



Ake Runga

Our best always

THURSDAY 30 OCTOBER
WEEK 4

Kia ora e te whānau,

Last week was quite a ride for our teaching team, and we really appreciate your support on Thursday as many of us in the public sector walked off the job. The media conversation since has, unsurprisingly, been full of mixed messages. It reminded me of our last newsletter about the complexity of teaching. Our communities are diverse, layered, and full of colour. That richness is what gives life to the tapestry of who we are. The complexity of those threads is incredibly important. The last thing we want to do is simplify those threads so much that we end up with a flat, two-tone checkerboard instead of something woven with depth, pattern, and meaning.

Unfortunately, there is a growing belief that if we simplify learning into tidy steps, all children will learn the same way. This idea is influencing the curriculum changes currently being introduced. It is based on parts of neuroscience being taken without the cultural and developmental context needed to understand them. The two pieces of science the Minister refers to as the "Science of Reading" are how the brain moves information into long-term memory and orthographic mapping, which helps us store letter-sound patterns. These processes are real and important, but knowing how to sound out a word is not the same as understanding it.

Here's a simple example. The Minister recently celebrated "improved reading results" from a phonics test. But the test measured sound recognition and recall, not comprehension. Many of us can read this whakataukī from our, New Zealand Curriculum | Te Mātaiaho, aloud:

Mātai aho tāhūnui, Mātai aho tāhūroa, Hei takapau wānanga e hora nei.

Most of us can decode the words of the whakataukī, but not everyone will understand the meaning. Meaning-making is where true learning lives. It does not move in straight lines or tidy levels. It grows through our identity, our whānau, our reo, and our relationships. It is the richness and spice of learning that gives colour, texture, and life to the tapestry.

This is the part that has been removed from the newly released curriculum: the parts that honour diversity, inclusion, community, partnership, belonging, and the complexity of who we are. Those threads matter. They are what make learning real, human, and connected. The name Te Mātaiaho was gifted to our New Zealand Curriculum with purpose and intent. 'Mātai' means to study deliberately, examine, and observe, and 'aho' describes the many strands and threads of learning. When we remove those rich threads we are no longer upholding the meaning of the name or the gift it represents.

And so, no matter what changes at a national level, here at Apanui we will continue to teach and lead in ways that honour the whole child – their culture, their identity, their voice, and their mana.

Ngā mihi maioha,
Whaea Mārama
Tumuaki - Apanui School

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday 31 October - Halloween Disco
Tuesday 4 November - Apanui Athletics Day
Thursday 6 November - Science Roadshow
Friday 7 November - School assembly hosted by Takapū (postponed from this week)
Thursday 11 November - Interschool Athletics
Friday 12th December - Prizegiving at Whakatāne Highschool and Last day of School for 2025



STAY IN TOUCH

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CRAFTY CORNER FROM PIWAKAWAKA

OUR FRIDA KAHLO PORTRAITS

As part of Book Week, our class learned about the famous Mexican artist Frida Kahlo. Frida is well known for her colorful self-portraits, her love of flowers, and the way she expressed her feelings through art.

We looked closely at her paintings and talked about what made her art so special. The children then created their own Frida Kahlo portraits using pencil and crayon. They decorated bright floral borders on black paper with pastels and added beautiful flowers to Frida's hair to complete their work.

During Book Week, our teacher even dressed up as Frida! It was a fun and inspiring way to celebrate creativity, self-expression, and the joy of art.



BRAIN TEASER

Last weeks answer: The horse's name was Friday

Q. You're driving a city bus. At the first stop, three women get on. At the second stop, one woman gets off and a man gets on. At the third stop, two children get on. The bus is blue and it's snowing outside in December. What color is the bus driver's hair?

A. Check the next edition of Ake Runga for the answer!



LOCKDOWN DRILL

Apanui School are having a lockdown drill on Friday (tomorrow) during the school day. This is so we all know what to do in case of a real emergency.

