School News

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Over the past six months the school has been working hard behind the scenes to develop an improved reporting format for this semester. With suggestions taken on board from staff and parents, as well as looking at the requirements of the Department, we have made some changes so that parents will have a better understanding of what their child has been doing at school, and their progress, compared with state expectations.

The major change has been that the ‘Above Grade Expectation’ and ‘Below Grade Expectation’ grading system has been brought into line with the standard state wording ranging from ‘Outstanding’ to ‘Limited’. Attached to this newsletter is a Department of Education Reporting Bulletin, which clearly explains what the ‘Outstanding to Limited’ grades mean. It is well worth a read before reports come home. If students receive a ‘Sound’ grade, they are on track to achieving grade expectations. Another major change is that we have allocated increased space for the English and Maths comments, to allow teachers to comment on the successes and further needs of students in these important areas. The strands in these subjects have also been brought into line with the new NSW syllabus strands.

To allow the additional space for English and Maths, the comments in the other key learning areas (KLAs) have been shortened to a statement about what your child has been doing in that KLA. Comments on their particular strengths, achievements or needs in any of these KLAs have been made in the general comment on the back page, which has now also been extended significantly in length and detail. The work habits, skills and participation sections on the back page have also been slightly changed to reflect what is happening in the school.

In a major change for Kindergarten we have taken away the wordy comments for English and Maths. These have been replaced with grades for the skills and knowledge expected of Kindergarten students at this stage of the year. A very detailed general comment also paints a clear picture of their progress over the first half of the year.

Of course when there is a change to something we are used to, it can be a little difficult to understand at first. If you have any concerns, please don’t hesitate to discuss your child’s progress or their report with their class teacher or grade supervisor.

Elizabeth Macarthur Historical Writing Competition

Earlier this term, students were invited to enter the Elizabeth Macarthur Historical Writing Competition, which is open to students throughout Macarthur. Congratulations to Cassie McMurdo, Gabrielle Bradley and Poppy La Hay who won prizes in the competition for their outstanding writing. They were fantastic. Mrs Evans did a great job chairing the event and to Audrey Taylor.

Stage 2 finalists were Stephanie Taylor, Sharmini Chevanayagam, Henry Key, Joshua Dib, Cooper West, Chelsea Perriman, Jacob Darby, Leah Maglis, Ella Clarke and Kaiden Vandersteen.

Stage 3 finalists were Libby Clapson, Molly Skinner, Oliver Macdonald, Cassie McMurdo, Tori Machiori, Tayla Dale, Libbi Kynaston and Lachlan Taylor.

The standard of these finalists was exceptional and the impromptu speeches were fantastic. Mrs Evans did a great job judging as it wasn’t an easy decision.

So, the two co-winners from each stage are Leah Maglis and Ella Clarke from Stage 2 and Oliver Macdonald and Cassie McMurdo Stage 3.

Congratulations to all our finalists for making this a very tough competition. Special thanks to David Truong for chairing the event and to Audrey Saunders and Adam Talbot for timekeeping.

Congratulations to our winners who will represent Mawarra at the area final here at our school on Friday, 20th June, 2014.

Mrs K Took Coordinator

Student News

Multicultural Perspectives Public Speaking Competition

Last Tuesday, 3rd June, 2014 Mawarra had the school final of the Multicultural Perspectives Public Speaking Competition.

Stage 2 finalists were Stephanie Taylor, Sharmini Chevanayagam, Henry Key, Joshua Dib, Cooper West, Chelsea Perriman, Jacob Darby, Leah Maglis, Ella Clarke and Kaiden Vandersteen.

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Mrs K Took Coordinator

Afternoon Parking

The afternoon bell time is a very busy time around schools. Could we please ask you to be considerate of our neighbours when finding a parking space. Cars should not block people’s driveways or be parked anywhere that may pose a danger to other traffic or pedestrians.

Security and Gates

To ensure the safety of our students, our external gates are locked each morning at 9:15am and unlocked in the afternoon at 2:30pm. Between these hours, the front gate on Macarthur Road remains open. On days when parents are invited into the school for events or assemblies, the back and side gates will be unlocked before the event, and then closed again shortly after the event concludes. This will ensure that our children remain in a secure environment while here at school.

40th Birthday Reminder

A reminder that our Education Week Open Day will be held on Tuesday 29th July, 2014. The day will also celebrate our 40th year, and a time capsule will be opened, along with all our interesting activities and performances. If you would like your family name/s to be included on our 40th anniversary wall the order form for plaques went home last week. They are also available from the office or on the website. Please spread the word to past Mawarra families. With 40 years worth of students somewhere out there in the community, we need you to help spread the word.

Don’t forget to read the attached Reporting Bulletin so that you are prepared for our new reports.

School Photos Reminder

School photos will be taken on Thursday 26th June, 2014. Children need to be in full school winter uniform. Order envelopes need to be returned by photo day, as the photo company imposes an additional late fee to parents who order after this day. Family/sibling envelopes and Group/Team envelopes are available from school office.

www.mawarra-p.schools.nsw.edu.au  mawarra-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au
Phone (02) 4658 0990  Fax. (02) 4658 0223
**Student Welfare**

**Live Life Well @ School**

**No Time for Breakfast!**

Try some of these quick breakfasts children can enjoy “on the go”.

- Reduced fat yoghurt, or a yoghurt drink
- Reduced-fat milkshake
- Healthy cereal in small plastic bag (a small carton of milk can add a calcium boost)
- Slice of banana loaf or other low fat fruit loaf

*Live Life Well Coordinators*
*Sharon Kynaston & Narelle Scott*

**Mawarra Movers**

The points competition is proving very popular and the assembly behaviour is really improving. As a result we have decided to extend the competition for another week, classes will earn points for listening quietly and moving off from the assembly in a quiet, orderly manner. The infants and primary classes with the most points at the end of the three weeks will earn a sausage sizzle lunch on a day to be advised in the following week.

**Library News**

**Reminder** — Next week will be the last week for borrowing before the holidays. If your child has any overdue library books at home could you please send them to school.

Students who are completing the Premier’s Reading Challenge will be able to borrow books to read over the holidays. All entries for the challenge must be added before 22nd August, 2014.

**Premier’s Reading Challenge**

**Years 3 – 6** If your child has read and entered the required 20 books please fill in the validation slip at the end of this newsletter and send it to me. I will then go online and validate their records so they will receive their certificate at the end of the year.

**Book Club**

If you would like to order any books please send your orders and money to the school office by Monday 16th June, 2014 as this is the last day for book club orders.

*Mrs Dianne Cronshaw*
*Teacher/Librarian*

**Sport News**

**Boys Cricket State Knockout**

Mawarra played Mount Annan in the Boys State Knockout Cricket Match on Friday 30th May, 2014. Although the boys played well as a team, they lost 4-2. Congratulations to the boys on their great effort and behavior.

*Mr P. Morrison*

**P&C News**

**P&C Mowing Roster**

Thank you to Greg Mottram, Brendan McMurdoo, Lachlan Best & Dennis Eagles (Coordinator) for their wonderful effort on Saturday 31st May, 2014.

**Community News**

**Blanket our community with your warmth and love this winter... We need your help!**

Spare a thought for those women and their families in our communities who will struggle this winter. Please donate any extra Baby Blankets, cot sheets, single, double or queen blankets & sheets, towels or new pillows (still in plastic).

Donated items can be dropped off until 31st July, 2014 at Cakebiz, 267 Camden Valley Way, Narellan or King Street Natural Health Centre, 20 King St, Campbelltown

Brand New Day Female Services Inc. is partnering with CakeBiz Narellan and King Street Natural Health Centre Campbelltown and Curves Campbelltown together with local Macarthur Community Service Organisations who meet first hand those women and their families in our communities who will find this winter difficult. Please join in our campaign.

**Upcoming Events**

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<tr>
<th>Monday 16/6/14</th>
<th><em>Uni Writing Competition</em></th>
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<tr>
<td><em>Pet Education (K-2)</em></td>
<td><em>P&amp;C Meeting @ 7.30pm</em></td>
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<tr>
<th>Wednesday 18/6/14</th>
<th><em>Uni Spelling Competition</em></th>
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<td><em>Area Multicultural Public Speaking Final</em></td>
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<tr>
<th>Tuesday 24/6/14</th>
<th><em>K-6 Assembly @ 12noon</em></th>
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<th>Thursday 26/6/14</th>
<th><em>Newsletter day</em></th>
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<td><em>School Photos</em></td>
<td><em>Reports go home</em></td>
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**Premiers Reading Challenge Validation Slip**

I certify that my child_________________________ of class_________ has completed the Premiers’s Reading Challenge 2014 and has abided by the set rules and conditions.

Signed_________________________ Date____________

Parent/Guardian
Could try harder... always does her best... lacks concentration... easily distracted... a pleasure to teach...

Do these comments, taken from a batch of student reports sound familiar?

Student reports bring mixed feelings for parents. Pleasure and pride if they are performing well but considerable angst when children are not progressing as you hoped.

Reports can mean anxious times for children too. Will my parents be disappointed or proud? This is the main concern of most children. Kids of all ages take their cues from their parents, so your reaction to their school report can affect the way they see themselves as learners and as people.

Before you rip open the sealed envelope containing the report do a little self-check to see if you are in the right frame of mind:

1. Are your expectations for your son or daughter realistic and in line with their ability?
   Expectations are tricky. If they are too high then kids can be turned off learning. Too low and there is nothing to strive for. Pitch your expectations in line with your child's abilities. A quick check of your child's last report cards may provide you with a good yardstick.

2. Do you believe that children learn at different rates?
   There are slow bloomers, late developers and steady-as-you-go kids in every classroom, so avoid comparing your child to siblings, your friends' children and even yourself when you were a child. Instead look for individual progress.

3. Are you willing to safeguard your child's self-esteem rather than deflate it?
   Self-confidence is a pre-requisite for learning, so be prepared to be as positive and encouraging as possible.

School reports come in different formats. Some are prescriptive while some use grading systems such as A, B, C, etc. with room for teacher comments. Regardless of the format school reports should provide you with an idea of your child's progress in all subject areas, their attitude and social development.

Here are some ideas to consider when you open your child's report:

Focus on strengths. Do you look for strengths or weaknesses first? The challenge is to focus on strengths even if they are not in the traditional 3Rs or core subjects.

Take into account your child's effort and attitude to learning. If the report indicates that effort is below standard, then you have something to work on. If your child is putting in the required effort, then you cannot ask any more than that, regardless of the grading.

Broaden your focus away from academic performance to form a picture of your child's progress as a member of a social setting. How your child gets along with his or her peers will influence his happiness and well-being, as well as give an indicator to his future. The skills of independence and co-operation are highly valued by employers so don't dismiss these as unimportant.

Take note of student self-assessment. Kids are generally very honest and will give a realistic assessment of their progress. They are generally very perceptive so take note of their opinions.

Discuss the report with your son or daughter talking about strengths first before looking at areas that need improvement. Ask for their opinion about how they performed and discuss their concerns.

After reports are read and discussed celebrate your child's efforts with a special activity or treat. In this way you will recognise progress and remind them that the holidays are just around the corner when they can forget about assessment, tests and reports for a while.
Making A-E judgements

There has been a great deal of discussion in schools and at professional learning workshops about the A-E judgements and preparation for issuing the new reports.

In response to questions that have arisen the following 5 key principles will assist teachers and principals in making their judgements about a student’s performance up to that particular point in time.

1. It needs to be emphasised that the A-E grades are to be presented as “part of the total picture”, or an aspect of the overall assessment and reporting tapestry.

2. We are ultimately relying on the professional judgements of our teachers to make the most appropriate A-E judgements. These judgements will be informed by the grade descriptions, work samples and other support material that are available.

3. It is important to have assessment information on hand, which might sometimes include examples of work, when discussing reports with parents, but we must stress the importance of overall professional judgements being made. These judgements are based on not just assessment tasks, but observations, ongoing anecdotal records etc. and other contextual information known by the teacher. Evidence from national research demonstrates a high correlation between teacher judgements and the outcomes of national tests.

4. None of us should work in isolation as we approach these important tasks. Dialogue needs to occur with colleagues across year / stage levels, within KLA groups and whole school staff meetings and beyond our own school, through regional and state-wide networks. This is how we will enhance the level of consistency in our student reporting.

5. It helps when we consistently use plain language as we discuss, determine and report on the A-E judgements. This can and should include references to quality teaching principles such as “depth of understanding” as we differentiate how students are performing at a given point in time.

Understanding the A-E grades

At the beginning of a reporting period, teachers will consider what students are expected to learn. That is, the knowledge, skills and understanding that is typically spelt out in the syllabuses and the teaching/learning programs developed by schools.

At the end of the reporting period, teachers will consider how well students have achieved what they are expected to learn during that semester. This is addressed by using the common A-E grade scale which summarises the degree to which students have demonstrated their achievement of the knowledge, skills and understanding.
they have had the opportunity to learn. How well takes into account the breadth and depth of their learning.

The Board of Studies grade descriptions, provided below in italics, describe the standard for each grade, but teachers will need to consider what this means in practice.

The Department's Student Report Reference Group, which includes school principals, has developed some further advice on the A-E grades to assist teachers with their understanding of the standards. These further and better particulars need to be read in conjunction with the Board of Studies grade descriptions. The two are complementary and, together, will assist teachers.

The C description is listed first because a judgement about sound achievement is a logical starting point. Having identified those students whose achievement is not of a C standard consideration can then be given to identifying which students are achieving a D or E. Students identified as achieving better than a C standard would then be considered for a B or A grade.

C – Sound
The student has a sound knowledge and understanding of the main areas of content and has achieved an adequate level of competence in the processes and skills.

In practice a "C" would be awarded if the student is performing reasonably well with the work that has been taught based on the syllabus expectations. Some of the work may have needed some extra revision or even some individualised instruction, but the student has understood the main concepts and has demonstrated a sound level of competence in the desired skills. The student is 'on track'.

D – Basic
The student has a basic knowledge and understanding of the content and has achieved a basic level of competence in the processes and skills.

In practice, a "D" would be awarded if the student's performance is inconsistent. There will be some gaps or lack of depth in his or her understanding of the work that has been taught and there is evidence that this has been occurring across a range of assessments. For example, a student awarded a D may well have demonstrated a sound grasp of some mathematics concepts covered in a semester, but may be having difficulties with the work involving measurement and space.

E – Limited
The student has an elementary knowledge and understanding in few areas of the content and has achieved very limited competence in some of the processes and skills.

In practice an "E" would be awarded if there is a high level of concern about the student's performance. He or she will have experienced difficulty in most of the assessment tasks. It is likely that the student will only have an elementary knowledge in a few areas of what was taught.

B – High
The student has a thorough knowledge and understanding of the content and a high level of competence in the processes and skills. In addition, the student is able to apply this knowledge and these skills to most situations.

In practice, a “B” would be awarded if the student is performing very well with the work presented and has consistently met the outcomes at a high level for the reporting period. This has been evident across assessments. For example, the student has achieved very good results in the aspects of the Creative and Practical Arts program that have been taught during the semester. The student demonstrates the confidence, skills and understandings which are going to enable them to easily extend their learning in the area.

A – Outstanding
The student has an extensive knowledge and understanding of the content and can readily apply this knowledge. In addition, the student has achieved a very high level of competence in the processes and skills and can apply these skills to new situations.

In practice an “A” would be awarded if the student is performing extremely well and is regularly applying their skills, extensive knowledge and deep understanding to new situations. The student is demonstrating outstanding achievement.

Further Information
Details on the policy requirements can be found at www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/curriculum/schools/curric_plan/PD20050290.shtml.

Detailed information will continue to be available to Principals and teachers via the Department’s website at www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/timetoteach/ This site provides:

- information on the new policy
- sample report formats
- curriculum planning and programming resources
- questions and answers and information brochures
- implementation support advice including School Development Day materials

For further information on the new requirements for reporting to parents, as part of the Curriculum planning and programming, assessing and reporting to parents K-12 policy you can contact:

- Director Curriculum on 9886 7602 or robert.randall@det.nsw.edu.au

OR

- Manager, School Based Assessment and Reporting 9886 7765 or ian.harrison@det.nsw.edu.au

OR

- Questions can also be submitted to reportinginfo@det.nsw.edu.au and answers will be published on the FAQ section of the website www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/timetoteach