Learning – Education

Principal’s Conference: A very informative and interesting conference on ‘Adaptive Leadership’. The Key note presenter, Dr Pedro Noguera, spoke about changes made in schools, in the USA, based on Adaptive Leadership. My conference notes have been uploaded to the Board’s Google Drive.

Using iPads in The Classroom and Future Direction: Pete and Eugene are doing a fantastic job in inservicing and supporting staff with the use of iPads in the classrooms. This is now occurring regularly so that staff can continue to use the electronic devices in their everyday teaching and learning.

Pete and Eugene will be scheduling future meetings with Phil to discuss the future direction of the use of IT in the school, especially electronic devices, early next term.

2015 NAPLAN

Points to be made about 2015 NAPLAN Results

1. Very proud of the children’s overall achievements. In analysing our results two years ago, it was determined that a priority for the school was to extend our more able learners. Our curriculum focus has therefore been Creative and Critical Thinking. At first glance, our NAPLAN results show that the majority of our students in the higher bands have shown great progress from Year 3 to Year 5. Having stated this, we must also recognise that NAPLAN is only one piece of information about the school. Testing and data about student learning should and must be used as part of an assessment system, but it should not be the assessment system. What is most important is using this data to inform instruction. During Term 4, we will further analyse the results, identify trends and future priorities.

2. We should not just accept NAPLAN results as the marker of all that happens at St Columba’s School.

3. The more focus there is on NAPLAN, and it’s a growing focus, the less we will see the value of what has been the true marker of Australia’s education system - its ability to produce people who are creative thinkers, able to collaborate and solve problems, have initiative and are self-directed.

4. The reliance on a single set of test score results as the sole indicator of educational quality promotes a policy debate that can never adequately take account of the complexity and the nuance that differentiates the work of primary schools. Instead, this approach leads to simplistic school improvement strategies that are designed to produce a ‘quick fix’.
5. While we have politicians making decisions, rather than those who know education in depth, we will continue to have school principals and teachers sidelined in the policymaking process, disconnected approaches and quick fixes, and less chance of real change and improvement.

6. Broad judgments about the performance of systems and schools should be based on multiple sources of reliable evidence that take account of all that happens in a primary school.

7. Primary schooling and Early Childhood Education are the foundation years of a quality education, so that all children, no matter the circumstance, receive the best possible education. All schools need exceptional leadership, great teachers and great teaching, supportive communities and committed parents, and good quality programs and resources.

8. APPA (Australian Primary Principals’ Association) supports developing a clear national and long-term strategy for primary schooling, that is developed by those who know what works and what is needed for the 21st Century.

Engagement – Community

Mercy Mission Day: The school participated in the Mercy Missions Day today. The funds raised from the activities will be sent to various Catholic organisations. Parents and grandparents were very supportive and assisted during the day.

St Joseph’s School Wyndham: St Joseph’s School Year 5&6 students will be calling St Columba’s home during Week 2, Term 4. During this week, the students will be engaged in activities with the Year 6 students, such as the ‘Amazing Race’ activity, as well as attending other excursions. We look forward to welcoming the students to our community next term.

Accountability - Stewardship/Governance

2016 Staff Allocation: The Leadership Team is currently working on the 2016 Staff allocation. This will be finalised over the next few weeks and presented at the AGM.

Staff Returning: Ali Martin will be returning next term. Thank you to Lisa Wild for stepping in and doing a great job.

Stage 6 Building: The builders have confirmed that the construction of the new building will be completed by October 14th, 2015. I will keep you all posted.

New OSHC Supervisor: As previously advised, Jessica Scott has been appointed as the new OSHC Nominated Supervisor, replacing Rebecca Shaw. Jessica comes to St Columba’s OSHC with extensive experience as an OSHC Supervisor and classroom teacher. We were recently advised she is an outstanding OSHC leader.

Jessica is very excited about joining our community and is already coordinating changes to make it a more professional centre. Karen and I have gone through with Jessica the recent OSHC Monkey Survey collated results, identifying key points raised by the parents as a priority in the OSHC future direction and vision.

Jessica will commence on Monday 12th October 2015.

New Flag Pole: Caroline Brewer has successfully obtained funding for a new flag pole through the NAIDOC (National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee). The Aboriginal Flag will be flown alongside the Australian Flag. We will also be repairing the flag pole, adjacent to the parish, so that the school flag can be raised each day. We’re hoping to have it all completed by the time we celebrate NAIDOC Week.
Discipleship – Catholic Identity

Sacrament of Confirmation and Launch of ‘The Way Forward’: A very successful day last Sunday. Archbishop Timothy Costelloe mentioned he was very impressed with the connection between the school and parish, and how we worked as a team, which compliments his vision and priorities for the Archdiocese of Perth. He also commented on how well prepared the students were. A huge thank you to Eugene, Deb and the parish catechists for coordinating the event and preparing the students. A huge thank you, once again, to Father Minh-Thuy for his support and spiritual guidance.

The release and launch of ‘The Way Forward Plan’ is scheduled for Good Shepherd Sunday, 17 April 2016. Archbishop Timothy has encouraged all members to complete the ‘The Way Forward’ survey at the following link http://www.perthcatholic.org.au/Home.htm. All staff will be completing the survey over the next few weeks and parents will be encouraged to do the same.

Greg Martin
Principal
22nd September, 2015