

# Canterbury Regional News

03 July 2017

## *Kia ora,*

It's been a busy term and it's hard to believe we are already half way through the year. As we head into the July term break, there are a few things that I would like to share with you.

Last week, I had the privilege of attending the Prime Minister's Education Excellence Awards in Auckland. The awards celebrate outstanding work in education. For the first time, the judges gave an additional commendation, awarding it to Halswell School for its particular focus on introducing a modern learning environment, new approaches to teaching and learning and use of digital technologies. Congratulations to Halswell on a well deserved award.

A new initiative to help support children with their mental health and wellbeing has been launched nationwide following a successful trial in Canterbury schools. 'Sparklers' was developed by **All Right?** a healthy Christchurch initiative led by Canterbury District Health Board (DHB) and the Mental Health Foundation. 'Sparklers' provides tools/activities for schools and parents around wellbeing and mental health promotion for children. You will find more information about the 'Sparklers' wellbeing toolkit later in this newsletter.

There are now 24 approved Communities of Learning | Kāhui Ako in Canterbury involving 63,790 children and young people from 191 schools/kura, 49 early childhood education (ECE) me ngā kōhanga reo and two tertiary providers. Many of our Canterbury Kāhui Ako are making progress on supporting personalised pathways. Thank you to those communities who have shared their stories with us.

More of our stunning schools have received architectural and construction recognition. You can check out the five Canterbury schools that received awards in the education category of the [New Zealand Commercial Project Awards here](#). Congratulations to everyone involved for all the hard work you have done.

Since 2014, the Ministry has been working closely with local early childhood education (ECE) me ngā kōhanga reo providers and schools in the Linwood area to respond to multiple challenges. NZ Police, the Ministry of Social Development and local NGOs are now also fully engaged in this collaborative work which is known as the Linwood Wellbeing and Belonging Project. On 5 July, I will be attending the IPANZ Public Sector Excellence Awards as this project is entered in the Achieving Collective Impact category. It is a wonderful opportunity to nationally showcase a community working towards shared goals for children and young people.

I hope you all have a relaxing break.

Mā te wā,

**Susan Schneideman**

*Acting Director of Education for Canterbury*



*Creating an education network that inspires children to reach their full potential.*

## 'Sparklers', helping tamariki live brighter

**All Right?** are delighted to announce the release of a free wellbeing toolkit created to support tamariki with their mental health and wellbeing. 'Sparklers' has been developed in response to requests from the education sector for tools to help them promote the wellbeing of young Cantabrians.

Since the quakes, many teachers, researchers and other professionals working in schools have sought guidance from Canterbury DHB's School Based Mental Health and Health Promoting Schools teams on ways to enhance student wellbeing. This led to the two teams joining forces with All Right to create a resource that would support tamariki to learn the skills they need to build positive mental health and cope with life's challenges.

'Sparklers' has been made possible thanks to funding from the Canterbury Earthquake Appeal Trust and support from the Canterbury DHB, Pegasus Health, Community and Public Health and the Mental Health Foundation.

'Sparklers' consists of 36 activities that teachers can use to help their year 1-8 students feel calmer, happier, and more ready to learn. The activities take between 10 minutes and one hour, are aligned with the school curriculum, and cover a wide range of wellbeing topics including managing emotions, living in the moment, being grateful and showing kindness.

In addition to the 36 activities for teachers, **All Right?** has created six parenting guides.

## Avonside Girls' High School and Shirley Boys' High School

Avonside Girls' and Shirley Boys' High Schools, who will co-locate in 2019, celebrated another milestone this term. A site blessing was held at QEII Park before the construction of their new state of the art campus gets underway.





*Building a new and better future for education and for the community*

## **Communities of Learning | Kāhui Ako**

The North and South Timaru Kāhui Ako are collaborating together in sharing professional expertise to address common achievement challenges across Timaru.

The 13 schools and 16 early childhood education (ECE) me ngā kōhanga reo within these Kāhui Ako have engaged Lesley Brown from the University of Canterbury as their expert partner. She is also working with schools and Kāhui Ako across the South Island and Wellington region.

Lesley believes the success of the North and South Kāhui Ako is grounded in relationships and open collaboration which comes from a strengths-based perspective. As a result, representatives from the Kāhui Ako boards of trustees, Early Childhood Education (ECE) and school leaders, engaged in workshops to explore the unconscious bias across education sectors and to better understand how they can focus on learning more from each other.

Using findings from cycles of collaborative inquiry to improve teaching/instructional practice is essential if Kāhui Ako are to tackle their identified achievement challenges.

From these workshops and discussions with members of the steering group, the North and South Timaru Kāhui Ako have decided to engage in inquiry clusters prior to appointing the Kāhui Ako across school and within school teacher roles. These teachers will be required to drive a shared view of teacher best practice, and support inquiries into how this practice can lift achievement. Teachers will focus on what they know about the children and young people and what they identify their professional learning needs to be.

“This is often underestimated and therefore is where collaboration has the greatest strength,” said Lesley.

The North and South Timaru Kāhui Ako teachers and leaders will be engaging in another series of workshops in the coming month to further understand each sector, their schools and ECEs, regional data and what they know about learning progressions and achievement.

Lesley explains, “It’s the beginning of a conversation about these things which will lead into the inquiry clusters.”