

# Extending High Standards Across Schools

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In this newsletter we update you on the 2008 EHSAS Conference for Round 1 & 2 clusters, and have our regular features, the BES discussion, useful readings, and cluster contributions from Round 3 clusters, Aoraki and FAST TOI, and Round 1 cluster, Remuera.

If you would like to contribute to the EHSAS e-newsletter please e-mail [extending\\_standards@minedu.govt.nz](mailto:extending_standards@minedu.govt.nz) with any information or photographs.

Remember our website is: [www.minedu.govt.nz/qoto/extending](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/qoto/extending) and the EHSAS cluster online network is: [www.virtuallearning.school.nz/ehsas](http://www.virtuallearning.school.nz/ehsas)

## Project Management Team

Sylvia Burch is the Project Manager, Lynda Watson is Senior Advisor and Rebecca Sweeney is Operational Policy Advisor.

Volume 8 | May 2008



## From the Project Manager

Thank you to all those clusters who have submitted their 2007 report. We are providing very thorough feedback this year, which we hope will guide you towards robust discussion and clarity of focus. Alongside that, the team is also out and about visiting clusters. It is always interesting to meet the people behind the programmes, and to share some of the successes and challenges. There is a vigour in the EHSAS community that seems to arise from the stimulus of working together, and it is rewarding to see that energy converted into positive educational outcomes.

Current projects cover a wide spectrum, and it will be exciting at the conference to catch up, through cluster displays and workshops, with the work that is being undertaken by Round 1 and 2 clusters. This work, in turn, needs to be seen within the overarching framework of the new curriculum and the related lenses of Ka Hikitia (the Maori education strategy), the Pasifika Education Plan and Schools Plus.

We have started visiting clusters from Round 3, and it is clear that the same energy and excitement continue in this latest round. You will get that sense from the cluster contributions in this e-newsletter from Round 3 clusters, Aoraki and FAST TOI.

Best wishes,

Sylvia Burch  
Project Manager for EHSAS



## Round 1 & 2 2008 EHSAS Conference

By now, if you are a Round 1 or 2 cluster, you should have received an e-mail from Current Events with a link to the conference registration website. Every cluster is able to bring a group equalling the amount of schools in your cluster, plus one extra (i.e. a cluster of 7 schools = 8 delegates at the conference).

Registrations close on 1 June 2008. Soon after that we will send out a link to all registered delegates so that they can choose their workshops for the conference.

### **Going for Growth** *Building Capacity for Collaborative Professional Learning*

Keynotes and workshops will work with conference delegates on effective cluster collaboration, communication, and leadership. You will look at ways to build on your strategies and skills in these areas and will explore your leadership role within your cluster.

The conference will include practical work around cluster target setting and assessment, how to link your theories to your practice, analysing your leadership role within the cluster and building cluster capacity to enable effective professional development.

Themes were developed from cluster feedback on their own perceived needs and from the EHSAS Team's awareness of current cluster issues.

- Delegates will be more informed about what is happening in other EHSAS clusters. This will ensure that those working on similar projects are connected where necessary
- Delegates will have an increased understanding of effective collaboration, leadership and communication within their cluster
- Delegates will have a heightened awareness of how the NZ Curriculum, research and Best Evidence Syntheses connect with their projects

### **Cluster Workshops**

Is your cluster interested in running a workshop at the 2008 EHSAS Conference?

If you do a workshop, you will tease out an innovative aspect of your cluster project. This could be a challenge that you've overcome or something you've developed that works (i.e. your workshop will be about useful processes and thinking in your cluster work, not only what you've done – displays can show what you've done).

Everyone is very keen to see what you've been doing, so if you think you would like to run an interactive workshop for 45-90 minutes, please contact the EHSAS Team.

Your brief expression of interest is due by **Friday 6 June**, so QUICK! Ask for the form now, complete it and send it through to [extending\\_standards@minedu.govt.nz](mailto:extending_standards@minedu.govt.nz)

### **Cluster Displays**

Is your cluster interested in having your work on display at the 2008 EHSAS Conference? This could be student work, teacher action research or anything else you can think of!

If you'd like to have some of your work on display, please contact the EHSAS Team.

Your brief expression of interest is due by **Friday 6 June**, so QUICK! Ask for the form now, complete it and send it through to [extending\\_standards@minedu.govt.nz](mailto:extending_standards@minedu.govt.nz)

### **Present your Research**

There are up to five special 30 minute slots at the conference for cluster representatives to present any research that has taken place alongside EHSAS projects. If you or a researcher who works with your cluster is interested in taking one of these slots, please contact the EHSAS Team  
[extending\\_standards@minedu.govt.nz](mailto:extending_standards@minedu.govt.nz)

## Useful Readings & References

The EHSAS Team sets aside time to do some professional reading and sometimes we come across articles or books that may be of interest to you. Below are our latest finds and while we can't always provide you with a copy of the actual article for copyright reasons, we can provide you with the details you need to find the article. Most articles will be available through your local library, or you can order it through the publisher online. Where possible, we have provided the internet link to the article.

### [Assessing Key Competencies: Why Would We? How Could We? \(Hipkins, R., 2007\)](#)

This booklet looks at the increasing importance of fostering lifelong learning through involving students directly in assessing their own learning. It explores types of assessment tasks that are best suited to assessing the key competencies and discusses the benefits of rethinking assessment practices currently being used in your schools. The booklet offers some practical ways to start conversations in your school about how and why you will assess the key competencies.

[http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/implementation\\_packs\\_for\\_schools/assessing\\_key\\_competencies\\_why\\_would\\_we\\_how\\_could\\_we](http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/implementation_packs_for_schools/assessing_key_competencies_why_would_we_how_could_we)

### ["Survivors" or "Friends"? A Framework for Assessing Effective Collaboration \(Wiggins, K. & Damore, S., 2006\)](#)

An interesting article discussing elements of collaboration and levels within them. The authors also provide a rubric identifying developmental levels that you could use to see where your cluster is at. The EHSAS Team is currently developing a rubric based on various peer-reviewed journal articles such as this one and other research available on effective collaboration. We're hoping this might be useful to clusters who wish to examine how they are collaborating and whether or not it is making a difference for the schools involved.

**Source:** Teaching Exceptional Children, Vol. 38, No. 5, pp. 49-56  
**Publisher:** <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P3-1044076241.html>

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## Teacher Professional Learning & Development Best Evidence Synthesis (BES)

The Teacher Professional Learning and Development Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration (BES) is available at your school. It is a resource for schools which provides extensive information on findings that can inform decisions on how you might structure and implement professional learning and development in your school.

It is helpful to read through the Summary of Findings first, and where your interest or sense of need is triggered, you can refer to the main body of the synthesis for elaboration and ideas.

### **Creating Professional Learning Communities**

The BES explores different professional learning studies from around the world (including NZ). The BES indicates that those which showed improved student outcomes had teachers participating as members of a professional learning community. However, it is noted that "While participation in a professional community appeared to be a necessary condition for professional development that impacted positively on student outcomes, it was not sufficient." (p. 151).

The BES goes on to outline the ways in which professional learning communities and time and money spent on collaborating can result in no positive changes, and in fact, sometimes negative changes. (p. 201).

There are identified characteristics of professional communities that are associated with enhanced student outcomes and those that are not. Key qualities of professional communities that promote teacher and student learning include:

- "participants being supported to process new understandings and their implications for teaching"; and
- "a focus on analysing the impact of teaching on student learning." (p. 202).

These qualities and others are elaborated on in section 10.3 (p. 203-205). Pick up your copy of the BES now and have a read!

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## Virtual Learning Network

[www.virtuallearning.school.nz/ehsas](http://www.virtuallearning.school.nz/ehsas)

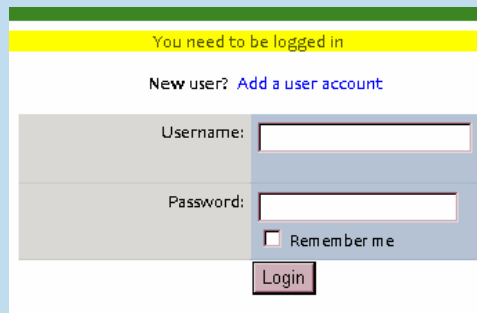
The EHSAS Virtual Learning Network (VLN) has been set up for EHSAS cluster members to see what other clusters are doing and make contact with them. It's a place where you can share what you have achieved in your cluster.

The EHSAS Team at the ministry will also add any useful resources they might find.

**Recently added** to the site were all the readings and references that have appeared in EHSAS e-newsletters, and more resources have been added to the resource bank. Conference updates also appear on the VLN including who the keynotes are and what workshops will be available.

The site is very easy to navigate and your username and password is created by you, so no need to remember yet another set of log-in details!

Contact [extending\\_standards@minedu.govt.nz](mailto:extending_standards@minedu.govt.nz) for access details (a one-off PIN).



The log in screen: If you're not already a member, simply click on "Add a user account" and create your own username and password.

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## Cluster Contributions

### Aoraki

The Aoraki EHSAS cluster is based in South Canterbury and is made up of seven secondary schools: Roncalli College, Opihi College, Mackenzie College, Ellesmere College, Geraldine High School, Mt Hutt College and Waimate High School. The cluster aims to improve academic, social and personal outcomes for students, professional outcomes for staff, and links within school communities, through the Aoraki Schools collaborating and focussing collectively on:

- **Relationships and engagement** (Student engagement and well-being; family / whanau / school relationships)
- **Evidence based practices**
- **Curriculum** (Differentiated teaching and personalised learning)
- **Leadership development** (professional learning communities; building leadership capacity)

Aoraki has started their project with the creation of a DVD that contains interviews with the Principals and School Coordinators involved in the project. This provides them with a collective voice that can be shared across the cluster, as well as documenting individual school expectations.

A 'combined' painting based on the key focus areas was created and each school has been given a piece of the painting to display alongside an image of the combined work. The cluster is hoping that this will provide a small catalyst for enhancing across-school collaboration as they enhance their regional professional learning community through the EHSAS project.

The Aoraki cluster has also started making across-cluster links through their contact with the Round 1 cluster, RAFA. They have recently had Cheryl Garrett from the RAFA cluster attend their Curriculum Forum as a critical friend.

On April 10th Geraldine High School hosted the Leadership for Learning - Student Cluster Forum. Students designed and lead the activities throughout the day. Feedback from the student leaders indicated that the event was worthwhile in building student knowledge and understanding across the cluster. By sharing powerpoint presentations about their school structures and working in focus groups to discuss common concerns, students said they had learnt new things about the other schools and were able to reflect on their own school community. They are keen to have another gathering to build on the relationships established during this forum. The Aoraki EHSAS cluster continues to build on student voice as a central means to inform our practice by creating DVDs of students talking about their learning, and is now looking at establishing 'students as researchers' later in the year.



Aoraki's combined painting based on their focus areas



Aoraki student leaders



Aoraki Cluster Student Leaders Group

### FAST TOI - Formative Assessment Tools – To Outcomes Improve! (Yoda Talk)

The FAST TOI EHSAS cluster is based in Christchurch and is made up of four primary schools: Clarkville School, Cust School, North Loburn School and Kaiapoi Borough School. They have a strong focus on raising student achievement through formative assessment strategies and students leading their own learning.

Fast Toi began by interviewing children in each of the participating schools with regard to what does quality learning look like, sound like, feel like? Who is in charge of your learning? What helps you to learn? How can teachers help you to learn? ...etc.

Feedback was interesting - apparently a ruler is a big help for example. Responses ranged from it's all up to the teacher to it's all up to us.

We kicked our EHSAS project off with a conference get together at Garden City Bowl (Ten Pin Bowling). This was a way of bringing us together in an informal session to build group relationships. We began with a "Star Wars Leading My Learning" parody movie - since Fast Toi is Yoda talk of course.

At this point perhaps we should explain our logo:

It features Yoda (due to Yoda Talk idea) and it features a fast toi - the mid-life crisis BMW. To stretch the analogy Yoda has a Toitoe branch in his hand, instead of a Light Sabre (Fast Toitoe perhaps), and he is pointing forwards to a brighter future (which we will arrive at faster due to fast sports car toy). Some unkindly felt that Yoda was giving the finger, look closely and see it is not so you will.



## FAST TOI , cont...

The four principals (we welcome Pene on board) planned a week for the leaders from each school to spend together to get the project up and running. That was launched at Clearwater Resort where during the afternoon we partook in double headed axe throwing, archery and lassoing. There were some perfect analogies to the teaching and learning process from this and several of us gained new insights about the nature of learning as a result.

A slide show presentation began the day. It looked at the many reasons why the 'old ways' of educating are no longer viable. The reasons behind the need for change. The Transmission to Transformation teaching and learning continuum and much more. It featured ideas from Sir Ken Robinson and Ian Jukes and looked at the die-off in divergent thinking as children get older and get "educated". With humour, challenges and reflection time included, it was well received.

Many arrived thinking they "knew it all" and had "children leading their learning in their schools". Those ideas quickly changed. Tremendous soul searching honesty was a real feature of the week. In the end we all realised the importance of our mission and the work that we must do to achieve it.

There was a tremendous air of enthusiasm permeating the discussion and activities all week. We achieved a taxonomy of learning, useful in itself, but the real use will be in going back to our schools and applying the same process to develop our own school-owned taxonomies.

Action Plans have been worked on, a process has been tested and proved and some teams were beginning with their staff the following Monday at 8:30am, so eager were they to get started.

Feedback at the end of the week was particularly interesting and particularly honest and rewarding. One self-confessed "dinosaur" - his words - spoke passionately about why he believed passionately in this project. It was inspirational for us all - and for our staff when he shared with them back at KBS.

All our leaders had questioned initially why we would need a week. They soon questioned how we could hope to achieve everything in just a week. By week's end, we had covered successfully everything on our plan. We did not set end of day timeframes, the end of day tasks ran as long as it took for them to be completed to each group's satisfaction. All set high standards, and achieved quality outcomes. The emphasis was on applying "lead your learning" principles.

Faye Le Cren from eTime took an excellent session on Children Leading Learning, but she absolutely excelled herself in the session on how to lead - my own team leaders had been focusing on this for two years, but this week and Faye's session brought it all together in a way I couldn't even have hoped for. This aspect alone has made this year of the project worthwhile already.

We have our own WikiSpace up and running and many useful postings and resources are up already. It will soon be a useful forum for discussion, sharing and reflecting on our experiences back in our schools....

<https://fasttoi.wikispaces.com/>

The energy, enthusiasm and passion we have generated already are going to carry this project forward at pace. At KBS we had our launch this week, next week we run a programme from 3:15 to 5:30 and then 6:15 to 7:30. We know from the one week experience, there is no substitute for having lots of uninterrupted time to deeply discuss and debate and arrive at common understandings.

**Ash Maindonald**  
**Principal Kaiapoi Borough School**

## Remuera

The Remuera EHSAS Cluster is based on effective Professional Learning that enhances teacher practice and in turn improves student learning. The cluster is made up of seven schools who have worked closely with each other over the past two years to develop a collaborative culture in and across all schools. This year schools have been working alongside Jan Hill, an education consultant, developing their own school professional learning models so that teachers are engaging in conversations that discuss and challenge their teaching as well as empowering them to share best practice. All schools have Learning Communities in place where teachers discuss and analyse data and their teaching approaches. All schools have worked closely with Toni Casserils from Team Solutions on the effective analysis of data.

Over the past term lead teachers have been working alongside teachers in their schools discussing and developing what is 'effective pedagogy'. Next term teachers will have the chance to go and view each other in action and discuss what they see happening in the classroom. All schools will also be taking part in Action Research training. The three training days will focus on using Action Research to improve school effectiveness and how to begin and carry out an Action Research project. Schools will carry out their own projects and report back their findings next year.

**Mark Keenan**  
**Remuera Cluster Facilitator**



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## Important Dates

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>31 May 2008</b>        | EHSAS Annual Reports due   |
| <b>31 May 2008</b>        | Charters due at your local Ministry of Education office if you are an EHSAS School – ensure EHSAS targets are clearly stated in your annual plan |
| <b>28-30 July 2008</b>    | EHSAS National Conference for Round 1 and 2 Clusters   |
| <b>17-23 October 2008</b> | Round Three Regional Seminars  |

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