



Principal News – June 2024

Westgarth Idol wrap

What struck me on Saturday night, is that it is 'community' that makes our school so special. There are not many schools that enjoy what we have. The sense of connection, belonging, acceptance and safety is strong. While the order of the night is fun with the side benefit of some fundraising, the best part of Idol, aside from the talent on stage, is coming together and this is an important factor in the health and wellbeing of our school community. Brene Brown says *"Connection is the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgement; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship"*. So, without this sounding too philosophical, I think that Idol plays a really important role of building connection and provides a great opportunity to fulfil the desire to buy and wear sequins and glitter without feeling self-conscious!

As for the performances, this year's Idol didn't disappoint, apart from the fact that the staff were too slow to get their act together! As MC Tony Wilson so kindly shared with the audience, it did make me feel my age as many of the songs were new to me! A huge thanks to the following people for their work on Idol: **Sam Hooper**, who with the band transposed, learnt, and rehearsed many songs over many hours. Thanks also to 'Team Idol' **Amy Greetham** and **Lucy Davidson** for organising everything to do with the event, liaising with the contestants, venues, school office staff, volunteers, donors, raffle, and organising the ticketing, stage management, etc. Thanks to our host with the most, **Tony Wilson** Idol MC. To our very talented **The Idol Band** for giving their time and musical talents to keep the vibe alive on stage: **John Carr** – Guitar & Keyboards, **Felicity Williams** - Flute, **Susanna Venn** - Clarinet & Acoustic Guitar, **Tim Williams** – Drums, **Matt Stringer** – Bass, **Guus Hoevenaars** – Guitar, **Daimon Brunton** – Trumpet, **Jess Mahler** – Sax, **Cam Lobb** – Trombone, **Cam Macklin** – Guitar & Vocals.



Thanks to photographer **Dan Mahon** and **Marcel Aucar** for the brilliant photography and **Tim Burgess** for capturing all the evidence in live action. And a big thanks to our volunteers for helping on the door, selling raffle tickets, chaperoning talent for photos, token counting and heaps more... **Amy Hubbard**, **Crispin Butteriss**, **Sam Surka**, **Jessica Friedman**, **Danielle Le Brocq**, **Lucy Yeo**, **Alex Scheikowski**, **Henry Davidson**, **Nathan Myhill**, **Elliot Leib**, **Dougal Hunt**, and **Paul Jones**.

To our merry band of singers and groovers, each act was amazing. Thank you for your interest, time and bravery providing the competition and entertainment on the night. Congratulations to the 2024 winners of the Golden Microphone, 'Schoolio' for their rendition of Gangsta's Paradise; Kellie Byrne, Sarah Cush, Claire Moore, Julia Bearzatto, Steve Bearzatto, Andrew Greig, Rachel Delaney, Kerry Angelin, and Raphaella Maffei. And finally, to everyone who supported the event by donating to the raffle, coming along to the show, and for buying the raffle tickets. Thanks to those Idols who are leaving the Westgarth shores this year. You will be missed.

Special thanks to our sponsors: Fitstop Northcote, Treasury Wine Estates, Allpress Espresso, A Day on the Green, The Northern Ball, and Maternal & Infant Wellbeing Melbourne. Please be sure to thank them for their donation when you support their businesses.

That's a wrap for 2024 and now performers (current and new) can start focussing on their 2025 acts!

Open Morning Monday 24 June

Parent/Teacher Interviews Thursday 27 June

Families are invited to attend our open morning (8.45 – 9.15am) on Monday 24 June, to look at their child's classroom and workbooks, ahead of the parent/teacher interviews. There will be no assembly on that morning. Parent/Teacher Interviews will be happening on Thursday 27 June (*in addition, Year 6 classes will*

also have interview times available on Friday 28 June in the morning). Thursday will be a pupil-free day and OSHC will offer curriculum day care on that day. Interviews will be via WebEx. Details will be sent via Compass to make a booking.

NB: 5 Lara and Prep Vicky will have interviews at different dates as communicated via Compass directly with the families of students in those classes. It will still be a pupil free day for them on 27th.

Education Week – Spotlight on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths)

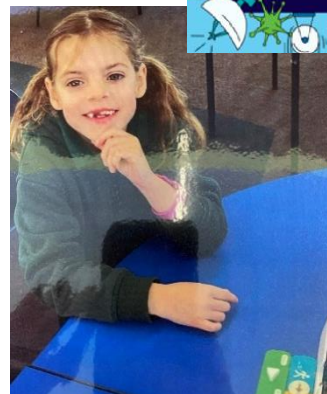
We celebrated Education Week this year with a variety of STEM activities. I would like to thank the many people who came together to celebrate and spotlight science and technology with and for our students. Parents and staff contributed to an array of science, technology, and mathematics opportunities throughout the week and at the Super Science Night. The primary school science curriculum is broad and covers many concepts at the different year levels. At Westgarth our students participate in a unit of science for one term each year as well as our year 3 – 6 students having a dedicated Robotics/Technology specialist class each week. Talking to our students has highlighted the perception that we do not teach enough science but when we dig deeper, students often view chemical science as science and other areas of science such as biological, earth and space, and physical sciences as inquiry topics, not science. It is obvious we have some work ahead of us to change that understanding. As a mother of a mathematician and a fire ecologist, I appreciate how important it is for our students to embrace the sciences, after all our future depends on it.



Parents & students playing maths games at the year 2 open morning.

Education week - Robotics

To celebrate Education Week's theme of 'Spotlight on STEAM', Prep, 1, and 2 classes participated in a robotics and coding session. Students rotated among various stations, experiencing activities such as controlling SPHERO Bolt and Indi cars and exploring block coding using OSMO coding kits. They had a great time.



Basting St crossing

The school has been informed the School Crossing Supervisor Jeff, will be on duty at the Bastings Street crossing from 8:15am to 9:15am and again from 3:10pm to 4pm. He is not available Wednesday mornings and all-day Thursdays. Darebin Council have advised they are short staffed but always recruiting and training new people to fill these rolls. Due to the shortage of staff, the Bastings Street issue may not be fixed for some time.

We ask that families remind students to be diligent on the days Jeff is not on duty when crossing Bastings Street. Please contact Darebin Council direct if you require any further information.

High Achieving students

Classroom teaching and learning programs at Westgarth are differentiated to cater for the needs of our students. This includes setting tasks to challenge our high achievers. This term we have also offered some additional opportunities for our high-achieving senior school students, supported by Department of Education Student Excellence funding. This included an excursion to the 100 Story Building in Footscray to challenge our talented writers, where students engaged in a 'Choose Your Own Adventure' workshop. In the session students were supported to compose an original story using several parallel possibilities to focus on the reader-author relationship. They were also scaffolded with techniques to create dramatic tension and best engage an audience.



In addition, our Year 6 'Math-magicians' also attended an excursion to Metro Tunnel HQ in the CBD. This provided the group with exclusive access to the visitor centre, where they were able to gain an understanding of the engineering challenges of the Metro Tunnel project. Students also engaged in the 'Voluminous Matters' workshop, where they were challenged to calculate the volume of cubes and cylinders using real-world data.



Mental Health Fund

There are many ways in which we address student mental health and wellbeing at school. Much of our focus here is Westgarth is our whole of school approaches such as The Berry St Education Model and aspects of School Wide Positive Behaviour model. We also implement year level specific programs such as UR Strong for year 3, Stride and Melbourne Victory for year 5 and Life Changer for year 6. The Department of Education provide schools with funding to support the implementation of some of these. We have also employed an occupational therapist and speech therapy to run small group sessions and



assist teachers. Something new that has been introduced this year is Reading Dogs which is a trained therapy dog that students can read a book to. So, meet Molly our newest and cutest mental health tool! She is coming in weekly to support some reluctant readers in yr 2.

Thank you!

Thank you to the parents who responded to our requests for keeping sick children at home. We had a peak of illness early in the term which was concerning on several levels. It is difficult to manage staff absences as a severe shortage of casual relief teachers continues to impact schools. We have had to resort to reallocating staff and splitting classes to cover multiple absences in the same day. If we can provide some protection to staff by reducing their contact with student illnesses, we will be better placed as to weather the winter colds and flu season.

School Council Report – May meeting – Darren Boyd (School Council President)

The last School Council meeting was held onsite at 7pm on Wednesday 15 May.

Principal's Report – Topics discussed: Staffing updates, Annual Report for 2023 and AGM date, illness in the school and the professional learning staff have been doing in mathematics, and teaching and learning.

Finance – The Finance Committee meet monthly to discuss the previous month's financials. Detailed financial reports are provided to committee members for review and discussion. The committee is happy to report that our positive cash flow allows us to meet our financial budget commitments for both revenue and expenditure. We have welcomed our new Business Manager into the school, Glenn Fischmann. Glenn started at the start of term two.

Environment – The environment subcommittee met on 8 May. We discussed the schedule of work for the new gym/classroom building and the enormous amount of works we have completed in physical school improvement over the past 10 years.

OSHC – We hope that all families are enjoying our Term 2 club programs and their time at OSHC. We would love to hear any feedback from students and families about the OSHC program – please share it directly with our educators or try out our new suggestion box! Stay tuned for details about the exciting programs we have planned for our next curriculum day on 27 June. When bookings open, be quick to avoid disappointment!

Education – no meeting

Fun & Fundraising – please refer to the FaF news that was sent out after the Super Science Club – Spotlight on STEM night.

Next meeting dates:

Education	Tuesday TBC @ 7pm WebEx
OSHC	Wednesday TBC @ 10am WebEx
Finance	Thursday 13 June @ 10.00am WebEx
Environment	Wednesday 12 June @ 8.00am Jo's Office
Fun & Fundraising	Monday 15 July @ 8.00pm online
School Council	Wednesday 19 June @ 7.00pm Staffroom or Library

If you would like to join a sub-committee, please contact the office so we can pass on your details to the convenors of the sub-committees so you can receive the correspondence and meeting invites.

Jo Wheeler
Principal