In this week’s newsletter:

* P & C Family Fun Night
* Principal’s Message

**Upcoming events**

Tuesday 1st December: DP and Principals Awards on both campuses
Friday 4th December: Family Fun Night
Monday 7th December: Volunteers Morning Tea
Tuesday 8th December: P & C Christmas Meeting/Dinner
   Village Green 6.30pm.

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**Awards**

The next couple of weeks will see various award ceremonies involving many of our students. Tomorrow, there are Deputy Principal and Principal’s Awards on both campuses. All students receiving awards were notified by letter last week. The Primary Campus ceremony will be held at 8.45am, whilst the Infants ceremony will be at 10.30am (sorry about the typo in the letter to parents!) Reading Recovery Awards will also be presented at the Infants Ceremony.

On Thursday, the students who performed well in the ICAS testing will be acknowledged in a special ceremony at 10.30am in the school hall. Parents of these students have been invited to attend and after the ceremony, we will provide a special morning tea for the students and their families to celebrate their achievements.

Next Thursday 10th December, starting at 10am, the annual GPS Presentation Day Ceremony will be held at the Saraton Theatre. Class and grade awards will be presented along with Dux 2015, Principal’s Award 2015, Scholarship winners, Sportspersons of the Year 2015 and the 2016 School Captains announced. All welcome!

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**Family Portrait Collection Day Thursday**

A reminder to the families involved that the Laura Jean Family Portraits will be here for collection on Thursday in the library. Other photos taken will be available for viewing and purchase as well.
The P & C Family Fun Night this Friday 4th December is shaping up to be a great night!!!

One of the activities on the night gives you the chance to win a $400 bicycle just in time for Christmas. All you have to do is buy a key for $2 from outside the library at lunchtimes or on the evening of the Christmas Family Fun Night. The bicycle, which is courtesy of Grafton City Cycles, will be chained and locked on the Family Fun Night. If the key you purchase opens the lock, you win the bicycle.

The tickets to our Christmas Raffle are now on sale. This is a Christmas Raffle with a difference as you can select which of the major prizes you wish to win. There are G, P and S prizes. A Gaming Package which includes a Playstation 4 and games, a Party/Pamper Package which includes a children’s birthday party at the OOSH Centre and various other vouchers, and a Sporting Package which includes a treadmill. Tick your ticket accordingly and your name will be placed in that barrel. You may put all your tickets in for the one prize if you wish or a few in each. Total prize value for the raffle exceeds $3500.

Other activities on the Family Fun Night include the popular Xmas Ham wheel (your chance to win Xmas hams, frozen chooks, fruit and vege trays and more), the wet sponge throw (which teachers will give you the chance to throw a wet sponge at them?), two waterslides, two jumping castles, sideshow alley, face painting, market stalls to browse through and so much more.
Grafton Public School
P & C Christmas Raffle

Tickets $1 each.
Drawn at the Family Fun Night, Friday 4th December.

Which barrel would you like your ticket to go in?
There are 3 major prizes.

G.P.S

G
Gaming Package
Playstation 4 plus 2 games
Valued at $500

P
Party and Pamper Package
A children’s party at the OOSH
centre plus vouchers for young
and old.
Valued at $500

S
Sporting Package
Includes a treadmill and an
Athletes Foot Voucher
Valued at $2000

All tickets will be combined to draw a
Runner-Up Road Package
Auto Window Tinting
Values at $495

Special thanks to all of our sponsors including OOSH, the Athletes Foot, Amart Allsports, Black Toyota, the Village Green, Jason Robertson, Red Hot Hair and more.
Congratulations…..

The competition to be the first class to return all their library books has been won on the Infants Campus. This was a tie between Kinder Red and K-2EH. Congratulations to these students and teachers!

The Primary Competition is still going and several classes have only one book to return!!!!

Thankyou to all families for searching for and returning any outstanding library books. Please keep looking and sending in any library books as all lost books will be invoiced to the borrower shortly.

The latest bookclub orders are due by this Friday, 4th December.

Donations of grocery items for our hampers to help local needy families can be dropped into either office.

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Infants Christmas Concert

The Infants Christmas Concert will be held next Friday 11th December. All students in Kinder, Year 1 and Year 2 will be performing as part of the concert which commences at 11.30am under the shade shelter on the Infants Campus. The GPS Band and Choir will be your pre-concert entertainment from 11am. Following the concert, parents are welcome to bring along a picnic lunch to share with their children in our playground.

*Please note: Gates will not be open for visitors until 10.55am. This is a safety measure as we have many court orders currently in place for various students so gates will be monitored closely by staff.*

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Library News

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Congratulations…..

Our band students all do their lessons through the Clarence Valley Conservatorium. We have many other students who do other studies through the Conservatorium outside school hours. We are proud to announce that 4 of our students have earned scholarships to further their music or drama scholarships at the Con. These students are to be congratulated on their achievements, which are a result of much hard work and dedication.

Congrats and well done to Nathan Collins, Kynan Saurine and Melissa Davies who have all won music scholarships and congrats to Megan Smith who successfully earned one for drama.

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We have updated the Band Booklet for 2016, including the Band Application. Booklets and Applications for next year are now available from the office.

All students from Years 2-6 2016 are eligible to apply.

Existing band members are reminded that they must re-apply.
Dear Parents and Carers,

Last week saw our swimming scheme draw to a close with many students achieving major growth in their water safety, capabilities with swimming and confidence in and around water. As we are just beginning summer it is now more than ever essential for all persons to know how to save themselves and others if in difficulty in water. Our school staff were outstanding with the implementation of this excellent water awareness and achievement program. It was very rewarding for our special education children, many of whom excelled in the water. Thank you to all of our staff who assisted with this program.

Following is an excellent article, written by a Canadian (also a world renowned philosopher), with respect to public education. As we have just celebrated "I give a Gonski" here in Australia, this is well worth a read.

In defence of public education by

His Excellency, John Ralston Saul

July 13, 2001

What is the tragedy of a classed based society? Quite simply, it is a society which has institutionalized selfishness.

We all have selfishness within us. We all have our self-interest. And we need it.

But that is quite different from acting as if selfishness were the leitmotif of civilization. A healthy democracy is one which works to avoid that tragedy.

As for public education, it is a simile for civilized democracy. You could say that public education is the primary foundation in any civilized democracy. That was one of the great discoveries of western civilization in its modern form in the middle of the 19th century.

Any weakening of universal public education can only be a weakening of democracy. I personally do not believe that citizens—Canadian citizens in particular—have any desire to abandon the true strengths of their society. I believe that there is a profound understanding in our society of the long-standing essential role universal public education plays in making us a civilized democracy.

Citizens live complex lives and have little free time. Yet they are obliged to deal with all of those fashions and ideologies which come along, grab hold of the mechanisms of public influence, and then set about undermining the fundamentals of civilization.

The ideologies of our day are comfortably ensconced in various schools of economics which have embraced late 19th century simplistic theories of inevitability. You can also find them in various schools of managerialism, which also are attached to a belief in the inevitability of events. Floating around these economists and managers is a whole new class of what used to be called courtiers and are now called consultants. Some of them are operating out of what are called independent think tanks, financed in such a way that they are independent on behalf of those who finance them.

All of this represents a tidal wave of specialists who have drawn as their principal conclusion that inclusive systems which serve the public good are no longer viable. In other words, the ideologies and fashions of our day are devoted in good part to a return of the tragedy of the class based society. They are devoted to weakening the universality of the very public education system which has made Canada such a remarkable success society.
Let me point out something which is difficult to accept for many people who are themselves devoted to managing—and managing well—classes, schools and the school system. Managerialism encourages and rewards agreement among professionals. It admires discretion and conformity, it encourages us all to believe that through detailed work, we can rectify enormous problems.

Let me give you two examples of the contradictions this creates. We all agree on the need for small classrooms, particularly in this era of high immigration, ever more complex societies and ever more open borders. We need intense, personalized education. This seems to mean classes of twenty or less students.

Yet the managerial solutions of today are carrying us towards larger classrooms. Why? Because no matter how modern these managerial theories sound, they are usually rooted in the industrial theories of the late 19th century. And those theories are based upon a belief in economies of scale. What is more, we are consistently bombarded by statistics which assert that class sizes are not actually too big. This is where the business of discretion and conformity and attempting to solve problems behind the scene comes in. In most cases, those statistics are a form of gerrymandering.

The statisticians take the total number of accredited teachers and/or administrators, and divide them into the total number of students. But many of those included in the calculation never go into a classroom because they are principals, vice-principals, counsellors and so on. And so the official statistics talk of 25 or 30 students per class, when parents—that is citizens—know that their children are in classes of thirty-five.

Let me give you another example of what happens when we buy into the closed arguments of inevitability. In school after school around the country it seems that there is ever less money for what are now described as the soft edges of education. Many of these soft edges were included automatically in education until a few years ago. Schools find themselves short of books and of equipment. They find that certain advanced classes are suddenly too expensive. Certain special needs are too special. Many extra curricular activities suddenly are beyond their budgets.

Principals, teachers and parents find themselves obliged to go out and raise money - i.e., engage in private fundraising. This presents two very real problems. The first is that raising funds for a public school in a middle or upper middle class neighbourhood is not all that difficult. Raising funds in a working class or lower middle class neighbourhood—or indeed a neighbourhood with many new immigrants trying very hard to begin their lives in Canada—is a much more difficult undertaking. The whole idea of private fundraising for public schools is the first step towards introducing a class based society into Canada. Private fundraising is, in and of itself, a form of exclusion.

Let me add a tougher comment. By going out and spending a great deal of their valuable time fundraising, principals, teachers and parents are actually collaborating in the gradual privatization of the public school system. They are making privatization easier for those who do not wish to take public responsibility for raising the necessary amounts of public money. I often feel we would do better to stand back and to say openly that this is a public system and that if society and its leaders are not willing to fund the system, then we collectively, and they specifically, must all take responsibility for the decline in the education of our own children and the children of our fellow citizens. Perhaps there is a need for citizens to stand back and say to the public authorities: It is your obligation to raise the funds and to deliver universal public education. It is not our responsibility to undermine that universality. Over to you.

Our country has been built, from the very beginnings of its democratic system 150 years ago, upon a happy linkage between democracy and public education. These are the basic principles of the Canadian democracy.
In the 19th century we were a naturally poor country, working under the extremely difficult circumstances of our climate and geography. We constructed our prosperity consciously and intellectually. We constructed our success and we did so to a great extent through our public education system. Any move towards weakening that system will risk undermining not simply our society, but also our prosperity.

Our success as a country is built upon this system. It is only with great difficulty that I could imagine a greater betrayal of the principle of Canadian democracy than the piecemeal reduction of public education to private education.

There is one point on which there should be no misunderstanding. The concept of universality does not mean that everything must be the same. The strength of a public education system such as ours is that, being so large and serving so many different communities, it is capable of enormous diversities. We only have to look at the remarkable success story of French Immersion over the last quarter century to see what our public system is capable of. Starting at zero, we have today over 320,000 students in French Immersion.

Let me add to that the other large requirement of diversity in our society. This country has been built on a combination of its Aboriginal peoples and its immigrants. Most of those immigrants have come as reasonably poor people, very often illiterate or not speaking either of our official languages. The Saul’s, for example, came here in the middle of the 19th century as virtually illiterate stone masons. My family, like yours I’m sure, is a product of the public school system.

We citizens take the responsibility of inviting people from around the world to come to join us in Canada. We’re the host. The primary obligation and responsibility is ours, as it is with any host. We offer these newcomers an open, inclusive society in which the citizens can act as citizens, can speak out, become involved in public life as they wish, and perhaps do well economically. We have three primary obligations when we invite immigrants to come to join us here. First, to ensure that our democratic system and its values are clearly understandable and accessible to them. Second, to ensure that our public systems work. Third, to provide an intense, inclusive public education system which will allow them and their children to adjust to Canadian society.

All the state has to provide are public systems which work and a good education system. The immigrant/citizen does all the rest. My family, like yours, is the proof that this is a bargain which no self-respecting democracy can turn its back on.

One of the particularities of Canada is that we have many levels of government, as befits the second largest landmass in the world with a reasonably small population, two official languages and three founding peoples. The system is as it should be. And fundamentally it works well. After all, we are the second or third oldest democracy in the world.

One of the specific realities of this system is that the responsibility for education was given, from the beginning, to the provinces and territories. This ensures that the regional nature of Canada is not overwhelmed, as it was in most parts of Europe, by monolithic, centralizing theories of state and mythology. Our civilization is intended to be complicated and the regionalization of our education system allows it to maintain that complexity.

What this means is that the primary arm for the creation of citizens, whether children of people born in Canada or immigrants, lies in the hands of the provinces. It is their most important responsibility. And it is regional, national and international at the same time. You may be for or against globalization. But at the end of the day, the ability of our young citizens to face the various effects of the opening of borders lies in the hands of the provincial and territorial governments. That is, it lies in their obligation to provide universal public education; to maintain the century and a half old tradition of a middle class egalitarian inclusive society.
Today we have a largely urban population. Our cities are filled with a highly mobile population, two job families, high divorce levels, single parent families, the return of long hours of work, the loss of community identification, high immigration levels, a new rise in the division between rich and poor and so on and so on. All of these factors mean that the one—if not the only—public structure we have which is capable of reaching out to all citizens in all parts of the country and making them feel part of the extended family of citizenship is the public education system. In the classic sense of the inclusive democracy, those simple bricks and mortar buildings, which we call the public schools, are in fact the one remaining open club house of citizenship. Not only is the public education system and its fundamental structure not old fashioned, it has found a new form of modernity. I would argue that we are more reliant on it today than we were through most of the 20th century.

We must turn away from the mediocre and tired management theories of efficiency through economies of scale. We must particularly beware of their latest manifestation which preaches training rather than education. We need more than ever to look at the public education system as the primary tool we have to ensure that children are able to grow up to become citizens.

I hope you can enjoy being a citizen who is developing our future citizens. That which we walk past is that which we accept.

Have a pleasant week,
Will Randall
Principal

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In support of our healthy eating program, we ask that no candy canes be eaten here at school. This is a lovely Christmas thought but we ask that the candy treats only be eaten at home.

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From the Principal

Each week we will try to acknowledge the children who received awards at their grade assemblies in the previous week. Congratulations to the following students who received awards last week:

**Kinder:** Kai Jackson, Keira Cooper, Chase Chapman, Taylor Larkin, Maynard Cootes, Lilly Fahey, Sasha White, Ari Tomlinson, Chelsea Farquar, Eliana Jackson,, Deacon Konemann, Elijah White, Cloe Highley Peacock, William Maddrell, Elisabeth Kennedy, Sophie Carter, Zayden Third, Hazel-Rose Birch, Kaiva Gillies, Ivy Eggin, Matari Holten, Naithanial Lasker, Ashleigh Bulmer, Nyokah Duroux

**Year 1:** Lilly-Rose Johnson, Lillian Lougher, Luca Michael, Wyatt Jewell, Cruz Boyd, Ruby Martin, Jett Sewell, Nash Boyd, Mikayla Gray, Grace McIntyre, Abbey Maginnity

**Year 2:** Madisyn Murdoch, Jarell Atkinson, Elisabeth Budden, Ruby Deefholts, Jake Crowe, Caitlin Kingsley, Eli Masters

**Year 3:** Teven Gallagher, George Holmes, Hayden Jeffs, Savannah McLachlan, Todd Roberts, Louise Edwards, Bryson Fauntleroy, Blade Collins

**Year 4:** Alyssa Fitzgibbon, Joshua Laurie, Nathan Collins, Chelsie Bagnall, Alicia Barnes, Grayson Reimer

**Year 5:** Jordan Loadsman, Jack Lougher, Tae-Arleigh Donnelly, Whitney Moon, Sean Thorley, Karson Russell, Hadassah Litchfield, Ashley Cole, Mackenzie Hogden

**Year 6:** Bronte O'Loughlin, Olivia McLaren, Kateena Hookey, James Deefholts, Lucas Westbury, Emily Hartz, Janaya Cable, Ryan Daniels, Jazz Crawford, Connor Rooke, Rory Leslie, Halle Ensby

**Support Unit:** Ruben Chaffer, Patrick Kennedy, Dodge Crouch, Isabelle Philp
Bike Bus

Grafton City Cycles wish to show their support for the GPS Bike Bus and all of those who ride their bike to school by offering a weekly prize to one lucky bike rider. One student who rides their bike to school during the week will be randomly drawn to receive a prize donated by Grafton City Cycles. We appreciate their support!

This week…. Last week’s random winner for riding to school was James Deefholts who has won a $20 voucher from Grafton City Cycles.

Infants Roster

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<tr>
<td>1/12/15</td>
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<td>Anita Sinclair</td>
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<td>3/12/15</td>
<td>Paula and Ingrid</td>
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<td>4/12/15</td>
<td>Mandy Pierse</td>
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Primary Roster

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<td>Charlene Keefe</td>
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<td>Help Needed</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/12/15</td>
<td>Kate Kratz</td>
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Many children do not eat the recommended 2 serves of fruit a day so try and pack one serve in their lunchbox. Kids like fruit cut, ready to eat so fruit salad can be perfect and it’s colourful too – try it on a kebab! If they don’t like pieces of fruit, try a banana sandwich, berry pikelets or other baked foods with fruit ingredients.