



13 January 2016

Dear Southern Cross Parents

The new school year has started and it gives me great pleasure to welcome our SCS community back for the year that lies ahead. Despite the very dry conditions, we still start this new year with a strong sense of excitement and optimism for what lies ahead. From an academic perspective the year could not have started on a more positive note for Southern Cross, with the release of the national Grade 12 examination results.

The Southern Cross College (SCC) Grade 12 Class of 2015 made sure that it is five years in a row achieving a 100% pass rate in the National Senior Certificate (Matric) examinations. Since our first Grade 12 class in 2011 the school has maintained this excellent academic record. The results achieved by the SCC Matrics in the national Independent Examination Board (IEB) examinations in 2015 are once again a reflection of the excellent academic standards being set by the school.

As already mentioned, the 20 young scholars of the SCC Grade 12 Class of 2015, achieved a 100% pass rate, but more importantly, they also all achieved a pass level that qualifies them to go on to enter institutions of higher learning like universities or universities of technology. The top achievers in the group produced outstanding results. At the top of the pile of top achievers is Claire du Randt who achieved distinctions in Life Sciences (81%), Afrikaans (85%) and Life Orientation (88%). Tammy Godding achieved the second highest average overall and also registered three distinctions in Economics (80%), English (80%) and Life Orientation (86%). The third best set of results according to overall average achieved was produced by Dale Brenchley who got three distinctions for Engineering Graphics and Design (88%), Mathematics (83%) and Life Orientation (83%). The fourth best set of results was produced by Lané Sonnekus who achieved two distinctions for Afrikaans First Additional Language (83%) and Mathematical Literacy (94%).

Congratulations to all the top achievers and the whole Grade 12 Class of 2015 for their achievements. We wish the Grade 12 Class of 2016 every success as they embark on their final year of high schooling. The year ahead holds great promise as well as many significant challenges. Allow me to share some news and to look at some of what we can expect in the year ahead.

Our Strategic Goals for 2016:

In our strategic planning process last year specific focus areas for the school were identified and sub-committees set up to drive each of these. The areas that were identified are:

- 1) Technology – improving the schools internet connectivity and stabilising the internal computer network. Since this strategic goal was identified a lot has already been done. The wireless backbone of the school's network has been replaced with a fibre-optic cable backbone. This has stabilised the network hugely. The next big step is to secure the hardware that will enable us to effectively manage our internet connection and usage. In the classrooms we are also looking at increasing the teachers and learners access to blended learning by providing additional data

projects. The sub-committee will also be reviewing the Technology Policy of the school, which needs updating.

- 2) Walking the environmental talk – is a very clear focus area of our school. Significant progress has been made in developing more structured Bush Lore and ECAL programmes for the schools. The appointment of Mr Ian Shoebottom to drive the environmental agenda has also seen a clearer focus developing. There are some significant challenges facing us in terms of our environmental management. The most pressing of these is the management of our sewage and waste water on campus which is complicated by the recent high water table in the vicinity of a number of our buildings. A start has been made in dealing with the problems but a great deal of work still lies ahead.
- 3) Corporate funding and fundraising – this strategic focus area cuts across a number of the other strategic focus areas. The priority of this focus area is to establish and endowment fund for the school which will serve to support:
 - a. Bursaries and scholarships for deserving children to attend the school;
 - b. Capital development projects to ensure the ongoing growth and development of the school;
 - c. Achieving an environmentally sustainable school and
 - d. The ongoing development of the school staff and the retention of high quality staff.

Significant work has been done to address the energy requirements of the school and a partnership is being developed with a private solar energy company to take the school off the national electricity grid.

- 4) Growing our College – is an important strategic goal for the school to ensure our future financial sustainability. This includes having two classes per grade from this year onwards. The medium term goal is to have two classes of 25 learners in each from Grade 8 to Grade 12 by 2020. In addition to maintaining high academic standards and ensuring that a positive image is portrayed of our College we would also have to expand our boarding capacity in the very near future.
- 5) Reviewing the curricular and extra-curricular offering of the schools – is required to keep abreast of developments in education and relative to trends in independent school. Given the fact that we are a school with a relatively small enrolment it is essential for us to keep reviewing what we can and do offer as subject choices and sports and cultural offerings. This strategic goal encourages us to reflect and review what we offer regularly and make suitable adjustments when necessary.
- 6) Marketing – is a critical strategic focus area. The main goal of our marketing will be to increase applications to the school. As mentioned already, our aim is to grow our College to two classes per grade (maximum 50 learners per grade) by 2020. A great deal of work has already been done by this sub-committee including the upgrading of our school website – www.southerncrosscschools.co.za. This year will see the school attending a number of education expos locally and in Gauteng. Marketing roadshows will also be undertaken to Mozambique and Botswana to attract boarders to our College.
- 7) Staff welfare and development – is essential in terms of retaining high quality staff and to ensure that we keep our academic staff abreast of the latest developments in education. Our academic and administrative support staff are currently completing a five module Life Balance course. Various staff will also be attending IEB User Group workshops and the entire Prep School staff will be attending the ISASA Proudly Primary Conference. We will also be encouraging our Grade 12 teachers to gain valuable experience by assisting with the marking of the IEB National Senior



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- ★ Certificate examinations. Other staff development opportunities will be looked at during the course of the year.
- 8) Transformation – as a strategic focus area is essential for our school and it will also cut across all areas of the future development of the school. Expect to receive information from the sub-committee about presentations and workshops that will be held on the topic going forward.
- 9) Development and expansion of Earth Tots – this was made a strategic goal as a result of the high demand for places at this level of the school. Since identifying this as a strategic focus area a new temporary building has been constructed at the Pre-school allowing for an increase in enrolment at Earth Tots from 13 to 20 children. The new building has also allowed for our Grade 000 and 00 classes to be split into two separate classrooms. This means that the overall capacity of the Pre-school and not just Earth Tots has increased.

If you are interested in joining any of these sub-committees please send an email to Mrs van Rensburg at raptor@scschools.co.za. Your involvement and/or input would be much appreciated.

Enrolment:

We are very pleased to share the fact that our school's enrolment has moved well beyond three hundred again this year. Although not a final figure, our enrolment is 317 learners including the 21 day care children accommodated by the increased capacity in the Pre-school. Our Pre-school enrolment has grown to 47 learners, the Preparatory School is sitting on 122 learners and the College 127 learners. Our boarding house has 55 learners.

Growing our enrolment makes it possible for us to prepare for the next phase of growth of the school. One of our strategic goals remains marketing the school aggressively with the aim of increasing applications for 2017 and beyond. Our goal is to attain an enrolment of at least 340 in 2017. This will mean enrolling at least two classes of Grade 8s and 9s next year.

A great deal of time, effort and resources have already been applied to achieving this goal and we have no doubt that we will achieve our targets with a concerted effort from all concerned.

Staffing:

With the growth in enrolment we have had to appoint some new staff for this year.

- In the Pre-school we have appointed Ms Khomotso Seerane as a classroom assistant for the Earth Tots class and Mrs Irene Wiltshire as the classroom assistant for the Grade R class.
- Last year we made do without an Estate Manager which was clearly not ideal. I'm pleased to say that we have appointed Mr Joshua Beaton in the combined post of Schools Sports Organiser and Estate Manager.
- At the end of 2015 we said farewell to Ms Pheladi Ledwaba who served as the Environmental Monitor and boarding house duty parent. She has been replaced with Ms Lindo Mazibuko who is completing her nature conservation practical year.

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- We are also very pleased to welcome Mrs Sharifa Razak to the academic staff of the school after she completed her teaching qualification with distinction at the end of 2015. Mrs Razak will be teaching in both the College and the Prep School.
- We also welcome Ms Ronel Adlem who will be assisting us in Tamboti Lodge as a duty parent.

We wish all of these new members of staff everything of the very best this year.

Class Teachers and Mentors:

Please note that all learners in the school either have a class teacher (Pre and Prep School) or a mentor teacher (College). We encourage all parents to communicate directly with these class teachers or mentors when raising concerns or questions regarding their child's education. Should the teacher concerned feel that they are not in a position to address your concern adequately they will direct the matter to another appropriate member of staff.

Please note that class teachers and mentors will be sending out regular emails to the parents of the children in their care. Please do take a moment in your busy schedules to read these emails and reply to let the teacher/mentor know that you are receiving their correspondence.

The Recent Heat Waves:

We have experienced extremely hot conditions in Hoedspruit this summer. We will monitor the conditions closely with regard to extra-curricular and outdoor activities. If the heat index, which is a combination of air temperature and humidity reaches dangerous levels we will stop scheduled sport and outdoor activities. Messages will be sent to day scholar parents to inform them of an early finish due to a dangerously high heat index should it be necessary.

Southern Cross Schools Facebook Page:

Our school has a very active Facebook page. It is updated regularly and carries posts of the wide variety of activities and events that take place at the school. Please go along and like the page and please feel free to share it often. Please also get your family and friends to like the page.

Daily Routine 2015:

The daily routine for the College and the Prep School is the same as it was at the end of 2015. Copies of both daily routines will be sent to all parents by email. If you need a hard copy of the daily routine please collect one from the office.

We would like to remind parents that school starts at 07:15 daily so we ask you to please make sure that the learners get to school in good time so that lessons can start as planned.

Growing our Earth Tots Class:

You will no doubt be aware that we have a new temporary classroom at the Pre-school. This additional teaching space has increased the capacity of the Pre-school and Earth Tots class. Our Earth Tots have come downstairs and will be accommodated in the large classroom alongside the Grade R classroom. The capacity of the Earth Tots class has been increased from 13 to 21 children, hence the additional classroom assistant. Mrs Di Locke will again be the day care teacher at Southern Cross Schools.



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We are currently also investigating a way to ensure that the daycare service is offered sustainably for parents who can't collect their children at the end of school. It is likely that we will call for applications from individuals who are interested in running the daycare service in a part-time basis.

SCS Fee Collection Policy:

Please note that it is a requirement of your child's enrolment that we have a signed fee collection policy on file for you. If we do not have the signed document on file you will receive a request from the admin staff to provide a signed copy as soon as possible. Please understand that the admin staff are simply carrying out instructions from our Board of Governors and implementing the policies of the school. Please do not shoot the messenger. This applies to all matters where SCS staff are implementing school policy. If you have a concern about any school policies and how they are being applied, please feel free to raise your concerns with either of the school heads or even directly with the Chairman of the Board. Please do not take your frustrations out on the SCS staff.

Smoking on Campus:

We are very keen to move towards a point where the SCS campus is a non-smoking zone. We do acknowledge, however, that there are people who smoke and so we will move slowly but steadily to our eventual goal of making the school a non-smoking zone. To this end we are implementing a complete ban of smoking inside the various classroom circles in the school. We would also like all smokers to refrain from smoking in the vicinity of school children. We also request that if you smoke on the school campus that you take responsibility for your cigarette butts and not litter the school property with them.

SCS School Calendar:

The full school calendar is attached for your information. Please note that this calendar is updated regularly as sports fixtures and event dates are finalised. Also note that all dates will be published on the school's online calendar which can be accessed via the school's website at www.southerncrossschools.co.za.

We would like to appeal to all our SCS families to take careful note of the school activities and events organised. As already mentioned not all sport events are included on the calendar yet because certain events still need to be confirmed. Attendance at school functions is compulsory for learners and we would ask parents to support us in ensuring that their children attend such fixtures and events when required.

Important Dates for 2016

Please take special note of these important events on our school calendar.

- 22 January – Prep and College Inter-house athletics meeting to be held at the Drakensig Sports Complex. All learners are expected to attend and we would love parents to support the event. New house t-shirts are available from the uniform shop at R75.00 per shirt. All learners must wear their house t-shirts for inter-house competitions.

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- 2 February – College will attend the Limpopo Independent Schools Inter-high Athletics Meeting in Polokwane. All athletics team members will attend the meeting and all other learners will have the day off.
- 5 February – SCS Meet and Greet the Hoedspruit Business Community function at the school.
- 11 February – The College will be hosting the Limpopo Small Schools Athletics Meeting in Polokwane. The whole College will attend the meeting and the half term break will begin straight after the completion of the competition. Boarders will be allowed to return to the boarding house on Thursday evening and then take the shuttle to Gauteng the next morning on Friday 12 February.
- 24 February – College inter-house swimming gala from 13h00.
- 12 March – College Open Day – a number of College learners will be involved in presenting aspects of College life at Southern Cross.
- 9 April – College Scholarship Exams for learners wanting to attend the school in 2017.
- 22 April – Earth Day will be celebrated at SCS with an inter-school cultural festival.
- 3 August – Founders' Day – we celebrate the founding of SCS on this day and all learners are required to attend. It would be greatly appreciated if parents could join us on this day as well.
- 11 to 14 October – Intermediate Phase (Grade 4 to 7) Trips Week – these field trips are a part of the school programme and important aspects of the learning programme are covered on these trips. You will receive an indication of the cost of these trips in due course and we suggest that you make provision for these costs so that they can be settled by the time the trips take place.
- 13 August – SCS Strategic Planning Workshop – we encourage all parents to be participate in this important reflection and planning process for the school.
- 29 August to 2 September – College Field Trips (Grade 8 to 11) – all learners are required to attend these trips as they form an essential part of learning programme for the year. As mentioned in the 2015 end of year newsletter, the costs associated with these trips vary. In Grade 8, 9 and 11 parents should budget about R2200.00 for the trips. The Grade 10 cultural/historical trip to Gauteng will in all likelihood cost in the region of R2800.00. This fee will cover transport, accommodation, food and entry fees for the five days.

Textbooks:

All learners in the school will be issued with the textbooks they require for the year. The cost of these textbooks will be charged to the parents' school fee accounts in either February or March. At the end of the year learners will have the option of returning the textbooks to the school. Books that are returned in a good state of repair and that can be used again will have a rebate value attached to them and the parents' school fee account will be credited accordingly. This policy will apply across both the Prep School and the College for textbooks that are issued to learners. Please note that workbooks that are issued to and used by the learners will also be charged to the fee account but these will not be handed back to the school at the end of the year.

Parents Association and Parents Forum:

The SCS Parents' Association will be operating as it was last year. A fundraising sub-committee of the Parents' Association (PA) which consists of a small group of volunteer parents raise funds for school development projects every year. This committee manages to raise about R300 000.00 annually and this money in the past has been used to provide



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sports facilities for the school. The most recent large project is the ongoing development of the school's sports field. The project has come along well in the past four years, although there is still a lot to be done. We encourage parents who are interested to get involved and to assist in this very meaningful endeavor.

The SCS PA will continue to provide an avenue for parents to make direct input into the school. We encourage parents to attend meetings as scheduled by the SCS PA.

Sports Field Update:

Our sports field needs a considerable amount of work to get it to the next level of completion. After applying the top dressing at the end of last year the grass cover on the field is slowly establishing itself despite the lack of rain.

International Exchanges:

We are pleased to announce that a number of inbound and an outbound exchange are confirmed for this year.

- Dutch Exchange – This inbound and outbound exchange will again see Dutch learners spending two weeks at SCS and SCS learners traveling to the Netherlands in September for two weeks.
- Swiss Exchange – We are pleased to report that another group of at least 8 Swiss learners will be spending four weeks at SCS in September and October this year.

National Blood Drive:

Southern Cross serves as a venue for the South African National Blood Service (SANBS) to collect blood donations from the public. In the past three years approximately 340 units of blood have been collected at the school. We would love to continue this excellent rate of donating and encourage parents and learners alike to donate again this year.

Car Security Discs:

Please remember that all parents will be issued with the new car disc for this year, which is blue and is available at the school office. You will be required to complete the security register on entering the school gate if you do not have an SCS car disc displayed on your vehicle.

Uniform Shop:

Please note the uniform shop will only be open from 07:15 to 08:00 in the mornings and from 13:00 to 15:00 in the afternoons. Learners will not be allowed to purchase items on account without prior written permission from parents.

We are very excited about the term ahead and believe that it is going to be another great learning opportunity for our children.

Kind regards

Ant de Boer
Headmaster

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