Principal’s Report

Gifted and Talented Education

In February 2011/12 an Inquiry into the education of gifted and talented students in Victoria was completed. The chair Mr Davis Southwick MP, states that there are up to 85,000 gifted students in Victorian Schools. The report proposes a coordinated approach to gifted education which recognises and develops the gifts of every student. Key recommendations include a state wide gifted education policy, the use of technology to provide extended learning opportunities for gifted students, increased education, training and support for teachers and greatly enhanced support for gifted students and their families. The committee’s fundamental approach in this report is that gifted education must be provided by every teacher in every classroom in every school in Victoria. This is the only way to ensure that gifted students are appropriately provided for whatever their backgrounds and where ever they live and go to school.

“In the absence of any agreed definitions of giftedness and talent, in this report the Committee adopts the model of leading gifted education expert Professor Francois Gagné. Under that model, giftedness refers to a natural ability in one or more areas, while talent refers to outstanding performance in an area or areas. Gifts are transformed into talents through a complex developmental process. Of particular relevance to this Inquiry, a student’s educational environment is one of the key factors influencing the transformation of gifts into talents.

It is impossible to paint a single picture of a gifted student. Gifted students come from all walks of life. They may be gifted in domains as varied as languages and leadership. A student may be gifted in a single area, or across a variety of domains.

The learning needs of gifted students may differ dramatically from those of other students. Many gifted students benefit from faster paced learning, independent study, more complex content, and opportunities to use high order thinking and problem-solving skills. Gifted children are often highly creative thinkers who approach tasks in novel ways.

Underachievement appears to be widespread among gifted students. Between 10% and 50% of gifted students will never meet their potential. Just as not all high achievers are gifted, not all gifted students achieve highly. A significant number of gifted students leave school before completing Year 12. Again there is no clear data on how many gifted students drop out of secondary education, with estimates ranging from 10% to 40%.” It is interesting for schools and families to consider why this is so. The perceptions around being gifted are not always accurate and the impact of being gifted on a student’s wellbeing and learning requires careful consideration.

Principal’s report continues over page

NOTICES FOR PARENT

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

For full calendar go to mooneewestps.vic.edu.au

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Principal’s Report continued..

“There a number of national competitions run on an annual basis that may provide challenging learning experiences for gifted students. The evidence received by the Committee suggests that these programs have strong participation rates across all school sectors. While these competitions are generally accessible to the whole school population, they may provide particular challenge and extension for gifted students.

Tournament of the Minds is unique in its blend of using creative and critical thinking skills, problem solving strategies and cooperative learning, with an emphasis on teams rather than individuals, to present a solution to an open ended challenge in a dramatic and audience engaging format.

The Australian Mathematics Trust, based at the University of Canberra, runs a range of competitions and enrichment programs in maths and informatics for students in Years 3 to 12. The largest event run by the Trust is the Australian Mathematics Competition, which has a strong emphasis on problem solving. Open to students of all levels, the Competition aims to ‘stimulate interest in mathematics for students of all standards’.

“The Committee is very concerned by evidence that many Victorian schools do not recognise and acknowledge all achievement equally. In particular, it notes a tendency for schools to celebrate non-academic achievements, such as a sporting accomplishment, while downplaying academic achievements. In the Committee’s view, it is essential that Victorian schools encourage and support students to shine in all areas of endeavour. To this end, both the Victorian policy and the model school policy on gifted education should highlight the need to uphold student excellence in all domains.”

The Government’s response to the 65 recommendations for improvements in gifted and talented education was tabled in December 2012. In April 2013 the Hon. Martin Dixon, MP released the New Opportunities for the gifted and talented directions paper which commits to a renewed focus on the needs of gifted and talented students. As a next step, a new five year gifted and talented education strategy will be developed for release.

To view the full reports please go to: http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/pages/gifted.aspx

At Moonee Ponds West Primary we believe the development of an individual learning plan for gifted and talented students is crucial. The students have participated in both Tournament of the Minds and the Australian Maths Competition over recent years with great success. We have a team of staff who actively promote education for gifted and talented students; Helen Thomas who leads Education supported by the team Amelia Thorne, Ryan Vermeulen, Justine Ryan and Chris Brock. Just recently Amelia Thorne attended a two day conference titled ‘EmpowerED... for giftedness’ - A conference focusing on Curriculum Differentiation facilitated by the Victorian Association for Gifted and Talented Children. Presenters were Susan Winebrenner and Debbie Youd, well known consultants working in this area for many years. Amelia will share outcomes of this conference with all staff at an upcoming staff meeting. How we best cater for gifted and talented students at MPW is an area we will continue to focus on.

Terri Campbell

Terri Campbell our literacy consultant returns to MPW for four sessions during Term 2 working with teachers in the Prep/1 area of the school. Terri works with students modelling the use of the 6 traits of writing. As a component of the Induction program, new and returning staff to MPW will be involved in observing sessions as well. These staff are also trialling strategies back in their classroom between sessions. Staff will also be involved in a staff meeting where we will look at student self-assessment and goal setting.

Parking

A reminder, that parking restrictions are in place around our school to protect all members of the community. After having received a number of complaints regarding double parking and the incorrect use of the disabled parking bays I am notifying the community that I have referred these onto the Moonee Valley Council Parking Officers.

Enjoy the week

Jenny, Helen and Randal
“Biggest Morning Tea”
Thursday 23rd May
9.15 Community Room

A reminder that All families and staff who are free at the time are invited to the “Biggest Morning Tea” tomorrow which aims to raise funds for cancer research by the Victoria Cancer Council. This year we are delighted to have comedian Kate Hanley as our special guest. And although cancer is certainly not funny, she will help us see the lighter side of life.

Please come along, “make a cuppa and make a difference”

For further details see Vicki Mesiti Room 21 or log onto: www.biggestmorningtea.com.au

Pizza & Trivia Night
Saturday 15th June

It's just over three weeks until the trivia and pizza night. How can you help make it a fun night and a successful event for our school?

A : Buy tickets – tables are booking quickly so please don’t miss out. Bookings are at the office.

B : Pop something in the hamper baskets (in classrooms now). Thanks very much to everyone who has donated already.

C : Donate a prize of goods, a voucher or a service

D : Any or all of the above!

Trivia night details are:

Venue: The school gym (We have heaters!)
Time: 7pm
Ticket price: $20 (cash, eftpos or cheque at the office). Buy individual tickets or tables of 10 are available.

What do you get? Pizza and other nibbles. Water will be available for purchase. BYO alcohol.

Any queries please call Karen Korff (0417 362 278), Michelle Currie (0417 583 075), Lawana Coulson (0438 947 010), Shirley Stephens (0416 85 708) or Kath White (0434 191 311).
**Education Weekly**

**SPORTS NEWS**

**Winter Sport**

MPW Blue v MPW Gold
Net A: Blue def Gold 24 - 7
Net B: Blue def Gold 5 - 1
Football Gold def Blue 32 - 14
Bat Tennis Gold def Blue 24 - 17

**Up & Coming Events**

Friday May 24th St Mary's A v MPW Gold
Friday May 24th – Walk Safely to School Day
Thursday 30th May – Division Cross Country (Brimbank Park)

Walk Safely To School Day – Friday 31st May
- Is an annual event held in Primary Schools around Australia on Friday 31st May
- Asks parents and carers to walk their primary school aged children all or part of the way to school. Those who can’t walk the whole way are asked to combine a walk with public transport or to park the car a good distance away from the school and walk the rest of the way.
- Encourages regular physical activity because active kids are healthy kids!
- Helps to reduce hazardous traffic congestion in and around schools, creating pedestrian-safe areas for children entering or leaving school.
- Is a way parents, teachers, carers and students can help ease global warming and climate change, as they reduce car-dependency.
- Teaches children healthy lifestyle habits from a young age as they learn that walking is the best form of exercise. It’s easy, free and almost anyone can do it at anytime. And these habits tend to last a lifetime.

**FAD - Free Activity Day for Grade 5 and 6 on Thursday 20 June 2013**

Can you help out? Can you spare an hour or two or even a full day to either run an activity or just assist?

The kids need you! The more help we can get the better the activity day for the kids.

Please see your child’s teacher to offer assistance or seek further information now!

"I think it would be really good for parents to help out as we can make FAD even better!" Bella Room 15

"FAD will be great but we cannot do it without the help of parents so please help out" Jarrod Room 16

"I think FAD is a great activity for kids so it would be great if some parents can help out!" Arabella Room 19

**News from the Environment Committee**

The days are getting shorter and the nights colder – it’s a great time for getting the garden ready for spring!

Nicole O’Brien in Hall is coordinating parents, families and children in working in the Veggie Patch and our willing volunteers have already cleared out weeds, planted some new trees, plants and signs, and kick-started the compost program around the school. If you are keen to get involved but need to find out what’s going on, please let the office know and we will add you to a mailing list for updates on what’s happening.

The Green Team are meeting fortnightly at lunchtime to work on the school environment, including activities such as helping in the Veggie Patch, decorating compost bins and ‘yarn-bombing’ some of the trees around Jack’s Paddock.

Finally, a date for the diary is 23rd June – one of our regular Sunday working bees will be held on this day. Come down from 10 am for a couple of hours of beautification of the school grounds. See you there!

Diana Vivian’s daughter is currently running a What is the future of our climate? study on attitudes toward climate change, scientists, and emerging environmental technologies as part of her PHD.

Regardless of what your attitudes and beliefs are about the above, understanding what people truly think about difficult issues is the first step towards making the political, social and economic decisions that will affect future generations.

So, if you’re interested and have 15 minutes to spare at some point, please consider completing the survey. She needs as many people as possible to complete the survey, so feel free to share it with your family or friends. Participants also go into the running to receive one of six $50 Coles/Myer vouchers.

**What’s involved?**

A quick 15 minute survey. You will be asked some basic questions about yourself and your attitudes towards scientists, environmental technologies and climate change.

**Where and when?**

Simply complete the survey online by clicking here (http://www.psychsurveys.org/swinburne/scientistsandtechnology), whenever you can find a spare 15 minutes! Or visit bitly.com/climatefuture for more information.
Room 4 Measurement
During Term 1, Room 4 learnt about measuring length and perimeter.

We learnt that we need to use units of the same shape and size so we can compare length accurately.
In June-July students from over 20 countries around the world, will be arriving in Australia to study at local high schools for 2-10 months.

Opportunities exist for families to act as a host family, in a volunteer capacity. Hosting can be on a temporary, short or long term basis. Host families help provide international students with the chance to study and experience life in Australia. This is a great way to learn about another country and culture, establish a lifelong link to a family in another country and contribute to international goodwill.

If your family can offer a friendly, supportive and caring home environment, contact us today.

To hear more about this wonderful opportunity or our student exchange programs out of Australia
Call Student Exchange Australia New Zealand on 0800 440 079 or visit www.studentexchange.org.au/host-a-student