

CALENDAR – see our website for the full Term Calendar

Term:Wk	Day	Event
1.6	Mon 08/03	
	Tue 09/03	Management Meeting
		Swimming – zone comp.
	Wed 10/03	Year 7 & 8 Sport
	Thur 11/03	ODI at Eden Park
1.7	Fri 12/03	Formal Assembly
		Admin Meeting
	Mon 15/03	BOT Meeting
	Tue 16/03	Management Meeting
	Wed 17/03	Year 7 & 8 Sport
1.8		Eden/Albert Principals' Mtg
	Thur 18/03	School Disco
	Fri 19/03	Music Assembly
	Mon 22/03	
	Tues 23/03	Management Mtg
	Wed 24/03	Year 7 & 8 Sport
	Thur 25/03	
	Fri 26/03	Admin Meeting,
		Formal Assembly



**Kowhai Intermediate
NEWSLETTER**



4/3/2010

We Learn. No Exceptions.

**Principal's Comment on
NATIONAL STANDARDS:**

National Standards is a complex issue. The *Standards* document runs to 115 pages (compared to 94 for the entire NZ Curriculum document), so it is no wonder there is not immediate clarity on them.

At Kowhai we will embrace whatever is helpful to enhance student learning and do nothing that will hinder it. Most of what the *Standards* describe is what we (and all good schools) already do to improve learning and is in place now. This includes:

Using a mix of formal assessment tools that compare student progress with others of their age across New Zealand, along with a large measure of teacher observation, insight and judgment to work out where students are at in their learning so they can progress to the next step.

Having benchmarks at the NZ Curriculum levels (now called Standards) which indicate the expected levels of achievement for our students at their particular age.

Sharing honest assessment information with students and their parents so that they know where their child lies in relation to that expected band of achievement.

Using assessment information (the mix of 'tests' and teacher judgment) to help students understand where they have got to and what are the next steps for their learning in each area.

Having students set goals for their learning and getting them to talk regularly with their teachers about their progress towards those goals.

Using positive encouragement and motivation of students by recognizing their progress as the big thing – because not everyone moves through learning at the same rate all the time.

Keeping parents fully informed of their child's current attainment levels and progress and explaining what that means.

Providing targeted help for students who fall well below expectation and challenging learning for those who have exceeded it.



***Introducing:
Julia Beaumont***

Julia is acting Associate Principal in place of Louise Broad who is on study leave for most of 2010.

Julia is well known to many of you. She has taught and lead whanau at Kowhai over the past 10 years. Last year she was an ESOL adviser at Team Solutions.

juliabeaumont@kowhai.school.nz

SCHOOL NOTICES/NEWS

SPORT

Great to see our sports teams going out to represent the school (and kind and talented parents helping with coaching and transport.) We have had tennis, cricket and softball teams competing over the past three weeks. The big news is the brilliant success of our Girls' Softball teams. The Year 7 team were runners up in the Central Zone and the Year 8 Girls' team won their competition and will now represent Kowhai in the Auckland competition!

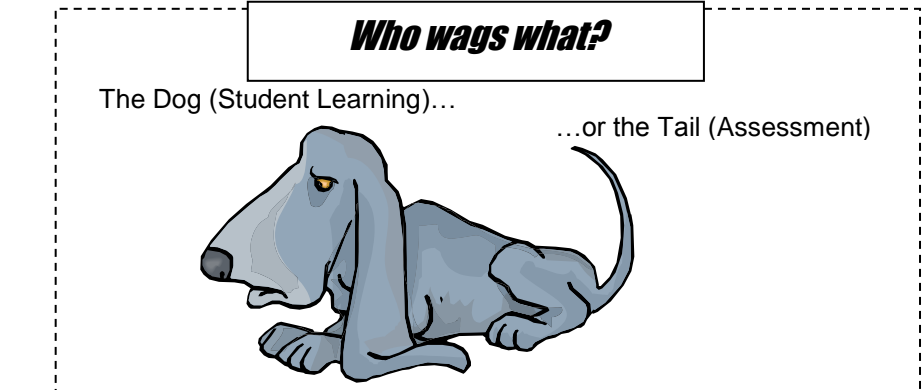
Thanks to Andy Whale, local businessman from Ray White Mt Eden Village for his help as a volunteer coach of the girl's cricket team. Andy says: "Parents. List and sell with me and I'll donate \$500 to Kowhai Intermediate, so we can all further help the community." andy.whale@raywhite.com 021 667 453

Ray White

I am cautious about being sucked into the polarized debate that casts us into either the unrealistic rhetoric that *National Standards* are going to magically improve student achievement, or the equally unrealistic position that they are about to bring nuclear winter to NZ education! I am confident we can implement National Standards at Kowhai in a way that satisfies the Ministry of Education, while remaining totally true to our convictions about what helps students learn best.

However, I do have some concerns about what may flow from *National Standards* which could be detrimental to our students' learning. In particular, judging student learning is not a 'scientific' endeavour (not many human responses and activities are!). Judgments about student achievement are not going to be identical between teachers and certainly not between schools. But, because the Government expects to find out via National Standards which schools are not up to scratch, they may find this lack of precision unsatisfactory and impose a National Test. But tests never tell the whole story.

The various good formal assessments we use in New Zealand schools, such as PAT, STAR, Asttle, GLOSS etc, rarely equate exactly with one another. They each provide highly useful information about students' achievement, but they do not tell the whole story, and sometimes contradict each other. This is why the professional judgment of the teacher is so crucial. Your child's teacher is constantly assessing your child. We call it 'formative assessment'. This is the feedback, questioning, refocusing and guidance given to the student as he or she progresses through the learning. A mix of formal tests plus the teacher's understanding of your child provide a much better idea of what your child can do, than a formal test alone. We need both approaches and it is stated in the *National Standards* that this mix should be used to work out what level your child is at. My fervent hope is that when the Ministry of Education discovers that judgments of your child's progress vary between and sometimes within schools, it will not opt for the simplistic solution of tests alone. Actually, assessment needs to be kept in its place – an indicator system - rather like a dog's tail!



As is our usual practice, before the next interviews (Term 2, Week 2) you will receive a summary of Term 1 test results for your child that will indicate whether your child is below, at or above expectation in each. However the conversation you, your child and teacher have will be the most valuable piece in the achievement puzzle.

Paul Paul Douglas pauldouglas@kowhai.school.nz

COMMUNITY NOTICES

Theatre! Film!

Trinity Guildhall Speech & Drama! Are you a passionate & enthusiastic drama student? Love to Act? Sing? Make Film? Or want to learn how? Introducing Drama Squad! Quality Private Drama & Film Tuition for students 8-18yrs Offered East, West, & Central Auckland. Call Janna & Jase 09 360 0173 janna@dramarama.co.nz

Wonderful Art classes afterschool. Broad variety of interesting Art; Cartoon Studio. Excellent professional teachers and content Term 2 early-bird movie ticket free gift! Our creative Holiday Programmes also out now! Also Little Chefs Cook School & Parties Holiday Programs, Term Classes and Parties! All at www.bramly.co.nz Tel: 624 6366 Bramly Art & Creative Studio (305 Remuera Rd)

Grey Lynn Farmers Market. Every Sunday 9am – 1pm. Grey Lynn Community Centre. www.glfm.co.nz

Guide Biscuits are on sale in March. \$3 for plain, \$3.50 for choc & mini choc per packet. Pre order your biscuits with Toni on 629 5932 or email edenbiscuits@gmail.com

AMI AUCKLAND NETBALL | OPEN DAY Sunday 7th March 2010 | 11am – 3pm. Our Open Day is for students wanting to join a netball club. Come along on the day to register as individual players. Teams available for the following age groups: Years 1-8, U16 & U20 AMI Netball Centre Auckland Netball | 7 Allison Ferguson Drive, St Johns | 09 570 0030 | www.aucklandnetball.co.nz

PONSONBY JUNIOR RUGBY REGISTRATIONS Rugby for Under 6's – Under 13's. Sunday 7th March, 9am – 12 midday. Western Springs Stadium, Western Springs. For enquiries phone Pam – 817-2127 or email juniors@ponsonbyrugby.co.nz

The Uniform Shop sale is on this week. 30% off shoes, bags, PE Shirts and Shorts. Buy one polo get 10% of sweatshirt.

POTENTIAL TRAFFIC PROBLEM

Thursday March 11th 2pm One Day Cricket International at Eden Park Parents please be advised that there will be gridlock around the school at 3pm when our students leave for the day. My advice is that you avoid coming to pick your child by car that day if you can arrange an alternative.