Dear Parents and Caregivers

Next Monday, 20 February the Australian Government releases the Gonski Review of Funding for Schooling. The outcomes of this report could have significant impact upon the three schooling sectors: Government, Catholic and Independent. It’s important that parents and workers in education are well-informed as there is much misinformation and reporting of the partial picture by media sources.

For this reason, I hope you will take the time to read an extract from yesterday’s letter co-written by Mr Mike Byrne, Executive Director of the Queensland Catholic Education Commission and Mrs Carmel Nash, Executive Director of the Parents’ and Friends’ Association.

Referring to the Gonski Review, they write,

“This report is the first step towards the Government’s plan to introduce a new funding system for Australian schools from 2014 and it could have significant consequences for Catholic schools.

We believe it is vital that Catholic school communities are well informed of the facts about school funding and are able to constructively participate in the discussions that will follow the release of this report.

Some of the key facts about funding for Catholic schools are:

- Catholic schools educate 1 in 5 Australian children, yet on average operate with 10% less recurrent funding than government schools, even when parent contributions are taken into account [NB: ‘recurrent funding’ is the money received every year by a school for its day to day operations].
- On average, 53% of Catholic school income is provided by Federal government and 19% by State government, while 28% is contributed by parents and community.
- On average, Catholic schools receive just 73% of the annual recurrent government funding (per student) received by government schools. Catholic schools receive $7,708 per student while government schools receive $10,562 per student.
- Including government funding + parent contributions, Catholic schools have an average annual income of $10,008 per student, while government schools receive $11,132 per student and Independent schools $13,711. (MySchool website 2011)
- Through parent and community contributions to schooling costs, Catholic schools deliver savings to Australian taxpayers of around $2.2 billion per year.

The school funding debate should not be reduced to an ‘us’ or ‘them’ argument. The success of Australia’s education system relies on children in all schooling sectors - Government, Catholic and Independent - receiving fair and equitable government support.

Fair and equitable government support for Catholic schools guarantees real parental choice in education. Catholic education authorities are seeking a modest increase in funding that will assist Catholic schools to build on their capacity to provide high quality education while keeping school fees as low as possible and striving to address educational disadvantage.

We encourage you to take note of the recommendations of the Gonski report and remain vigilant of the school funding policies that will be framed by government and opposition in the weeks that follow its release.

For further information we invite you to visit www.fundinginfo.catholic.edu.au or contact your school principal or Diocesan education office if you have particular queries or concerns.’

Much of the misinformation results from only one source of government funding, namely that from the Federal Government, being compared. This paints a picture of Catholic and Independent schools receiving a disproportionately large share at the expense of Government schools. The fact that is rarely reported is that Government schools receive the bulk of their funding from their State Government, while Catholic and Independent schools receive the bulk of their funding from the Federal Government.

Here are the facts as reported in the Government ACARA financial data:

Total Government Recurrent Funding (State+Federal) per student:
- Government Schools = $10,562,
- Catholic Schools = $7708
- Independent Schools = $6211.

When average parental contributions are added, the figures rise to those quoted in the above letter, namely -
- Government $11,132,
- Catholic $10,008 and
- Independent $13,711

Hopefully next Monday will see the potential for improved funding for all students in Australian schools, regardless of sector.

Have a great week everyone. Glenda

Welcome Cal and Rosemary Irons

With Mathematics identified as our major curriculum focus this year, this Monday and Wednesday we welcome renowned Maths educators, Cal and Rosemary Irons, who are partnering with us in the longer term to provide professional development for class teachers and classroom school officers as well as to coach and mentor us as Mathematics educators ourselves. Rosemary will work with Prep-Year 2 staff and Cal with Year 3-7 staff. After January’s professional development day, this week Cal and Rosemary will be in classrooms observing, teaching and providing feedback. Our staff and students are in very capable hands and we look forward to seeing great benefits to student learning outcomes in the area of Mathematics as has been the case in our ongoing partnership with Pat Edgar in English.
Dear Parents/Caregivers,

Recently I attended the wedding of my niece in the Blue Mountains. An absolutely beautiful venue overlooking the gorge and the red and gold escarpment in the distance, not to mention the beautiful bride and her bridal party, made for beautiful photos and videos. After they were circulated throughout the family, an email from one of my nieces set the ball rolling for regular correspondence between myself, two of my sisters, and three nieces about the need to look after ourselves a bit better, particularly with regards to our weight. Another niece is getting married in Auckland in January 2013 and we have determined that things will need to improve before then. So the ‘Calendar Girls’ email list was formed for the purpose of encouraging each other in achieving our individual goals for weight loss/healthy eating and exercise. We email one another each Sunday, giving as much or as little information as we are comfortable with, but I can tell you with conviction that it really helps to be held accountable, even in this very friendly and unthreatening way. We are now swapping healthy, nutritious recipes and handy hints for particular exercises to target particular areas of the body which are of concern and are generally supporting each other in ‘growing’ healthier.

The thought struck me while driving to work this morning, especially as today is dedicated to the memory of St Valentine, a martyr of the first century who was caught marrying Christian couples and aiding any Christians who were being persecuted under Emperor Claudius in Rome, that we all need assistance in life – someone to love us, to walk the journey with us, to accept that we will have our ups and downs and that we are not perfect by any means, but who will love us and support us anyway. Our ‘Calendar Girl’ program is similar in many ways to the Lenten program, Towards the Light, which starts Tuesday morning next week just before Ash Wednesday, to help us prepare our spiritual selves during Lent in preparation for the Easter Season when we celebrate Christ’s love for us in his passion, death and resurrection.

By meeting each week, reflecting on the Gospel for the following Sunday, and engaging in discussion and sharing, we can take the time to ‘soak’ up the presence of God in our lives so that we are energised and strengthened for the week ahead. In identifying our hopes and dreams for this Lent, we help and support each other in determining what is really important in life, so that ‘the time is fulfilled’ (Mark 1:15). We are asked what ‘good news’ we as individuals, and as a school/parish community, offer to people seeking hope and meaning in their lives. What signs of hope are we offering our travelling companions?

It is not too late to join the parent group which starts next Tuesday morning if you want to be part of the Lenten program. You will need to register your interest by filling in the slip from last week’s newsletter and send in with $8.00 to cover the cost of the reflection book. If you need to, you can phone me directly on 54098908 to register your interest. There are four places left and we start next Tuesday morning, so please don’t leave it too long to register if you are interested. The program runs for six Tuesday mornings from 21st February in the Children’s Chapel from 8.30am (I am on duty before then) and should finish about 9.30.

I hope your week is filled with good things and that you take to time to be with your loved ones and enjoy the present moment now and again.

God bless, Judith.
QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“Music has the power of forming the character, and should therefore be introduced into the education of the young.” ~ Aristotle ~

CLASSROOM MUSIC - Students from Prep to Year 4 have been introduced to the world of “Freddie The Frog”. Over the next few weeks more of Freddie’s adventures will be shared with the students. More details and relevant activities can be found at www.freddiethefrog.com/

CHOIR NEWS - It was wonderful to see so many students at each of the choir rehearsals. There was an error in the rehearsal time for SM Singers in last week’s newsletter. The correct time for rehearsals is Thursday morning from 7:45 – 8:30am.

TIP OF THE WEEK - Having trouble keeping in time? You need a metronome. This is a small device that beeps to keep you in time and can be very helpful.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC NEWS - Students involved in school instrumental and choral ensemble are reminded to return participation slips to the school office or music room as soon as possible after receiving them to ensure accurate rolls can be generated. Involvement in ensembles is highly encouraged for all students enrolled in the tuition program.

Student and parents are reminded to check the timetable every week to ensure punctual arrival at lessons. Tutors will attempt to contact students who forget to attend, but this does waste valuable lesson time and disrupts classrooms. Lesson missed without notice will not be rescheduled.

Last week most of our ensembles commenced rehearsals. Parents are reminded to return participation slips to the office ASAP. An updated list of rehearsal times is below:

Concert Band - TUESDAY - 7.30am in the Music Room
Stella Fellas - WEDNESDAY - 2.30pm in the Music Room Years 4-7 (boys)
Junior Strings - THURSDAY - 7.45am in the School Hall (Note: this group begins this week - 16 Feb)
SM Singers - THURSDAY - 7.45am in the Music Room Years 4-7 (girls)
Speech Choir - THURSDAY - 10.45am in the Music Room
Piccolo Choir - THURSDAY - 2.30pm in the Music Room Years 2 and 3 (boys and girls)
Senior Strings - FRIDAY - 7.45am in the School Hall
Percussion Ensemble - FRIDAY - 7.45am in the Music Room

If you have queries regarding anything musical – please feel free to catch up with us before or after school, by contacting us in writing or via email.

Musically Yours,
Inez Durrer
Classroom Music Specialist
idurrer@bne.catholic.edu.au

Todd Wynyard
Instrumental Music Coordinator
twynyard@bne.catholic.edu.au

Principal’s Awards

16th February 2012


District Trials for Girls Softball will be held on the following dates at Cummmundi Primary School from 3.30pm - 5pm. Senior Girls (Yr 7) - Wednesday 15th February
Junior Girls (Yr 6) - Wednesday 22nd February
See Mrs Till for a permission form and more information if you wish to attend.

Qualifying times must be met and signed by registered swimming coach. Qualifying times available through email: akelleher@bne.catholic.edu.au
School team selected according to times. Please forward times by Wednesday 15th February.

Thankyou to all those that attended Sign on. We still need Under 12’s, 11’s and 9’s to finalise teams. Call Damien on 0411283065 or Troy on 0457324888 for more info or rego’s can be taken to the school office.
Muster day (Team allocations) will be on Sat 25th from 8am on Bliss oval. If anyone is willing to sponsor the club in some way please call Damien or Steffen.
If any men & women are interested in playing in an over 35’s competition on Friday nights, than call Damien or see him at school and put your name down.
Cheers
Damien Faux (Stella FC President)

Honesty is the best policy

Thank you to:
Kirra Deighton, Montana Murray, Courtney Young

Magazines please.

5B are collecting spare magazines to use for the Year 5 Media unit on Persuasive Devices. Please leave on the seat outside 5B classroom. Many thanks in advance. Therese Lecompte

Week Ending 17 February

SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

All helpers needing to complete Student Protection and Code of Conduct sign-offs are invited to come to the hall during the day (every hour on the hour between 9.00am—2.00pm) next Tuesday 21 February and Wednesday 22 February where you will be able to go over the material, ask any questions and sign a declaration. These declarations are valid for 2 years so if you signed a declaration in 2011 you do not have to renew until 2013. The Guidance Counsellor will be in the Hall both days for your convenience.

Christine Craig (Guidance Counsellor)
email:ccraig@bne.catholic.edu.au

Class Covenant Ceremonies for the next two weeks

Thursday 16 February 9.30am 3A
2.30pm 4B

Friday 17 February 9.00am 3B
2.30pm 3C

Wednesday 22 February 9.00am 5A
2.30pm 2A

Thursday 23 February 9.30am 3D
2.30pm 2D

Friday 24 February 9.00am 6A
2.30pm 6D

Thank you to our sponsors: