

Quality Learning for all in a Caring Community



Toko School
Principals Report
June 2006

School roll is just over 100!

Personal Best



Great to hear Martin Weir in the Central Taranaki Ross Brown team.

The concept of learning stars as a school reward is going well. Weekly selected children are awarded a learning star. The class charts are filling up and after 4 stars a little certificate goes home for the fridge or maybe the album!

I am going to start putting my report together using the stars as guides and I wonder whether it would be a good idea to put the Board agenda together under these heading too!

Learning Environment



Samantha's second ramp has been installed. The Ministry ended up paying the complete costs involved. The ramp outside Room 3 is movable and was installed for a cost just over \$5,000.

The room at the back of the Hall is scheduled for remodelling over the school holidays and additionally the shelving is to be installed in that time frame too! Well hopefully. Little progress with toilet block!

The 5 year property plan and 10 year maintenance plan have been signed and returned to the Ministry of Education. There were some changes made to the draft received last year, but these were relatively minor. We will be

carrying over some funds from the last 5 yr period which can be used in various ways. However, one of the changes made to next the 5 year plan was to inflate the existing costs of the planned jobs by 20%, due to increasing property costs.

The painting contract has been signed and returned to PMS.

The Jones cup event went particularly well, and it is good news that the Jones Cup is back at Toko School. We will not be letting it out again and instead give the winning teams a "stand in". I believe the cup was found at Huiakama School. I am very grateful the new Principal had such a good look!

The courts lines etc were repainted prior to Jones Cup.

The school has a fire alarm this term which went smoothly.

There is a small assessment of 'accidents at school' for the year on the agenda.

Challenging Curriculum



Teachers reading

The Toko School teachers are involved in a reading contract. It involves some new content, new language and some new ideas. It is not that what we were doing was bad in any way, but things in education seem in constant motion. Megan made a very good point the other day. To some degree this contract is about the 'language'. When ERO came last time they were talking a *reading language* which we were not familiar with! To some degree new labels for old things!

Secondly there is a new book out! Yes a new book for teaching reading to children from years 5 to 8.

So this contract is also about getting teachers to read and be comfortable with the content.

Lastly this contract is about teachers making their own personal reading goal. They need to identify an aspect of *their teaching* and focus on this aspect with a focus group of children.

Teachers are working with two new programs this year, Schools Master and AsTTle which are both promoted by the Ministry. Both require a lot of time to understand and at the end the improved learning is still a question mark in my mind.

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Talent Program

This Monday saw the last day of the talent program which ran for the term and a couple of weeks at the end of term 2.

From the children point of view this was very successful. Lots of positive feedback from children. Staff had the opportunity to develop a longer term program in a specialist area. This is clearly a good opportunity for the kids to be involved in some deeper learning! This may be referred to a **rich topic**. I think this talent program has certainly provided evidence or a back bone to the “gifted and talented” program at Toko School.

In effect no money from the Operating grant went into this program this year, but I cannot be sure that this is possible next year! Funding this year all came from banked staffing.

Partnership



We had a serious behaviour issue at school this month. Five boys were caught ‘abusing solvents’.

An investigation was carried out.

Parents were contacted and at this stage I have talked to all via telephone and in person to three families. These discussions were honest and open and showed the caring nature of the school, rather than one of just disciplinary action.

Children have been disciplined through a detention which is really lots of jobs and stood down from basketball for one week.

Basketball decision was an interesting one... I decided to do it for this

reason.

The children’s behaviour impacted **on other people**, in a negative way, eg their team. Their family.

What we do has an impact on others. I wanted to stress this connection.

The biggest ‘hassle’ in all of this is loss of trust. These children were taking advantage of trust given to them.

Programs like Prep and to a large degree the mathematical investigation *may* require children to be out of the classroom and away from the teacher. At these times they have the opportunity to make either good or bad decisions!

Now, for as long as it takes, none of these children can be “out of class”.

Two newsletters have left the school since the last BOT meeting.

Parent Interviews are planned for the last week of term. We hope to see all parents. Children re meant to play a significant role in the interview! However, I am not party to all interviews. I would appreciate feedback on the level of student participation in this process from the BOT members that attend an interview.

Learning to Learn



The Prep program comes to an end this week.

A multi dimensional program, which the children still seem to love!

Layers of responsibility and problem solving on a minute by minute basis!

On Friday it is market day with all the children’s wares available plus of course the neat concert put on by year 2 and 3 children!

Mathematical investigations have been completed. It is a very big undertaking to get nearly all the children to a point where their work could be displayed **with pride** in NP this week. Finishing things!! An essential skill!

Two Quiz teams will be representing the school on Friday night at the

competition in NP

There has been a large commitment too with the NZ Herald Competition in Room 5.

The children’s newspaper work from the last 2 years was on display at the **Bard Wired Expo** in Stratford and received many comments on the quality! Lots of digital art from Toko School was also on display.

Children’s art work was on display in the Percy Thompson Gallery. Some excellent Toko work was there. Hope some of you got to see it!

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Room 4 had their opportunity to go a kiwi release. Great afternoon organised.

Foundation Skills



The teachers have been involved in developing variety of tests. We are looking at some new testing material. The Ministry has developed a 'tool' called AsTTle... It can develop tests in reading and mathematics and written language too I believe. Like any test it is a snap shot of the child's level, and needs to be used in conjunction with other data. In this meeting I will be providing data on the learning of the children at Toko School in reading, mathematics and spelling. It is based on tests and teachers interpretation of the progress and development of the child. For ease of passing on the information to the Board the children are slotted into 5

groups.

Significantly above

Above

At

More than **one and ½ year's** ahead of their chronological age

Approximately **6 months to 1 and ½ year** head

In an area **around 6 months of their chronological age**, either up or down (Please note that the younger the children the less leeway allowed. Eg a 6 year old that was 6 months behind their chronological age would not be considered *at* their age, however a 12 year old that was 5 months behind their age *may* be considered *at*!)

Below

Significantly below.

More than **6 months behind their chronological age**

More than **1 ½ years behind their chronological.**

All children enrolled at the school are included in the figures.

These categories are decided upon by the teacher and are based on more than just test data. It is the teachers duty to make the decision based on all their knowledge.

Management Unit

Cathy Trueman has resigned her management unit. I sadly accepted the resignation and have offered it to Heather Savage. She has accepted this. This was a permanent unit and I believe that Heather deserves the unit, based on her current organisational and curriculum responsibilities.

Self Review

The **property half of NAG 4** is up for review at this meeting to keep the timetable right!!!

It has 2 associated policies, **Fundraising** and **Maintenance and Upgrading of School Property**, which need to be reviewed, *then* associated procedures.

I have already made changes to the **procedures...** to more closely reflect what actually happens. Policies should be attached to this report.

The end of term 2 draws near. The half way mark in the year!

Regards
Richard Bradley
Principal