Principal's Report

As another busy term comes to an end it is a good opportunity for teachers, parents and children to reflect on what happens at our school.

Firstly, to our students- I ask the children to reflect on their time at school. Questions that you might think about could include –

- Are you taking advantage of all the opportunities that are being offered to you?
- Are you working hard yet balancing your sporting and social activities?
- Are you eating well and getting sufficient rest?
- Are you turning off all screens at least 2 hours before going to bed?
- Are you focusing on developing your organisational and study skills?
- Are you seeking help when it is required?

If you need help in any of these areas, please remember that there are many people here at school who would be delighted to help you.

Future Educational Directions

For parents and teachers it is interesting to think about the direction education is taking in general and BHHS in particular. Last week the MySchool website opened with the Naplan data for 2012. Once again Box Hill High School students achieved well above the Australian standards and even above the ‘like school’ cohort. Yet is this what is important in terms of educating our young people in 2013?

Last week I was fortunate to hear some excellent speakers who argued that National testing is not the way of lifting standards in Australian schools. I listened to a lecture given by Sir Ken Robinson - you may like to google his website and listen to some of his Ted Talks if you are interested in finding out more about this amazingly forward-thinking educationalist.

He believes that the trend by western countries moving towards national testing is wrong for teachers, students and Principals. He believes it is sensible to have a core curriculum but a model of improving education by central control is due to fail and has shown to do just that in countries like America and Britain.

He believes that radically personalising education is the key. This relies on an understanding that all kids are different. There are some things that they need to learn in common, and then we have to give kids time in the day to discover their talents and passions. If they discover what they are good at they will improve in all areas. Secondly he believes that schools need to customise their culture. Schools need to believe in the power of a school. He claims that society enjoys difference, that the school culture is vital for achievement and it must be adaptive.

So as I reflect on the actions that have occurred at our school this term, I note that these two things are indeed what we are attempting to achieve at Box Hill High School. Our school is indeed different and we are constantly trying to change to improve what happens at our school. We understand that children are different and through our core curriculum, our elective offerings, an incredible variety of subject choices and pathways, our clubs and our many co-curricular activities, we endeavour to give students the time to indeed discover their talents and passions. As a school we are working hard to provide variety and to allow for difference.

Over the last couple of years we have developed many outstanding programs to support children in their learning. These include our S4 subjects, and our support programs of Language for Learning, Quicksmart Maths and Drama in Society. This year our focus is to develop strategies to allow students to do the best VCE they possibly can. To facilitate improvement in this area we are studying data and working out strategies to improve performance at the senior end of the school.
Secondly, I heard Professor Stephen Lamb and Professor Richard Teese, both Professors at Melbourne University, speak about the equity challenges facing Victorian Government schools. I was also fortunate to hear Michael Kirby, ex High Court judge of Australia, talk about the importance of public education.

Both Professor Lamb and Professor Teese showed data which highlighted that State Government schools in terms of the poorest 20% of families deal with 91.7% whilst the Catholic system only deals with 6.3% and the Independent schools only deal with 3%.

Government schools only have 14% of students from the top 20% of the richest families. Other interesting statistics were that 78% of students with disabilities, 72% of students with ESL backgrounds, 80% of refugees and almost all of the aboriginal children are in State Government schools. Yet State Government schools receive the smallest amount of money per capita to run their schools. It was interesting for me to see that the MySchool website claimed that at Box Hill High School I received $13,067 per student. This is a very misleading figure as the amount on my SRP documentation states it is $7,153 per student.

Based on these figures it is amazing to me that BHHS continues to be the great school it is! It is a credit to the staff who teach here and the children and parents who send their children to our school.

Again of course I welcome your comments and input.

**Farewell to Ms Eastwood**

Finally this term, it is with great regret that we farewells our Year 7 Coordinator, Ms Annie Eastwood. She is taking up a position with Mission Australia to implement a government initiative to improve opportunities for at-risk students. Annie has been an outstanding teacher and Year Level Coordinator. She is a great advocate for her students and is always looking to develop strategies and programs that will improve the teaching and learning for her students. She was an integral part of the new system of pastoral care for Year 7 students, she was supportive of the Language for Learning program, she was a keen supporter of the ESL program for junior students, and she was working hard to improve Maths teaching for students who were at risk of failure. Just last week she initiated the Pi day that we had for all students. We will miss her, we hope she will only be gone for the rest of the year, but we wish her every success in her new role.

I am delighted therefore to announce that we are so fortunate that Ms Shareen Bottrell has successfully gained the position of Year 7 Coordinator that Ms Eastwood leaves. Shareen is an incredibly experienced Year 7 Coordinator and a great supporter of children. She was Year 7 Coordinator at our school for many years before she left to have a family and we are delighted to welcome her back to the position. We are also fortunate to be able to welcome Mr Hamish Thomas to our staff. He will take up Ms Eastwood’s teaching allotment. He was an outstanding pre-service teacher at our school last year and we are delighted to now be able to appoint him to a teaching position.

**Parent Teacher Interviews**

Next term we will be offering two opportunities for parents to meet with their children’s classroom teachers.

- Thursday 18th April will be for parents whose surname is A – L - from 2.00 – 5.00pm
- Monday 29th April will be for parents whose surname is M – Z - from 2.00 – 5.00pm.

Students will be dismissed at lunchtime on both of these days but we hope that they will join their parents at the teacher interviews. Parents can make appointments through Compass.

**Open Day**

This year’s Open Day will be held on Tuesday 23 April from 2.30pm until 4.30pm. To prepare for this event and to accommodate the huge numbers of student helpers, students will be dismissed at lunchtime.
New Jazz Ensemble!

The Box Hill High School Jazz Ensemble has been formed and is rehearsing every Thursday lunchtime in P07. The ensemble has been growing since its inception and will be a vehicle for students to learn the art of improvisation and learn many standard jazz tunes, such as “Cantaloupe Island” by Herbie Hancock, “Summertime” by George Gershwin and Blues influenced standards. The ensemble is directed by the very talented Gianni Marinucci who can be found playing around Melbourne and beyond in his own Quartet and Trio. Good luck guys. We look forward to seeing the Jazz Ensemble develop their skills over the years and hearing them play at the many school concerts and Dizzy’s Jazz Club, later in the year.

Mr Troy Rogers – Director of Music

ICAS Science Competition (UNSW)

This year’s Science Competition will be held on Wednesday 5 June. All Year 7-9 High Achievers and SEAL students will participate and do not need to apply or pay an entry fee, as their entry fee has been included in their school contributions. Mainstream students in Year 7-10 are also encouraged to enter. Students who would like to participate need to collect a permission slip from me or their Science teachers. These students need to pay an entry fee of $8.00 and return it with their permission slip to the General Office by Friday 19 April 2013. Students can familiarise themselves with the test format by going to http://www.eaa.unsw.edu.au/icas/hints-and-tips

Ms Erica Sporri – Science Co-Ordinator

Have you received the Schoolkids Bonus?

Do you know about the Schoolkids Bonus? It is a new cash payment to help eligible families and students with the costs of primary and secondary school studies. Around 1.2 million families have already benefitted from the first wave of payments in January 2013 – have you?

If you receive a family or income support payment, including Family Tax Benefit Part A, you could be eligible to receive $410 a year for each primary student and $820 a year for each secondary student, with half paid in January and half paid in July.

The Schoolkids Bonus replaces the Education Tax Refund (ETR) and is a much simpler system. You no longer need to collect receipts and payments are made automatically so you don’t have to wait months to make a claim via your tax return. Unlike the ETR you can choose how you use the payment to best support your children’s education – whether it be school books, stationery, uniforms, school fees or excursions.

Check your eligibility by visiting www.australia.gov.au/schoolkidsbonus and if you think you might have missed out on the January payment, contact Centrelink – either in person at a Centrelink-Medicare Office or by calling 132 468.
**Community Announcements**

**FREE study for overweight young people looking for help**

*The Murdoch Childrens Research Institute at The Royal Children’s Hospital is conducting a randomised controlled trial of an online weight management program designed for overweight adolescents aged 12 to 17 years.*

We want to find a fun and interactive way to help adolescents learn about healthy food choices and physical activity. Around 30% of all 12 to 17 year old Australians are overweight and spaces in clinical services are limited. Staying Fit is an interactive online program designed to help adolescents learn about healthy lifestyle choices. We would like to find out if it is more effective than the information that is already available to Australian adolescents.

We are looking for 550 overweight adolescents aged 12 - 17 to help us test two ways of providing health information. Those who take part in the study will be randomly assigned to either the Staying Fit group or the Usual Care group.

- Both groups will receive information for young people about healthy food choices, physical activity, stress and coping with eating disorders, and a list of useful websites to visit. The Staying Fit group will also spend about an hour each week (for 12 weeks) working through a fun, interactive, online session and they will be provided with a pedometer and a walking program.
- If we find that the Staying Fit program is more helpful, then at the end of the study the Usual Care group will also get access to the Staying Fit program.
- All participants are asked to complete questionnaires and have their height, weight, blood pressure and waist circumference measured at baseline, 3, 6 and 12 months follow-ups. Parents are also invited to complete questionnaires, height and weight measurements. These measurements can be taken at the Royal Children’s hospital or during home visits (not at schools) and all individual information is confidential.

- Recruitment has commenced and we are looking for overweight young people aged between 12 and 17.

If you would like to know more, contact the Staying Fit Project Coordinator, Karly Cini on (03) 9345 6954 or email: stayingfit@mcri.edu.au  web: www.rch.org.au/cale/stayingfit

**Looking for Volunteer Host Families**

World Education Program (WEP) is inviting you to experience another culture in your own home by becoming a volunteer host family to an international student arriving in July 2013. Our students from Italy, Belgium, Finland, France, Switzerland, The Netherlands and South America are looking forward to experiencing life in Australia, making new friends and becoming a member of an Australian family soon. Find out more! Getting to know your student before he or she arrives brings fun and joy to everyone involved. Take the next step and contact WEP today to receive a full information pack for your family.

Sylvia Kelly, Manager–Inbound Exchange Programs  Ph :1300 884 733  E: info@wep.org.au  http://www.wep.org.au

**City of Whitehorse – Parent Information Session**

Rod Dungan – Founder of Thriving Youth, Director and Trainer for Thriving Youth Australia presents Living Harmoniously with your Teenager on Wednesday 17th April 2013 from 7.30 to 9.30pm in the Waratah Room, The Whitehorse Centre, 397 Whitehorse Road, Nunawading. $2 gold coin donation. Bookings required. Enquiries: 9262 6332

**Are you interested in Event Management?**  *Live Music, Events, Film Festivals, Cultural Events.*

Whitehorse Youth Services is calling for interest in our 2013 FReeZA Event Management Team. As a team member you will meet fortnightly to organize events for young people in the City of Whitehorse. You will gain film and music industry experience and learn about planning, developing and managing events. If you are 12-24 years old and this is for you, contact Amy McDonald on 9898 9340 or email amy.mcdonald@whitehorse.vic.gov.au