Thank you for coming to celebrate the end of a great year and to wish our graduating students the best of luck for the years to come.

We have a great deal to celebrate this year. We have opened 4 new classrooms purpose built to encourage independence, offering different spaces filled with light and access to the fresh air. Their own gardens, their own kitchens, things we have come to expect as normal.

In fact we have come to think that much of what we do at Beehive is normal in a school, parent access to classrooms for observations, regular meetings with teachers, freedom for children to move, discuss, make choices, learn to self-regulate their behavior and not depend on the teacher to orchestrate their every move. Students learn to be part of a community and be responsible for its civility. A Board consisting of parents past and present that have been elected by you, working in a volunteer capacity to offer you the best education we can. Teachers that are devoted to your children and working to help them achieve what they are capable of, helping them discover their precious and unique gifts.

At this year’s Year 6 Speech Night it struck me how every one of the students were different. Every speech was different, reflecting who they are. We haven't produced standardised children that have learnt how to fit in and perform in a particular way so that they can be successful. We don't have students that have given up because they think differently, act differently, that suffer because they don't fit into the box that only acknowledges the scientific intelligence and ignores the cultural and artistic intelligence. We applaud the different types of intelligence and respect and nurture the different ways children learn and give them freedom to develop their unique potential. They will be happy productive people who don't rely on a score sheet to motivate them but work to create themselves, to improve themselves, to grow according to the beat of their own drum.

It's not difficult to see that the Montessori Method is streets ahead. We are constantly reminded of this by educational consultants that work with us and this was confirmed last year by the Department of Education Services school registration assessors when they examined every aspect of our school and acknowledged our outstanding level of teaching and learning.
The jewel in our crown is our adolescent program that has been rebranded as our Middle School. It offers an educational philosophy so different from other systems that it is sometimes difficult for parents to grasp it in its entirety. We see the results every year when our graduates say good bye to us. We see students that are living in their own skin, learning for the love of it, students that have been taught how to think, and students that have been able to dig deeply into a topic, where there are no limits on what they can research and then present their knowledge to each other. Students that are excited about learning, students that feel capable of success and in control of their learning. Students that learn by doing with a deep sense of satisfaction for what they produce. Students that will be equipped to the rapid changes that face them.

Gone are the days when the pathway for success was school, university and then employment. The latest research states that only 58% of students leaving university will find employment. We read about the innovation of the schools in Finland leading reforms in education, proposing to replace teaching the classic school subjects separately but instead include them with broader, cross- cutting topics to link the subject areas and deepen knowledge. This idea is getting global attention. At Beehive it's what we do.

A film has been released, 'Most Likely to Succeed', that challenges the standardisation of students and states that the current system of education is archaic and not meeting the needs of the students of today facing a world that is moving so fast and reorganising itself to operate in a completely different way, where technology will change how we view life and students will need to adapt to be successful. The movie promotes an educational programme where students work on projects with professionals in their fields to produce something. Then present their work with pride to the community. Their reward is the finished product and their joy is their completion of meaningful work. Not a percentage rating for an essay that they might throw in the bin because it has no meaning. The major schools in our area are trying to formulate how they can offer the type of programme described in the movie.

Our Middle School students already engage in a programme described in the movie 'Most Likely to Succeed'. Each time I listen to their end of term presentations I am speechless at the level of exploration and research, and especially the pride of the students when presenting their work.

The Montessori approach is to connect students to people who are experts in their fields or passionate about their hobbies in all walks of life. Their projects and individual research will be enhanced by community members inspiring them, sharing their passion and knowledge. Up until now we have had limited access to the members in our diverse community to come and share their love of their work. Next year we will be making a concerted effort to involve more of you in our
cutting edge approach to learning. We will be setting up a Directory of Expertise and Passion and invite you to register your interest to be involved in our innovation. It could be an inspirational talk or a workshop where you share knowledge and the tools of your trade.

We will start the year by building on our micro economy, you have already seen the results of this in their shop but we can use your assistance to help them establish this as a business. Are you passionate about business plans, marketing, branding, occupational health and safety, financial literacy? Can you offer your time? The next project will be ‘developing a small playground’ and will need a different set of skills and expertise, research skills, landscape architecture, indigenous land rights, horticulture, sustainability, council permits, an artist or graphic designer to help with the drawings, or an actress to help with presentations.

During all the projects we will need to feedback to our community what we are doing and to do this we will need the help of film makers, blog writers, and social media experts. Do you have a bit of spare time to help inspire the students, to enhance what they already do and have the opportunity to work with these unique young people? Then add your name to the directory for a most rewarding experience. The more you become involved in their work the more you will be impressed by the programme.

I will leave you with a message from John Dewey, an American philosopher, psychologist and educational reformer.

*If we teach today’s students as we taught yesterday’s we rob them of tomorrow.*