Dear Parents and Caregivers

A couple of weeks ago, I received a heartening email from one of our Mums following her reading of David Gillespie’s article, *Why Money Can’t Guarantee a Quality Education*, in the Weekend Australian Magazine, January 25-26. I hadn’t read the article myself so Cherie sent it in for me. (Thanks Cherie) Putting aside the fact that there was obvious promotion of his latest book and nothing really new was presented, the article still offered a very concise and timely summary of what research (as well as common sense and experience) tells us about what matters in schooling for our children. John Hattie’s work, to which I’ve frequently referred over recent years, has also brought this topic sharply into focus, allowing schools to more reliably develop in the areas that really make a difference to student learning improvement.

The Gillespie article addresses some of the more widely-held, and until recently, uncontested beliefs out there about what works in education, but firstly, to put the article in context. David Gillespie set out to find what the research said about educational outcomes and money spent, as, having attended Churchie himself, he calculated providing the same education for his six children would come at a cost of $1.3 million – money he didn’t have.

He also refers to the three systems of education available to Australian parents:

- Government schools (in which 36% of students are drawn from the lowest quarter of incomes);
- Independent Schools (almost half drawn from the top quarter of income earners and 73% of students from the top half of the income scale); and
- Catholic schools (more balanced with 43% from lower half and 57% drawn from top half)

Thankfully, he does not include Catholic schools with the Independent schools (commonly called ‘private’ in the broader community) as we most certainly are not, nor should we aspire to be. Catholic schools are faith-based schools typically with much lower fees than Independent schools and a process of fee adjustment for those who would not otherwise be able to afford a Catholic education. Stella Maris, therefore, is not a private school. We are proudly Catholic with intent to provide a quality education for students whose parents come to us from across the socio-economic spectrum. In many ways, many Catholic schools are similar to State schools with the addition of an articulated and lived faith life and tradition.

So, one of those commonly-held beliefs addressed by David Gillespie, is the one that says, ‘The more you pay, the better the education you receive.’ He writes, ‘The research tells us there’s no correlation between how much you pay and the quality of the education your child is likely to receive.’ I guess that’s a polite way of saying that there are the good, the mediocre and the bad in all three systems. Gillespie continues, ‘Studies have consistently shown that when you adjust for the socioeconomic status of the children in the systems, all three Australian systems are equally effective (or ineffective). Paying more will definitely get you nicer buildings and newer computers. And it will definitely allow your child to hang around with more kids of “his class” (assuming that’s a benefit).’ Having said that, there is a big BUT that follows and here it is, ‘What I found during my research is that some things – teachers and principals – count a lot, while other things that most parents worry about – class size, school size, composite classes, fancy buildings – don’t matter at all.’

For many, I know this will be very difficult to accept because, logically, one would think that these factors (money, class size etc) should make a difference but the research says, they don’t. What matters is the job that teachers do in classrooms and playgrounds and the way their work and their professional learning is supported, shaped and harnessed for consistency and quality across the school. We’ll take a closer look at this next week. Have a great week everyone.

Glenda

Parent Teacher Night Thank You - Thank you to those who joined us for last Tuesday’s Parent Teacher Partnership Evening. It is always heartening to see the grounds full of cars and the classrooms full of people and even better to hear laughter throughout the school. It’s good to have a laugh amidst the more ‘serious’ information shared.

If you still have the yellow feedback request sheet to complete we look forward to hearing from you with your suggestions as to how we can improve upon the evening and better meet your needs as parents. Thank you to those who have already provided feedback.

SCHOOL FEES ARE NOW OVERDUE.
Dear Parents/ Caregivers,

The Season of Lent is only a couple of weeks away with Ash Wednesday falling on 5th March. We will again host Lenten Reflection Groups for Parents, meeting on Monday Morning at 8.40am in the school Chapel.

The season of Lent calls us to deepen that journey as we walk with Jesus from the temptations in the wilderness to the glory of the cross. The Gospels for Lent in 2014 are from the Gospel of John engaging our minds and our hearts with vivid stories:

- The Samaritan woman at the well;
- The man Jesus cures of blindness and the Pharisees who refuse to ‘see’; and
- Martha by the tomb of Lazarus.

There is a recurring theme in John’s Gospel in the journey from darkness to light, from blindness to seeing; seeing as spiritual sight or insight. The setting for these stories is significant and yet, for us, easy to overlook. All that happens, happens on the Sabbath, the day God has set for us to turn away from our work in the world and rest, leaving what remains undone in God’s care. The Sabbath is where we stop and give God a go. This is particularly counter-cultural in our lives of constant over-busyness. Having learnt that industriousness, busyness, multi-tasking etc. are all virtues for which we will be esteemed and rewarded, we are reluctant to turn away from our duties, tasks and responsibilities and turn towards God and rest. But the Sabbath is where Jesus will enter, and remind us we are blind, and offer us the chance to see. It will change us and others will notice. No doubt this will confuse some and confound others. If we can be humble enough, as the blind man was, to know that we are not only blind, but ‘blind so that God’s works might be revealed’ in us. Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus we have been set free from the chains of death – in all its forms. Our baptism commits us to be people of Good News in the here and now (extract from the Archdiocesan Lenten Program 2014).

The six sessions of the Archdiocesan program, “You Have Set Us Free”, will provide food for thought in reflecting on the Lenten Gospels, and provide some discussion questions and suggestions for mission in daily life.

If you would like to join the parent group on Monday mornings in 2014, please tear off the slip below and return to your child’s teacher by Friday 21st February so that booklets can be ordered in plenty of time for the first meeting on Monday morning 12th March at 8.40am.

I hope you will join me in reflecting on the Gospels and the message they have for us as we take Sabbath time in our journey together through Lent.

God bless,

Judith.

Please tear off the slip below and return it to the class teacher by Friday 28th February.

I would like to join the Lenten Reflection Group for parents in 2014. Please order me a booklet – price $8.00. (payable at the first meeting)

(If you have already purchased a booklet please cross out the above)

Name: ......................................................

Contact Number/s: ......................................................

Signature: ......................................................
MUSIC IS SPECIAL - Virtually every person every day experiences music. Every person has the capacity to enjoy and make Music. Every culture in the world includes music in some form: for ceremony, relaxation, communication, celebration, and enjoyment. The world would be inconceivable without music. Imagine the absence of music in our lives. It is through schools that every child could have the opportunity to find the joy of making and understanding Music.

Here at Stella Maris, we are most fortunate to have amazing support for the Arts and students are afforded the opportunity to participate in Music on a weekly basis. With this continued support and encouragement we will continue to grow, sharing the passion we have for students learning through the Arts, providing even more opportunities for students to participate in many different ensembles.

Don't forget to ask your child what is going on each week in Music – classroom, instrumental, and/or ensembles.

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. Free metronome apps are available for apple, PC and android computer and ipod devices.

RECORDERS - The recorders have arrived and are now available in the Uniform Shop. Thank you for your patience.

MUSICAL NEWS - As an introduction and demonstration of commitment to our musical, all students wishing to be part of our 2014 musical are reminded to attend rehearsals as outlined in the newsletter each week. Rehearsals will be as follows:

Year 5 – Mondays @11am in the Music Room
Year 4 – Wednesdays @11am in the Music Room
Year 6 and 7 – Thursdays @11am in the Music Room

There will be an initial planning meeting in Week 7 for any parent wishing to help out with our musical this year. Thank you to the many parents who have already expressed their interest in assisting us. Watch this space for the date and time!

CHOIR NEWS - It was wonderful to see such large groups of students at each of the choir rehearsals. Those students who were unable to attend our first rehearsals are invited to come along this week. Permission forms will be given to those children willing to become part of each choir.

Piccolo Choir rehearsal this week will be for any Year 2 student who would like to ‘see and hear’ what choir is all about. I look forward to seeing those interested students Thursday afternoon from 1:50 – 2:20pm in the Music Room.

INSTRUMENTAL NEWS - Parents are reminded to return ensemble participation slips to the music room or office ASAP to ensure we have accurate rolls.

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

MUSIC IN THE COMMUNITY - LEGACY & SCREAM Big Band will perform at Maroochydore High School on Saturday 29th March at 2 pm. Tickets are $20 pp, $40 for a family (2 + 2) and $10 for students 16 and under. Afternoon tea included. Tickets can be purchased from Legacy Laurel Clubs, Maroochydore High School on 5409 7333 or by visiting www.screambigband.net Enquiries, please phone 5443 2779.

Welcome to all those parents to Stella Football Club that have signed up there children for the 2014 season. This Sat 22nd Feb will be our ‘Muster Day’. This is where you find out who your children are playing with, and to work out who is Coach etc. This will be starting about 9 am at the hanger towards the back of the school. We are also still looking for players to make teams complete. The Age you turn this year is the age group you would play in. Girls can also play down a year. We need 3 x Under 6 players, 2 x Under 7 players, 2 x Under 8 players, 6 x Under 10 players & 2 x Under 12 players. So if you are interested in playing please contact Damien Faux on 0411283065 ASAP.

Due to the school Liturgy, the Uniform Shop on Thursday 20th February will not be open from 8am to 1pm, it will only open after the school liturgy and stay open til 1pm. We apologise for any inconvenience.

Recorders are now available.

A flyer has been sent home with all Year 3 students. For children in older classes who are interested in receiving their Sacraments, flyers are available from the office.

Congratulations to Hayley Edgar, Ayla Cheatham, Jayda Cleary, Ryan Hollis and Blake Thompson who have been selected to play for QLD Oztag teams and will travel to the ACT to play against NSW & ACT at the National Titles in May.

Well done and Good Luck!

MUSIC NOTES

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

Tasting Success

Sizzling Success

Football News

Uniform Shop

Your Child and the Sacraments 2014

Tuckshop News...

Calendar of Events

Recorders NEEDED: Chocolate Cake and Pikelet mixes.

Roster coming soon.

2014 Football News

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Time for Boundaries.
Great start to the year. Everyone was very tired at the end of the first full week and that’s going to continue for a little while in the heat. Parents, you may find that your child might be a little out of sorts at home. Given that they have to concentrate, socialise with a big group of children and follow rules. Any acting out at home is because home is a safe place where they can let go after a big day.

You are the experts of your children and are in the best position to teach your children how to make good choices and decisions. You can do this by setting clear rules and boundaries for your child. Setting rules and boundaries gives your child structure and helps him or her to feel more secure in a world that can be overwhelming at times. These limits also guide your child in learning socially acceptable behaviours.

One of the first things to consider is the developmental level of your children. With more than one child you may have different rules and boundaries within the family. Since all children have a need for independence and to express their individuality, it is important to provide structure and guidance by establishing clear rules and guidelines according to their developmental level.

Involve your child or children in setting the rules. They are more valuable to them if they have had a say in them. Put a list of house rules in a highly visible place and use the chart or list as reminders as needed. Watch out! Parents might get reminders too! Try to keep rules to 5 general positively phrased statements (e.g “Keep hands and feet to yourself instead of “no hitting”). Don’t forget to discuss consequences too.

Though it may seem at times that they are rebellious and frustrating, deep down children understand that rules you set are meant for their safety and well being, and take comfort in the fact that you love them enough to provide such structure in their lives (and yours).

headspace.org.au
National Youth Mental Health Foundation  Tel 0408 299 788

*An eheadspace live info session is another way for young people and their families to ask professionals some questions in a totally anonymous and online environment.

The first eheadspace live info session this year is about school transitioning and is titled ‘Coping with change: moving from one school to another’. This will be held on Thursday 20 February from 5.00-6.00pm (AEDT). For more information, visit: http://www.headspace.org.au/about-headspace/news-videos/news/coping-with-change-moving-from-one-school-to-another

Christine Craig (Guidance Counsellor)
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