



End of Term 3 Assembly – Rector's Address

Mark Wilson

Friday 19 September 2025



Tēnā koutou katoa, nau mai, haere mai.

A very warm welcome to you all.

A special thank you to our awesome Preparatory School Kapa Haka for their opening welcoming. Let us all acknowledge their courage and quality performance with a loud pakipaki (clap).

This week is not only special being the end of Term 3, but it is also Te Wiki o te Reo Māori – Māori Language Week.

Ko te reo te mauri o te mana Māori (the language is the life force of Māori identity).

Languages are the lifeforce of our cultural identity. This week, and every week, it is important to celebrate and look at using more of our native/indigenous language, which is unique and special to us in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This year is significant, as it marks 50 years since the first Māori Language Week back in 1975.

We all gather here today for the end of this term, to recognise and celebrate some of the amazing achievements that have been attained over this term, and especially across our winter sporting codes. I am pleased to welcome and thank our Board member, kia ora Mr Peter Nelson. Ka pai, it is good to have you here, joining us this morning, and he will be assisting with some presentations within this assembly.

This is a very special assembly as it illustrates our belief in the purpose of education, which is to educate the whole person – this means both their intellect and their character.

Sport is often used as a metaphor for life. This is because the game of life is a lot like sports... you have to *tackle* your problems, *block* your fears, and *score* your points when you get the opportunity.

Someone once said of the legendary footballer, Lionel Messi, how *lucky* he is to be such a talented footballer. But his response was: *"I start early and I stay late, day after day, year after year, it took me 17 years and 114 days to become an overnight success."*

In other words, he wasn't an overnight success. Like all of us, Lionel Messi's success is down to his hard work over a long period of time. This message is echoed by former World Champion heavy weight boxer, Mike Tyson (or 'Iron Mike'), who competed professionally from 1985 up to 2005. He once said:

"I don't care how good or talented you are in anything, if you don't have discipline, you'll be nobody. You're nothing without discipline, as you will give up with the slightest struggle without discipline."

Mike Tyson went on to say: *"Discipline is doing what you hate to do but doing it like you love it."*

Mike Tyson is referring here to a commitment – to all those hours of training, exercising, diet, getting up early, travelling, all those things that happen behind the scenes before you step out on the sports field, pool or court to perform.



So, for those young people we are acknowledging at this assembly, yes you may have some great talents, but it's *not* luck that has created your achievements, it is discipline and hard work. Only in a lottery does winning happen by chance or luck.

In sport and life, the winning difference is a mixture of motivation, perseverance, and character, otherwise known as grit. Yes, when playing any sport, you might get a lucky bounce of the ball, or get the referees call on a 50-50 decision... but it is what you do with that chance that will define you as a person. What defines us all as people, is how we choose to respond to events in our lives, whether they are moments of fortune or misfortune.

How we act, what we do, and what we choose not to do, is how we will be really known and defined. Thomas Jefferson (Founding Father of the United States) realised the importance of hard work, when he once said: *"It seems the harder I work, the more luck I seem to have."*

This message is true for all aspects of life – the price you pay to earn something, is what makes it valuable. Learning and achieving here at school demands hard work, for example to gain your NCEA qualification it will cost time and effort. To simply turn up and expect to achieve, would mean it has no value. As the old expression goes: *"Nothing worth having, comes easy"*.

The traditional Māori whakataukī (proverb) expresses this same message, in a practical way: *He kai, kei aku ringa* ("There is food at the end of my hands"). In other words, it is through your hard work that we achieve this good food. Your greatest personal achievements will always be those that required the greatest personal amount of discipline, effort and courage from you. Remember, life is about the journey not just the outcomes – that journey is what truly builds your character and sets up who you are seen as and are valued for.

This message is true for all aspects of life, not just sports. The price you pay to earn something, through all the challenges, mistakes and learning – that is what makes it valuable. You learn the value of hard work, by working hard.

At this assembly, we celebrate and acknowledge achievement, and it is right that we do. As with any significant achievement this typically comes from a lot of hard work and discipline.

We also must remember and acknowledge, that behind all these student achievements there are many support people in the background that help make it happen. This includes our dedicated and committed staff, coaches, managers, minivan drivers, parents, family and friends. They have worked so hard to give our young people opportunities and increase participation across such a wide range of activities.

Ka nui te mihi (thank you so much).

Please join with me to thank all the people who have supported our young sportspeople here tonight, with pakipaki (our applause).

To conclude, I congratulate all of our young people here, who have put in the many hours of hard work, overcome their own challenges, and achieved such outstanding results in your own specific fields.

And, in terms of all of us challenging and extending ourselves, step out and use more te Reo Māori – not just during this Māori Language Week but as a wider part of our daily lives.

Tēnā koutou katoa.