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                          Wanganui.

Acknowledgements:

Report Topic:

Topic: *To share the many effective programmes and interventions happening in Decile 1 & 2 schools that contribute to improving student engagement and raising student achievement.*

The purpose of this study was to investigate some of these effective programmes, interventions and practices and to share some of the information and details with other schools.

It was my original intention to discover these effective programmes that are happening in our schools and to share this information in this report. My initial thoughts were that there may have been a number of specific programmes that are being implemented in schools that contribute to increasing student engagement and achievement.

Through my initial e mail contacts and follow up communications I have been privileged to many interesting conversations and also excellent examples of quality teaching, quality programmes, and a variety of specific interventions that are aiming to address concerns of disengagement and increase student achievement. There is also a number of other socio – economic factors which the students regularly encounter on a daily basis that the school cannot always address but many schools try to overcome in their pursuit of best meeting their student needs.

It must also be mentioned that many Schools and Communities, are year by year having to increasingly fund and resource the support and programmes made available to children with disengagement/ behaviour issues.

After many interesting and enlightening conversations with a variety and a number of school personnel I have found that almost all of these explicitly value the development of a positive school culture where there is a climate of respect and trust with all – the students, the staff and the familes/whanau/communities. The underlying values of respect and trust along with ownership can allow schools to better and more effectively engage students and increase student achievement. The importance of a maintaining a positive school and community partnership enhances the

opportunities students have to achieve and engage.

Successful Schools implement a variety of initiatives to develop a positive, respectful school culture and climate. Many schools who place the child as the focal point and who implement a variety of initiatives to best meet students needs, increase student self esteem, develop positive social skills and empower students and their parents/whanau to enjoy learning - create an environment were students engage and improve their achievement. Associated with this is the practice of improving and enhancing Home – School Partnerships to eliminate barriers for whanau and ensure they feel part of their child's school. Many schools have strategically developed plans to enable them to improve their relationships with their school community. Some of these schools have focused on curricula areas and community days to encourage whanau involvement. For example some of these have been included at the appendix of his report where Physical Education was the vehicle to encourage parental involvement and engagement in their school and also used to enhance student engagement and improve achievement.

From these conversations it is apparent that schools have a vision that their school community – students, staff and parents/whanau share the same goal of increasing student engagement and especially achievement. Many schools approach this in similar ways. From community consultation, collaboration and communication the schools develop a consensus for their desires, wishes and goals for their children. Developing a plan of positive outcomes where children are also included, increases student ownership and also brings about a school code of expected behaviours, attitudes and language that all the school community adhere to. This also conveys the collective understanding that certain behaviours etc are not acceptable at their school and there are steps to maintain a positive and safe learning environment for all.

Many effective schools have a variety of excellent systems to best meet student needs - whether these are needs are emotional, health, social, welfare or academic. These systems eg: SENCO aim to meet these child needs as best as they can through a variety of interventions which aim to allow the child and family to be given an opportunity to engage and achieve. Many effective SENCO systems identify students at risk early and then put interventions/support in to best met these needs. Key workers/personnel monitor these students to ensure the desired outcome and these interventions are monitored at the follow up meetings.

In association with this has been the inception of the Fruit in Schools Programme which offer free fruit to lower decile schools. This was an attempt by the Government to eliminate some of the health and socio economic barriers for lower decile students and increase student health and well being and give these students the opportunity to engage and learn. The Fruit in Schools Programme is valued and contributes to increasing student engagement.

 Also from these conversations it is apparent that effective teaching and learning strategies and practices eg: ATOL, certainly contribute to increasing student engagement and achievement. With learning programmes best meeting student learning needs and being the next learning progression increases achievement. Through effectively using assessment information teachers now can group students and provide them with specific learning intentions with success criteria that increase student engagement and achievement. In conjunction with this is effective use of questioning and peer tutoring/cooperative learning opportunities that allow students to take a greater role in their learning. With the students setting learning goals/ next steps and assessing their performance and then to share these with their peers,

parents/whanau all contributes to a positive and effective learning culture.

Effective and positive relationships that exist between students and teachers can also contribute hugely to increasing student engagement and achievement. Relationships that are built on respect and trust have a solid foundation that encourages engagement and learning. A shared understanding of acceptable practices and support can alleviate many negative issues students and staff may be faced with. Students feel secure and comfortable in these environments where they can take risks in their learning and where there is mutual respect. Teachers that develop an emotionally friendly class environment increase the opportunities for students to engage and achieve. Teachers ensure students are consulted and have collective ownership in their classroom learning environment.

It is evident that not one but the implementation of a number of these strategies contribute to increasing student engagement and achievement. It is also imperative for schools to be successfully engaging and improving student achievement that these strategies are continually being implemented and reviewed to increase effectiveness.

Many school personnel have commented on the value of Reading Recovery and such like programmes which early identify learning needs and aims to address these needs with effective practices.

To be honest it has been rather difficult to obtain specific programme information but the following is a sample of the some of these programmes.

The following programmes have been invented, modified or developed by schools to increase student engagement and improve achievement.
- Foundations of Literacy:
- Check and Connect
- Boys Club

Foundations of Literacy:

FOUNDATION LEARNING ASSESSMENT INITIATIVE

Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success 2008-2012 goals include
- Maori enjoying education success as Maori
-All students achieving their potential
Its priorities are:
– all students experience effective teaching
- children's learning is nurtured by families and whanau
- evidence based practices are used by all involved in schooling

The New Zealand Curriculum states:
• Putting students first
• Enhancing professional practice

- Building partnerships to support learning
- Sustained learning communities

Research which was carried out in a Decile 1 school in 2008/9 provided evidence indicating low level literacy skills on entry to school. Picking up early those learners identified as at risk, improved outcomes. Data shows that the gaps are not unbridgeable, thus proving the measurement of learning gains over time. The Foundation Learning Assessment is not just addressing students at risk, it's growing all learners.

PURPOSE AND USE OF FOUNDATION LEARNING ASSESSMENT
The assessment is essentially diagnostic and its purpose is to identify student's strengths and weaknesses early. Assessment takes place at one month at school, at 5 years 6 months and 6.0 years. Informed judgements are made about the students progress and future needs based on the findings. Data is recorded on what has been learnt to date. The literacy tasks are well founded (An Observation Survey – Marie Clay 2002) formally designed and consistently administered. They involve:
- Letter Identification
- Concepts About Print
- Word Reading
- Writing Vocabulary
- Hearing and Recording Sounds
- Running Record at instructional level

A Burt Word Reading test is also taken at six years of age.
The tasks are standardised and norm referenced and compare students learning with others. Student's needs are addressed and those identified as being at risk of being left behind their peers are picked up early and are targeted in classroom programmes and through intervention programmes.

RELEVANCE TO CLASSROOM TEACHERS
Discussion and a written summary help inform next steps in learning and supports teachers to implement effective programmes. Information available to teachers that is timely and where no time is wasted impacts on teaching and learning. Classroom teachers can capitalise on the relevant expertise that students already have in more specific focused ways.
A culture of continuous improvement and better outcomes for all learners will be evident. Teachers will be successfully lifting the expectation of student achievement. The Foundation Literacy Assessment alongside other formative assessment builds a profile of the student in their learning pathways and goals. Teachers use this information for reporting to families on student progress and achievement.

Outcome and Variance Report

Outcome and Variance Report: End of year review data gathered (see attached) on 35 six year old students has shown an increase in achievement. 57% are at stanine 4-6 in writing vocabulary compared to 30% within this range in 2008.

Data shows low rates of literacy at school entry in all observation tasks. A pattern of continuous improvement is evident.

Teachers find the information provided from assessment clearly identifies gaps and next learning steps.
Teacher aides also use assessment information to inform starting points and to use the knowledge students already have for their programmes of learning support.
Word Power is being fully implemented and students are rising to the challenge of self improvement. The school wide Written Language focus is also making a difference to the achievement in Hearing and Recording Sounds task.

The following chart indicates the progress and lift in writing vocabulary – 2009.

Age	Number of Students	Below Stanine 1-3	At Expectations Stanine 4-5	Above Expectations 6-9
5.1	21	17 81%	4 19%	
5.6	23	10 43%	11 48%	2 9%
6.0	35	15 43%	16 46%	4 11%

The expected difference was not achieved with the control group. The 7 students that were assessed after 1 month at school at 5 years 6 months and after 1 year at school have not made as bigger learning gains over time as anticipated.

Age	Number of Students	Below Stanine 1-3	At Expectations Stanine 4-5	Above Expectations 6-9
5.1	7	6 86%	1 14%	
5.6	7	4 57%	2 29%	1 14%
6.0	7	4 57%	1 14%	2 29%

A number of factors could have impacted on or influenced the variance.
A dramatic increase in the number of new entrants from T.3 onwards entering school with extremely high needs has meant that the teachers have had to focus on and direct more attention to the newer students. Students that have in the main adjusted to school transition and just beginning to get underway may not have had as much targeted teaching as was planned for them to make the necessary shifts forward in their learning.

There is a need to continue to find ways to achieve ongoing improvement in student literary outcomes.

Word Reading is the suggested focus for 2010 goal, which will also impact on Text Reading Levels and Concepts About Print.

Introduce Early Junior Report – Home school partnership.

Parent Teacher Conferences / share assessment information.

Include information in referrals to R.T.L.B / SLS etc.

Two of these students have hearing difficulties and are awaiting further assessment and 2 students are under the Speech Language Therapist. Two students have family issues around them.

Recommendations:
Through assessment, identify students early and target in literacy classroom programmes and in T.Aide support programmes.

Continue to implement Word Power Programme Yrs 1-3.

Celebrate successes.

Check and Connect

A student engagement intervention programme.

Developed at Castlecliff School following the NZCER conference " 2009 Student Engagement " in September 2009.
This programme is a modification of the 'Check and Connect' intervention presented by Sandra L Christenson PhD.

Background

Initially developed in the United States by Sandra L Christenson Ph D. and her team of researchers, 'Check and Connect' is a comprehensive intervention designed to enhance student's engagement at school and with learning.

'Check and Connect' has been implemented in the USA with students from K – Y12.

RATIONALE
We can't change family circumstances for students, but we can strive to fuel student's academic motivation and provide persistent support.

What is Check and Connect?

Check and Connect is comprised of four main components:

- Systematic Monitoring
- Problem Solving
- Relationship Building
- Persistence

Check and Connect Components

- **Check** - systematic monitoring of students' connection to school
- **Connect** - responding to student's educational needs according to their type and level of risk for disengagement

  - ✦ All targeted students receive basic interventions
  - ✦ Students showing high risk behaviours receive additional Intensive interventions

The Mentor

The Mentor is the 'lynch-pin' of the whole programme. He/she builds relationships with nominated students, helps students set clear goals and identifies ways for students to succeeds using role play to teach what is expected/acceptable.
- Helps students stay connected to school
- Helps students navigate school and track progress
- Builds relationships as part of an effective mentoring
- Individualize interventions/target strategies to meet students needs
- Work collaboratively with families, teachers and other adults to support the student
- Help students with problem solving and successfully meeting the everyday demands of the school environment
- Teach the behaviour that is expected

Partner with families - Component

- Enhance home-school communication
- Foster home support for learning
- Responsiveness to parent's needs and questions

In Check and Connect

A mentor works with students and partners with families for a minimum of two years:

- Regularly checking on the educational progress of the student
- Intervening in a timely manner to re-establish and maintain the student's connection to school and learning
- Enhancing the student's social and academic competence

Check Alterable Variables

Behavioural: absences, outside of class, 3 x Behaviour book, stand-down, lack of coping skills, showing extreme emotions.

Academic: work completion, reading below age level, out of class, below expectation on nationally normed tests, limited interest and participation in all areas.

Cognitive: low self-esteem, minimal interest in school work, resistance to learning, lack of personal goals.

Affective: social isolation, feelings of not belonging, low expectations of success in education.

Connect Interventions

- Individualised, not prescriptive using student's needs, family circumstances, and availability of school and community resources as a basis for design.
- Some students may need individual tutoring, after school activities, or homework help.
- Two levels of interventions: Basic and Intensive

Connect Basic Intervention

A deliberate conversation (15 mins daily) that involves:

- Sharing monitoring data.
- Regular feedback - discussing the relevance of school for student's goals
- Practicing the five-step problem-solving strategy to enhance student's adaptation to schooling demands
- Fostering opportunities for participation

Role of Student Responsibility

We use a five-step cognitive behavioural problem solving strategy:

- Stop. Think about the problem
- What are some choices?
- Choose one
- Do it
- How did it work?

- **Help students integrate their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours to meet schooling demands**

- Getting to school on time
- Staying in class and working hard
- Completing all set work with accuracy
- Experiencing academic success

Intensive Connect Interventions

- Problem Solving
- Liaison with Classroom teachers re Programme Modification
- Referral to support agency - SERT, RTLB, SWIS, GSE
- Communicate with parents re individualized contracts
- Other agencies - CYFs

Personal Goal Setting - the ABC's

- Mentor and student identify the demands of the school environment and expectations for student success in different areas
- Request teacher input: What does the student have to do to be successful in this lesson/class? Consider task completion, quality of work, classroom behaviours.
- Mentors use teacher input to create scenarios relevant for problem solving practice (i.e. use the five-step plan) with student on a regular, consistent basis.
- Meet with the student to set personal goals for the time when enhanced academic or behavioural improvement is desired.
- Ongoing monitoring or self-monitoring

Partnering With Families

- The focus of family-school connections is on the student's educational performance
- Mentors enhance communication with families through sharing information in a positive and solution-oriented fashion
- **Mentors invite, inform and are informed by, and include parents**. This done with persistence builds trust

- We have to be realistic - some families resist involvement

Outcomes Expected

- Improved attendance
- Significant improvement of being in class
- Improved social skills
- More class work completed
- Evidence of Progress in learning
- Students able to set goals and become self-monitoring

Lessons Learned about Engagement

- Persistent support that hinges on acceptable standards
- Systematic monitoring of alterable variables
- The power of data-driven decision making
- The power of relationships
- Engaging some families requires "something extra" (persistence, ongoing support, provision of resources)
- Person environment fit (students must be prepared to meet the requirements of the school environment)

Influences Crucial to Engagement

- **Persistence:** There is someone who is not going to give up on the student or allow the student to be distracted from the importance of school

- **Continuity:** There is someone who knows the student's needs and desires and is available across the years.

- **Consistency:** The message is the same from all concerned adults

Persistence-Plus Message

A caring adult wants you to …….

- Learn
- Do the work
- Attend class regularly
- Be on time
- Express frustration constructively

BE SUCCESSFUL

Mentor's Qualities

- A mentor has to believe in the student's ability to be successful
- A mentor has to be persistent - bringing it back to the student's goals
- A mentor cannot take it personally (rejection, anger etc)
- A mentor must be prepared to be co-operative and non-judgemental of student's family

Role of the Mentor - a typical Lesson

- Provide instrumental support - facilitates problem solving towards personal goals
- Give informed feedback in a nonjudgmental way – encourage the student to **self observe, self evaluate and self reflect** on progress
- Emphasis the importance of a work ethic - effort, persistence and trying again - help student to self-regulate their motivation
- Persistent source of support - tow year commitment is most desirable

The Power of Engagement

Increasing the successful completion of school is much more than simply staying at school, and thus, much more than the dropout problem - it involves meeting the defined academic standards of the school, as well as underlying social and behavioural standards.

Attend ……………….. Engage ……………………. Invest

<u>Attend</u> - to be present
<u>Engage</u> - to occupy oneself and become involved
<u>Invest</u> - moving towards their future - this is the choice students make

<u>Personal Investment is sustained through relationship</u>

Concluding Remarks

Research has shown that engaged students tend to earn <u>higher grades, perform better on tests, report a sense of belonging, can set or respond to personal goals, and persist on tasks</u>

We also know that engaged student <u>perceive more support</u> from teachers and peers, which leads to <u>increased levels of engagement</u> and adult support

<u>Boys Alternative Afternoon Programme</u>

<u>Purpose:</u>   Many of our boys have been identified as having poor self esteem/confidence and lack of enthusiasm to participate or engage in learning, physical and social activities.
This in itself creates many challenges for our school and obviously our community as the student's increase in age.
 If we can better engage these boys now - at a younger age by providing core curricula learning in the morning - Reading, Writing and Maths and an afternoon programme of Arts, Culture, Sport, Social Development, social interaction, social skills and positive experiences
We aim to develop these students self esteem and positive participation in our community.
The expected outcomes are increased engagement in learning, improved achievement in learning, and a positive attitude to learning.

<u>Goal 1:</u> *To support the boys in the afternoon programme*
- To support identified children in their attitudes and behaviours to learning
- To provide another communication channel for children
- To assist children to problem solve in a positive manner
- To follow the schools Behaviour Management Support Programme
- To inform teachers/management of outcomes/concerns/programmes
- To assist the boys to engage in the programme activities

The Social skill components are:
- Developing self esteem and confidence building
- Positive motivation
- Positive peer support
- Cooperation (Social interaction skills)

Performance Indicators
- Identified students are supported and assisted in their choices
- Teachers are informed
- Monitoring students progress (weekly)

- Encourage and develop positive team work
- Measure programme outcomes at the completion of programme and the need for review
-

Goal 2: *To support the facilitators of the afternoon programme*
- To manage and supervise the boys to allow the facilitators to deliver their afternoon programme

Performance Indicators
- Facilitators are delivering the programme and the boys engaged in the activity

Goal 3:
- To develop self identity
- To encourage the use of Te Reo Maori in speech making and to enhance self esteem and confidence building
- To provide the students with the opportunity of experiencing Marae Tikanga/protocol
- Learning activities involving a range of cooking skills. The purpose of this activity is to see how well the students respond to instructions and how well they can work as a team
- To learn about self discipline self control and self assessment
- To learn skills to develop anger management

Programme Details
Tuesdays   Art and Craft and EOTC trips
Wednesdays Woodwork and School Improvements
                        Activities - Vegetable Garden, Seed Boxes, Garden Development,
Woodwork
Thursdays   Week 1-5 - Social Worker in Schools facilitates Cooking, Marae
                        Visits, Box On etc
                        Week 6-10 - RTLB (Resource Teacher of Learning and Behaviour)
Fridays   Week 1-5 - Sport facilitators provide a Sports Programme
                        Week 6-10 - Woodcarving facilitated by a Maori Carver

Tutors
The Boy's Programme has three male tutors to support the programme. The programme operates 4 afternoons per week 1.30-2.45pm and provides a range of activities.
The tutors are receiving Professional Development in Mentoring. These tutors are there to support and assist the boys in their social interaction and participation.

Tutors Goals:

Goal 1: To support the boys in the afternoon programme

Goal 2: To support the facilitators of the afternoon programme

Goal 3: *To participate in Professional Learning opportunities in mentoring students and any related programmes that increase student engagement and cooperation*

Expected Outcomes

The expected outcome is the identified boys will develop positive attitudes, acceptable social skills and increased self esteem which will enable them to be good citizens and play a positive part in our school community.

As the programme continues and all participants reflect and review the programme - the outcomes seem to improve and we are continually in a process of improvement

Additional Strategies:

Currently there is release of the classroom teachers of these boys, so they can work alongside the boys in the afternoon programme. This will further consolidate their relationship foundations so these can strengthen and hopefully increase classroom engagement.

We are intending to involve the parents/whanau and include them in this programme as well.

Outcomes from Identified Boys are:

- More engaged in all learning
- Are relating positively to others
- Are using a variety of acceptable problem solving skills
- Are happy and enjoying school
- Being exposed to a variety of experiences has increased their participation and involvement
- Less involvement in negative/disruptive/challenging incidents

It is intended to analyse the value of this programme by comparing the identified/targeted boy's progress and achievement data in the core curricula areas. The purpose is to see if this programme has contributed to increased engagement and improved achievement.

Report Conclusion:

There are increasing numbers of students who have disengagement issues and students who are not achieving at the expected levels of attainment.

There are many other socio – economic factors which can contribute to students' engagement and achievement. Many schools aim to rectify this deficit and aim to make a positive difference to ensure the children have opportunities for success.

Financial support for human resources and support can also positively increase student achievement and improve student engagement.

There is evidence that effective and positive school environments, positive community/home and school partnerships and effective classroom teaching can increase student engagement and improve student achievement.

There are many effective teachers and schools that continually provide effective learning and teaching programmes and interventions to increase their students' engagement and achievement - some with impressive achievement improvements. It is the combination of a variety of factors which contribute to these increased engagement and achievement gains.

It must be stated that effective schools which continue to raise student achievement and increase engagement employ a variety of strategies and interventions. It is this variety and combination that contribute to schools effectiveness not the use of one or two programmes. The whole school community and their cultural approach based upon respect and positive relationships lay the foundation for increased engagement and achievement.

I wish to acknowledge with my appreciative thanks, the approval granted by the Teachers Study Awards Committee (Ministry of Education Wellington) to provide this valuable study and refreshment leave for Term 1, 2010.

Regards

Chris Dibben
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Appendix:

Previous case studies of schools that have used The Physical Activity Project to enhance the School and Home Partnership that contribute to increased engagement and improved achievement.

Camberley School

- School location Hastings
- School decile 1

From the Board of Trustees' view, the School Community Physical Activity Project (SCPAP) has been perfect for us to continue building community involvement.

Aim/Focus: Community

- To hold school events that will encourage our parents and community to be part of our physical activity (PA) culture with their tamariki.

Background

Camberley School is a small to medium-sized primary school, located in the small, compact suburb of Camberley in Hastings West.

Many of the residents are related and closely knit and this is the same for the school's students and caregivers.

The community is friendly and supportive, and involvement with the school is both pleasing and on the rise. Attendance at parent–teacher interviews has, in the last 10 years, risen from 45% to 92%. Employment in the community is seasonal.

The school is, and has been for years, the focal point of the community, as the only suitable meeting place is the school's hall. We believe our caregivers' value of education is on the increase. The support we receive from our community is very strong.

Our open-door policy has built a strong relationship between the school and community. From the Board of Trustees' view, the School Community Physical Activity Project (SCPAP) initiative has been perfect for us to continue building community involvement. At Camberley School, all initiatives have an educational outcome.

Our school rule, "Respect yourself, respect others and respect all property", promotes everything at Camberley School, including the SCPAP initiative.

Many years have been spent encouraging our parents and community to become involved in school activities. The rapport has been achieved and the barriers broken. Through sport, PA, and kai, our school encourages the parents and community to become involved.

Process undertaken

- Staff discussions on approaches/ideas to implement
- Board of Trustee awareness and approval of the ideas
- Student PA /Health Committee meetings for ideas and approval
- Newsletters for community helpers and upcoming events
- Personal invitations to parents
- Incorporating community / Te Ora Hau / role models (trying to use ex-pupils and local identities)
- Following our PA action plan (community involvement)
- Organisation of sponsorship deals (Sport Hawke's Bay / supermarkets / Bakels, and so on).

Responsibilities

- Staff/community meetings
- Parents – helpers – playground games – sports teams
- Te Ora Hau
- Board of Trustees
- Principal – newsletter/community liaising – Health/PA Committee
- Students – trolley/monitors.

<div align="center">Outcomes</div>

- To have a positive attitude by the community coming into the school
- Improve the attitude of staff, parents, and students to PA
- Students see the value of healthy eating and PA for their health
- Students' and parents' enjoyment together while active
- Use PE skills within a PA environment.

<div align="center">Reflection</div>

Strengths

- Increase of student and parent pride in the school
- Continued increase and variation in equipment
- Staff retention
- PA days create a topic of interest to discuss between staff and community
- Number of staff attending meetings from management, and junior and senior school
- Supportive staff and increase in support from community
- Motivation and interest of students – sustained by choice of gear
- Students independently varying their activities
- More parents coming after initial activities showed the community that doing PA with and alongside their students is FUN
- It encourages other whānau to join in, too
- Support from outside agencies (stakeholders)
- Improved behaviour
- Communication between staff and community
- Appropriate expectations, activities, and organisation.

Possible future weaknesses

- Ongoing availability of gear – additional and replacement
- Change of staff ... future community liaisons
- Need to be well prepared and plan for any barrier, and need to be flexible
- Ongoing support from staff and parents ... need to sustain motivation for the future
- Council changes and support withdrawn.

Corinna School

- School location Porirua
- School decile 1

The development of strong relationships requires a deliberate approach to the inclusion of parents/caregivers in all aspects of school activities.

<div align="center">Aim/Focus: Community</div>

- Developing school–parent relationships through a Family Fun Afternoon.

Background

Corinna School is in Waitangirua, Porirua City. The school population of approximately 315 is 70% Pacific Island, 25% Māori, with European, Asian, African and other nationalities making up the balance of 5%.

Parents and caregivers in our school community are interested in and committed to their children's success through education. Developing Home–School Partnerships was the basis of our approach for consultation in mathematics and literacy in 2006, and it was agreed we would use a similar approach for health and physical education (PE) in 2007.

We had felt that every effort was made in previous years to ensure our consultation approach and parent–teacher interaction processes were as inclusive and as fully supported as possible. However, typically only about nine or ten parents/caregivers per class level group (about 36 to 40 in total) attended the informal briefings in each of the previous two years. We felt there was potential to improve the level of parent/caregiver participation in school activities.

Corinna School has been actively reviewing all areas of the curriculum over the last few years, including an outcomes-based approach to physical education. The School Community Physical Activity Project (SCPAP) project provided an excellent opportunity to build on the strengths of our parent/caregiver relationships, the work undertaken within the PE curriculum and, at the same time, to try a different approach to encourage greater parent/caregiver participation and involvement.

Process undertaken

A planning meeting involving the Deputy Principal and health and PE teams was held in early February 2006.

A Family Fun Afternoon concept was developed and objectives drafted. The idea was presented for discussion at a subsequent staff meeting. The idea was endorsed, developed, and the aims and objectives were agreed. Staff promoted and supported the idea of a whole-school approach to this event.

Objectives

The Family Fun Afternoon concept provided an opportunity:

- for parents/caregivers and staff to meet each other in a relaxed, informal environment

- to inform parents/caregivers of initiatives being developed at Corinna School to ensure that students are given information and opportunities to enable them to make choices to be healthy and active
- to encourage parent/caregiver support and involvement in the achievement of our health and physical activity goals
- to foster parent/caregiver and school relationships to encourage ongoing active participation in all aspects of their children's education.

Format

The format of the afternoon was planned in three parts:

1. Games and activities involving students and parents/caregivers
2. A presentation to parents/caregivers by the regional Active Schools Facilitator
3. Sausage sizzle, fruit kebabs, drink – mixes and mingles.

The date was set for Thursday, 22 February from 3.30pm to 5.00pm, and the students wrote the invitations to parents and caregivers.

One of the wider school goals in 2007 was to develop the student voice within our school community. Year 7 and 8 students were involved in the development of games and running a 'tabloid' sports day at the end of 2006. It was decided to involve them in the development of the games and activities for the Family Fun Afternoon.

What happened on the day:

• 3.30pm to 4.00pm, physical activity/games: skipping, Jump Jam, volleyball, fun relays, and Italian golf
• 4.00pm to 4.30pm, hui: kōrero with whānau and Active Schools Facilitator outlining how whānau can be involved, a brief promotion on Pioneer Families, and wrap-up/thanks by the Principal, Kerry Hoskin.
• 4.30pm to 5.00pm, kai: sausages, bread, and sauce; fruit kebabs; drinks; mix and mingle; visit classrooms and chat with teachers.

Students were involved in the preparation of fruit kebabs, sausages and drinks, equipment set-up, and the running of the games and activities. Teachers and teacher aides manned the barbecue, mixed and mingled with parents/caregivers, and chatted informally with them in their children's classrooms.

Outcomes

The Family Fun Afternoon resulted in attendance by 274 parents/caregivers and whānau, in addition to students.

Seventy-eight parents/caregivers met in the classroom with their child's teacher. This was a 216% increase in parents/caregivers who visited classrooms, and a 760% increase in parents who had visited the school over the previous year.

A number of parents/caregivers indicated that they would be prepared to be involved in supporting activities at school or at inter-school sports events.

Corinna School is a member of the Porirua Primary Schools Sports Association. We participate in two inter-school sports tournaments each term, in addition to other one-off events such as the Pelorus Trust Stadium Sports and the NZ Cricket Players Association Hooked on Cricket tournament.

In past years, we have struggled to gain sufficient parent/caregiver support, so Safety Action Plan requirements have been met totally by teachers and teacher support staff.

In contrast, in 2007 the Pelorus Trust Stadium Sports and each sports cluster event received excellent support and involvement from parents/caregivers. All teams have had adult parent/caregiver leaders and additional adults present to support their children.

Reflection

Why was it successful?

- The Family Fun Afternoon was run as a whole-school project, encouraging parent/caregiver participation.
- Aims and objectives were developed, discussed, and agreed as a whole staff.
- Students were engaged through preparation of invitations to their own parents/caregivers.
- Senior students were involved in the development and running of activities on the day.
- Students were involved in the preparation and distribution of food.

Next steps

- Ongoing development of all curriculum areas, including health and physical education
- Development of student focus groups to enhance student voice within the school community. Current focus is on playground activities and facilities
- Ongoing development of Pioneer Families for Better Health
- Inter-school sports activities through Porirua Primary Schools Sports Association
- Promotion of healthy eating – provision of healthy food options through the school canteen
- Providing appropriate in-school skill development for students, for example, tackle skills through the Youth Development Officer of North's Rugby Club, soccer skills through Olé Soccer Academy, and extension to the aquatics programme for seniors to include water safety
- Further parent/caregiver school-based fun activities, for example Whānau (Family) Sports Day.

Many of these steps also provide a sound base for ongoing development of active and positive relationships between the school and parent/caregivers under the Home–School Partnership umbrella.

The development of strong relationships requires a deliberate approach to the inclusion of parents/caregivers in all aspects of school activities.

The process used in the planning and implementation of the Family Fun Afternoon provides a model for future inclusion and participation of our parents/caregivers in all aspects of their children's education.