Hello Numinbah

Here we are half-way through the term already and it is actually term THREE. Wow, how I continue to be gobsmacked by the transition of time and its somewhat rapid passing.

I would like to clarify any misinformation about my absence last week. Following my recent participation in a 2 day Principal’s training workshop I was selected to be part of a school review team. As a peer reviewer I joined another internal reviewer contracted to the School Improvement Unit to review two small schools in Central Queensland. My initial focus participating in the training was to essentially develop a deeper understanding of the actual review process. How I might build on that experience to continue our school’s journey toward improvement is our current focus and ultimately my goal as we move forward.

The improvement agenda for our school will be targeting two or three specific areas where greater progress is necessary. By progress I am referring to student outcomes and this can in some cases necessitate working to ensure improvement continues even with students who are doing well.

Naplan
This year Numinbah Valley State School had only five students take part in the national testing program. Recently our participating students (Lucas, Lorcan, Lara, Boston and Eithne) received their results. I was extremely pleased with each and every one of them having all achieved above the national minimum standards and in the majority of strands achieved the upper 2 bands. More importantly in several instances they have eclipsed the national mean for that topic. This is a very positive outcome for those students and they should be very pleased and proud of their individual efforts. However, there is always room for improvement and as mentioned earlier we cannot rest on our laurels. Analysis of the data will play a major role in myself and the staff developing an improvement agenda that addresses areas where the most improvement can be achieved.
Facilities
I believe at last we have finalised to some extent the major jobs around the school that add to the school’s appearance, safety and access around the buildings and grounds. The grass is slowly growing back and the disruption the grounds were subjected to is starting to settle down. I am looking to investigate the lopping of some of the trees surrounding the veggie garden. My aim is to support the garden’s access to sunlight through the cooler months and reduce the actual shade that reduces actual sunlight even during the warmer periods.

We are also exploring ideas around eliminating the steel cabinets / lockers that have become fixtures underneath the administration building. By replacing them with more modern, aesthetically pleasing units that are well planned, practical to use and combine an efficient use of space I’m sure we can reduce inefficiencies around storage and eventually, partially free up the art room.

Attendance
Some of you may notice several reminders I have posted around the school when you are next here about the type of start your child is receiving to their education. Research has shown that the most productive period or the best learning time for young children is in the beginning of the school day. Every morning punctually we conduct reading groups generally followed by a spelling focus of some description. These sessions are run at that time to align with the students’ best learning time where their ability to focus and maintain concentration are at the optimal level for the day. I think you will agree that kids matter and that we need every child attending school, every day, every term, every year for them to experience success. It is a legal obligation of parents to ensure their child attends school every day of each term and these days this obligation extends over thirteen years.

I would also like to remind parents that unless otherwise arranged because of work commitments or appointment issues that students’ arrival at school is not necessary until 0830 each morning. We acknowledge that circumstances periodically necessitate an early arrival however normally there is no need for students to arrive any earlier than 0830. If you need to drop your child off any earlier please contact the school to make prior arrangement.

Classroom
Students in the junior class are currently looking at the how information texts differ from story texts. We have read the story ‘Stellaluna’ a wonderful book about a tiny bat separated from her mother. The boys then contrasted an information text around types of fruit bats, their habitat, food and breeding habits. We are now exploring a story ‘Alberta’ about a little penguin as we continue to contrast the difference between the text types. This unit continues to investigate noun groups, descriptive language, sentences and encourages individual creativity.

Our seniors are currently learning about traditional Asian stories with the expectation that they write their own traditional narrative. Having read, deconstructed and analysed several tales they have identified common threads and structure elements that essentially are apparent in each story. These stories contain a theme, moral or message for children but expose it in child friendly and entertaining ways. We have discussed introductions of these traditional tales, brainstormed ideas for messages or morals and explored direct speech and its application. The students have read some very entertaining stories but I think they prefer Tikki Tikki Tembo the best.
Homework
I am at present working on a variation to our current homework arrangement. Firstly I am implementing a reward for those who regularly and consistently submit a high standard of work. This will take the form of a week off from homework once a student has completed three exceptionally good weeks of quality work. However they will be expected to complete a spelling test and times table test each week. How they prepare for it is up to them but I am suggesting they simply write out their words and times tables to ensure they are still maintaining their skills to some extent. This week off will be open to every student in the senior class. Secondly there will also be some changes perhaps every three weeks where the format for that week will be change. This concept is still being finalised and I will be informing parents once I have the process properly planned and carefully considered to ensure a positive outcome for all concerned.

SEL
Weekly on Monday afternoon our students continue a social and emotional learning program You Can Do it. This program has been the go to program for schools for many years and is based around the Four Foundations to success comprising confidence, getting along, organisation and persistence. The program was foundered by Professor Michael E. Bernard designed to develop the academic, interpersonal, and emotional potential of young people. He has spent many years working with individuals, parents and teachers, teaching the importance of providing young people with the mindset for achievement and emotional well-being.
Weekly we review student behaviour across the school and where areas of concern become apparent we target these behaviours to discuss with students the impact of the behaviour, consolidate student understanding of acceptable interaction with their peers aiming to improve the overall dynamic at the school.

Until next time
Have a productive week
Regards
Warren

QUOTE OF THE WEEK
A friend is one of the nicest things you can have, and one of the best things you can be.
Last Friday the students were harvesting the sweet potato crops and it was so much fun. The girls were in the kitchen practising to make fresh scones for the Seniors of the Numinbah Valley Community, whom have been invited to School for Seniors week on 24th August. The Students will prepare food, meet and greet the elderly and asking questions of their past experiences and fun days. We will then be taking the chicks and Lulu the puppy and Pippa and Nico so they are able to groom and pat the animals. A fun afternoon following our class subject on RESPECT.

- Jodie

The students enjoyed harvesting their sweet potatoes

The greenhouse is flourishing with new seedlings
Junior Class

This term in History the kids will be looking at different representations of families by viewing a variety of sources. They will consider a range of family structures and identify similarities and differences between them. Students will make comparisons between childhoods in the past and today and they will recognise that parents and other adults are a source of information about the past. They will develop an understanding of what technology is and that technology has changed over time and they will examine the ways in which our daily lives have been changed due to technological changes in the objects we use.

Senior Class

This term in History the kids will be looking at the first Australians and each year level will focus their research in a particular area. Each year level will pose historical questions, research sources, explore perspectives and communicate their findings. Year 3 will research the first Australians in the Numinbah area. Year 4 will research the nature of the first contacts between the first Australians and Europeans. Year 5 will research a significant first Australian who played a role in shaping a colony. Year 6 will research the contribution a significant first Australian played in the development of modern Australian society.

- David

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Senior Class

In the first week of term 3 the students were challenged to enter the Gold Coast Commonwealth games mascot competition. They were given the design requirements and were asked to draw an appropriate mascot and explain in 100 words why their mascot would be the perfect choice. Most children sent their efforts along to the competition. Good luck!! In the next four weeks the kids have been challenged to design and construct a flying model plane from paper, straws and sticky tape. The plane has to be able to be replicated from their design drawings and instructions and they are attempting to complete a flight of 20m; quite a challenge.

Junior Class

The kids will be looking at the importance of packaging for the transport of items. They will be given a number of items including straws, string, packaging noodles and sticky tape and they will be challenged to design and create a package that will hold an egg and save it from cracking if dropped from the first level of the office stairs. The package will have to be able to be made repeatedly.

- David
Build up Frequent Father points

By Michael Grose

Michael Grose looks at the importance of topping up Frequent Father points, and the benefits for both dads and for kids.

A good friend enthusiastically told me how he was looking forward to spending a few days away on his own with his two kids, aged 10 and 13. He was feeling quite chuffed.

He was having some ‘dad time’ with his kids. Good on him!

He was doing some memory building & relationship building, as well as having some fun. He told me that he was aware that his kids were getting older and he knew such opportunities were diminishing.

Gone are the days when the only relationship many men had with their kids was through their wife. She would explain him to the kids (‘Your dad’s very busy but he would love to see you play sport but he can’t make it.’) As well, she’d keep him up-to-date with the children’s lives.

Blokes, it seems, are valuing the time they spend with their kids on their own. Or at least the dads I mix with are. Spending time alone with kids is a great way to build confidence in dads. And the kids usually just love it.

Mothers can play a role here by not getting in the way if their husband or partner wants a little time alone with kids. (Most mums I meet welcome this!)

Children usually associate their fathers with activity. When I ask children to tell me about their dads they usually talk about the things that they like to do together with their dads. Playing, walking, fishing, wrestling...the list goes on.

It’s through shared activity and involvement in kids’ lives that dads build up frequent father points. It’s hard to build good connection with kids when you are not there!

Don’t wait until adolescence

These relationships are best built in childhood, when kids just love their dads to bits and want to be around him. It gets trickier in adolescence, but having shared interests developed in childhood gives you a connection point during these sometimes-turbulent times.

Dads also benefit from spending time with their kids. Most health scales state a healthy relationship with their children is a predictor of good health and longevity for men. I’m not sure where the health benefits come from, but I suspect there is something relaxing and de-stressing about getting into a child’s space. There is a big kid inside most men just busting to get out.

These days we take parenting pretty seriously and it’s easy to forget that one of the fundamentals of raising kids well is to spend some time in your child’s space, doing stuff, or not doing stuff, whatever the case maybe.

So how are your (or your partner’s) Frequent Father Points going? If they need some topping up then you can start by doing something together that they enjoy.

Having a bit of fun together is the best place to start.

Author’s note: Sole mums can take these ideas on-board to have a NO RULES weekend with your kids, where you have a change of routine and activity that can give kids the chance to see you in a different way.