April 25 ANZAC Day Public Holiday
April 26 Merrimac Mini Marathon
April 29 Starbound Dance Eisteddfod

May 2 Labour Day Public Holiday
May 3 Year 7 & 8 Immunisations

Our recent Parent Teacher Evening provided a great opportunity for parents to understand the demands of the subjects studied by their son/daughter. It also gave teachers an insight into the individual student's needs and family circumstance. Nearly 700 interviews were conducted on the evening with both parents and teachers expressing high degrees of satisfaction. Teachers were keen to provide advice on what action could be taken to improve the student's overall success at school. After speaking with many parents on the night, I know parents greatly appreciated the advice from teachers. This partnership between teachers and parents always delivers great rewards for the student.

At all our Enrolment Evenings, I outline to new parents the importance of students developing new friendships and growing strong, healthy relationships amongst as many other students as possible. I emphasise the importance of activities such as a school camp and team sports for developing this relationship.
**OPEN BOYS RUGBY LEAGUE SHOW DOWN**

A thrill 13 will go down in my coaching career as one of the highlights I will remember forever. The Open Boys Rugby League Team made up of Soccer, Basketball, Union and Touch players represented our school with pride and passion in the first round of the Titans Cup Challenge. This team was thrown together on the day with these boys committed to fulfil their commitment of representing Merrimac State High School in this prestigious competition.

The boys were up against playing one of the heavy weights, St Michaels, who had won the 2015 competition. This did not deter our boys; they took the field full of confidence and enthusiasm and scored the first try of the match. Well lead by our inspirational captain Zayden Martin, the boys fought like any skill, readers need to practice reading to become good at it and fast at it. If your student says they have no homework tonight, why not get them to read – read anything every night for 20 minutes is a good start, and once the habit is established, they will learn to love it!

Karen Farrow
Deputy Principal

The boys allowed the opposition to go into the half time break leading 12-4.

In the second half both teams battled it out with bruising defence and side line to side line attack. Our boys fought to the end and the opposition knew they would have to produce some miracle plays to break our rock solid defense. They took to the air to score two tries against the run of play to run out eventual winners. I am very proud to have taken on the role of guiding you through the rest of the competition. Thank you very much, imagine what we will be like with a few training runs under our belt. I have recruited two secret weapons for the rest of the season, Mr Gibbons and Ms Cassell.

David Maccoll
Coach

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

**PRINCIPAL’S MESSAGE**

Karen Farrow
Deputy Principal

Our recent Year 7 camp was an outstanding success for the students that attended. However, with only 50 of the 160 students attending we have undertaken a review of what contributed to such low numbers.

While parents saw the importance of the camp, price was the determining factor. We are now looking for other more affordable options, that still meet our development needs, to be offered in 2017.

Chris Tobin
Principal

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**DEPUTY’S DIALOGUE**

**KAREN FARROW**

All students at Merrimac SHS are offered English lessons matched to their ability to ensure they develop successfully as independent readers, writers and speakers. Research shows that better readers become better learners. Effective readers are ultimately successful in all curriculum areas as they can ‘make sense’ of information in print form, often called ‘text’ form. Merrimac SHS has both a Head of Department in English (Ms Kylie Wilson) and a Head of Department in Reading (Mrs Debbie Nelson) and a Reading Coach (Mrs Louise Cullen) who work together to provide expert reading curriculum, teaching and resources for students. Our school has adopted the Tactical Teaching of Reading program as a whole school approach to improving literacy, particularly student reading comprehension.

Merrimac SHS students who experience difficulty with reading may also be offered support in Junior Secondary tutorials (coordinated by Mrs Marnie Costello) or in one-on-one reading tuition as part of our Multi-Lit Program (coordinated by Miss Ellie McGahey, Miss Hayley Cassell and Mrs Sophie Politakis). It is well known that students who reinforce reading at school with reading at home, will ultimately become better readers. Often, parents ask what they can do at home to support their child’s reading at school. As students read, reading processes take place before, during and after reading. Before they read a story or information, students need to ‘make connections’ by activating their background knowledge of a topic. During reading, students need to understand the vocabulary used and check that they are understanding the information given. After reading any text, students need to question what they have read and process the information to make sense of it. Successful readers intuitively draw upon a range of strategies such as adjusting their reading rate, predicting what is to come next, connecting information with what they already know and ‘self-questioning’ when confronted by challenging texts. Good readers eventually become very skilled at knowing the purpose of a piece of writing, being able to identify the vocabulary, language style and structure of the writing and in reading fluently. As I said before, like any skill, readers need to practice reading to become good at it and fast at it. If your student says they have no homework tonight, why not get them to read – read anything every night for 20 minutes is a good start, and once the habit is established, they will learn to love it!

Karen Farrow
Deputy Principal

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**YEAR 10 LEGAL FOUNDATIONS**

Our International students got to spend a great day at the Dreamworld theme park on Friday 15th April. The students had a fantastic time riding all of the big roller coasters and making themselves green. They were also able to visit the park on Friday 15th April. The students had a fantastic time riding all of the big roller coasters and making themselves green. They were also able to visit the park on Friday 15th April.

Joanna Filmer
HOD LOTE

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**DREAMWORLD EXCURSION**

**JUNIOR SECONDARY**

Highlighting the Junior Secondary students’ achievements and news headlines

Towards the end of Term 1, Year 10 Legal Foundations students caught the tram and took a trip to Southport. The purpose of this trip was to witness real live cases at the Southport District Law Courts. It was a busy morning at the courts and whilst students felt a little nervous moving through the different courtrooms they were amazed at just how busy and how many ‘wrongful/criminal’ acts were needing to be addressed. Their first hand observation of the courts and court-room personnel at work has left a lasting impression. It has provided a meaningful teaching experience and resource.

Lisa Cowdroy
HOD Education/IT

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In our Junior Secondary LOTE, Ms Napoles has introduced a new fun element to her teaching practice this term. It is based on the use of a story in the language being learnt by the students. There is one main character within the story. This main character is played by one of the students and he or she is identified by wearing the black curly wig! This introduces an element of fun into the classroom and the students are responding really well to this style of learning. The teacher uses this practice so that students have to listen to the spoken language and respond. Therefore all of their skills are being addressed throughout the process, and written work consolidates their understanding.

We are really happy to see such great learning going on in our LOTE classrooms.

Jeanna Filmer
HOD LOTE

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I awoke on Tuesday morning to the sound of storms and forced myself to think positively. As I drove to school I glanced repeatedly at the sky, willing the clouds to thin and the sun to make an appearance because the field study must go on!

And so began one of the highlights of our Senior Biology program - Year 12 Camp, where students spent two days working with teachers from the Jacobs Wall Environmental Education Centre (JWEEC) to conduct coastal field study activities in the northern Gold Coast.

Thankfully the rain ended quickly and we enjoyed beautiful weather as we made our way to South Stradbroke Island and Wavebreak Island, where we conducted dune studies and snorkelled to gather data on the Gold Coast Seaway. We trawled for plankton on the way back - which we analysed with tired eyes later that evening prior to toasting marshmallows by the camp fire.

Day 2 dawned warm and bright and we made our way deep into the mangrove reserves of Jacob's Well. Learning about the importance of mangroves and interdependence of organisms in coastal ecosystems. No one was exempt from negotiating the dense growth of mangrove trees or the ankle-deep mud, whilst trying desperately to avoid sinking knee-deep into hidden mud crab holes (a feat which no one achieved).

This was my second Biology camp at Merrimac SHS. I was awed by how knowledgeable and passionate the JWEEC teachers are about environmental education. Our students' behaviour and work ethic was exemplary; they approached each task with a positive attitude and we managed to have a lot of fun in spite of an intense schedule. I am sure that the students and I will remember this experience for many years to come.

Please contact me if you would like further information about Science @ Merrimac SHS.

Anjuli Dillon
HOD Science

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

The Instrumental music department is pleased to welcome two new teachers in 2016. Mrs Ricket has joined to teach strings; violin, viola, cello and double bass and Miss Winter joins Mrs Deb and Mr Mitchell in teaching woodwind, brass and percussion instruments.

Our performance groups are conscientiously rehearsing for upcoming events in this term, with the concert band performing in our first event, the ANZAC Day ceremony being held on 22 April 2016.

Another performance opportunity we are involved in is Fanfare. This is a state-wide competition where ensembles compete to be a representative from our district to perform in finals at a later time in the year. Our percussion ensemble, concert band and stage band will be performing on Tuesday the 24th of May, so instrumental students are asked to please keep this date in mind and attend all rehearsals.

Percussion ensemble (rehearsal times are Wednesday morning tea), concert band and stage band (both rehearsing after school on Tuesdays) will be leaving school on a bus around lunchtime on Tuesday 24 May to perform in Fanfare. As the groups finish after school time we are asking parents to please pick up their children from Upper Coomera State College at the completion of the performances.

The instrumental music workshop in Week 10 of Term 1 helped greatly in consolidating the groups and despite the fact that many students were absent due to conflicting commitments, the day was a great success. We are hoping that rehearsals are fully attended in the future by all members so that the best possible results are achieved.

A big thank you goes out to parents and instrumental music students for their ongoing support and commitment to the instrumental music department as we ensure an enjoyable and productive start to the year.

Craig Mitchell
Instrumental Music Teacher

SCIENCE @ MERRIMAC SHS

Jacob’s Well Learning about the importance of mangroves and interdependence of organisms in coastal ecosystems. No one was exempt from negotiating the dense growth of mangrove trees or the ankle-deep mud, whilst trying desperately to avoid sinking knee-deep into hidden mud crab holes (a feat which no one achieved).

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Please contact me if you would like further information about Science @ Merrimac SHS.

Anjuli Dillon
HOD Science

Remainder…

All vocation, employment and/or training programs are advertised directly to Year 10-12 student school email accounts. We recommend that students check their inboxes mid-week and weekends – keep the emails and attachments of those opportunities they wish to apply for or enquire about, delete those that are not relevant to their pathway plans.

School based Apprenticeship and Vocation Education and Training Resources can be found on our website or by CLICKING HERE.

Rachel Skrabanich
Industry Liaison Officer
rskra1@eq.edu.au

Effort & Determination Reap Rewards

“Good, better, best. Never let it rest. Until your good is better and your better is best.” ~ Tim Duncan

Kool Kids Training College School based Traineeships

Year 10-11 Students looking at career pathways in childcare, early childhood education, au pair and recreation programs for children may wish to prepare an expression of interest for this program. Please refer to your student email accounts for details.

Australian Defence Force Academy Information Night

Year 11 Students and parents only

18 April 2016 at 6pm
Defence Force Recruiting Office Ground Floor, 14 Edgewater Court Robina Qld 4226 RSVP by calling 131901

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NOTICE BOARD

Stay informed about what’s happening around our school

Host Families Wanted

Merrimac SHS has a long history of hosting international students and we are looking for families to join our community as a homestay family. All you need to do is provide a warm, supportive environment, a separate bedroom and three meals a day.

Host families are people who like to experience different cultures and traditions.

Host families are continually supported by our international staff and a placement fee of $272 per week per student is paid to cover food and expenses.

For further information please contact our Homestay Coordinator Kim Norfolk 55 95 8612 | knorf6@eq.edu.au

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