

REPORT ON MARIAN COLLEGE PRINCIPAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

A.

TITLE: *A patchwork of renewal*

B.

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SCHOOL: Marian College, Christchurch

PERIOD SABBATICAL COVERS: 23 April to 29 June 2012

C. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Teacher Study Awards through the Ministry of Education and NZPPTA
- Marian College Board of Trustees
- The senior leadership team and staff of Marian College who carried additional responsibilities in my absence.
- Principals and staff of schools visited for their gracious hosting and generous sharing of time and ideas.

D. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Through five weeks of a conference, school visits, professional development courses and professional reading the principal of Marian College has been energized in a variety of areas that will impact positively on the life of the school in a variety of ways in the time ahead.

E. PURPOSE

As stated in the *Secondary Principals' Sabbatical Leave Guidelines* (MOE, 2010),

The purpose of the secondary principals' sabbatical leave scheme is to provide, during their career as a principal, a sustained period of time away from their school for professional learning activities, reflection and renewal.

The scheme is intended to:

- aid retention and possibly recruitment of principals
- encourage and enable professional growth, through providing time for reflection and dedicated professional development
- promote collaboration within the profession.

This purpose of this sabbatical was amended, for reasons as outlined in section F, to the following:

1.1 To ascertain ideas to help further reinvigorate the two founding religious order charisms at Marian College: the Mercy and the Josephite charisms coming from Catherine McAuley and from Mary MacKillop respectively so that students, staff and the school's community will better understand our school culture and its heritage as lived today.

1.2 Through targeted school visits, to investigate successful approaches and strategies that:

1.2.1 foster student achievement for all students and support the learning and development of Maori and Pacific students;

1.2.2 help keep the founding charisms alive in the school culture.

1.3 Through targeted school visits, to investigate current trends in school refurbishment and building that support learning and teaching in the twenty first century.

1.4 Additional professional development opportunities:

4 day course on Sexuality education for Catholic school teachers.

1 day course on dealing with the media.

From all of the above any relevant adaptations for Marian College will be then planned for implementation to support Maori and Pacific students, the school's special character and culture, and any potential refurbishment or rebuilding post earthquakes.

1.5 To be personally refreshed.

F. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Marian College is a Year 9 to 13 state integrated school for girls in the Catholic tradition, with a particular flavour coming from the Josephite and Mercy founding religious orders. The school is situated in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Between September 2010 and the current time the Canterbury and college community have experienced a range of strong earthquakes. Those from 22 February 2011 led to the re-siting of the school for 2011 on an afternoon shift arrangement and a second re-siting for 2012 (for the next two to four years). It is not yet known if and when the school can return to its original site. Due to the impacts of the earthquakes, the principal's sabbatical was rescheduled from term 2 in 2011 to term 2 in 2012 and the purpose expanded to include items re school buildings.

Although Marian College has very good outcomes for its Maori and Pacific students, this is a national educational priority area.

As leader for school special character it is important for the principal to be enriched with input on the founding charisms.

Marian College's original site facilities may need repair or rebuilding post earthquakes. It is important to be strategic re current directions in school infrastructure.

The college is under represented in teachers trained in sexuality education from a Catholic perspective.

The school has needed to increase its marketing post earthquakes.

G. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Some professional reading on:

2.1.1 Mercy and Josephite charisms; and

2.2 Attend one conference:

2.2.1 Association of Josephite Secondary Schools Conference, mid May 2012 in Sydney, on the theme *The Josephite spiritual homeland*.

2.3 Targeted school visits to:

2.3.1 Mercy and Josephite schools in Sydney and Auckland;

2.3.2 Good practice schools in Sydney and Auckland for fostering student achievement, including Maori and Pacific student outcomes:

2.3.3 Schools with recent refurbishment or new buildings in Wollongong, Sydney and Auckland.

Overall thirteen state, state integrated and private secondary schools in Australia and New Zealand were visited.

2.4 Reporting to:

- senior leadership team and staff.
- board of trustees.
- whanau committee.
- students via assembly.
- leaders website (www.educationalleaders.govt.nz).

H. FINDINGS

The best practice for fostering Maori and Pacific student achievement mirrored the professional literature. Relationships within the school were warm. Whanau/fanau were well included. There was a clear focus on the holistic achievement of these students with a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Whole school professional development underpinned teaching approaches for these students. Celebration of Maori and Pacific student success was evident. Often external wrap around services worked within the school to support Maori and Pacific student well being. Visiting the schools reinforced the findings of the literature for Maori and Pacific student positive outcomes.

There was a range of ways that schools fostered the charisms of the founding orders. Most principals were involved in regular and usually annual professional development in this area, often adding a new idea or two per annum to the kete of good practice in their

home schools. Marian College already uses many of these tried and true ways to foster the founding charisms. One cluster of schools banded together to host in depth professional development over a year on the charism for two staff per school that ended in a project for their home school.

A diverse array of ideas was gained from looking at building refurbishment and new school buildings.

- Detailed user consultation from the initial planning stages was the norm in all instances with no one set model for all.
- The best buildings were environmentally friendly, being solar passive for instance.
- New buildings or refurbishments tended to be either open plan, large space models or to be smaller with flexible learning spaces.
- Wide use of glass was evident.
- Insufficient attention to acoustics was an issue in some new builds or refurbishments.
- There were variable responses to the effectiveness of some schools having open plan areas for senior staff to work.
- Building design could be used to foster self management by students.
- Creative design optimized breakout spaces for small group work.
- New kinds of furniture were being trialed in a number of schools.
- There was a move away from computer suites as many schools had learners with their own devices or use of computers on wheels.
- Wireless was predominant in many schools.
- Some schools removed resource rooms and offices, having in built cupboards with pinboard doors within classrooms for storage.
- Science laboratory configurations were varied and allowed more flexible use of the space.

Staff invariably visited an array of schools before becoming immersed in design input for the refurbishment or rebuilding of their own place with the help of relevant professionals.

The media course was practical and insightful especially for dealing with the media in an emergency situation. A post sabbatical course has further reinforced skills learned and extended these to optimizing the free traditional media. This joint training should be in all the new principals' induction courses.

I. IMPLICATIONS

The principal needs to ensure that that is a steady annual growth in the expression of the charisms in the school.

As already requested by our Maori and Pacifica communities, Marian College could hold annual celebration nights for learners from each of these backgrounds.

Planning for any changes to Marian College facilities must have good input from the beginning from students and staff, and not be imposed by any outside agency.

A target can be set to submit data about the school for use by the traditional media, to complement planned work by a public relations company for our college.

J. BENEFITS

4i.LINKS TO ISSUES IMPORTANT TO THE SCHOOL

The board of trustees wished to further invigorate the charisms of the founding orders.

There is a steady Maori and Pacific roll in the school of about 6 to 7%.

Thinking about building plans can be well informed.

We need to maintain a high public profile.

4ii.LINKS TO THE SCHOOL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic plan goal SP5: The recommendations of the Diocesan External Review of the Catholic Special Character report of June 2009 are addressed.

Strategic plan goal ED4: Maori and Pacific students achieve as well as Marian College students generally.

Strategic plan goal ED6: Teaching practices are continually improved (in the post-RAFA funding period).

Strategic plan goal CO2: Highly functioning and actively engaged relationships with parent and caregiver communities exist; in particular, with Maori, Pacific and Asian communities.

Strategic plan goal RE1 regarding building facilities.

4iii.LINKS TO PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Will tie directly to my principal's performance goals for 2012.

Time for personal reflection and to recharge.

4.iv.LINKS TO CURRENT SCHOOLING SECTOR PRIORITIES

Ties to *Ka Hikitia*, to the national *Pasifika Education Plan* and to the *New Zealand Curriculum*.

5.COSTING SCHEDULE

Due to significant post-earthquake financial challenges for the school in 2012 sabbatical costs were kept to a minimum.

Conference in Sydney:	\$1650
Sydney school visits over four days:	\$285
Auckland school visits over five days:	\$325
TOTAL:	\$2260

Thank you to family and friends who hosted and provided transport at no cost in both Sydney and Auckland.

K. CONCLUSION

The principals' sabbatical opportunity is one that each principal should ensure they take up each five years. It is a time for rejuvenation of ideas and energy.

L. REFERENCES

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