Hello Folks

Wonderful rain in the gauges and a steady flow bubbling along in the river, the weather sneakily warming up all appear to have combined to somehow herald the emergence of a prolific season for growth and new life. By the current look of the surrounding skyline it appears we may be in for a reasonable smattering in the next few days.

And as we transition through this fourth term I am buoyed by the great progress our students are making especially with reading. We have recently completed our regular testing and the results are extremely encouraging. Recently the last of the ICAS testing results were sent home. I hope parents have taken the opportunity to explore how your child responded to the various items and even challenged yourselves to see how you may have done with some of these challenging questions. Our students will also be tested through the ACER online assessment and reporting application in the areas of reading comprehension, vocabulary, maths, spelling along with grammar and punctuation. This testing online will complete the range of diagnostics that will help us establish the trajectory for each individual for next year.

Parliament House Visit

Our students had an enjoyable visit to Parliament House last Wednesday as guests of Roz Bates. I was informed that they conducted themselves in a cordial manner and their behaviour was exemplary. My sincerest thanks goes to Mrs Ash and Tina for including our students in the Springbrook group and looking after them for the train trip up and back. We have included some lovely photos of that visit. Please see Danni if you would like a copy. I will put a couple on the website.
Explicit Improvement Agenda
At Numinbah Valley State School we have focussed specifically over the last few years on improving students’ reading and comprehension skills. Essentially that focus will continue. Acknowledging the importance of reading can never be overstated and, encouragingly our students have made wonderful progress. To further develop the emerging skills and knowledge the daily reading provides, we have made a conscious decision to make writing our major and explicit improvement agenda for now, into, and across 2016. Writing as opposed to handwriting comprises the coming together of sounds into words, words into crafted, well-structured sentences, sentences into meaningful, sequenced paragraphs and paragraphs combined to present an engaging narrative.

How will that look in our classroom? We continue to use Jenny McVeity’s Seven Steps to Writing Success program and continue to have a focus lesson daily. I am currently reviewing the addition of weekly writing on demand and a review of marking and moderation of student writing samples. Marking will utilise the Naplan marking guide and as I have done recently I will use colleagues to support the moderation process. This facilitates a broader view of student writing.

Achievement Goals
We have spoken to students over time on several occasions about setting achievable goals and working toward those targets to accomplish continued improvement. With that in mind we are currently reviewing each child’s progress and looking to work with each individual to establish learning goals. Each term these goals may change or vary in some way. The goals will at this stage be set for a term but may in some instances be reviewed at the end of the term and adjusted for the following period. While the importance of goal setting has been well documented a major consideration is that agreed goals are achievable and measurable. Equally critical to their success is that the student, staff and parents are all aware of the goals documented. This provides support at home as well as at school where the goals will be displayed and regularly discussed. I will be keeping you informed as we progress through this process aiming to have things in place for the commencement of term one 2016.

Christmas Tree
All our students are practising weekly preparing for the Christmas concert ably led by Mrs Barrie and Mrs Simon. Mrs Barrie has put together a humorous play certain to make you laugh. If the play fails to get a giggle going I’m sure the kids will have you in stitches. A note will be coming home soon to make parents aware of costume requirements in plenty of time for alterations and production. I have been reliably informed that Mrs Simon will be conducting a working bee of sorts to organise the construction of props and will be the person to contact as we edge closer to the date. Hopefully parents can also assist in some way with their child’s play practice and learning of lines and cues at home. The annual Christmas Tree and concert will be held on Saturday 5th December.

Swimming
Please ensure you have your child’s transport organised for Friday swimming each week up to and including week 7 (20th November). In addition I want to remind parents that outstanding permission notes for the Hinterland Small School swimming carnival are due. It is important that we have these notes in to finalise details for the actual competition. Springbrook State School will be running the carnival at the Mudgeeraba Aquatic Centre on Friday 4th December which is the day before the Christmas Tree function.
Interviews / Report Cards
Parent teacher interviews will be conducted during week 8 commencing November 23rd. These interviews are intended to provide an insight into how your child/children are progressing as they move into the 2016 school year. I will allocate 15 minute timeslots on the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons. Please contact the school to book a suitable time. Report cards will be issued in the last week of the term and as usual will be emailed out to families.

Furniture
We currently have 2 computer desks and an analogue television that need a home. If you have the need for a desk or a television for the kid's room please feel free to contact the school to negotiate a mutually agreeable arrangement.

Oral Presentations
Each fortnight our 3-6 students present a talk orally to their peers about a topic related to one of their subject areas. These formal presentations are intended to support student’s verbal communication skills and to provide an opportunity to practise and become more familiar with public speaking. It is common knowledge that even adults fear public speaking even when presenting to a familiar audience. I want to take this opportunity to thank those parents who made the effort to support our students during their presentations last week. Your attendance demonstrates a sincerity of interest that provides real encouragement and indicates to students that we care about their progress and what they’re doing at school. As students move into the secondary environment they will be called on more often to present assessment items orally. Students are well aware of the topics on which they are required to speak at the beginning of the term enabling them to research, prepare, plan and practice well ahead of the date rather than squeezing it in at the last minute. The topics for each fortnight are documented in each student’s homework book providing parents with an insight into what is planned and when. Results are recorded in the homework book and here parents have a snapshot of a range of progress scores and behaviour standards for each week.

Enrolments
As it currently stands and as mentioned earlier in the term our 2016 numbers look very similar to this year with an enrolment of approximately 13 anticipated for the commencement of the new school term next year. We have, as some parents may be aware, recently distributed brochures in the Nerang area to promote our school. I will continue to utilise this strategy every year to advertise our school, what we offer and where we are. And, while we are in some opinions somewhat isolated, I believe that is well compensated by the feel of the school and the environment we have at Numinbah Valley. Word of mouth is also a great tool for promoting the features of our small school and what makes it a unique place to attend school.

Facilities
We are currently looking into having several large cupboards installed under the building to replace the old steel lockers and the cleaner’s cabinet. Our aim is to provide more storage in purpose built cabinets that provide greater flexibility and are more aesthetically pleasing. We have had some design discussions and put rudimentary drawings together and are at present looking to reduce the cost where possible.
Recently I asked Barry to reduce the foliage and shrubs concealing the front of the school to open up the school’s façade and provide additional visual security. Thanks Barry, it looks great and combined with the freshly mowed lawn makes our school look fantastic and demonstrates a pride in our school and its appearance.
World Teacher’s Day
Teaching is a role that has lost some of its status over the years. The respect a teacher once demanded in a community has over the years eroded somewhat to the point where attracting people to the profession is becoming increasingly more difficult. We are, at Numinbah Valley extremely fortunate to have with our current staff established a great blend of skills, experience, knowledge and compassion. Our dedicated staff demonstrate immense sincerity working hard to build relationships with the students through listening, supporting and providing regular feedback. I want to openly thank our devoted staff Danni, Heather, Mali, Dave, Susan and Jo for their commitment to the students, the school and ultimately the students’ educational outcomes. I want to publicly thank P&C executive; Sam, Mashenka and Helen for their thoughtful consideration in providing a breakfast on Tuesday to mark WTD. They were well supported and ably backed by Aimee, Rachel and Belinda, thank you all for giving of your time to express your appreciation for our wonderful teaching staff. Please take the time to read the excerpt included “Education Crisis Looming”.

Until Next Time
Please take Care
Have a wonderful week.

Kindest Regards
Warren

Education Crisis Looming

A perfect storm is brewing in Australian education and it’s likely to have a major impact for many years. An aging population of stressed teachers at risk of burnout, problems retaining new graduates, rising enrolments, challenging student behaviour and the declining status of teaching all contribute to a potential crisis in education.

Quality teaching is clearly linked to student learning. No education system can be better than its teachers. Demand for quality teachers is high and will continue to grow. Demand for quality teachers is already exceeding supply. A number of factors contribute to this emerging gap.

Teaching is demanding. Engaging, managing and motivating today’s students requires high levels of skill, energy and intellect. As a result of growing up in a digital age, many of today’s students have shorter attention spans, expect all the ‘bells and whistles’ of a full production and demand immediate, personalised attention. That’s not easy in a traditional school environment with finite resources.

The relationship between families and schools has also changed in recent times. Whilst both parties continue to want what’s best for the student, mutual support and a partnership are less common than blame and deflection. Support for teachers has declined. A teacher who reprimands a student is more likely to be challenged by the parent than supported. Busy parents vigorously defend and protect their children and demand that teachers justify their actions. This adversarial relationship is counter-productive.

The status of teaching has declined and this will have serious consequences for Australia’s future. The declining status, adversarial relationships and stress levels make it difficult to attract Australia’s brightest to take on the challenges of teaching.

According to the 2013 Teacher Status Index, “In many countries teachers no longer retain the elevated status that they used to enjoy. Consequently, its effects are profoundly damaging to the life chances of the next generation. If teachers aren’t respected in society, children won’t listen to them in class, parents won’t reinforce the messages that are coming from school and the most talented graduates will continue to disregard teaching as a profession. Over time, this declining respect for teachers will weaken teaching, weaken learning, damage the learning opportunities for millions and ultimately weaken societies around the world.” (Varkey GEMS Foundation, 2013)

CONTACT: Steve Francis, Brisbane. Ph 0421 705 693 steve@stevefrancis.net.au
Spring is and we are harvesting our few ripe vegetables on a weekly basis. Students are welcome to take some herbs, beans, tomatoes, spinach etc. home for parents for Friday night's dinner. (note: please ensure you have other food to accompany our harvest or you may go hungry lol)

**Quote of the week**

Be so **HAPPY** that when others see you, they become **HAPPY** too!

**HALLOWEEN DRESS UP FUN!**
OUR YEAR 5 & 6 STUDENTS VISIT TO PARLIAMENT HOUSE
What to say when kids become anxious

By Michael Grose

7 practical things to say to kids to help them when they feel anxious.

Anxiety has a way of making everyone feel helpless - those experiencing anxiousness and those trying to help. It’s hard to know what to say when a child becomes overwhelmed with anxiety, but it’s most important to be a strong, steadying influence. You may not be able to take their anxiousness away, but your emotional support and your calmness makes a difference.

Children take their cues from their parents so your trust that they can cope when they become overly anxious will send a powerful message that they’ll come out the other side safely. The language you use will convey your trust and also offer your child the comfort they need to feel safe, as well as the courage to find their own solutions to their anxiousness.

When you see anxiousness take hold here are some things that you can say that will help your child cope:

‘You’re okay. I’m here and I won’t be going anywhere.’

Such statements indicate warmth, safety and comfort. Your child may not believe you straight away but that’s okay; your presence will get the message across.

“You don’t have to do anything right now. Just breathe.”

A big part of the stress of anxiety comes when children don’t know what to do. They don’t have to fight the feeling of anxiousness, but let it pass. The less children fight anxiousness, the more likely it is that the feeling will go.

“Let’s go for a walk and see if we can take some big breaths.”

Physical activity is the best antidote to an anxiety attack as it helps burn up the adrenalin that prepares a child’s body to fight or take flight. Try to help them take some strong breaths while they walk, which will be easier if they’ve practised when they aren’t anxious. Practise by breathing in to the count of three, holding for one, breathing out for three and holding for one.

“Take some big, deep breaths. I’ll do it with you.”

Anxiety comes from the fight or flight response when the brain perceives a threat. It doesn’t matter whether the threat is real or not, the brain thinks and acts as if it’s true, leading to tenseness, hyperventilation and confused thinking. Breathing triggers the relaxation response which, like the fight or flight response, is hardwired in all of us.

When children are calm explore different approaches to empower them to better manage their anxiousness. You might say:

“I’d like to understand what your worry feels like for you. Can you teach me?”

The ability to accurately identify a feeling when it occurs is at the heart of emotional intelligence so encourage your child to verbalise what their anxiety feels like. Greater self-awareness increases your child’s ability to manage their feelings.

“What would you say to a friend who was going through what you go through?”

Invite your child to take a more objective look at their own anxiety to help them gain a different perspective and level of understanding. This approach also gives parents a greater insight into what a child is going through.

“Your brain is amazing. Every time you breathe through your anxious feelings you’re teaching your brain how to manage your anxiousness.”

Brains have an amazing capacity to adapt and learn new ways of coping. By helping your child understand that he is, in effect, training his brain to better respond to anxiousness you empower your child to positively manage their feelings.

Help children manage their difficult emotions, including anxiety, by validating their feelings and encouraging them to experiment with different ways of coping. Encourage kids to come up with their own solutions when anxiousness threatens to overcome them. Kids are usually adept at solving their own problems when they have loving, supporting and positive adults in their lives.