

The makings of a brilliant principal

EDITORIAL

By INDIA GADDES, ISABELLA BOYLE and KATE BAXTER

PUBLIC schools are in the middle of perhaps the most unprecedented series of changes in the history of education in this country.

From Gonski to new syllabuses in every key learning area, principals are navigating rough water. But what makes a good principal?

Being a principal of a public school can be incredibly challenging, rewarding, stressful, busy and complicated. To be a good principal you have to have high energy, always try to improve student outcomes and most importantly you have to be a good listener.

To become a principal, you have to be a great teacher, have university qualifications and understand people, listen to problems and have a love of learning.

Principals need to be understanding but strict. They need to be helpful to students, teachers and parents when they are in need.

Problems principals may have to deal with on a day-to-day basis include bullying, student misdemeanours, finances, attendance,

staff conflicts and complaints from teachers or parents.

Beyond this, Ian Graham, principal of Eleebana Public School, said that his daily business also included planning for students, teachers and parents. He stressed that effective principals need to organise their time and always be fair to people with problems.

Perhaps the hardest part of the job is to give a message that some people don't want to hear, such as to a student who has been bullying a peer or to a teacher who is not meeting expectations; but good principals have this skill.

Mr Graham said the reason he wanted to become a principal was to make a difference.

This includes listening, trying to understand problems, determining if anyone has been hurt, counselling and helping others to find ways to fix problems.

Principals have to be organised and have to be willing to engage with whoever walks into the school or off the street.

Thank you to all the wonderful principals in the community, such as Ian Graham, who last Saturday was awarded the NSW Federation of P&C Department of Education and Communities Employee of the Year for his outstanding commitment to students, parents and community.

In a school of 560 students, he knows every name and family.



TALK: John McDonald prepares for the regional final of the NSW Multicultural Public Speaking Competition. Picture: Sean Hayes

Giving a voice to immigrants

By SEAN HAYES

SPEAKING out against racism, bullying, harassment and inappropriate treatment of refugees are important skills for all Australians.

The NSW Department of Education and Communities supports the development of these skills through its annual Multicultural Perspectives Public Speaking Competition for students in years 3 to 6. Students speak on a range of topics including: What is un-Australian, racist jokes aren't funny, multiculturalism at school and refugees.

For the first time, Eleebana Public School has entered and with some success. Year 5 student John McDonald won his zone final of the

competition, and gained a place in the Hunter Region Final, to be held on August 22.

When asked about his success in the competition so far, John reflected that his topic pondering the question of when migrants become Australian had engaged his audience and made them think about their beliefs.

He reflected that his path to the regional final, that had included a school speak-off and zone final, had been demanding, but he was looking forward to the challenge.

The regional final will include an impromptu speech for which he only has five minutes to prepare.

"My only goals are to do my best and represent the school."

Don't forget the popcorn at Spotlight

By CHARLOTTE WARD, CHELSEA COOK and LEXI SHELDRICK

THE cameras are rolling at Eleebana Public School, with preparations in full swing for the school's 20th annual production, *Spotlight*.

This year's theme is "At the Movies". The production features class, band, dance and choir items around the movie theme during the first half of the performance and then a full-scale production of *Aladdin Junior* featuring year 6 for the second act.

Aladdin Junior brings Disney's famous and much-loved *Aladdin* movie to life again on stage. In the city of Agrabah, Aladdin, a kind street urchin, falls in love with Princess Jasmine. Aladdin, with a little help from a zany genie, fights to win Jasmine's love.

Production director and creative and performing arts teacher Sallie Dezius said every student enjoys and participates in *Spotlight*.

"Learning all the words, songs and choreography is a challenge for the children but really builds self-esteem and confidence," Mrs Dezius said.

This year's performance is shaping as the biggest and best yet.

Everyone is welcome to come along on September 11 and 12 at the Newcastle Panthers Auditorium.



Cartoon: Amelia Taylor

Firecrackers go off with a winning bang

By EMILY DAVIS, MACKENZIE SHORTLAND, EMMA NEWTON and MIA CURRAN

AEROBICS is a high-intensity sport that integrates choreographed dance routines with high-energy music. It is great fun and fitness.

This year, Eleebana Public School entered its inaugural team into the world of aerobics competition.

In an amazing effort, they travelled to the NSW state titles in June and placed first in their division. The team of 10 girls

and their dedicated coach, kindergarten teacher Sarah Meehan, are now preparing for the National titles in Queensland this month.

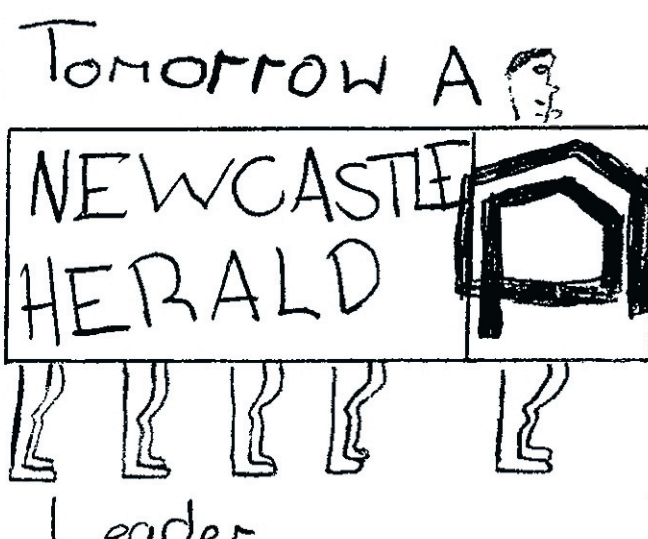
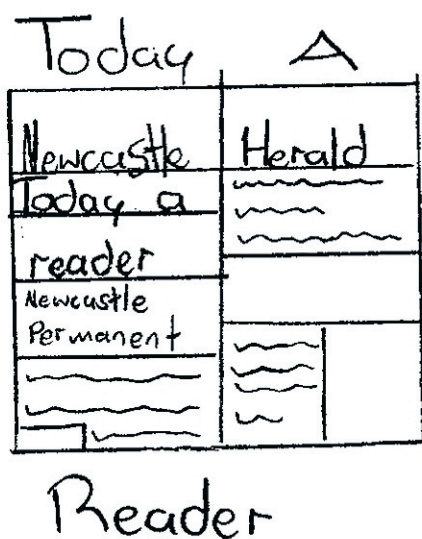
Thinking ahead to the nationals, Ms Meehan said she had her fingers crossed that the girls weren't over-awed by the occasion and didn't get too nervous.

Team members were all looking forward to the finals and making new friends.



SKY HIGH: Eleebana's aerobics team prepares for the national championships. Picture: Kate Baxter

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