

GREEN BAY SCHOOL

www.greenbay.school.nz

3rd December 2009

Principal's Piece

Goodbyes and Hellos

It is with sadness that we farewell some staff who are leaving us at the end of term. Congratulations to Stephanie Pye who has won a position at Gladstone Road School and Cherie Bennett whose contract finishes this year. We wish these teachers all the best in their next positions. We are temporarily also farewelling Anja Hennig and Natalie Williamson who join Belinda Ryder on maternity leave. We are welcoming new to our school next year 2 experienced permanent Intermediate teachers, Garrick Bridges and Deryck Freeland. Garrick will be Acting Senior Teacher in Natalie's stead. Deryck will have a leadership role as Sports Co-ordinator. We also welcome back Freddie Barron who will be rejoining our staff as a Yr 5/6 teacher, and Hsin-yi Yang returning from maternity leave.

With these exciting additions to our teaching staff we are already looking forward to next year.

Student Achievement Results 2009

At the end of every year we report to our Board of Trustees on student achievement across the school.

In Reading this year, we have achieved 87% of students reading at or above the benchmarks compared to 83% in Term 1. This result includes a shift from 23% High Achieving in Term 1 to 42% Highly Achieving in Term 4.

In Writing, we still had some way to go to achieve our goal. We had achieved well while on the Writing Professional Development Contract in terms of their benchmarks, but decided to raise our benchmark this year to the ambitious target of achieving the national curriculum level. We have achieved 70%, an increase from 45% in Term 1, including a shift from 5% Highly Achieving in Term 1 to 23% in Term 4. We are well on the way to achieving the strategic goal of raising achievement in Writing to the national standard within the next 2 years.

In Numeracy, we have improved from 49% in Term 1 to 77% in Term 4 achieving at or above the national expectation.

There is always room for improvement in these results as it is our aim to achieve 100% success rate. We will keep striving to assist those students with English as a second language and special needs, and students who are new to the school or who are struggling with an area of the curriculum. Next year Maths and Writing will receive intense focus. We are also providing professional development for teachers in helping students better understand where they are at in their learning and what they need to work on next, because engaging students better in their learning has been shown to have excellent benefits for raising student achievement.

Children's Market

Thank you to all the supportive parents who turned out in the rain to buy children's products at the Market Day last Friday. We raised approximately \$2,500 after expenses. Teachers have yet to determine how this will be spent for the children's benefit. Well done to teachers and students for their enterprising efforts!

National Standards—what is the fuss about?

You will have read a lot of controversy in the media about the implementation of the new government policy on national standards.

Our school fully supports the rights of parents to know where their children are compared to national expectations and believes that schools should use a method parents can understand. As Green Bay School parents know, we have implemented these principles in our reporting to you for about 4 years now.

The Ministry's requirements on this will still mean more work for us as we must ensure our teachers are aligning their assessment methods with the Ministry's new expectations. While the short timeframe will impose a challenge on us, we want our systems to be the best we can make them, and we want parents to be on board with us, so we will do what is necessary.

There will be more pressure on us because we are also implementing the new curriculum at the same time. Fortunately, we have already been implementing many aspects of the new curriculum through our Learning Pathways programme for some years now, so we're up for this challenge too.

As your school's principal, I believe I should share with our community the professional restrictions about aspects of the standards which myself and many colleagues, including leading academics have about the standards, such as:

- The standards are untested—it is not known whether they will work. Any new education initiative must benefit children's learning, not damage it.
- There is a risk that schools might narrow down the curriculum and weaken opportunities for students to excel in areas of personal talents.
- Children could be labelled as failures if they do not meet the standard for their age, when the actual progress a child is making is what is most important to measure.
- They impose a national "one size fits all" approach to learning.
- They could lead to "league tables" of schools being published which create incorrect and unfair perceptions of "good" and "bad" schools.

However, the standards have become law through a democratic process and a state school's role is to carry out policy. The intention behind national standards is to help all children achieve—and that is what our school will continue to focus on!

I'd like to take this opportunity of thanking our parents for all their support during the year, and I'd like to acknowledge the talented and hard-working staff and Board of Trustees we have. Lastly, my thanks to all our students, without whose hard work we wouldn't have such a great school!

On behalf of the staff, I would like to wish all our families a safe and very Happy Christmas!

Jude Black

**2PM FINISH
THURSDAY 17TH DECEMBER
Term 1 starts
3rd February 2010 8.50am**