SUMNER
SCHOOL
Per ardua ad alta

Assessment & Reporting Parent Survey Results Term 1 2018

Executive Summary:

An Assessment and Reporting online survey was shared with our parent community at the end of Term One (opening 28 March and closing on 13 April). With schools no longer required to report on the National Standards we are in the process of reviewing the way we report student progress and achievement at Sumner School. Our parents were asked to give feedback on our existing reporting processes and were given the opportunity to suggest ways that these could be improved.

Thank you to those families who took the time to complete the survey. We received a total of 102 responses from 282 families at Sumner School which (assuming that we received one response per family) constitutes a response rate of approximately 36%. During the survey, respondents were asked questions under three sections: Written Reports, Learning Conferences and Sharing of their child(ren)'s Learning.

Summary of findings - Written Reports:

The results demonstrate that on the whole our parents find the information they currently receive about their children's progress and achievement either 'informative' or 'highly informative'. This was particularly prevalent for the 'General Comment' section of the report, which was most valued with 92% of respondents finding it either 'informative' or 'highly informative'. The section of the written reports that respondents found of least value was 'Other Learning Areas'.

We also asked parents how informative they found the 'how you can help at home' comments. Eighty three percent of respondents stated that they found this 'useful' or 'extremely useful', but that it could be improved if parents and caregivers had access to a range of online resources and practical suggestions to support their child(ren)'s learning.

Summary of findings - Learning Conferences:

In this section questions were focused around the Learning Conferences held at the beginning of the school year. Parents were asked whether Learning Conferences served as a successful vehicle for building relationships between parents, students and teachers and to set learning goals for the upcoming year. Only 55% of respondents felt that the Learning Conferences were a successful vehicle in their current form. Further analysis of these results highlighted a preference to push the beginning of the year Learning Conferences back to Week 5 or 6 to give the teachers more time to get to know the needs of the students in their class and create more meaningful learning goals. There was however, a strong desire to continue to have the opportunity to meet teachers early on in the school year.

Summary of findings - Sharing of child(ren)'s Learning

Parents were asked if they would like to access more of their child(ren)'s learning online. Seventy five percent of respondents stated that they would welcome this opportunity. Approximately 10% of respondents had concerns around this, particularly related to their child(ren)'s digital footprint and the potential for additional workload for teachers having to do this.

Parents were also asked if they would like to access more information about their child(ren)'s progress and achievement online. Seventy one percent of respondents stated that they would like this opportunity. The main concerns for parents who did not wish to view this information online were around digital security and not having enough time to go online to regularly check on their child(ren)'s progress.

Following in depth analysis of the survey results the school is considering the following actions:

Written Reports:
- The greatest priority will be given to the writing of the 'General Comment'
- Continue to prioritise the reporting of child(ren)'s progress and achievement in reading, writing, maths and 'other learning areas'
- With the removal of National Standards, we will now report against the NZ National Curriculum Benchmarks to continue to provide families with a clear understanding of their child(ren)'s attainment
- Remove the "How to help at home" comment from the written report and replace it with a dedicated page on our website that has practical tips and ideas for how parents can help their child(ren)'s learning at home
- Continue to report to parents and caregivers on their child(ren)'s progress and achievement in 'other learning areas,' but develop ways of ensuring reporting is focused on skills and knowledge learned in specific learning areas rather than providing a commentary of experiences
- Continue to report to parents and caregivers on their child(ren)'s 'next learning steps'. To ensure a more personalised 'feel' this will be embedded in the body of the comment and not isolated into bullet points
- Remove the tick boxes for 'learning habits' and ensure that information on children's learning habits are captured in the 'General Comment'

Learning Conferences:
- Consider moving Learning Conferences to week 5 or 6 of Term 1, to allow students time to settle into the year and teachers more time to get to know the students and their needs
- Create a community event that will allow teachers and parents time to connect at the beginning of the school year
- Communicate the format of Learning Conferences more clearly so that parents and caregivers are aware there are five minutes available at the end for discussions without children present
- Develop a template for whānau to complete prior to Learning Conferences which allows them time to consider questions or discussions they would like to have with the teacher at the conference

Sharing Learning:
- Continue to explore safe platforms that provide a means of making learning more visible online without impacting on teacher workload
- Explore approaches for sharing student assessment information online that are safe and do not add to teacher workload
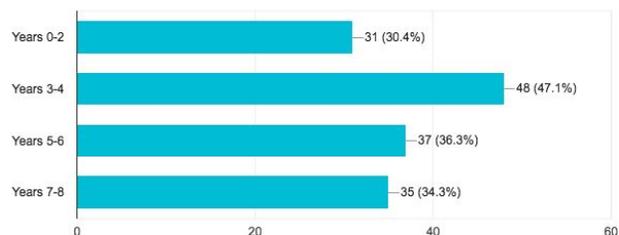
Section 1: Demographics:

How many children do you have at Sumner School?
102 responses

- 1 — 55.9%
- 2 — 32.4%
- 3 — 11.8%
- More than 3
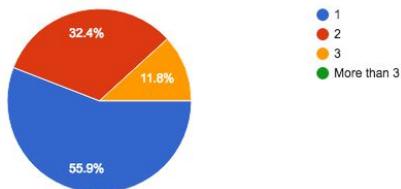
My child(ren) are in;
102 responses

- Years 0-2 — 31 (30.4%)
- Years 3-4 — 48 (47.1%)
- Years 5-6 — 37 (36.3%)
- Years 7-8 — 35 (34.3%)

Section 2: Written Reports

Question 2.1: How informative do you find the 'progress and achievement' comments we provide in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics? How could this be improved?

How informative do you find the 'progress and achievement' comments we provide in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics?
102 responses

- 1 — 2 (2%)
- 2 — 16 (15.7%)
- 3 — 53 (52%)
- 4 — 31 (30.4%)
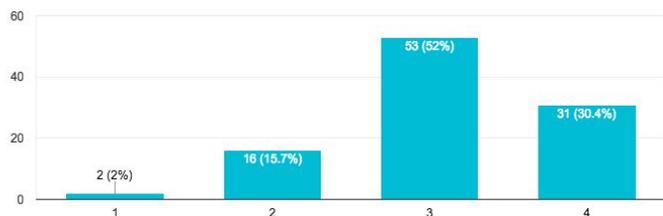
Summary statement:
The results show that 82% of respondents found the progress and achievement comments of the current written reports informative (52%) or extremely informative (30.4%).

Indicative comments for how this could be improved (80 comments received)**:**
"It doesn't need to be as long. I just need to know they are making progress. I don't need to know all the nitty gritty of whether they are putting full stops and capital letters in the right place. I'll know this when I see my children write at home".

"It would be good to know what level they are at even when there are no National Standards just to know if they are particularly strong at something or not as the case may be."

"The key thing for us to understand from this section is whether you as the teacher/school are comfortable with our child's progress and perceive any learning need that requires extra support from us as parents."

Of those respondents who commented the following themes emerged;
- 58% of respondents found the progress reports sufficient in their current form,
- 26% of respondents felt that the comments could be more personalised to their child
- 16% of respondents reported that they would like these comments to directly report their child(ren)'s test results.

Considerations for the future:
- We will continue to report to parents on their child(ren)'s progress and achievement in reading, writing and maths
- With the removal of National Standards we will now report against the NZ National Curriculum Benchmarks to continue to provide families with a clear understanding of their child(ren)'s attainment.

Question 2.2: How informative do you find the 'how you can help at home' comments we provide? How could this be improved?

How informative do you find the 'how you can help at home' comments we provide?
102 responses

1	3 (2.9%)
2	16 (15.7%)
3	55 (53.9%)
4	28 (27.5%)
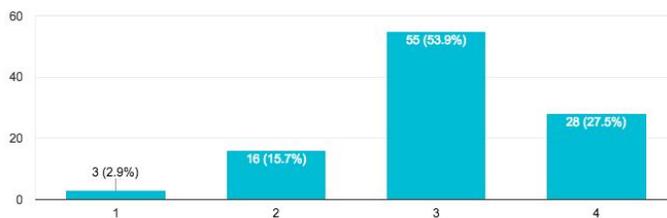
Summary statement:
The results show that 83% of respondents found the 'how we can help at home' comments of the current written reports informative (54%) or extremely informative (28%).

Indicative comments for how this could be improved (72 comments received)**:**

"Some more practical suggestions - games, exercises, literature etc"

"Specific with some resources i.e. online websites etc."

"I don't feel this is report worthy, parents can get this feedback at parent meetings, takes more teacher time including this in reports"

"We are happy with the learning that is happening at school, and feel we are already doing enough at home. However we do read this section to get some ideas."

"... this is better at the Learning Conference when it can be a more inclusive discussion"

Of those who commented the following theme arose;
- A desire for more practical examples (e.g. websites or reading lists) of ways to help their child(ren)

Considerations for the future:
- Remove the "How to help at home" comment from the written report and replace it with a dedicated page on our website that has practical tips and ideas for how parents can help their child(ren)'s learning at home

Question 2.3: How informative do you find the 'next learning steps' comments we provide? How could this be improved?

How informative do you find the 'next learning steps' comments we provide?
102 responses

1	2 (2%)
2	15 (14.7%)
3	55 (53.9%)
4	30 (29.4%)
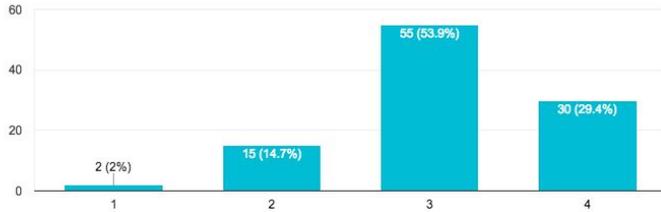
Summary statement:
The results show that 83% of respondents found the 'next learning steps' comments of the current written reports informative (53.9%) or extremely informative (29.4%).

Indicative comments for how this could be improved (48 comments received)**:**

"We appreciate your knowledge of the appropriate developmental steps for our children's learning. It is always good to see what is coming up for them in the future"

"It's good to have a focus on how to progress and build on strengths and develop areas that are more challenging"

"I think it's fine, but there could maybe be a little more 'specific' detail"

Of those comments received the following theme emergred;
● A feeling that the 'next learning steps' comments provided at times lacked personalisation

Considerations for the future:
● We will continue to report to parents and caregivers on their child(ren)'s 'next learning steps,' however to ensure a more personalised 'feel' this will be embedded in the body of the comment and not isolated into bullet points

Question 2.4: How informative do you find the 'other learning area' comments we provide? How could this be improved?

How informative do you find the 'other learning areas' comments we provide?
102 responses

1	4 (3.9%)
2	26 (25.5%)
3	42 (41.2%)
4	30 (29.4%)
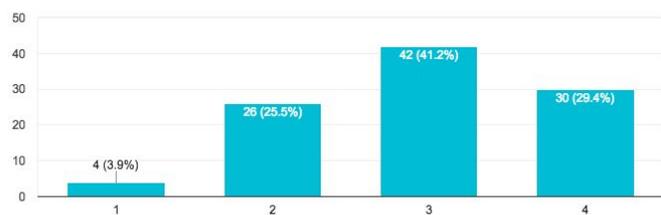
Summary Statement:
The results show that 71% of respondents found the 'other learning areas' comments of the current written reports 'informative' (41.2%) or 'extremely informative' (30%).

This is a noticeably lower percentage than in other sections of the written report, with 29% of respondents reporting that the comments we provide are not particularly informative'.

Indicative comments: (56 comments received)

"Sometimes it is unclear what these 'other learning areas' encompass. Perhaps more information on the different projects that were undertaken and the focus for those projects would be helpful. The comments seem to be very general and it is hard to get a picture of the skills that were developed in these areas. For example, a comment about taking part in a Science Fair does not tell me very much about what was learnt or what skills were developed…"

"This is always very brief and seems to indicate that these are not areas of much interest; it is as if these are deemed less valuable and are less addressed in learning than other areas and this is a weakness."

"I like to read some comments that apply only to my child not generic ideas that are in other kids reports"

Of the comments received the following themes emerged;
- A feeling that comments around 'other learning areas' needed to be more personalised around what their child(ren) have learnt, instead of providing a commentary of activities they have participated in

Considerations for the future:
- We will continue reporting to parents and caregivers on their child(ren)'s progress and achievement in 'other learning areas,' but will develop ways of ensuring reporting is focused on skills and knowledge learned in specific learning areas rather than providing a commentary of experiences

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Question 2.5: How informative do you find the 'learning habits' section we provide? How could this be improved?

How informative do you find the 'learning habits' section we provide?
102 responses
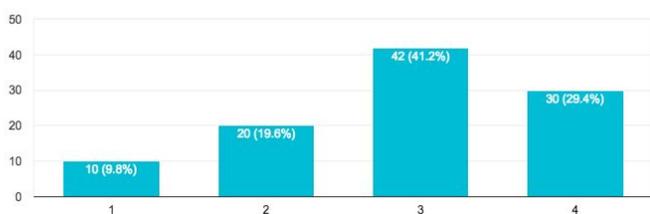
Summary Statement:
The results show that 70% of respondents found the 'learning habits' comments of the current written reports informative (41.2%) or extremely informative (29.4%).

Similar to the responses we received in the 'other learning areas' section of the written reports, a larger percentage (19.6%) of respondents indicated that they found this information not particularly informative.

Indicative comments:

"Keep the report simple, all the boxes ticked and separate comments is time consuming and not helpful. I just want to know what she is good at what needs some serious work and how she fits into the classroom as a whole and her social skills".

"I feel this gets covered in general comments in a more personal way".

"I would like to see it linked into the general comment to make it more personal"

Of the comments received the following theme emerged;

- While the tick boxes provided information to parents on their child(ren)'s learning habits, they felt that they lacked personalisation and would be more meaningful as part of the 'General Comment'

Question 2.6: How informative do you find the 'General Comment' we provide? How could this be improved?

How informative do you find the 'general comment' we provide?
102 responses
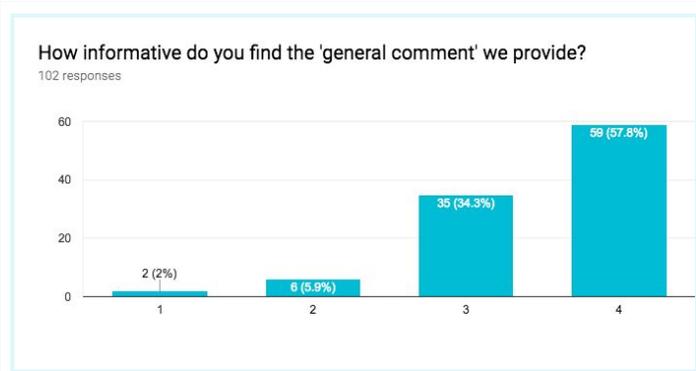
Summary Statement:
The results show that 92% of respondents found the 'General Comments' in the current written reports informative (57.8%) or extremely informative (34.3%).

The results illustrated that this section of the written report is clearly the most valued by parents.

Indicative Comments: (73 comments)

"This is by far the most important section and often the one I will read first as it provides the best overview. As a parent, I very much appreciate it when this section has been completed with obvious care and thought and the teacher writes something that really shows they have taken the time to understand my child as an individual. This is done by most teachers FANTASTICALLY."

"I think this is the most important part of my child's report. I do not want to know as much about their literacy and numeracy progress as I do about how they are progressing in their "key competencies" or with their well-being at school. If they are not developing their key competencies/progressing in this area then all other learning areas suffer, so it is important for me to know a lot about this."

"This part feels personalised to each child and summarises their achievements and potential."

"This is the part I like to read first as it gives the whole picture of the child as seen by the school and teachers. I think this general comment is very relevant now as you are commenting more on Character strengths."

Question 2.7: Please rank the following sections in terms of their importance to you as a parent with 1 being least important and 6 being most important.

Please rank the following sections in terms of their importance to you as a parent with 1 being least important and 6 being most important.
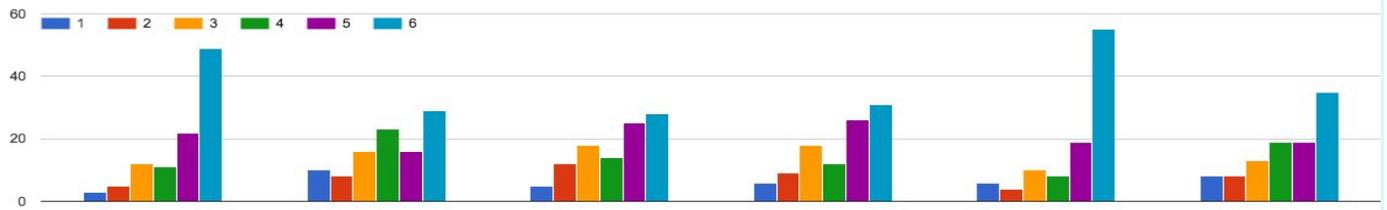
Summary Statement: The results show that the majority of respondents reported that they would rank the sections of the report in the following order of their importance;

1. General Comment and Progress and Achievement comment (on par as most important)
2. Learning habits
3. Other learning areas
4. How you can help at home and Next Learning Steps (on par as least important)

Considerations for the future:
- The greatest priority will be given to the writing of the 'General Comment'
- We will continue to prioritise the reporting of child(ren)'s progress and achievement in reading, writing, maths and 'other learning areas'

Question 2.8: Is there any additional feedback you would like to give us regarding the information you receive within your child(ren)'s written report?

Summary Statement:
The additional feedback reinforced the themes captured above. It also highlighted the appreciation our parents have for the amount of time and effort our teachers put into writing these reports. There was also a feeling that reporting on children)'s progress is more important than achievement. Ultimately our parents want to know if their child(ren) are happy, progressing well and if we have any concerns about their learning.

Indicative Comments:
"The progress is more important than the achievement. The enjoyment of learning is the key."

"I think the teachers at Sumner school create very detailed reports and I appreciate the work put into them. It is always great to read the "general comment" section and be able to really feel like my child's teacher has gotten to know them well. That is the most important thing for me as a parent."

"All I require is to know my child is happy and making progress. I don't need anything more specific than that as I know teachers know what they're doing and should be left to get on with the job. The Learning Conference is where I need to be told if there are any concerns, not on a written report which can date very quickly."

"The more personalised and specific, the better"

"There are a lot of words, and it is a very qualitative assessment. From our perspective we just want to know whether they are progressing well enough for their age and if there are any issues or behaviours that need to be addressed."

Section 3: Learning Conferences

Question 3.1: The purpose of the Learning Conferences within the first two weeks of the school year is to build relationships between parents, students and teachers and to set learning goals for the upcoming year. Do you feel that the Learning Conferences are a successful vehicle in doing this? How could this be improved?

Do you feel that the Learning Conferences are a successful vehicle in doing this?
102 responses

- Yes
- No
- Undecided?

19.6%   25.5%

54.9%
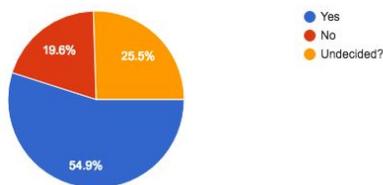
The results show that 55% of participants found the Learning Conferences at the beginning of the year were a good vehicle to build relationships and to set learning goals. However, 19.6% said that Learning Conferences were not an effective vehicle and 25.5% were undecided.

This level of satisfaction would indicate that there is considerable scope for improvement in this area.

Indicative comments: (74 comments)

"I think it's great that the student takes an active role in introducing his/her goals. The booking system is easy and user friendly."

"More prep and input from parent and teacher around learning goal. On the spot questions are not very solid in a lot of cases."

"Would feel it much more informative to have a pop in open night to meet the teacher after a couple of weeks and just a casual how they are settling in chat - maybe just an open classroom from 5 - 6pm and parents pop in to see their child's class, look around, meet the teacher properly and a quick how they are settling in chat. Could even be an open night for the community, open classroom, bring fish and chips to eat on the field - chance to connect with each other?"

"I would like to see the Learning Conference more like week 6/7 when the child has settled in and the teacher can sit down with you and comment on their progress so far, what you can help with at home and share the goals the child has already set with the teacher during those first 7 weeks."

Of those respondents that commented the following themes emerged;
- A feeling that the Learning Conferences were held too early in the year

- The suggestion of hosting a community event at the beginning of the school year that would allow parents to connect with their child(ren)'s teacher(s) in a more informal setting.

Considerations for the future:
- Consider moving Learning Conferences to week 5 or 6 of Term 1, to allow students time to settle into the year and teachers more time to get to know the students and their needs
- Create a community event that will allow teachers and parents time to connect at the beginning of the school year

Question 3.2: Is there any additional information you would like to provide regarding our Learning Conferences?

Summary statement: The responses from this question reiterated the comments above around the timing of Learning Conferences at the beginning of the school year. There were also a number of people who suggested that dedicated time needs to be offered without the child present. This is currently the case as teachers reserve the last five minutes for conversations without their child present. This would imply that we need to communicate this more clearly to parents. It was also suggested that to help prepare for the conference it would be helpful to develop a template/form that could be completed by families prior to the Learning Conferences.

Indicative Comments:
"Perhaps there should be set questions/answers before the conference so we know exactly what to discuss"

"It is great to meet the teacher with these Learning Conferences but it would be more beneficial to meet the teacher once they know more about your child and have had more time to get to know them. Maybe the children and teachers can set the learning goals then later in the first term have Learning Conferences so the parents can see how they are progressing or re-evaluate the learning goals (if you are looking for parent input)."

**Considerations for the future:**
- Communicate the format of Learning Conferences more clearly so that parents and caregivers are aware there are five minutes available at the end for discussions without children present
- Develop a template for whānau to complete prior to Learning Conferences which allows them time to consider questions or discussions they would like to have with the teacher at the conference

Section 4: Sharing of Learning

Question 4.1: Would you like to be able to access some of your child(ren)'s learning online e.g. projects, websites or personalised blogs? Please explain your response.

Would you like to be able to access some of your child(ren)'s learning online e.g. projects, websites or personalised blogs?

102 responses

- Yes
- No
- Undecided

9.8%
15.7%
74.5%
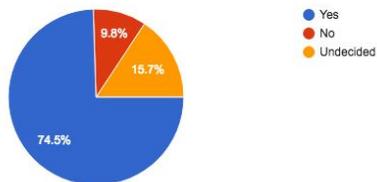
The results show that 74.5% of respondents would like to access some of their child(ren)'s learning online, with 9.8% of respondents stating that they would not like to access their children's learning online and 15.7% of respondents were undecided.

Indicative response for 'Yes' comments:

"I can access some things but would absolutely love to be able to see more to understand what they are talking about and where they are at. They enjoy showing what they have done."

"This is an example of how best to "help at home", parents can sort this alongside the child and not use teacher time to discuss individually."

"Happy to access learning on any platform - it's a good way to be in touch outside the classroom provided it suits the teacher to use these platforms."

Of the 74.5% of respondents that said 'yes' the following themes emerged;
- A feeling that making learning more visible allowed parents and caregivers to feel connected to their child(ren)'s learning
- This would provide authentic means of allowing parents and caregivers to understand their child(ren)'s next steps and help at home
- As learning (particularly in Years 5-8) is becoming more digital there is not as much to see in children's books, so it would be good to be able to access this learning
- A feeling that a lot of this is happening already so it is a natural progression

Indicative response for 'No' comments:

"I like going into school to look at work on a Learning Conference or mornings occasionally (if they have done something to be proud of)."

Of the 10% of respondents that said 'no' the following themes emerged;
- Concerns around too much screen time and a preference around face-to-face interactions.
- Concerns around computer and digital safety

Indicative response for 'Undecided' comments:

"It is nice to see what they are doing, but delivering this just for parents benefits should not impact on the teachers time spent with the children or planning their teaching materials."

"I wouldn't want teacher time lost sharing learning, but if the children can share their own work directly with their parents then that would be positive."

"I generally ask my child to share these with me and sometimes ask the teacher directly."

Of the 15% of respondents that said they were 'undecided', the following themes arose;
- A feeling that it may add to teacher workload

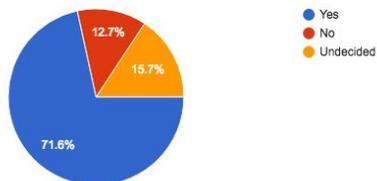| |
|---|
| ● Uncertainty about what this may look like and what might be expected of them as parents |

Considerations for the future: ● Continue to explore safe platforms that provide a means of making learning visible online without impacting on teacher workload

Question 4.2: Would you like to be able to access some of your child(ren)'s progress and achievement data online?	
  Would you like to be able to access some of your child(ren)'s progress and achievement data online? 102 responses ● Yes ● No ● Undecided 12.7% 15.7% 71.6%	The results show that 71.6% of respondents would like to be able to access their child(ren)'s progress and achievement data online. 12.7% of respondents did not want this access and 15.7% were undecided.

Indicative response for 'Yes' comments: "Knowing how they are doing and having an awareness of what we could be practising at home would be useful earlier rather than later" "Big gaps between reporting. Don't want to be ambulance at bottom of cliff. Also want to be able to celebrate achievements!" "Everything is online nowadays. Reports could be collaborative between many teachers and parents and evolving over the year." "It would flag any areas of concern. However I would not want this to add to the teacher's current workload and it would need to work in conjunction with how the teachers already collect this data." Of the 71.6% of respondents that said 'yes' the following themes emerged; ● More convenient way of having their child(ren)'s progress and achievement reported to them ● It would make the reports more meaningful as they would be 'real-time' ● It would provide a better connection between home and school ● It would save paper

Indicative response for 'No' comments:

"This is unnecessary. I don't want to create extra work for busy teachers!"

Of the 12.7% of respondents that said 'no' the following themes emerged;
- Concern around the security of holding student data online
- Concern around the additional workload that this may create for teachers

Indicative response for 'Undecided' comments:
"Only if it didn't increase teachers' workloads too much, as they have enough on their plates as it is"

Of the 15.5% of respondents that were 'undecided' the following themes emerged;
- More information would be needed about what accessing achievement data online might look like to know if it would be useful
- Questions around whether 'unexplained' data reported in isolation would have any relevance for parents and caregivers
- Questions around whether this would add workload for teachers

Considerations for the future:
- Explore approaches for sharing student assessment information online that are safe and do not add to teacher workload.

Summary: Please provide any additional feedback you may have about assessment and reporting at Sumner School.

Summary Statement: A broad range of responses were received in this section with no clear additional themes emerging. The summary section reinforced that our parents are generally satisfied with the quality of information and range of approaches the school provides in reporting their child(ren)'s progress and achievement. However, there are still some opportunities to improve this further.

Indicative comments: (40 comments received)
"I'm more interested in my child being happy, enjoying learning, taking risks and being brave in all areas, and developing a growth mindset and good character. There is and will be a hangover from National Standards which has made us obsessed with levels and where a child is at. This does nothing for learning or for a child's confidence other than fixing their mindset to say they're always going to be good at something, or telling them there's something wrong with them"

"I understand that the current method of reporting is time consuming/onerous to teachers and I am happy for that to change so that our children get more interactive teacher time and are the greater focus. I am pleased to hear from the teacher regarding my child's progress and am happy to receive written comments rather than graphed results. I am less focussed on ranking on a national system, than my child being happy and engaged to learn."

"We really appreciate all the work the teachers put into communicating with us and I feel confident that they would speak with us if there were concerns before any reports or conferences."

"From our experiences with Sumner School to date, we are happy in general with how the assessment of our children's learning is being handled and reported to us. Also, the teachers have always been good about meeting us

to chat about any concerns we have. We are glad to hear that the extra work associated with National Standards reporting has now gone!"

Considerations for the future:
Based on the results of the survey, the school will now make improvements to our assessment and reporting systems, with priority being given to reformatting the written reports in time to be shared with parents at the end of Term 2.