PRINCIPAL PĀNUI

25th September 2026

Kia ora e te whānau

This week, I was at Ōwhata Primary school for Te Hiwi o Toroa. It was an amazing event, and it was great to see all the students performing with pride and a strong sense of belonging. We know that when students have a strong sense of identity and feel affirmed in their language and culture, that flows into everything they do, and lifts their success in all endeavours. I am lucky to work here, where we have such a strong community of schools and ECEs, and we are able to participate in events like Te Hiwi o Toroa and see that growth and progression in our young people. Ōwhata Primary did a great job with the event, and I enjoyed talking with so many of our whānau.

As you'll see in some of our social media soon, the Herald has released a visualisation tool that measures academic success in schools, sorted by subject. We have long known that our students achieve highly in a wide range of subjects. Being a smaller school, one of our strengths is the ability to work with students around their own individualised paths and learning progressions, and that is reflected in our results. While we have some particular strengths, the visualisation shows that our learners achieve across the whole curriculum.

With reports being issued at the end of term, now is a great time to check and refocus for the last term. When we return in two weeks, we're straight into prizegiving and then exams for seniors. We will be hard at work preparing revision support and exam practice, and we know that our students will be working hard too.

We hope you have a great school holiday and enjoy the longer and (hopefully) warmer days. We look forward to seeing all our rangatahi back soon.

Ngā mihi

Gwyneth

Feel free to contact me at
principal@rotorualakes.school.nz

THIS IS LAKES

Celebrating the moments, achievements, and spirit of our students.

FRIDAY 25TH SEPTEMBER 2026

TE HIWI O TOROA

Lakes Kapa Haka Takes the Stage

Te Hiwi o Toroa brought Eastside kura and early learning centres together for a special celebration of kapa haka, whanaungatanga and community. Te Kapa Haka o Te Kura o Ngā Moana represented Lakes with pride, taking the stage with plenty of wairua and energy after weeks of preparation. Ngā mihi to Whaea Merekara and Whaea Rahera for the time, aroha and mahi poured into our performers, and to whānau for their support. A huge mihi also to Owhata Primary School for hosting this year's festival and bringing the Eastside community together. At the conclusion of the day, the mauri was handed back to the iwi ahead of Te Hiwi o Toroa 2027. Lakes looks forward to coming together again next year.

BEYOND BORDERS

Lakes Students Explore Vietnam

Thirty-four Humanities students and eight adults have begun an 18-day journey through Vietnam and Cambodia. Their first days in Hanoi have been packed with history, culture and local food. Students became chefs for a MasterChef-style challenge, visiting a local market to source ingredients before preparing two dishes, with Group 3 taking the win. After receiving wonderful hospitality from Thanh Trí Home Cooking, the group shared a haka in appreciation, creating a special moment of cultural exchange and whanaungatanga. Ngā mihi to Ms Chemis and Ms Goodrick for the huge amount of organisation and fundraising behind this opportunity. With plenty more still to come, it's an exciting start to their adventure.

DANCE SUCCESS

Kate Takes Second at Nationals

Charlotte Hodge and Kate Ganotice represented Lakes at the DanceNZmade Nationals in Palmerston North, competing alongside talented young dancers from across the country. Four Lakes dancers and the Open Team had qualified at Regionals, but other commitments and injury meant Charlotte and Kate made the journey this time. Both enjoyed performing on the national stage, with Kate delivering a stunning tango to place 2nd in the Year 12 solo category. It was also a chance to share the experience with dancers from across Rotorua. Ka mau te wehi, Charlotte and Kate, and congratulations to Kate on an outstanding national result.

GOLF TO PUPPIES

9 Kōwhai Take On Project Day

9 Kōwhai packed plenty into Project Day, combining practical learning with another chance to give back to the community. Students tried golf, disc golf, the driving range and mini golf while learning the basic skills and biomechanics behind each activity. The class also followed up last week's SPCA fundraiser by delivering the money raised, along with donated towels and blankets. They even got to meet some friendly bunnies and cuddly puppies looking for homes, although everyone made it back to Lakes without any extra passengers! Ngā mihi to Whaea Christina and Ms Penny Simpson for another hands-on Project Day and for creating varied learning opportunities for ākonga.

We're authentic. We're real. We're pono. Mauria te pono.