Grafton High School
Achieving Excellence

Wednesday, 20 May 2015

In this Issue:
- Principal's Report
- PBL
- Popstars the Musical
- Library
- Community Notices

Principal's Report
Grafton High Student Awarded Youth Volunteer of the Year
Cricket Clubs across NSW and the ACT were this year invited to nominate their Exceptional Youth Volunteers. Jayde Blanch from the Tucabia-Copmanhurst Cricket Club was the overall female winner.

Jayde was nominated by her Club President, Andrew Buchanen, who was extremely proud and grateful for her efforts assisting the Under 16's team. Jayde was also involved in fundraising for the Club and a subsequent donation to the local Palliative Care Unit.

At an awards ceremony at Grafton High School last Friday, Jayde was presented with a Certificate of Recognition as a Young Volunteer and received a personally signed cricket bat from the Australian Cricket team.

Cricket NSW Game Development Manager for the North Coast, Dave Szumowski, praises Jayde’s achievement: “It’s an outstanding effort from such a caring and helpful young volunteer. Fittingly it’s National Volunteers’ Week and it will be an honour to recognise Jayde’s contribution to her community and thank all our invaluable volunteers who are the backbone of Australia’s Favourite Sport”.

Go Art Volunteers
As I have mentioned in prior newsletters, our P&C is holding their annual Go Art Exhibition over the June long weekend. This is the P&C’s major event/fundraiser for the year and so assistance is being sought from any parents who can volunteer over the weekend to assist at the entrance and sales desk, or with the pack up on Monday afternoon. If you are able to volunteer over the weekend, then please contact Richard Green (P&C President) on 0408 418 486.

Assessment Alert
The smartphone app, Assessment Alert, is now available for Grafton High School students and parents. It is an innovative and convenient way for teachers to communicate with students and parents about daily homework requirements, assessment tasks, exams and other relevant events. It is a smart phone application which allows you to receive daily homework and assessment due dates as well as exam dates, directly to your smartphone. Parents and students can synchronise dates to their calendar and receive regular alerts before tasks are due.

The app is FREE to download and use and we encourage all families to make use of this fantastic communication tool.

If you have an iPhone, iPad or iPodTouch simply go to the App Store, or if you have an Android device visit the Google Play Store and follow the prompts.

It is simple, easy to use and will help students and parents become more organised and engaged with their studies. To download and use the app is FREE.

Please refer to these set up guides to set up the app correctly;

Differences between Apple & Android Functionality:
It is important to note also there are some differences between Apple and Android devices. The Apple version will sync straight to the calendar on your iphone/ipad. However, on Android phones the app will sync to a gmail account.

As at 19th May, it is expected that all Year 11 and Year 12 assessment task due dates will be entered into the system. We will then work towards having other year groups entered as soon as possible. In addition, junior students will each soon receive an assessment book for their year with dates and assessment requirements.

For more information on the app go to:
www.assessmentalert.com

For assistance with the app please contact:
info@assessmentalert.com
Parent-teacher and Subject Selection Evenings
The school will be holding two parent-teacher evenings:

- Years 8, 10, 12: Tuesday 9th June from 3:30 – 6:00 pm in the school MPC
- Years 7, 9, 11: Tuesday 23rd June from 3:30 – 6:00 pm in the school MPC

Student reports will be handed out on the night at the door. All parents are encouraged to attend. Handing out reports on the evening ensures that they get to parents in an appropriate condition and that parents are available for the Parent-Teacher interviews. We have also scheduled the first evening earlier in the term so that we can complete the subject selection process before Term 3. This allows us the necessary time to develop our 2016 timetable properly, given the growing size and complexity of our school and curriculum.

A subject selection and information evening for Year 11 – 2016, will be held in the MPC following the Parent-Teacher evening from 6:30 pm on Tuesday 9th June. At this evening we will explain the various combinations of subjects available to students and some of the rules that affect eligibility for a HSC and for University admission (ATAR). Note that there will be no separate subject selection evening for Year 9 – 2016. Year 9 students will be spoken to as a group at school regarding the selection process. The parent teacher evening is also an ideal time to discuss subject choices with teachers.

School Funding Explained
I have been asked by some parents to explain school funding in light of “Gonski” funding and to what extent this funding has added to our total school budget. This topic of conversation has no doubt arisen as a result of the recent federal budget which would appear to not allow for the previously agreed continuation of this funding into the future. I do not wish to make any political statement and so I thought it best simply to state some facts regarding the amount of funding received by the school. If parents have any further questions regarding our annual budget then I would direct them to our annual school reports for the last few years (on our school website which will soon include the 2014 report), all of which include an annual financial statement.

In 2013, the school received funding under the previous funding arrangements. This funding did not include the costs of permanent staff salaries and conditions, but included all other school running costs. In 2013 the school received approximately $644,390 in funding. In 2015, the school had an enrolment that was somewhat larger and the school now also receives additional funding as a result of state government initiatives as well as federal government “Gonski” funding. In 2015 the school received approximately $1,292,638 in funding. This excludes the wages of permanent staff, which would equate to a further $8,623,173 in funding. The non-staff component of funding reflects the increased school size, as well as additional funding for students with a disability. Some of the particular components of this funding that reflect the “Gonski” funding model include:

- $460,014 in funding to reflect the socio-economic status of the school community.
- More than $200,000 in funding for students with disabilities.
- An initial allocation of more than $32,000 for Aboriginal students and programs.

The main focus is on Norta Norta literacy/numeracy tutoring, with further funding granted for senior student tutoring.

Whilst these amounts seem significant, they are for a school of more than 960 students with 5 support unit classes. They also include amounts that the school previously received separately. However, they are largely additional funds that the school did not receive in 2013 and previous years. As the Gonski funding model is “needs-based,” the school is receiving funding that represents the relative needs of its community.

This additional funding has allowed the school to undertake a range of initiatives, with the most recent and significant being the Chromebook digital learning program. These initiatives have involved an overall investment by the school of close to $500,000. This simply would not have been possible previously but by utilising this additional funding while available, we ensure that we have infrastructure in place for the future where it appears that funding won’t be as significant.

With more than 1,000 staff and students and an overall budget of around $10,000,000, the school represents a significant enterprise within our community. This funding is typical of most similar sized regional schools. Again, whilst this may seem a great deal of money, I would like to demonstrate just how productive we are as a nation in terms of education.

In terms of proportion of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per Capita, Australia is around the 5th richest of the 34 OECD (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries. Table B2.3 from “Education at a Glance 2013 OECD Indicators”, shows that Australia’s public expenditure on Primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (e.g. TAFE) as a percentage of GDP was 3.7%. This expenditure only ranks us as equal 15th of the 32 countries reported on in this data set. That is, we rank roughly midway in expenditure on education.

However, in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) testing, our student mean performance in Maths ranks us 12th out of the 35 participating countries. In Science we rank 10th out of 35 and in Reading we rank 9th out of 35.

This means that in all three performance measures we outrank our relative ranking as far as expenditure goes. If you take productivity in simple terms as being the value of product compared to the cost of producing that product, then with a relative level of educational outcome achieved in excess of the relative level of expenditure, we are a very productive nation in educational terms when compared to many other countries.

Peter South - Principal

Athletics Carnival
A reminder that our school Athletics carnival is being held at Grafton High School next Friday the 29th May. All students are expected to attend and any absences must be explained with an acceptable reason as per any other school day. Students are encouraged to attend and have been preparing for the event through PDHPE lessons.

Evaluation

IMMUNISATIONS WEEK 7 TERM 2
On June 4th Year 7 will have round 2 of their Immunisations. Year 11 & 12 Immunisations will also be conducted on this day, not June 5th which had been previously indicated.

V. Nichols (HT Welfare)
UNE Open Day
Twenty dedicated Yr 12 students braved the elements and headed over the mountain on Friday 1st of May to experience UNE Open Day. After an early start and a very long bus trip due mainly to the adverse weather conditions, we just made breakfast at Earle Page College. The students then headed off to explore the on-campus accommodation UNE has available and then up to the University itself to gather information on courses and experience some of the programs and facilities on offer. Although the weather was not ideal, UNE is well accustomed to hosting such events in similar conditions and our students were not disadvantaged in any way. It was also great to see some former Grafton High students who are achieving well and enjoying the UNE experience.

Library News

GHS Library
Assignment starters A-Z
What projects or essays does your child have that are due by the end of term? One of them could be among the School A-Z website’s assignment starters – resources designed to point you in the right direction. Find out more:

GHS Library Premier’s Reading Challenge
The Challenge aims to encourage a love of reading for leisure and pleasure in students, and to enable them to experience quality literature. Booklists are here: https://online.det.nsw.edu.au/prc/booklist/home.html

Book of the Week
ZAFIR: THROUGH MY EYES

In this book, we follow the life of Zafir. He is a young boy who moved to Syria from Dubai. His life is very different to what he knew. He has struggled to make friends and is homesick for the life that he had. When life in Syria takes a turn for the worse, the friends he did have all flee, leaving him even more isolated.

Zafir and his family find themselves caught in the middle of the uprising and he witnesses and experiences things that a boy of 13 should never have to. He has a close relationship with his family, but with all that is going on, he finds himself in a position he never imagined. A timely story that will take readers into the heart and mind of someone not so different from themselves. It is a book that will give both boys and girls an insight into the tensions of life in the Middle East. Suited for those 12 +.

Upcoming Events:

Term 2
Week 5
18-22/05 Year 7-10 Mid-Course Exams
19/05 ICAS Digital Technology
21/05 Year 7 Geography Excursion to Washpool.

Week 6
28/05 Police Talks Year 8
29/05 Athletics Carnival

Week 7
3/06 ICAS Science Assessment
4/06 Year 7 Immunisations
4/06 Year 11 & 12 Immunisations
5-8/06 GO-ART

Week 8
8/06 Queen’s Birthday Holiday
11/06 Police Talks Year 8
11/06 Slam Pottery Year 9-11

Week 9
15/06 Merit Assembly – whole day
15-19/06 Textile Excursion to Sydney
Departs 9pm Monday
Returns 5pm Friday
18/06 STELLAR The Great Yr 8

Week 10
22/06 NAIDOC Flag Raising
22-26/06 NAIDOC Week
22/06 Gold Class Close YR7 2016
24/06 Dirty Dancing Excursion
26/06 NAIDOC Touch Football & BBQ
26/06 Last Day Term 2

TERM 3
13/7 Staff Development Day
14/7 School resumes all students.
Week 2
22/07 Opportunity Class Placement Test
23/07 Police Talks Year 9
23/07 STELLAR Recipe for Success
Week 3
28/07 ICAS English Assessment
30/07 Australian Maths Competition
Week 4
3-14/08 HSC Trials
4-8/08 Ski Trip – Year 10 and 11
Departs Tuesday 4pm
Returns Saturday 6am
6/08 Police Talks Year 9
Week 5
11/08 ICAS Mathematics
13/08 Bangarra Dance Excursion Brisbane
Week 6
18/08 Police Talks Year 10
Week 7
27/08 Musical Performance School Day
28-29/08 Musical Evening Performance 6pm
Week 8
3-5/09 Musical Performance Evening 6pm
Week 9
Week 10
Week 11