

Anchored in Excellence....

Community Newsletter #9

September 29th 2015

"When I say to a parent, "read to a child", I don't want it to sound like medicine. I want it to sound like chocolate. "

Mem Fox

Reminders:

Consultation Meetings

Values and Behaviour

Wed October 7th

Wed October 14th

What do you want from your child's school experience?

**This will be one of the questions that will be explored at our consultation meeting next week.
I look forward to seeing you.**

Those not able to attend will be given an opportunity to provide feedback via the website next week.

**Public Meeting
Date change to be confirmed.**

Venue:

Murrumba Secondary College,
Performing Arts Centre 6.30pm

From Vicki Baker, the Principal

For those on school holidays, I do hope you're all enjoying a wonderful break and are able to spend some quality time with your children.

Preparations for moving into the administration building in early November are on track. Last week when I visited the site with staff from Education Queensland and the Plenary Group we were just elated to see the progress. The pride that all involved in this project have in creating this community is evident and building during as we get closer to completion and handover of Stage One A.

The administration block is now painted, has carpet and joinery. You really get a feel for just how amazing it is going to be. The Resource Centre is also starting to have the finishing touches applied.

Something very exciting is expected to happen this week....all going to plan, the outside lights will be activated. I am hoping to capture this moment on film and will look forward to sharing it with you.....

Over the school holidays the staff have met with me along with the Principal and staff team from the new school at Bellmere on two occasions. Last Thursday we engaged in professional learning in a phonemic awareness program that will be introduced next year. We've also met with publishers and school resource providers to make decisions about resources that need to be purchased. As you can imagine, the process involved in considering what will be needed to start is as exciting as it is daunting. Being able to purchase brand new books and the most up to date resources is just brilliant. However the downside is that they need to be prepared for borrowing by students and staff.

This is where we will make our very first call to our community. We will be looking for volunteers to assist with book covering and accessioning. Those not able to come and assist through the day because of work and family commitments might like to consider taking books home to cover when there is a little 'quiet time'. It will be a case of many hands making light work..... This will be a wonderful way to make a contribution. Your support will be appreciated. I will provide further information as we get closer to moving into the building.

Staffing to appoint teacher aides is progressing smoothly. Rachael our BSM will joining me from Wednesday the 7th of October and we will complete this very important process. One teacher aide will be appointed from November to assist with the setting up of the Resource Centre and the Uniform shop.

Prep Information

For your information: There's a workshop for parents to help transition prep children into formal school at North Lakes State College Performing Arts Complex Joyner Cct on Thursday 8 October at 10-11:30am or 4-5:30pm. RSVP to michelle.reber2@dete.qld.gov.au by Oct 1st

New school in Griffin

Anchored in Excellence

Food for thought:

Curiosity and Powerful Learning

Curiosity Corner

Imagine walking into a classroom as a student. In the corner of the room, you see all sorts of objects. You're not quite sure of their uses, purposes, or possible connection to each other. Additionally, you see various texts, chart paper, iPads, pencils, paper, and other items that invite your curious mind to discover and explore. The teacher in this classroom understands that the space for exploration starts in this corner.

Before every unit of study, teachers create "curiosity corners," or immersion centres, to activate students' knowledge and encourage questions during this time of early exploration. For example, prior to a unit on weather, a teacher might display a thematic basket that includes a thermometer, rain gauge, barometer, anemometer, and a windsock for students to examine. These items, along with various texts and chart paper, help students make observations and document questions that arise as they explore, and this curiosity informs the teacher's lesson plan. Exposing students to weather instruments before starting the unit creates excitement about learning and encourages students to begin questioning what, why, and how each object is used. The teacher then uses their observations and thoughts to drive the unit's instructional purpose and activities.

Recently asked questions....

Q: Will my child use technology?

A: Yes. Our school will be a 'bring your own device school'. Students from Year 1 will be encouraged and invited to bring an electronic device, either an ipad or laptop of certain specifications to use as an integral part of their learning.

The information regarding specifications will be provided in a newsletter within the next two weeks.

Q: Will the students that do not have their own device have access to technology.

A: Every class will have devices provided for shared student use.

I've included an easy to read article at the end of the newsletter that covers:

- **Getting Involved With Your Children: Involved Parents make a difference.....**
- **Getting Involved With the Teachers**
- **Getting Involved With the School Community**
- **Tips To Motivate Your Children To Do Well In School**

Photo Gallery

From Friday the 25th of September...
Enjoy!!!!



A very long walkway, goes through the centre of the school....



Coloured panels bring the school to life.....



Staff at work....



Getting to know one another.....

Getting Involved With Your Children: Involved Parents make a difference.....

Put on a happy face

At the end of a busy day your feet may hurt and your head may pound, but when your youngsters come running to you full of enthusiasm about something at school, put on a smile and match their excitement. When you put them off with "Later, later," their joy in the accomplishment disappears.

Table talk

Talk about what your children are learning in school while at the table eating supper. After the meal is finished, pass around any papers they've brought home for everyone to discuss and admire.

Don't stow it, show it!

Instead of stowing school papers and artwork in a forgotten drawer, show it off. Use a wall, the refrigerator door, or a bulletin board for the display. Take a minute now and then to look at the changing displays with each child and talk about how proud you are of the work that's exhibited. When papers are taken down from the bulletin board, preserve in a special folder for periodic review.

Change "Whatdja get?" to "Whatdja learn?"

When tests and reports come home, take the emphasis off the grades and focus instead on the information and skills they learned by doing the work. Give children a chance to show what they know by asking simple questions about the subject. Increase your children's knowledge by sharing anything you know about the topic, or by looking it up in an encyclopedia.

Talking texts

Ask your youngsters to read their textbooks to you while you fix dinner, sort laundry, or drive the car. Any text will do—a reader, a social studies book, even a math book. When they finish a section, discuss any questions the book presents in order to expand their comprehension of the ideas in the text.

Classroom chronicles

Children who get home before their parents can record descriptions of the school day on cassette tape, while events are still fresh in their minds. These Classroom Chronicles don't replace the time you spend with your children, but rather serve as springboards for discussion when you listen to them with your kids later in the evening.

Family merry-go-round

When you ask "What happened in school today," and get the answer, "Nothin' much," it's time to hop on the Family Merry-Go-Round. Start a sentence that each person in the family must complete in turn. "The most surprising thing I learned today was . . ." "One of the things I did well today was . . ." The sentence merrily goes 'round till everyone has shared their experiences.

"I can" cans

Give each child an empty juice can covered with contact paper and labeled "My 'I CAN' Can." Whenever your children learn a new skill, be it academic, artistic, or athletic, write it on a piece of paper and stuff it in the can. Review the contents of the cans periodically, and watch your children's self-esteem soar.

Make mistakes okay

When children can learn from their mistakes, instead of feeling discouraged by them, they are on the road to success. Make mistakes okay by talking about your own errors: "One mistake I made today was . . ." Encourage your youngsters to describe mistakes that they made, and then talk about solutions: "One way I can keep from making this mistake again is . . ."

Getting Involved With the Teachers

Happygrams

Keep a small pad of brightly colored paper handy, and use it to write a brief note of thanks to the teacher whenever your children demonstrate new skills or express excitement about something that happened in school. The short time you spend on this happygram will greatly enrich your parent-teacher partnership.

Banish blaming

Take a "no fault" approach when your children experience difficulties in school. Blaming teachers or classmates only strains relationships. Join forces with teachers to reach a common goal: helping your children overcome difficulties and find success.

Ask for advice

Teachers like sharing their specialized knowledge with concerned parents, so don't hesitate to ask for advice. Teachers can assist you with behavior problems, homework hassles, and how to reinforce at home what's learned at school.

Lend a hand

Even busy parents can pitch in when teachers call for help with school projects. Let the teacher know how much time you have and what talents you could offer. No matter how small, your contribution will be a help to the teacher and noticed by your child.

Respond to report cards

When report cards come home, take time to thank the teachers in a quick note. Teachers usually spend their own evening and weekend hours to write these reports, and your thanks will help them feel appreciated. If you're pleased with your children's progress, say so. If any of the grades or comments disappoint you, ask what you can do to help your child improve.

Beat the clock

Punctuality counts. When a teacher sets a specific time for a conference, make every effort to be there on time. Teachers often schedule many conferences back to back, and one late parent can throw everyone off schedule.

Be prepared

Bring a list of questions to parent-teacher conferences. Prepared questions help the conference stay focused and keep you from rambling into overtime. The National PTA has an excellent pamphlet entitled "Making Parent-Teacher Conferences WORK for Your Child." This pamphlet tells you how to prepare for conferences and what questions to ask.

Information, please

Be sure to give teachers any information about changes in home circumstances that may affect your children's behavior or performance. A death in the family, an extended sickness, a separation or divorce—even the loss of a pet can put a strain on children that spills over into the classroom

Getting Involved With the School Community

P&C at the school

Today's P&C has kept up with the changing times. Recognizing that in many families both mothers and fathers work outside the home, the P&C often schedules meetings at night. P&C meetings are still the best way to keep informed about, and involved with, the school community.

No excuses

Next time back-to-school night or parent programs roll around, don't make excuses for not going. Your attendance clearly demonstrates to your children how much you care about their education. To make it easier to get out of the house, freeze leftovers or casseroles with "save for back-to-school night" labels.

Know the neighborhood news

Be sure to read school newsletters to keep informed of the latest developments. If these newsletters tend to get overlooked during hectic evenings and weekends, take them with you so you can read the newsletters while eating lunch at work or on the train or bus.

Do your bit....

Busy parents who want to volunteer at school but can't usually be present for long periods of time during the day can still contribute their talents. Call the P&C president or the volunteer coordinator and offer to write an article for the newsletter, speak to classes about your career, coordinate a student site—visit at your workplace, or call other parents as part of a telephone tree.

Become a more informed parent

It isn't easy to raise children. If you're doing the job alone, or in a stepfamily, you have even more to consider. Learn what works with today's youngsters by joining one of the many parent education programs that more and more schools and P&C are offering. When you have effective parenting skills at your fingertips, the time you took to become a more knowledgeable parent will be well repaid.

Tips To Motivate Your Children To Do Well In School

- Take the time to read with your children daily.
- Provide enrichment material, including children's books and magazines, and educational toys.
- Provide quiet, private work spaces where children can study undisturbed.
- Keep your children's work spaces well-stocked with all the supplies they need to complete their assignments.
- Take time to sit down with your children and help them schedule homework into their daily routine.
- Reward good grades with recognition and avoid the temptation to use money as a bribe for good performance.
- Take advantage of educational events in your community as often as possible.
- Value your children's uniqueness, and avoid comparing them to others.
- Limit the amount of television children watch to one hour on school days and two hours on weekend days.
- Encourage creative thinking by asking your youngsters for help solving problems.
- Encourage your children to practice school skills in real life situations.