

Principal's Sabbatical Report – Terry Roberts.

Proposal:

To evaluate the impact the 'Healthy Schools' concept has had on education in schools in Tai Tokerau.

Methodology:

Meet with co ordinators involved in 'Healthy Schools' programme both in education and in Northland Health.

- Prepare questionnaire to be sent to those schools involved in 'Healthy Schools' – notably those who receive Fruit in Schools.
- Visit local schools who receive Fruit in Schools.
- Visit with co ordinators including 'Sun Smart', Health Foundation, Fruit in Schools, Healthy Schools and Sport Northland.
- Co ordinate and report on results.

Acknowledgements and Thanks:

- Northland Health and the availability of the Health Promoting Schools and Fruit in Schools co ordinators. (Notably Helen Manning).
- The schools who completed the questionnaire.
- The staff of Portland School.

Rationale:

Portland School has been involved in the Health Promoting Schools concept for the last ten years.

When the 'Fruit in Schools' programme started I personally doubted the value of providing fruit to children.

Throughout the years I have noted many changes and improvements in the 'well being' of our children I must acknowledge the Healthy Schools concept.

I was interested in finding out if other schools in Tai Tokerau had recognized similar results.

Fruit in Schools Evaluation/Questionnaire:

How long has your school been a member of Fruit in Schools?

1. Have you noticed any changes in classroom performance?
2. Have you noticed any changes in overall health/fitness?
3. Has there been a change in school attendance?
4. Has there been a change in school lunches?
 - Personal lunches.
 - School supplied lunches.
5. Please note any changes you may have noted in the community.
(Please note any dental health changes and any policy changes that have occurred as a result of Fruit in Schools Scheme).

RESULTS

Questionnaires returned – 19 (Thank you!)

Of all the schools only 1 school has been in the scheme for less than three years and many for over six years. This does make the results more relevant.

All schools have a roll of between 75% and 100% Maori children.

1. Have you noticed any changes in classroom performance?

17 schools said yes definitely, with children more focused, especially in the afternoon.

The other two schools stated that they were unable to answer as there were many variables.

2. Have you noticed any changes in overall health/fitness?

17 schools stated yes definitely, with improved participation in school activities. The children have more energy and are more positive. 1 school said they were unable to answer.

1 school said no.

3. Has there been a change in school attendance?

Response varied greatly from an immense improvement to no improvement.

13 schools recognized an improvement in school attendance.

5 schools have seen no change.

1 school was unable to answer.

4. Has there been a change in school lunches?

13 schools said yes.

6 schools said no changes.

5. Any changes in dental health?

Very difficult to answer as there are so many variables and outside influences.

6. Any changes in overall school policies/attitudes?

- All schools have policies in place to promote Healthy Nutrition and many have communities who are right behind this.
- As much as possible food provided and sold at schools is of a healthy nature.

CONCLUSION

1. The overwhelming results indicate that 'Fruit in Schools' is having a very positive influence in schools.
 - Best results are when the provision of this fruit is well organized and all children sit and participate.
2. 'Fruit in Schools' is only one part of the 'Healthy Schools' concept.
 - Many schools are also 'Sunsmart' schools and also have Heart Foundation awards.
 - When the school environment involves the planting of school vegetable gardens and orchards the value of the Health Promoting Schools are great enhanced.

PERSONAL CONCLUSION

The Fruit in Schools programme has had a very positive effect on the Portland School Community.

- We do offer fruit in a manner that it is easy to consume (cut if necessary).
- We are a 'Sunsmart' School.
- We do have a Heart Foundation award.
- We do have school vegetable gardens and fruit trees. (We have even progressed to having school chickens).
- We have participated in the 'Active Schools' programme.
- We have changed the school lunches that we proved to the children.
- We do at times cook and prepare vegetables from our garden with the children. (Soup, fritters, salads, burgers etc).
- Our children are positive about Healthy Eating and a healthy life style.

I acknowledge the difficulty of many of these things happening in large schools but they do lead to positive outcomes.

Change is gradual but when a school has a positive attitude towards nutrition and a healthy lifestyle, alongside a physical education programme that encourages participation and daily fitness we can make a difference.

The whole school community needs to get 'on board' and we will all experience positive outcomes.

Terry Roberts – Principal Portland School.