

Principal's memo - May 2026

Kia ora koutou

There have been many announcements made recently relating to education which may have caused some discussion and/or debate in the community. So I thought I would reach out to you and explain what plans MHJC has as we navigate these changes. I have also included a brief update on our progress towards achieving the targets set by the government relating to attendance and achievement.

### **Curriculum reviews:**

The Ministry has signalled a move to a more “**knowledge rich**” curriculum with a focus on knowledge and skills. We will continue to provide the foundations for our students to succeed at senior college while ensuring the content is delivered in a way which will engage and interest our students, see connections between subjects and have authentic, real world outcomes.

### **Assessment:**

The Ministry has introduced a new **SMART** assessment tool for reading, writing and mathematics. We chose to continue with e-asTTle this year to ensure that the new assessment tool can be used with confidence in 2027. This gives us another year to be able to use comparative data to inform our planning and teaching and to integrate the new descriptors into our assessment model.

### **Reporting:**

We will continue to provide a **holistic** report to parents which provides *progress and achievement* data across all subjects; *engagement* data which includes attendance, punctuality, involvement and excellence in our extra curricular activities and has a special element about how our students are *living our values*.

By 2027 we will be using new **progress descriptors** for all subjects but only for English and Maths in 2026. We are using this year as an opportunity to align the new curriculum with our assessment model and the new reporting statements.

 Reporting-to-Parents-Info-Sheets-Whats-Changing-10-04-2026 (1).pdf

## **New qualifications:**

Much discussion in the media has focused on the replacement of NCEA by the Foundational Skills Award in Year 11, New Zealand Certificate of Education (NZCE) in Year 12 and New Zealand Advanced Certificate of Education (NZACE) in Year 13.

While these changes are more applicable to senior colleges we have started consultation with Ormiston Senior College about how we can best prepare students for the new Year 11 qualification which will have a strong focus on literacy and numeracy. Currently there is very little information about what this qualification will look like but we are confident that our students will be well prepared as we have provided specialist subject teaching from Year 7-10 since the school was opened.

We will continue to offer students in 2026 the opportunity to gain their co-requisites in reading, writing and mathematics. These are required in order to achieve Level 2 or Level 3 qualifications (many of our Year 10 students wrote these last week). This may change in 2027 depending on whether senior colleges will only be able to offer corequisites in Year 11 and not in Year 10.

We will also continue to offer NCEA Achievement Standards this year but stop in 2027.

 [Media info sheet - New senior secondary final.pdf](#)

## **National targets**

### **Literacy and numeracy**

We are well on track to reach the targets of 80% of our Year 7 and 8 students being at or above curriculum levels in reading, writing and mathematics by 2030. Given the high percentage of students whose first language is not English, this is a significant achievement. All our teachers are receiving PD in writing which is our focus for the year as this is an area which lags behind other data at MHJC and across all schools.

### **Attendance**

We are also tracking very well towards the target of 80% of our students attending 90% of the school year. Our data for Term 1 was 76% and while in Term 2 we may have more seasonal illnesses we hope to stay in the mid 70s.

My thanks to all our parents who prioritise attendance and punctuality and I also urge parents not to plan overseas travel during term time as this is our biggest cause of unjustified absence.

### **Professional development**

It is obvious that the amount and pace of change would place a heavy load on our teachers. We will be supporting them by providing Professional Development after school and time will also be provided by the Ministry for teacher only days. We thank you for your understanding in advance for the inconvenience these days may cause which we have minimised following feedback from last year and your understanding of the pressure the education sector is under at the moment.

### **Conclusion:**

I hope this brief summary might help parents understand a little better what changes are coming our way and what our plans are.

Meantime I am pleased to say that our commitment to achieving our goals and vision of *growing greatness through innovative, constantly evolving, personalised learning* continues to shine through despite these changes.

I am sure that our community will join me in thanking our staff for their individual and collective efforts. This is a team effort and your support is invaluable.

Kia mana ake - growing greatness!