FROM THE PRINCIPAL’S DESK

Welcome back to the second Term of the 2012 school year. In particular a warm welcome to new students and their families to the Meningie Area School community. We encourage all parents to become involved in the life of your child at school and work with teachers in supporting your child or children in their success as a learner.

With the major sporting events of the year now behind us, Term 2 traditionally is the term when we can get a strong push on student learning.

By now you will have had an opportunity to attend a formal interview with your child/children’s teacher if your child is in Reception to Year 4.

Formative reports went home on the last day of Term 1 for students in Years 5 to 12. Along with these reports was a copy of your child/children’s Individual Learning Plan. A letter accompanied the Learning Plan seeking your comment and input. Many parents have responded to our request, and we thank you for this.

We hope that the Individual Learning Plans will become an important document over time and add to the information we can share with you about learning progress and strategies to support successful academic outcomes.

SITE STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT

Focus Area 1: Quality Teaching and Learning.

Our broad goals at Meningie Area School reflect the broad goals established as a focus in our region; the Murray Mallee.

They are:
1. Increase the level of writing for all students, particularly non-fiction writing.
2. Increase the level of reading and vocabulary achievement across the school.
3. Improve all indigenous students reading and writing progress with a key focus in the early years.
4. Intervention programs make a positive difference to student learning
5. Every student taught by an effective teacher.

So what are we doing to meet these goals?

Writing, particularly non-fiction writing, has been a focus of our teaching and learning at Meningie Area School for many years. We have an expectation that all teachers are responsible for teaching this aspect of literacy.

Over the years staff have and will continue to engage in current Training and Development that will support their teaching and student learning.

This Term an aspect of General Staff meetings will focus on a Non-Fiction writing genre, to keep skill levels up as well as work towards a whole site approach.

The NAPLAN, to be conducted in Week 4 on Tuesday 14th, Wednesday 15th and Thursday 16th May for students in Year 3, 5, 7, & 9 will test students in Literacy and Maths. This year students will be asked to write an Exposition. Throughout Term 1 teachers taught this form of Non-Fiction writing at all levels in both the Junior and Middle school.

Reading is critical to student success in all subjects at school. Significant focus is placed on the explicit teaching of reading skills across the school. A good start in the early years sets students up for continuing success and access to curriculum. To this end Training and Development, diagnostic testing and intervention strategies are implemented to closely support and track student progress.
Regular reading at home supports and accelerates student learning. This strong push in the early years shows strong growth, but is an area that needs continuous focus and persistence. All teachers at Meningie Area School are given opportunity to enhance knowledge, skills and understanding in their teaching. With the implementation of the Australian Curriculum the focus has been specifically in Maths, English and Science. This will continue throughout the year, with personnel both at the regional and state level supporting the Australian Curriculum initiative.

There will be 4 student free days this year as announced by the Minister for Education and Children’s Services Ms Portolesi. The first of these as approved by Governing Council is June 8th.

ANZAC

Last Wednesday 24th April, an Assembly led by Mal Jurgs was held in the school hall with a focus on ANZAC day. Lessons during last week focused on the meaning of ANZAC. Meningie Area School has developed a culture of understanding and commitment to the ANZAC tradition through our program Connecting Spirits. This year will see the fourth tour of the Western Front. Mal Jurgs will lead this tour with several of our senior school students, joined by others this year from Coomandook and Birdwood.

CHANGE IN WEATHER

Last week brought with it some really cool days. Several teachers and front office staff noticed that some children were turning up to school dressed for warmer weather. The mornings are cold and despite the great heating systems we have in most classrooms they take some time to warm up. As well as that, lots of children talked to teachers about being hungry. It might be a good time to have that talk about putting on longer pants and school sweater, and packing in a jacket. This is particularly so for younger students. On some days the wind off the lake is quite fierce and bitterly cold. Perhaps an extra sandwich and piece of fruit in the lunch box would be a good idea as well. We suggest this over pre-packaged snacks for two reasons. Firstly, current research shows that the energy out of a wholesome sandwich and or piece of fruit will last much longer than a packet of chips, crisps, biscuits or a sweet and is much better in supporting learning. Secondly, pre-packaged food contributes to extra disposable waste at the school and it would be great to reduce our consumption in this respect.

Monica Williams

SCHOLASTIC ORDERS

Scholastic catalogues were sent home with students last week. Orders with payment can be made at the school book room or front office until Wednesday 9th May.

REPORT ENVELOPES AND ILP FEEDBACK

A reminder to parents and caregivers who have not yet returned the yellow report envelopes and also the Individual Student Plan feedback forms to keep them coming in.

The Individual Student Plan feedback forms are a particularly valuable tool in assisting staff to monitor and evaluate education programs and individual student’s educational journeys and outcomes in collaboration with families and the students themselves. Individual Student plans are most effective when families and caregivers use this opportunity to capture the perspectives of their child and relay any of the child’s strengths, issues or concerns.

MAS SPORTS REVIEW

Governing Council is currently going through the process of reviewing how the sports program and current house system works at the school.

Currently there are 3 houses (Albert, Bonney and Coorong), and the majority of whole school sporting events occur in Term 1, as do the interschool swimming and athletics carnivals. This makes for a very busy term for all involved.

We would like to invite parents, staff, students and community members to have input as to what can be done to try and improve the system to result in better outcomes for all of the children involved. This may (or may not) include changing from a 3 house system to a 2 house system. It may include changing timing of events, or it may even include different ideas of ways to help children develop their skills throughout the year.

If you would like to be involved, please contact either the school on 85751106 or Felicity Turner on 0400 299 087 after which further details will be advised.
In week 10 of Term 1 33 Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 students arrived at school bright and early, ready to get on a bus for their long-awaited excursion to Monarto Zoo. The bus ride was long, but Mrs Applekamp did an amazing job getting us there on time.

When they arrived at the Zoo, the R-2s had brain food before embarking on the first activity of the day. Right before the astonished eyes of the parents and teachers who came with them, the R-2’s became Zoo Explorers! They used their senses; sight, smell and hearing, to spot the wallabies in Wallaby Gorge, match colours with local flora and fauna, listen for traces of animals in the local environment, and frame interesting and beautiful things around them as they walked along a dry river bed. They ended their time as explorers by the chimpanzee enclosure, where they saw the male and female chimpanzees playing games eating and lazing about in the sun.

After lunch at the visitors centre, the R-2s hopped back on the bus for their safari tour through the open enclosures in the zoo. Our guide Ruth took us to see many different and exciting animals, including a rhinoceros, three cheetah brothers, a beautiful young lioness that stalked the bus curiously, hyenas and painted dogs that were snoozing in the sun. Then we were taken to see a long-necked cow (but the children quickly told Ruth that they were giraffes, not cows). It was an amazing way to end the day.

After such a long and exciting day, the R-1-2s got back on the bus and started the journey back to Meningie Area School. All the children, as well as the parents and teachers, had a fantastic time learning about the different animals and the Zoo.

Thank you to Mrs Applekamp who drove the bus, and to the parents who came along and made the trip possible.