FROM THE PRINCIPAL’S DESK

In the last newsletter I wrote a rather lengthy article about student reports and how many reports reflected that students showed by way of grades and teacher comments that they underachieved in Semester1. Since then class and home group teachers as from Year 3/4 Oliver up to Senior Secondary have been working together with students on identifying the area for further improvement, goal and strategies to reach the goal. In working on His/ her commitment for Term 3
1. The area I most need to work on in Term 3…….
2. My goal is…….
3. To meet my goal I need to……
The conversations that have taken place in class have been really focused and show that most students want to do well. They know where their weaknesses are and they have been working on strategies to assist them to improve over the term.

Whilst students want to improve over a number of subject areas they can also identify what they need to do. This is what some of the students have to say.

- Avoid distractions
- Stop talking
- Follow instructions
- Listen
- Get straight into my work
- Read more challenging books
- Write a full page
- Be organised
- Face the front
- Do extra home work

Another more specific skill that will help students achieve goals and accelerate learning is Automaticity. If your child / children has / have been at Meningie Area School for some time I am sure you will recall me writing about it. Automaticity means being able to do things without having to think. This means learning the foundations of both Language and numeracy. It means learning sight reading words, spelling lists, quick mental maths such as adding, subtracting and of course knowing patterns like times tables.

Some people may think this is ‘old hat’ and in fact many students do. It can be challenging to begin with and take persistence. They get bored because it is hard work, and maybe think it will all eventually go away. That’s when the problems often begin. Learning things so that what is learnt becomes automatic builds ‘WORKING MEMORY’. So when the working memory is strong students can then readily use it to move to other aspects of learning that involve deeper thinking such as problem solving, and show creativity.

Setting great learning patterns when children are young and in the early years can sound like hard work, and it really does take a mighty and consistent effort on the part of parents and carers. However it pays off. Research shows that it is much better all way round to build ‘working memory’ from an early age onwards. For students who do not have automaticity, the work at school begins to be a hard slog, especially if he/ she does not engage and take on board what successful learners already have and do. Of course we all understand that the older a student is the more self-conscious he / she is, the more disengaged, and eventually it can be all too hard, but not impossible.

Consistent attendance helps increase the chance of a good job.
If you want to know how to help your child build his/her working memory make a time to meet with the class or subject teacher. Working Memory is something we all rely on throughout our lives we are never too young or old to start.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance data for the term so far shows that there is consistent absence. There does appear to be a rather awful stomach bug going through the school by the number of students appearing at the front office being sent home, and then away the following day. It continues to be a concern the number of students away unexplained or for family reasons. We seek parent/carer support in ensuring all students are at school daily unless ill. There is no doubt that patterns off poor attendance impact on learning throughout life and choices that one can then make in just so many ways.

PARENT DROPPING OFF STUDENTS

Please be reminded not to drive into the staff car part in either the morning or afternoon to drop off or pick up your child/children. This has and continues to be an issue of safety, and we seek your support and understanding in this.

SCHOOL DAY

Just a reminder that whilst many staff arrive at work quite early in the morning, yard duty begins at 8.30am daily. Please do not drop your child or have he/she walk to arrive at school before this time. The school day concludes at 3.20 pm with buses leaving at 3.30pm. There is no staff member on yard duty after this time.

MINOR WORKS PROGRAM- ROOF UPGRADE

I recently received correspondence from the Director Asset & Business Services, DECD, advising that the application to have the roof replaced has been approved as part of the 2014 Minor Works Program inclusive of all DEMAC buildings on the site to the value of $450,000. This is a considerable windfall for the site. The roof on all DEMAC buildings have been of concern for many years, and the site through Governing Council has appealed for action in this regard. At this stage we do not have any details about when the work will begin and what disruptions there may be to the daily operations and routines of the site. As information becomes available and a plan developed the school community will be kept advised. We look to commencement and the completion of this project.

Monica Williams

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Student Attendance Percentages - Term 3 2014

DECD TARGET FOR 2014 = 94%

HEIFER EXPO

On the 15th of July at 6:30am, Alysha Eckert, Miss Low and I were on our way to the Adelaide showground to partake in the SA Junior Heifer Expo Educational Program. First up was Biosecurity where we learned about common diseases and their ability to easily spread throughout stock, we were taught ways to reduce the spread onto other properties. At 9:30am we had a break for morning tea, where a range of snacks and drinks were supplied to us.

At 10am we moved on to where cattle veterinarian taught us about fertility and pregnancy in cattle, she showed us what to look for in a suitable and healthy breeding cow. We were lucky enough to be able to be hands on with the female reproductive system of the cow, and practiced how to AI. We then listened to a talk about the most effective techniques of running a stud and what customers look for when buying stock and the best way to treat customers. At 11am we ventured over to where we were showed what judges look for in a heifer and the difference between a first and second classed heifer. We then got to practice our judging skills with the heifers ourselves.

Lunch was amazing, and a well needed hot drink warmed us up. Straight after lunch, we got an insight into the marketing of cattle and beef, where the speaker helped us understand what goes through a buyers mind when buying; and most importantly the difference between being a seller of cattle or a marketer of cattle.

Show preparation and knot craft was next, where we practiced quick release knots and helpful tips.
to catch a judges’ eye in the ring. Alysha and I were then allocated a heifer to lead around the ring which brought back memories from last year. Alysha lead a Murray Grey and I lead a Shorthorn. We then helped the novice leaders wash their heifers which we would usually be glad to do on a warm day. To finish the day we looked at carcass assessment. We learned about each cut of beef, where they come from and the best way to cook each piece. We also learned what made a bad piece of meat and how to avoid it.

Overall it was a very informative, but a full on day. I would recommend that students who are interested in entering the cattle industry keep this expo in mind. Next year I am hoping to return, but enter the expo as a handler.

Jessie Bland

YEAR 10 BRAIN BEE

On Friday 25th July, Tessa Bagshaw made her way down to Florey Lecture Theatre, in the Medical School at The University of Adelaide. She had been selected from her round 1 ABBC results to compete in the individual competition. Meningie Area School was also selected to take a team down to compete in the Team Challenge in the afternoon, however due to a variety of reasons this was unable to happen.

The day started off the Professor Paul Rolan, a pain physician, speaking about the current research they are undertaking. The Brain Bee coordinator also spoke about her work as a Behavioural Neuroscientist, and looking at addictions. The individual challenge was tough, with the questions really pushing the students. Unfortunately Tessa did not make the top 5 individuals who then went on for an oral questioning round. The competition was very tough, and Tessa did extremely well, considering most of the other schools had Brain Bee clubs which ran at lunchtimes.

We were lucky enough to get a tour of the Pathology and Anatomy Museums at the University. I would suggest that 2015’s Year 10 students give it a go too.

Ms. Low

How to reduce your child’s risk of depression and clinical anxiety

Strategies for parents of primary-school aged children.

The University of Melbourne, with funding from Beyondblue, has developed new guidelines for parents to reduce the risk of their children developing depression or anxiety.

How to reduce your child’s risk of depression and clinical anxiety: Strategies for parents of primary-school aged children is a general set of recommendations that may also be useful for parents whose child is already experiencing some symptoms of depression or anxiety. The University of Melbourne and beyondblue recognise that each family is unique, and so parents may need to adapt these strategies to their specific situation.

To view the guidelines, please visit www.parentingstrategies.net/depression

Please note that a similar guide for teenage children is also available at the above link.

JEANS for GENES CASUAL DAY

Captains are holding a casual day for Jeans for Genes Day on the 15th of August (Friday), to help raise funds for children that are born with a genetic disorder. Please wear your coolest jeans, and support this cause with a gold coin donation.

Thank You,
M.A.S Captains

TAX FILE NUMBER

If any students need a Tax File Number for the upcoming school holidays, any completed application forms we receive by the end of Week 6 should see the student getting their TFN by the time this term ends.

Forms are available at the Front Office.

STUDENTS FREE DAY

FRIDAY 8th AUGUST

Consistent attendance helps increase the chance of a good job.
This coming week will see Meningie School & Community Library be the first of the Coorong network of libraries to join the One Card System.

The Meningie School has been particularly supportive of the transition and provided the extra resources that were required to make all the hard work come to fruition. The School values the contribution the library makes to the wider community and the extra staffing and resources, along with some dedicated voluntary work, have facilitated Meningie’s move to the State Wide network of Public, School and Community Libraries.

The advantages and benefits will be apparent to all as we will have access to millions of items and online resources from home or in the library.

Don’t forget to rejoin by simply filling in a form so you can get a card that will work in any public or school/community library in South Australia. Try out the website above and use the search box to see how far and wide you can borrow from.

Bernie Ryan Librarian