Leap into Learning

Across all reaches of our school you will hear the phrase “Leap into Learning”. Schools are about learning, it is our core business each and every day. In 2014 we have continued to invest a great deal of time as a staff discussing what our focus for this “learning” will be. We have a very clear and defined goal around improving our results in Reading, Writing and Numeracy and we are very committed to this plan.

Leaping into Learning is everyone’s business and we all have a critical role to play:

**Students**
- be present at school
- to be organised and ready to learn
- be an active participant in all learning experiences.
- to reflect on own learning.

**Parents**
- to ensure children are at school, on time every day
- to keep in contact with your child’s teacher
- to read to your children every day (lower primary)
- to work in partnership with the school to support your child’s learning.

**Teachers**
- to know the individual needs of every child in the class
- to engage students in challenging and meaningful learning experiences.
- to deliver the specified curriculum in all Key Learning Areas.
- to implement assessment “of” and “for” learning.
- to work together with leadership team to analyse data to inform teaching and learning programs.
- to build and nurture relationships between home and school.
- to work together in productive teams to deliver quality teaching and learning programs.
- to actively participate in professional development opportunities to build knowledge and improve practice.

**Support Staff and Teacher Aides**
- to work together with the leadership team and teachers to deliver support programs for identified students (with an intensive focus on Literacy and Numeracy)
- to maintain productive relationships with students, teachers and parents.
- to assist in the assessment, data and target review cycle.
- to actively participate in professional development opportunities to build knowledge and improve practice.
I am very proud of the commitment our whole school team have shown towards this most important of agendas and we are looking forward to celebrating our successes and milestones along the way with you.

You will frequently hear us on assemblies, school newsletters and through other forms of communication discussing:

- whether students have made “leaps in their learning”, reaching their targets and aiming to do better
- whether class teachers have data (every 5 weeks) that demonstrate how their class has made “leaps to reach their targets”, who has “leapt past their target” and who has “further to leap”.
- whether our intervention programs have supported children in “leaping forward”.
- recognising and celebrating the “leaps forward that we all make”
- recognising and celebrating those students who “leap high” through academic awards each semester.
- teachers and staff making “leaps in their learning” as they develop their professional skills and knowledge.

Have you leapt into learning today?

All Teachers Involved in 5 Weekly Target Meetings This Week with the Leadership Team.

This week all teachers will meet with their Leadership Team representative (Principal, Deputy Principal’s, HOSES) to discuss their class data. This data includes the recent school wide assessment tasks (PAT Maths, PAT Comprehension, Spelling/ Grammar/ Punctuation/ Vocabulary test) that were conducted throughout week 2 and 3.

Teachers analyse this and other student data to set 5 weekly targets for the children in their class in the areas of Reading, Writing and Numeracy.

These Leap into Learning Target Meetings are a very important component of our school improvement agenda as we focus on the learning needs of all students to ensure that children are supported to make leaps forward in their learning every day.
Number two: Boys just want to blend in
The abiding wish of all boys from school-aged through to adolescence is to fit in and be a part of a group. They are group-oriented by nature. They tend to play group games and form themselves into structured friendship groups. This need to fit in will dictate much of their social behaviour so those who raise or work with them need to be mindful not to place them in positions which compromise this desire. Frustratingly, there can be a sameness about the group as boys adopt similar dress, language and codes of behaviour. Boys generally don’t want to stand out from their crowd.

Don’t put them down in front of their friends and realise that at times they may make friendship choice that may be dubious, but the one thing a boy doesn’t want to be is alone.

Number three: They are hierarchical and they like to know who is in charge.
Boys have two questions on their minds whether they are in a group or at home:
1. “What are the rules here?”
2. “Who’s in charge?”
Boys like limits and boundaries as they make them feel safe and secure. They also like to know that someone is going to enforce those rules so don’t be afraid to be ‘in charge’, although you don’t have to use the same authoritarian methods as perhaps your own parents used.

Number four: Never communicate with a mask.
Some boys, eight years of age and older, wear a mask to protect themselves from being hurt or to portray a tough guy image. This mask can take many guises including; ‘tough nut’, ‘cool guy’ and ‘class clown’. They will attempt to communicate with that mask. Refuse to communicate with a mask. Make them feel comfortable, joke with them, even tickle them but get them to drop the mask if you really want to get through to them.

Number five: Loyalty is an incredibly strong driver for boys.
Boys are group-oriented beasts. As a community we place individualism and stoicism on a pedestal. The self-made man is celebrated in Australia but this does boys a disservice. They are incredibly influenced by their peers, which can hold many of them back. It takes a brave boy to get too far ahead of the pack so they often hold each other back when it comes to achieving. But loyalty to others can get boys into trouble. Call a boy’s sister an insulting name and you are in for fight. Insult his friends and you are asking for trouble. Understand that loyalty to friends, family, teachers and cause are key male drivers and you go along way to understanding the male psyche.

Number six: Use short-term goals to motivate them.
Want to know how to motivate a boy to learn? Just make sure he can see some type of benefit in the task he will work hard to get it. You need to make sure the benefit is tangible and short-term though for many as they are less likely, compared to girls, to work when there is no foreseeable gain for them.

Number seven: Success is the greatest motivator for boys.
This is tricky but essentially it is about realising that boys will succeed at most things they put their mind to if the know they will experience success. This means that we need to structure activities so that success is achievable and also make sure they experience success along the way. One simple way of putting this into practise is if a basketball coach wants to introduce a new complex skill he will make sure his charges practise known skills first before introducing the new one. If he or she is smart they will teach the activities in small steps so they can achieve little by little along the way.

There is no doubt that raising boys can be a challenge for many parents. It appears to me that those adults who do best raising boys have a significant understanding and appreciation of what makes boys tick.
Junior school students have settled into classroom routines in their new year level and this week they will be completing assessment for their first English and maths units of work. Along with the usual curriculum units of work we will continue our strong whole school focus on reading and further develop our work on spelling and writing.

Spelling is linked to writing and reading and is essential when communicating thoughts, ideas and information. With our young children spelling begins with writing as a terrific way for children to express their thoughts, creativity, and uniqueness. It is also a fundamental way in which children learn to organize ideas. And learning to spell and write well helps children to be better readers.

When engaging in writing, young children often mirror what they see around them; adults and older children writing lists, notes, text messaging. They are observing the way writing is used in our everyday lives.

Some simple ways parents and carers can help children with writing are:

- Keep markers, pencils, and crayons available at home. Children develop skills that prepare them for writing through their normal play — like drawing, painting, and tracing objects. This kind of play helps prepare the brain and the muscles for holding a pencil and forming written words.
- Help them learn to write their name. This is an empowering experience, and allows them to begin to identify themselves as writers.
- Involve them in your writing activities. Make a shopping list together and point out the words that start with the same letter as the child’s name. Show your children that you write too. Let your children see you writing thank you notes, composing an e-mail, or communicating with your child’s school.

As you read to your children, point out things the book author did to make the book so fun to read. “Wow! Listen to how the author describes the ocean. Don’t those words make you feel like you’re back jumping over waves?”

After you share a story, talk about important story elements such as beginning, middle and end. Encourage your child to retell or summarize the reading. After reading nonfiction, ask questions about the information, “Is the spider an insect? How is a spider different than an insect?”

During and after reading, call attention to interesting words and phrases. This may include repeated phrases, metaphors or idioms (“sick as a dog,” “a dime a dozen.”) Talk about any new vocabulary and other ways the author used language or words to make the text interesting, informative, funny or sad.

As parents, we hope to develop many positive skills and traits in our children. Critical thinking, the ability to think deeply about a topic or a book, is an essential skill for children to develop. Critical thinking is developed through conversations when reading and listening and viewing and takes time to develop in children… discuss the characters, actions and events. Why did this character do what they did and what do you think this tells us about them.? You can also ask open-ended questions where there can be many answers.

Please continue to communicate with your child’s teacher as the partnership between parents and teachers is paramount in helping your child progress academically and socially and emotionally at school.

Old Magazines wanted
3R are asking for any old magazines that are suitable for children to be sent to their classroom. National Geographic included if you have any.

Thank you.
Community News

Cosmos Netball Club are still signing on players for the 2014 season, especially players born 2000 - 2005. Call Sandy Maag 0407 576 543

Open Day ‘14

FREE Sausage Sizzle
Education Displays
Drill Displays
Model Building
Remote Control Aircraft
Static Display
Flight Simulator
Guest speaker

@ Australian Air League Headquarters
Don Adams Drive, Hervey Bay Airport

Contact OC Christine Johnstone for further information
0457 338 379
Phone 1800 502 175

“Training tomorrow’s pilots... Today”

Family Day Care Providers are having an Open Day.

Bring your children for free kids activities and take a look at how much fun they will have at Family Day Care.

When: Saturday the 1st of March
9am to 11am
Where: 28 Topaz Circuit
Urangan, Hervey Bay