From the Principal

Welcome to week 7! This morning I had the great privilege of visiting the ICPA Sports Camp being held in Clermont. What a wonderful opportunity and experience, not just for our students, but all small, remote and distance education students. I underestimated the scale of the event, finding out this morning that there are approximately 115 students all competing and camping throughout the week.

What I value in these types of camps isn’t necessarily the opportunity to learn and refine sporting skills, but the opportunity for our students to meet new people; to form friendships that will assist later in life when transitioning into higher education.

To the volunteers, families and organisers of this event, a very big thank you on behalf of Mackenzie River State School.

Whole School Review Findings

Recently our school participated in a whole school review by the School Improvement Unit; all schools undertake this review as part of a four year cycle. Our reviewers praised our students for their exemplary conduct, manners and overall attitude to learning and individual improvement. Well done!

The review did identify some areas that we can continue to work on but overall it was very positive! Shortly we will receive an executive summary that will be posted on the school website with the full review coming at a later stage.

Personally, one of the most pleasing things to have been noted was that all staff demonstrated a genuine care and belief in every student. It would be remiss of me therefore if I didn’t thank the wonderful staff and parents that support everything that we do.

Attendance

Since the start of Semester 2 we have seen a steady decline in attendance, from 96.2% to 91.2%. To a large extent these absences are explainable through illness and family commitments, and I thank everyone for their efforts so far in ensuring that students are attending as much as possible. We are hopefully through the cold and flu season now so I look forward to our attendance once again reaching our goal of 95%.
Words Their Way—Spelling

Each week students are completing a pre and post test based on their spelling patterns and words for the week. On average, students are improving by at least 3 words per week and in some instances 10! My focus is on improvement, whether it is by 1 or by 15 so a big congratulations on this ongoing improvement.

Daily 5

Each afternoon our students are reading a book of their choosing as part of our Daily 5 program. We are very fortunate that our students already love to read, however during these sessions we want them to be reading with a purpose as well. One of our targets is around comprehension and in particular, the ability to retell a book, a chapter or even a single page. When reading with your child at home you can assist with this strategy by asking some easy questions such as:

- Who are the main characters?
- What happened in the start? Middle? End of the story?
- What problem/s arose? How did they overcome it?

If you ask a question that they are unsure of it is completely okay. It will provide an opportunity to re-read the story and model how to find the information. For more information, see this fortnights Parent Pipeline.

Minion of the Week/s

We’ve had three very deserving recipients of our Minion of the Week. In my absence last week Mr Caden Torrisi was very lucky to be presented his award by Mr Andre Meurant, our local policeman. Our Minion’s of the week were:

- Week 4—Cameron Frankish—for his outstanding improvement in NAPLAN
- Week 5—Carter Wight—for his perseverance and hard work on his English task
- Week 6—Caden Torrisi—for his hard work on learning his sight words and beating his own times.

Brigalow Cluster Meeting

On the 4th September Mackenzie River will be the venue for a Brigalow Cluster meeting. As a cluster we have been working together to create a culture of coaching and feedback, and to witness what other schools are doing. The day could be a little daunting for our students as there may be up to seven other school principals and four people from regional office. Could you please reiterate to your children that although there will be people in the class, they will be observing myself. Learning doesn’t stop when we reach adulthood and this is a wonderful opportunity for us, as teachers, to learn from each other in order to drive student improvement. I always welcome and encourage people to visit our small school and I look forward to showing our visitors ‘our little oasis’.

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Camps / Excursions

Tim and Howard Drama Performance

On the 8th of September our students will be travelling to Clarke Creek to participate in Tim and Howard’s Drama Performance. I have not yet seen Howard but have heard great things from around the region. Permission and excursion forms will be sent home shortly.

Movie Night

On the 11th September we would like to hold a movie night here at Mackenzie River. It will be held on the same night as the P&C meeting so everyone is welcome to attend! We are hoping to have a popcorn and candy bar open on the night. More information to come but please leave this night free if you are able to.

Pre-Prep Program

Unfortunately we have run into a small hurdle with our Pre-Prep transition program and have been informed that a parent must be in attendance. I would like to extend my thanks to the parents that have been travelling to ensure that this occurs as I know we aren’t exactly ‘just down the road’. I am continuing to look for a solution and if the situation changes will let everyone know as soon as possible.

Mackenzie River Pony Club

Lastly, the Mackenzie River Pony Club is holding an Open Day on the 5th September. Please contact the school or Mrs Tanya Wight for further information.

If there is anything at all that you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact the school or myself.

Yours Sincerely,

Troy Mutton
Principal