen received an email from the Stephanie Alexander Foundation related to the offer of a corporate working bee for our school. This was then referred on to us and Donna eagerly took on the challenge of organising it all. To say it was a mammoth task was an understatement, but one look into the garden shows how much work was achieved in the one day last Monday 27th July. Despite early showers the group from the Boeing Corporation, and a smaller group from the SAKG Foundation, arrived full of enthusiasm and were soon eagerly tackling various tasks set up by Donna. Our usual grades of students were also involved and greatly benefitted from the friendly approach of the visitors. Ben and his Grade 6 students also spent the whole day working on the wetland area, which now has a brand new landscaped garden area complete with a gravel path for the students to stroll through. Donna had managed to locate some new apple crates from a parent with contacts in the company and these were delivered in time for groups of the helpers to use as replacements for the many dilapidated ones previously in the garden. Another task that been on our wish list for a long time was to create some tyre art sculptures in the garden area. Once again, Donna was able to source some old tyres from a parent to use in the project. This was eagerly undertaken and we are the now the proud owners of a layered garden bed, a large red spotted ladybird and a green frog with enough spare tyres to complete the set with a minion. The hungry group were well fed by Emma and Leanne in the kitchen with various grades of students preparing quiches for morning tea and then soup, salad and hamburgers for lunch. The visitors were also taken on guided tours of the school by a couple of volunteer school leaders during the lunch break and were very impressed by their confidence and the uniqueness of our school surroundings. The whole event was a resounding success, due mainly to Donna and her painstaking organisation.

The program for the rest of the term is a repeat of the program in term one and two with some variations due the differing age groups.

**Week 4**

**Vegetable identification**

It had been noticed that many of the students found difficulty recognising the plants that we harvest common vegetables from, therefore, our focus this week will be vegetable identification. We classify the vegetables into three groups depending on the part of the plant we eat and using vegetable plants from the garden the students will be shown both the vegetable and the plant leaves. This is particularly important for root vegetables as no part of the vegetable is visible above the surface.
All the students will be introduced to working in Cooperative Learning Teams, where each member of the team was given a specific role to fulfil. This ensured that each student becomes an integral part of the team and to be fully successful in their tasks, they needed to function as a team.

**Week 5**
Herb identification – the students have a very limited knowledge of herb recognition and so this session will be focused on demonstrating some of the common herbs and how they can be used in the kitchen.

**Week 6**
Insect investigations - Friend or Foe
We will investigate the different ‘mini beasts’ present in the garden and whether they are a Friend or Foe to the garden. Using some identification charts, borrowed from the Environmental Education room, the students will able learn to visually identify and then learn the names of familiar, and some unfamiliar, garden creatures. Using the Internet for research we are able to clarify which creatures are beneficial for the garden and those that needed to be discouraged. The students will then able to search the garden areas looking to see how many of these creatures can be located in the garden.

**Week 7**
How can we protect our crops?
This session will continue on from the previous week, as we will now able to recognise which harmful creatures were present in the garden and what type of damage they were doing. We can then discuss what ways could be found to protect the plants, particularly the seedlings, from any further destruction. Once again, we can use the Internet for research and find out what environmentally friendly ways there are to protect the plants. During this week and the following week we will be hosting kinder groups in the garden. There will be four groups each week and our students greatly benefit from the interaction with the younger students. The rapport that develops between the students has great benefits for all of the students. They usually do a scavenger hunt and then our students will help the kinder students to plant a rosemary cutting for them to take home.

**Week 8**
Food miles
We will look at packets from various commonly used food items and see where they come from. Using a World map we can then demonstrate the distance that they have travelled, and the possible additional costs involved. A discussion about the importance of growing our own food and buying locally will give the students the opportunity to think about where the food that eat comes from.

Students can write down where they buy their vegetables from and then estimate the food miles for one vegetable.

**Week 9**
Companion planting and the needs of plants
We often need this last session to catch up with any other tasks not completed during the term due to timetable changes etc, however, this is the plan for the sessions should time allow. We will investigate what plants are considered companion plants and then compare this with our own planting in the garden. If time allows the students can play the Companion Planting Game. The main needs of plants are water, sun soil and food. The students will participate in two experiments:
- Experiment 1: How leaves lose their moisture
- Experiment 2: Sweating plants

**Open Garden**
Linking in with the Art Show on Thursday 3rd September, we will open the garden from 3.15 to 5pm. This will enable the school community to see for themselves the amazing new tyre sculptures and garden surroundings
that their students work in. Last term the Grade 6 students were involved in an activity where they wrote their own self-guided tours of the garden, so hopefully we will have some of these typed out and available for the garden visitors to use on the day.

**Environmental Education**

*Emma Griffiths and Emma Malinowski*

**Grade Prep**

The Grade Prep classes have been learning about the ocean. The main focus has been around how they can make a difference to the animals and plants that live there. We have worked hard with the Prep classes to give them the appreciation for the beach and ocean so that they feel inspired to care for it and encourage others to do so also. Throughout this term, we are looking at things we can do to make a difference, such as not littering, reducing the pollution we put down the sink, wearing biodegradable sunscreen when swimming in the ocean and educating others on the importance of caring for the sea.

**Grade One**

The Grade 1’s have been learning about Endangered Animals. We have focussed mainly on Australian Endangered animals so that they can develop their appreciation for local and national issues regarding animals. We have been looking at reasons why animals become endangered such as deforestation which results in loss of habitat, bush fires, hunting animals, wild and tamed dogs, introduced animals and disease.

**Grade Two**

The Grade 2’s topic this term is ‘Think Global, Act Local’. The purpose of the unit is for students to begin thinking about and identifying issues both globally and locally. They are learning to see issues that occur locally that may start small but over time can become large global issues. Furthermore, by understanding that local issues are a part of a larger global issue. Students are learning about how they can make a difference and work towards helping the environment. Things such as having Nude Food, cleaning up rubbish, using biodegradable washing detergents, following the composting program, planting trees are all examples of things students are coming up with to help the environment.

**I Sea, I Care**

At the end of Term 2, our Grade 6 Ambassadors travelled to Endeavour Hills to observe a local rubbish catchment being cleaned. It was a real eye opener to see how much litter is caught in one catchment and to think about the effects this rubbish would have had on our environment had it not been caught in the catchment. In the afternoon, students travelled to a local park along with several other schools to assist in planting trees and cleaning up rubbish from the park.

In Week 9 of this term, our Ambassadors will venture out on another excursion to Warneet.

**Nude Food**

Nude Food has continued again this term. We are still encouraging students to bring Nude Food lunches to school every day to reduce the amount of rubbish that we are producing at Berwick Fields.
We would like to congratulate 1C and Mrs Pitcher for being our Term 2 Nude Food winners. They had 880 Nude Food lunches in term 2. That is an amazing result! They have won a Fun Day with Mr Mills! Further congratulations goes to the following grades who were active participants in our Nude Food program in Term 2:

- Prep G and Miss Sparks – 670
- 3F and Miss Hofinger – 638
- 6F and Mrs Brew – 630
- Prep F and Miss Shorrock – 507
- Prep B and Miss Ward – 371
- Prep C and Miss McPhan – 295
- 5D and Miss Campbell – 230
- 2D and Mrs Flanagan – 217
- 4B and Miss Stone - 121

We hope to see ALL grades participating next term as it is a whole school initiative.

**Resource Smart**

In the last week of Term 2, Grade 6A and 6B went to CERES for an Energy excursion. Each grade completed three activities about renewable energy including a hands on activity where the students rode bikes for a minute as fast as they could to create energy. This was a great activity as the students were able to see the energy they were producing and then after that they used the energy by turning on a light, kettle and popped some popcorn in a microwave. The resource smart accreditation process is continuing and we are hoping to receive our next star for Energy this term.

**Performing Arts**

**Prep** - Students will be learning a variety of action songs and speech rhymes. They will use their singing voices during music games and songs and explore creative movement to a variety of songs. They will learn to keep a beat and will start to understand music terminology such as rhythm, pitch, melody and tempo. Students will continue to develop these skills next term.

**Grade 1** - Students in Grade One will build on their music knowledge from the previous year. This includes rhythm, pitch, melody and tempo as well as building on their knowledge of the instruments and how they are used. Students will have the opportunity to sing every week and learn a variety of action songs. In Drama, they will use their faces to show emotions and characters.

**Grade 3** - Students will focus on the elements of drama as they prepare for the Grade 3 production. They will begin to learn their item for the production, learning choreography, stage directions and lines for roles. Each week, students will develop their performance skills and learn a variety of techniques needed to perform in a production. The theme for this year's Grade 3 production is the Environment. Dates still to come, however, the production will take place early Term 4.

**Grade 6** - The Grade 6 students will not be participating in a production this year due to their other commitments. Students will focus on dramatic elements this term such as mime, voice, expression and stage directions. They
will then use these skills to work in groups to create a scripted performance. They will be given a blank script (no characters, no setting, just random lines) and create an entertaining scene, using the elements they have learnt.

The **Show Stopper Dance group** and the **Happy Harmonies** are busy rehearsing for a Casey Cluster Arts event. Students will perform with other schools in the Casey area at River Gum Performing Arts centre in Hampton Park on Wednesday 12th August at 7pm.

### Visual Arts

Michelle Ferguson and Sara Fleming

In **Visual Arts** we are currently very busy organizing and promoting the 2015 Berwick Fields Art Exhibition. Entry forms have been placed in the newsletters and will continue till the date of the event.

- **Preps** have been focusing on lines pattern and colour through activities such as weaving and using pastels.
- **Year 1** have looked at the artist Henri Rosseau and created Tigers using oil pastels in response. They have also been discussing the weather and colours in the environment around us and made rainy day, wax resist pictures.
- Students in **year 2** who have Mrs. Fleming have read the book Miss Spider’s tea party and have explored colour and pattern to create a stack of tea cups.
- Students in **year 2** who have Mrs. Ferguson have been looking at animals in aboriginal art in preparation for painting a mural near the SAKG. This was to be part of the Boeing/SAKGF working bee but the painting was cancelled due to wet weather – when there is a fine day, we will venture out to finish the mural as soon as possible.
- Students in **year 3** have been looking at perspective and planning a finished oil pastel drawing that will show their understanding. They have read the story, Frog in the Well and looked closely at the illustrations in preparation for their work.
- Students in **3E**, who have Mrs. Ferguson have also been looking at animals in aboriginal art in preparation for the mural near the SAKG.
- Students in **year 6** are looking at the art of human movement and are creating a body of work that depicts people in motion. So far they have sketched various poses using charcoal techniques and used cardboard models to create silhouettes of a person in a particular movement. They have also created models capturing people in movement using aluminum foil, as inspired by Giacometti. We hope that much of this work will be exhibited in the Casey State of the Arts exhibition at River Gum secondary college alongside a showcase of performing arts, however we are on a very short timeline with this.

### Language Other Than English (Japanese)

**Emma Malinowski**

*Konnichi wa! こんにちは This semester Emma Malinowski will be spending time in each Prep grade to assist the classroom teachers with their Japanese teaching (and learning). Term three so far has seen a lot of language being introduced to our foundation students.*
We have continued to introduce greetings such as good morning, (ohayo gozaimasu) おはよ ございます.

The students have also learnt how to introduce themselves by saying, watashi no name wa_____desu. わたしの なまえ は_____です。

This has been further extended by the students saying how old they are. Watashi wa gosai desu. わたし は ごさい です。

The students have been also introduced to colours and have made Japanese fans. The foundation students are enjoying these lessons and are picking up the language quite well!

**Language Support**

Week 1 was busily spent testing students and the Language Support Program officially began in Week 2. Here is what we plan to be working on during the term:

**Prep** students have started the Phonological Awareness program to develop phonological awareness skills, for example, consolidating names and sounds of alphabet letters, blending sounds together to hear words, hearing beginning, middle and end sounds of words and breaking words into individual sounds to assist writing.

**Grade 1** students will be developing reading and writing skills, for example, exploring narrative texts, learning strategies to decode tricky words, comprehension strategies to better understand what they are reading, hearing and recording sounds in words, writing sentences, developing handwriting and learning when to use capital letters and full stops.

**Grade 2** students will be developing reading and writing skills, for example, strategies to decode tricky words, comprehension strategies to better understand what they are reading, exploring narrative texts, editing writing so sentences make sense, spelling strategies and applying punctuation.

**Grade 3** students will be working on developing reading and writing skills, for example exploring procedural texts, spelling strategies, applying punctuation, checking that sentences make sense; and reading skills like working out tricky words, comprehending what is read as well as presenting to small groups.

**Grade 4** students will be working on developing reading and writing skills, for example exploring information report texts, spelling strategies, applying punctuation, checking that sentences make sense; and reading skills like inferring from text and how to check that they understand what they read.

**English as an Additional Language**

This term in ESL groups we have welcomed back Lisa Sargent following her maternity leave and the students now attend groups for two hours per week. We have continued to be involved in small group and one on one reading, writing and speaking listening activities.

In prep and grade one, we have continued to play games, sing songs, read stories and share our experiences. Many opportunities have been provided for students to be involved in rich language experience tasks to further develop their reading, writing and oral language skills. We aim to make the learning experiences fun and meaningful for the students to help build their confidence and love of learning.
The students in Grade two, three and four have continued to work hard in our small group sessions. Language Experience and Rich texts are used to assist students in learning about language. Activities have been planned to give students opportunities to practise their oral language, vocabulary, grammar and comprehension skills through varied speaking and listening, reading and writing activities.

Grade five and six students continue to be involved in targeted small group activities designed to help them further develop their oral language, reading and writing skills at their point of need. Rich language experiences which focus on vocabulary development, sentence structure, grammar and reading comprehension are central to our program and aim to help students develop the confidence and ability to fully participate in their classroom environment.

### Domains and Mentors

The mentor team have been working together to unpack the exemplary practices we hope to develop consistently across the whole school as identified in the strategic plan. We have collected evidence to develop a shared understanding of the teaching practices we value at Berwick Fields Primary School for the significant impact they have in raising student achievement.

Teaching practices that are being valued include:

- Promoting a shared responsibility for learning (goal setting, WALT)
- Understanding and teaching to the students’ individual needs
- Considering deeply what it is being taught
- Listening to the students’ voice
- Establishing and utilising a shared language for learning (GLB’s, success criteria)
- Providing authentic and meaningful feedback
- Clarifying and probing for understanding via questioning
- Linking to and being informed by the curriculum
- Differentiating the learning to cater for students’ individual needs
- Being data informed (summative and formative; tracking achievements, determine needs, identifying growth)
- Reflecting to reinforce learning
- Discussing and conferring with students
- Explicitly teaching skills, strategies and structures
- Offering learning choices
- Linking assessment, teaching and learning
- Scaffolding the learning (visual prompts)
- Promoting success, motivation and attitude

From here, our team is seeking to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement both personally and as a team reflecting upon how successful we have been at enacting these practices, within our current roles. We have identified an area in which we would like to develop our capacity as a team which we believe will have the greatest impact on developing teachers, students and teams that we work with.

The guiding question we are investigating is: How do we, at Berwick Fields Primary School use evidence to inform and evaluate? Through our investigations we will be working on:

- Developing a shared understanding of evidence based best practice
- What members our team already do in the way we collect evidence with the people we mentor?
- Develop strategies linking evidence in with PDP goals
- How effect sizes can be used as a strategy to inform and evaluate?
- Explore ways of involving students in developing assessment
- How can we develop
- Develop our capacity to differentiate assessments to meet the needs of all students

**Mathematics**

- The term has started off well with many classes having some sort of focus on money and/or time leading up to the mini fete.
- Tan and Anita are off to their second last EMU day this week where they will be sharing short videos to the group of a misconception picked up during an EMU lesson and discussing the learning needs of these students and planning for future lessons.
- We have just organised visit to the kinder for week 6 where the three of us will take over groups of students that we are working with over to the kinder to help the kinder kids complete a maths activity. They will have paper plates to make their own ‘pizza’ with cut up shapes and then a sheet to count and record how many of each shape they put on their pizza.

**English**

**Writing professional development with staff during 2015.**
The time space learning model used with the English focus on writing throughout 2015 allows teachers to develop their understanding of excellent practices. It is important to allow them to learn about new approaches, try things out in their classroom and come together to discuss findings as they continue to refine their craft in supporting children’s learning.

The teachers are to be commended for their continued engagement and professionalism in refining their craft and extending their own learning.

We have our third sessions planned for staff development in using the VCOP writing (Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers & Punctuation) and the Writer’s Notebook approach. The after school sessions will focus on developing and extending the writing approaches used across the school with staff from Prep to year 6 participating in either of the two programs offered.

**VCOP Writing**
The use of the VCOP criterion scale has been adopted as a whole school approach for the moderated assessment of writing from Prep to Year 6. All teachers meet 4 times a year to compare their assessment judgements in writing in order to develop consistency and a deeper understanding of achievement levels in this area of the English curriculum.

4 staff from across the school have been willing to share their excellent classroom practices with their colleagues at this upcoming professional development session which includes:

- Using VCOP assessment criterion scales to evaluate writing across the school,
- enhancing children’s writing attempts with a focus on individual goal setting for improvement,
- editing and proof reading work with an awareness of how to up-level writing in order to add detail and interest for the reader
- reflection on writing attempts and feedback to improve their skills in order to focus on their needs and develop a self-awareness of areas to improve
- using assessment data to develop explicit teaching opportunities with class teachers
Learning Focuses for Term Three

During the last week of Term Two our teachers were busy planning for all the exciting and engaging learning that will be taking place in Term Three. Below is a quick summary of what will be explored in each year level across this term.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inquiry Investigation</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Maths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prep</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Under the Sea</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ What lives in the ocean?</td>
<td>▪ Exploring different sounds in words.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ What makes the ocean a good place to live for the animals and plants there?</td>
<td>▪ Writing simple recounts (texts of events that have happened).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ What are the ways we can describe things?</td>
<td>▪ Writing lists, questions and answers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ▪ How does the environment, including the oceans, change? |   ▪ Using different reading strategies such as ‘tryin’ lion’, ‘skippy frog’ and ‘chunky monkey’.
| ▪ How do we impact on the ocean environment? |   ▪ Listening attentively and sharing ideas with the class. |
| ▪ How can we take responsibility to care for the oceans? |   ▪ Recognising and counting with teen numbers. |

| **Grade 1**           |         |       |
| **From the farm to the table** |         |       |
| ▪ Where does food come from? |   ▪ Reading and writing narratives (fictional stories) and procedural texts (such as recipes or experiments). |
| ▪ What is the purpose of farms? |   ▪ Using capital letters and full stops correctly in sentences. |
| ▪ What are the similarities and differences between different foods? |   ▪ Practising our letter formation. |
| ▪ How do foods change from the farm to the table? |   ▪ Skip counting by 2s, 5s and 10s to and from 100 |
| ▪ How can we grow food sustainably? |   ▪ Recognising and ordering numbers up to 100. |

**Excursion to Chesterfield Farm**

| **Grade 2**           |         |       |
| **Technologies of the past and future** |         |       |
| ▪ What are technologies that we have used in the past? (for transport, communication and around the home) |   ▪ Reading and writing of narrative texts (fictional stories). |
| ▪ How did these technologies change our community? |   ▪ Reading and writing transactional texts such as letters, diaries, telegrams, blog comments. |
| ▪ What elements of these technologies can we see in things we use today? |   ▪ Using capital letters and commas correctly. |
| ▪ What might our households and communities look like in the future? |   ▪ Editing and ‘uplevelling’ our work using our VCOP strategies. |
| ▪ How might our households and communities look like in the future? |   ▪ Building our vocabulary. |

| **** |         |       |
| **Berwick Fields** |         |       |

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### Inquiry Investigation

**Make it and sell it!**
- What leads people to buy new products?
- What is the difference between a want and a need?
- What are the steps in designing a new product?
- What does it mean to be ‘environmentally friendly’?
- How can we decide if a product is a good design or successful?
- How can we apply feedback and make improvements to products?

**Sustainable Products**
- How do the materials and resources become the things that we use?
- What is the impact of humans on the natural environment?
- What is our responsibility towards the environment?
- How do different views about the environment influence our approach to sustainability?

*Excursion to Werribee Zoo*

**Natural Disasters**
- What is our place in the world? Understanding the geography of the world around us.
- Why do people choose to live in dangerous areas?
- How do people adapt to the conditions of dangerous areas?
- How do people react to disasters?
- Do we have a responsibility as a first world country to support other countries?

### English

- Reading and writing narrative texts (fictional stories), including detail and description.
- Reading and writing procedural texts (such as how to build a product).
- Look at how visual texts (such as videos or advertisements) differ from written texts.
- Creating persuasive texts to ‘sell’ our products.
- Building our confidence when presenting in front of the class.

### Maths

- Revise addition and subtraction strategies.
- Investigate multiplication and division, especially the 2, 3, 5 and 10 multiplication facts.
- Work with money and count change to the nearest 5 cents.
- Tell time to the nearest minute
- Create surveys and represent the results on a graph.
- Explore the angles in shapes and around us.

### Grade 3

- Reading and writing narrative texts (fictional stories), including detail and description.
- Reading and writing procedural texts (such as how to build a product).
- Look at how visual texts (such as videos or advertisements) differ from written texts.
- Creating persuasive texts to ‘sell’ our products.
- Building our confidence when presenting in front of the class.

### Grade 4

- Use strategies to solve multiplication and division problems involving the number facts to 10 x 10.
- Use addition and subtraction strategies to solve problems involving money and providing change.
- Measuring length and mass using standard units of measurement, such as cm and kg.
- Find the area of different shapes.
- Read and provide directions when using maps.

### Grade 5

- Comparing and ordering fractions
- Adding and subtracting fractions with the same denominators
- Identifying and ordering decimals into the hundredths (such as 35.82).
- Using grid references and directions to describe places using maps.
- Calculating area and perimeter.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inquiry Investigation</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Maths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Science and Sustainability</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reading and creating persuasive texts to convince other people of our ideas.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Work with fractions and decimals including adding and subtracting fractions with similar denominators.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ What is my impact on the world?</td>
<td>▪ Developing public speaking and persuasion skills through debating.</td>
<td>▪ Making connections between fractions, decimals and percentages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ How can I make a difference to my impact?</td>
<td>▪ Reading and creating procedural texts (such as experiments).</td>
<td>▪ Finding and recording angles in different shapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ What are renewable resources and how can they limit our impact?</td>
<td>▪ Researching and summarising information.</td>
<td>▪ Constructing 3D shapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ What makes a good scientist?</td>
<td>▪ Understanding how authors try to influence us through advertising and the features of texts.</td>
<td>▪ Measuring length, area, volume and capacity using decimal numbers and the metric system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ How do we think scientifically?</td>
<td><strong>Science Fieldtrip Excursion</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Dale Mills**  
Essential Learnings Leader

- Improving the capacity of individuals, groups and the school to have a positive impact in the world.

**Principles**

**Support**
- Managing and monitoring learning is seen as a major responsibility of all community members.

**Improvement**
- The school must understand and use strategies that lead to sustained improvement.

THE EDUCATION STATE - School Consultation Paper

Last Monday I was invited to meet with our local member Judith Graley, along with other local Principals and educators, to help describe what ‘excellence in schools’ looks like and to discuss the challenges schools are currently facing. This information would be fed back to the group charged with the responsibility of developing a vision for ‘the Education State’. Obviously every school is different to each other but the common theme that came out of the discussion was the notion of ‘personal best’ and the role that students, parents and staff have in helping that to be achieved. The challenges were many but the main themes here were seen to be the escalating expectations that communities have of schools to ‘fix’ the problems of society (particularly in the mental health area) and the shrinking of school budgets that has occurred over the past few years, making it increasingly difficult for us to meet the needs of all our students (currently Victorian school funding is around $2,000 per student below the national average). Steve Bracks is currently chairing a steering committee to look into school funding and hopefully we will see the benefits of that in 2016.

WHAT WE’RE STRIVING TO ACHIEVE: EXCELLENCE

For all students, and in all fields of learning and development

THE IDEA IN ACTION

One of the characteristics that will define the Education State is the extent to which we define and embed excellence in every classroom, for every student.

Excellence isn’t just for most students, or some students. It’s about all students, from all backgrounds, and in all contexts - ensuring that all schools are schools of choice. It’s as much about the arts, the sciences, digital technology and internationalisation as it is about literacy and numeracy, and as much about extending the learning of our highest achievers as it is about ensuring all students rise above minimum standards.

Victoria has some outstanding examples of excellence, both in outcomes and practice.

Our Specialist Science Centres lead the world in connecting the academic community with scientific enquiry in our schools. Our Koorie Academy of Excellence supports indigenous students in Victoria’s north-west to build leadership, culture and academic excellence. And across our state we see examples of students redefining our expectations of what can be achieved in every Victorian school.

Building on a growing evidence base of “what works”, these examples and others have helped us to understand what excellent teaching looks like, and how it can lead to improved learning for all students. Schools across Victoria have taken such examples and honed their craft to a point where they deliver excellence for their students with a high degree of reliability; to the point where every lesson is of a predictably high quality.

But we know that such excellence is not currently experienced by all, it is not sufficiently well-defined, and we do not develop our teachers, leaders and support staff with the specific goal of attaining excellence.

Our examples of excellence remain isolated in small pockets, localized within individual schools and classrooms. We need to tap into these pockets and extend their reach throughout our system.
As part of the school consultation process a number of ‘prompting questions’ have been asked around the concept of defining what ‘excellence’ looks like in Victorian schools. On such question was:

‘How Can We Work Differently By Valuing Expertise?’

Provided below is the context to that question as well as a Case Study of a school that is seen to be having success in this area.

**HOW WE CAN CHANGE**

There are a number of strategies Victoria could pursue to overcome this isolation of excellence. For example, we can better describe and define what the stages of development towards excellent practice look like. Combined with professional learning and support to move from one stage of development to the next, teams of teachers, researchers and other professionals could build their knowledge and practice from beginning stages, through to agreed standards of excellence across our schools.

While there has been much discussion of standards at the national and international level, we can be more precise about what makes a great Victorian school.

At a minimum, such definitions would cover the basics of what we know about excellence from our most effective schools and classrooms, spanning curriculum planning, assessment and the use of data, models of teaching, team-based learning, governance and school management.

Victoria could also pursue new methods of sharing knowledge and building excellence, such as through expanding teacher specialisation. This work could help us reach a point of widespread agreement amongst principals, teachers, students and parents about what excellent schooling is and how we’ll recognise it when we see it.

**DISCUSSION STARTERS**

- Do we know enough about excellence in our schools to define it?
- How can the opportunities to experience excellence that are often available to some students through select entry and specialist programs be made accessible to all students in all schools?
- If we know what excellent practice looks like, how much room should there be for local customisation and autonomy?
- How do we share and grow excellence – what kinds of networks and information systems are required?

**HOW WE CAN WORK DIFFERENTLY: BY VALUING EXPERTISE**

An education system that values expertise is structured and strategic in the way it nurtures and develops its workforce, and draws on expertise across the community.

**THE IDEA IN ACTION**

Evidence from education systems like Ontario, Finland and Singapore tells us that the best school systems in the world make a sustained and focussed investment in the skills of their teaching workforce over time.

This investment reflects the value and trust that government and the community place in the expertise of their teachers.

By valuing expertise, teaching is a desirable and high status career.

Victoria has made some great starts in valuing expertise. The Bawstow Institute for Educational Leadership plays a pivotal role in developing the expertise of our school leaders, and recent work through the Teaching Academies project, which partners schools and universities to improve the quality of pre-service teacher education.

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority draws substantially on teacher and academic expertise in the design of Victorian curriculum and external assessment and is seeking to build on this collaboration in the coming years, including through greater use of technology.

There has also been significant success in developing teaching and learning coaches, as well as specialist roles, and in working with universities to improve the quality of Initial Teacher Education. But we could do much more to develop expertise within our system, to ensure access to expertise is equitable across our rural and regional areas, and to tap into the expertise that already exists within our communities.

As much as expertise is built in formal learning environments, we know that the impact of school-based professional learning can be much more powerful in delivering sustained changes in teaching quality than one-off experiences delivered outside of the classroom.

**HOW WE CAN CHANGE**

We know that the best education systems make a deliberate investment in the time that teachers have during the school day to develop expertise – to plan lessons together, observe each other’s teaching, to coach and be coached, and to support each other with structured and precise feedback about how to best improve students’ learning.
These systems ensure that their schools have a sophisticated and structured adult learning environment — they are systems where schools focus on their own learning so that they can always meet the needs for their students’ learning.

Students can also contribute their expertise to learning. The student’s voice and perspective is often the clearest and most compelling and each brings a unique set of skills and abilities to support their learning and the learning of their peers.

There are a range of models that can and are being used in schools to build students’ expertise in understanding their learning, including senior students tutoring junior students; students in the same year level forming partnerships to assist each other with both course content and personal concerns; discussion seminars; private study groups; buddy systems or counselling and peer-assessment schemes.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Is expertise sufficiently valued in our education system?
- Does Victoria need to be more deliberate about developing and recognising teaching and leadership expertise?
- What could we learn from an approach like the National Institute of Education (see case study), and are there any elements we could adopt in Victoria?
- Do we need a better school leadership pathway in Victoria?
- How do we better support students to develop expertise and share their expertise within their school?
- How do we ensure that expertise is shared across our system?

CASE STUDY

In-school mentoring to develop expertise

In 2012, a school in Melbourne’s outer south eastern suburbs introduced a ‘Maths Mentor’ program funded through the Primary Mathematics and Science Specialists initiative. At the end of 2013 when the initiative wound up, the school decided to continue the program with its own funds.

In 2014, the school extended the program with the addition of three English mentors. Six part-time mentors enabled every teacher in the school to have either an English or Maths mentor. Mentors are all drawn from existing staff.

For the first two years the main focus was implementing the new Australian Curriculum. The priority then switched to assessment and the effective use of data.

At the end of the second year the school was faced with a choice – continue the program or maintain current class sizes. Staff were surveyed and results were overwhelmingly in favour of the program continuing, with both staff and mentors reporting improved teacher knowledge and skills.

Teachers preferred the support of a mentor and were prepared to trade off smaller class sizes to ensure the mentors’ continued guidance.

The program recognises that differentiating instruction is a challenge for teachers so the mentor role is explicitly about building teacher capacity. The mentors have one data analysis, feedback and planning session with each teacher per week, as well as a session in the teacher’s classroom that may include lesson modelling, observation and/or team teaching, depending on the individual teacher’s development needs.

Now, in 2015, students’ literacy and numeracy outcomes have improved, but the principal believes there is still a way to go, with the focus now shifting to collaboration with high performing neighbouring schools to get a better understanding of how they improve and measure effectiveness.

Who could this school be?
Enrolment Information

As of today (5th August) our enrolment is 1100, a decrease of 3 students on the last report (June 2015).


At the moment the class sizes are:

- Preps. (7 classes): 20 to 24.
- Year 1 (6 classes): 24 to 25.
- Year 2 (6 classes): 24 to 25.
- Year 3 (6 classes): 24 to 26.
- Year 5 (6 classes): 24 to 25.
- Year 6 (7 classes): 23 to 25.

We currently have 82 students enrolled for Preps in 2016, similar to this time last year.

Accommodation

No change

Staffing

Where do I start!

A couple of weeks ago we translated 6 of our current teachers, who had contract status, to ongoing. They were offered ongoing after participating in an interview process.

Friday 7th August is Jess Norder’s (6B) last day before she starts her family leave. We have appointed Emily Roberts to replace her.

On the 17th and 18th August we will be interviewing applicants for three two year classroom teaching contract positions, as well as two year contract positions for the Kitchen and Phys Ed specialist programs, respectively. We anticipate that we will have additional positions to fill for 2016, and hope to do this early term 4 (being cautious at this point in time while we wait to see how our 2016 Prep enrolments go).

At the end of Friday 28th August we will see Emma Griffiths (Kitchen and Enviro Ed specialist) start her family leave. Emma will be replaced by existing staff members returning from leave. At the start of term 4 Nicole Murnane will take over Emma’s kitchen role and Sue Johnston will be the Enviro Ed teacher P-2.

The last day of term will see Bianca Banks begin her family leave. Her replacement will also be two current teachers returning from family leave. They are Natalie Hynd and Fiona Lardner.

In terms of the vacant Assistant Principal position we will be advertising this early in term 4, 2015.

Financial Statements

See reports.

We have just completed the Mid Year Census for the Department of Education. With respect to the ‘Student Family Occupation’ index which determines a school’s level of disadvantage and eligibility for additional funding the results for our school, when comparing 2014 with 2015, is quite interesting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>225</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A equates to the highest level of employment. N are those who are unemployed.

We have 3 international fee paying students not included in this count.
This information will determine our SFO index for 2016. The index should increase as a result and it will be interesting to see if it provides us with additional funding next year.

Major & Minor Works Program Update.
With the wet weather we have had Russell, our handyman, working on locating and stopping leaks that have appeared in a few portables. We have also had about $10,000 worth of LED lighting installed to replace the original lights that are now deteriorating. This $10,000 has come from an environmental grant that Emma Malinowski secured for us through the ‘Resource Smart’ program. We have also had heating contractors in to repair half a dozen heaters that have required maintenance.

Eco Cubby
Last term the steering committee of myself, staff members Danni Hofinger, Sam Knight, Emma Malinowski, Donna Egglestone, Suzy Gaymer and parent, Kerrigan La Brooy met with the owner of Bent Architects, Paul Porjazoski, to discuss the process required to develop formal plans for this project. These are the minutes from that meeting.

- Broadly speaking, the design is to be developed as per the concept images previously presented.
- We’d originally discussed the idea of the eco cubby becoming a woodwork workshop however, a formal workshop with extraction fans and the like is not required. The program for the cubby will be relatively loose; it may be used for both educational and play purposes.
- The eco cubby is to be developed as an outdoor structure, more like a shed than a formal air conditioned/heated classroom. The containers do not require interior linings per se; Berwick Fields could always retrofit wall/ceiling linings if acoustic or environmental insulation is required.
- The structure is to utilise recycled materials and products where possible. Where new materials/products are used, they are to have sound environmental credentials.
- As per the concept design, the eco cubby should incorporate opportunities for kids to personalise the structure.
- The rock climbing wall could become horizontal rather than vertical for safety.
- The landscape will most likely be provided by the school community by way of working bees; we don’t need to focus on it at this stage of the project.
- Berwick Fields intends to build the structure on an owner–builder type basis that will allow it to utilise materials and labour from the school community and from the local Tafe.
- The local Tafe will need a fair bit of warning if their labour is to be utilised for this project. With this in mind, we should spend the majority of this year designing/documenting the structure, obtaining necessary permits and installing the containers on site, and then utilise the Tafe’s resources in the first semester of next year for the various project ‘add-ons’ (staircase, roof deck, look-out platform and the like). We understand that there is no time limit for spending the grant.
- We should meet with the Tafe sooner rather than later to determine what’s potentially on offer in terms of labour and materials; this meeting should happen at the Tafe.
- Stephen has had previous conversations with Royal Wolf about supplying the containers for the project; we should continue the dialogue with them as they could provide the containers with all of the required modifications prepared off-site.
- The project steering committee will provide assistance with sourcing materials and labour.
- The eco cubby should be located to ensure that existing fire services don’t need to be relocated.

We have decided to meet on an ‘as needed’ basis with the majority of the project being completed next year. I think most people agreed that Paul listened very carefully to our ideas and opinions and came across as extremely enthusiastic and committed to making our Eco Cubby a reality.

 Meeting with Peter Sells, Principal of Berwick TEC, Glenn Graham, Trade Supervisor, Paul Porjazoski (Managing Director of BENT Architects) and myself. 4/8/15

Paul asked for this meeting to be arranged so he could ascertain the extent to which the students from Berwick TEC could be involved in this project, as well as meet Peter and Graham. This would help him to finalise the building plans. The meeting went for an hour and a half and covered lots of ground i.e framing, fixing, plumbing, landscaping etc. Paul walked away feeling very confident that Berwick TEC would be an asset to this project. The upshot of the meeting was that I would now work hard to find a registered builder to oversee the project; Paul would finish the plans so we could access the $100,000 from the State Government and all going well we would aim to have a slab constructed late term 4 with the shipping containers in place, ready for the start of term 1, 2016.

Paul wants to have another meeting within the next two weeks with the steering committee.

Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Project (SAKG)
See Essential Learnings Report

School Grounds For Learning
See Community Development Report

CONTINUING TO BRING OUR PHILOSOPHY OF LEARNING TO LIFE!
In the first half of 2014 Berwick Fields completed a successful review of its School Strategic Plan (2010-2013) and made the following recommendations for the next four years:
- Refine the school wide approach to learning and teaching by embedding exemplary teaching practice and building our capacity to take responsibility for individual and cohort growth.
- Nurture in our learners the importance of learning for life.
- Maximise the capacity and commitment to wellbeing practices in order to benefit our community.
- Enact the school vision, mission, values and Philosophy of Learning through building the capacity of staff to improve learning outcomes.

This Friday staff will be involved in the final curriculum day for 2015 where we will work on identifying those
'exemplary practices' that we believe will assist our school community to best enact our philosophy of learning. These will be based on exploring the following questions that have been linked to the competencies that we have identified as being critical for 21st Century learners.

**COGNITION** - How does goal setting and feedback help or hinder a learner's confidence?

**CONNECTION** - How does learning about ourselves and our students as learners build resilience and learner’s confidence?

**COMMUNICATION** - How does hearing the student’s voice help foster learner’s confidence?

**COLLABORATION** - How does collaboration, built on trust, promote learner’s confidence?

**CREATIVITY** - What role might creativity play in stretching, building and challenging learner’s confidence?

We are very mindful of the importance of developing the literacy and numeracy knowledge and skills of all our students i.e an example of this being our large investment in our mentor program that enables staff with particular expertise in literacy, numeracy and student engagement to work side by side with classroom teachers. We are also equally committed to developing in all our students those aptitudes and dispositions that encourage life long learning and enable each student to take responsibility for their learning, now and into the future.

*From Amanda…*

**Building the Capacity**

*Building the capacity of leaders so they can strategically lead learning effectively and improve learning outcomes.*

This year we have continued to offer time, space and opportunity to build the capacity of our Teacher Leaders, particularly our seven Mentors and eight Lead Learners. In Semester One we met fortnightly with the Lead Learners and Mentors to ensure that they were connected with school wide strategic plans, had support in enacting their leadership roles and were engaged in improvement strategies offered by senior leaders.

- **Mentors**

The learning of our Mentors began on understanding what the individual teachers they are supporting want from them. This saw the group review their own capacities in leading self, leading others and leading learning, along with evidence from last year’s approach to mentoring. As a result the group framed up a vision for their mentoring team: *“We are striving to empower confident and responsible learners who are committed to achieving their personal best”*. 

The focus has now moved on to consider the learning that this group of teacher leaders are currently leading, specifically in regards to English and Maths practices. We have had various opportunities to collectively consider evidence as a means to ‘notice’ the exemplary learning and teaching practices that are already going on within our classrooms. These conversations have led to the development of list of best practices that are valued by the mentoring team. This evidence was consulted as we framed up a list of ‘Our best practices’ which will be the focus of our curriculum day on August 14th. (See below)
Our work throughout Semester One has really highlighted the high quality outcomes that this mentoring group is striving to achieve, particularly in relation to English and Mathematics. We have engaged in professional dialogue; shared ideas, knowledge, and techniques and participated in collaborative problem-solving around mentoring issues…so much so that in Semester Two we have recognised that this group of teacher leaders need more time together to collaborate on their way forward and learn collectively throughout their mentoring endeavours. This has resulted in them now meeting for two hours each week, with support from a school leader on a fortnightly basis. The basis of their professional learning in the second half of the year will centre on being evidence and research informed.

➢ Lead Learners

Our Lead Learners are those teacher leaders that are responsible for leading our Professional Learning Teams (PLTs). To support them with this responsibility they are given one day a fortnight, leadership release time and engage in a fortnightly meeting with fellow leaders.

We began learning with these leaders at the end of last year, given their need to establish collaborative and innovative learning teams in the new year. During this occasion the group were able to form their own ‘learning community’ whilst also allowing them to recognise their own capacities in leading self, leading others and leading learning.

Early in 2015 the group determined a vision of striving to make a difference as inspired learners in our collaborative and innovative community. To support in leading learning within their teams we have engaged in various readings to continually build understandings of leadership and curriculum design.
This group of teacher leaders have played a pivotal role in leading our termly Planning Days, in light of our ‘Blueprint for Learning’. Evidence has suggested that teachers are now seeing the Blueprint for Learning document to be an effective tool for guiding and considering what needs to be attended to when planning (April-73% of teachers and June-83% of teachers). Teachers are also suggesting that, overall, their planning days are productive (April-82% of teachers and June-90% of teachers).

It appears that this group of leaders are valuing the processes of discussing, questioning, suggesting, acknowledging, complimenting, listening, cooperating, relaxing, helping and engaging as they continue their important work of leading our teaching teams.

General Business Notes

1. Community Policy Draft – your thoughts?

2. Community Consultation Draft – your thoughts?