



Stanford Lake College

24 February 2011

Dear All,

Here we are. It is half- term. We all need a good rest and time off to spend together as families and friends.

Next week will be hectic with the first TREKS of the year for Grades 8 and 9.

We had our Hatchery concert last night and will have the Induction Assembly today. Well done to our Gr. 12s, our staff and the Gr. 8s. Once again, welcome to all new students and parents.

As you are aware, Mr. Grant Daly is the new Chair of our Board. He chaired the first meeting of the Letaba Educational Trust for the year during the week.

I was able to give a comprehensive report to the Trustees and would like to share some of the content with you.

We have had a good start to 2011.

Governance

Staff started the year with a Round Square workshop in an effort to promote the IDEALS of RS at SLC. Specific reference was made to democracy issues and the decision making processes. It was agreed that a consultative process will be followed and more staff meetings were introduced to promote freedom of speech and constructive debate.

THE EXCO and Trustees have also met to assess the school's performance in 2010. The majority of the KPIs were achieved. New KPIs for 2011 were agreed upon. A Business Plan for the period 2011-2013 was presented.

HR Issues

Our new teachers (Mr. Mhundurur, Mr. Swann, Mr. Ludick and Mr. Park) and the new gap year students (H. Pieterse, M. Pieterse and M. Rennie) have settled in nicely.

Mrs. Gerda Snyman has resigned and the PA position was advertised. Interviews will be scheduled during next week. Thank you to Gerda for her 10 years of service at the College.

The appraisal and training of Stanford staff will be a high priority in 2011.

Academics

The 2011 academic year has started smoothly, with the necessary planning in place. The Academic Committee met in January to confirm academic targets for the school.

GROWING TOGETHER FOR LIFE

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Independent
Day/Boarding
High School

The teachers report a positive work ethic from our Gr. 12s. This bodes well for the year ahead. Mr. Jack has met with each student to look at their subject marks from Grade 10 onwards and to suggest targets and strategies for each term this year.

All Grade 12 teachers attended IEB User Group conferences either regionally or nationally.

At the end of the 2010 academic year various parents have expressed their concerns about the low averages in Mathematics from Gr. 8 to Gr. 11, as well as in the prelims for Gr. 12 (the target for all averages is 60%) and the need for extra Mathematics lessons.

I met with Mr. Jack to reiterate these concerns and our commitment to achieve the targeted averages.

He has subsequently had a very fruitful meeting with Ms. Sidiropolous, the IEB Mathematics subject specialist, to discuss our outstanding Grade 12 Maths results over the last three years and to discuss other issues and ideas related to Maths in general. He has since met with the senior Mathematics teachers to talk about ideas specific to Grade 12 and will include the other Maths teachers in discussion about the way forward for Mathematics in all grades at the College.

Adventure

The Adventure team is firing on all cylinders and they enjoy the focus time (1 day adventure in a 10 day cycle). Mr. Turton's experience at American summer camps has proved invaluable and he is a huge asset to the team. The enthusiasm of the gap year students is almost unstoppable and the students enjoy the vibrant atmosphere.

In the first term they concentrate on first aid, orienteering skills, camp craft and the Treks to the Iron Crown and the Olifants River.

Mountain biking is well supported and SLC teams will compete in all races in Limpopo and Mpumalanga.

A new group of rowers has emerged and will be involved with races on the Blyde.

The adventure team was actively involved with the Hatchery programme and the open weekend, as well as leadership development for a Polokwane school.

A 10-day Advanced Land Survival course is on the cards for the first April holiday.

The lake area is busy in the afternoons and fully utilized after the extramural programme. Socializing, touch rugby, hockey, paddling and soccer form part of the main activities in the afternoons at the lake.

Pastoral Care

The student leaders are continuing well and have managed a very successful hatchery weekend.

All grades attended the Steve Hamilton presentation on drugs, alcohol and AIDS awareness. Parents were invited to meet with Steve Hamilton. Unfortunately, few parents attended the session.

Disciplinary enquiries are as swift as possible and we have had one this term.

An abridged "famous five" of rules and regulations was handed to all students.

The Board approved the amended Code of Conduct Policy. Parents can access the new policy on the website.

Sports

We had a difficult start to the sporting year due to the inclement mountain weather.

SLC athletes were not as fit as usual after the holidays. We nevertheless defended our title (Independent School champions) successfully and held off a strong challenge from PEPPS.

The Firsts X1 continued their good form and played in the finals of the Pro 20 league. We lost against a strong PHS side. It was an excellent achievement. PHS continued to play against Waterkloof, who won the completion last Sunday.

Preparations for the winter codes are underway. The first matches will start next week.

Culture

Mr. T. Mhunduru is the new MIC of Culture. This talented young man, Mr. Swann and Mrs. S-J Olivier are already a formidable team and are making a huge difference. We have a new school choir and there is huge interest in music, debating, public speaking and the drama club.

We listened to the choir today. It sent shivers down my spine. There is such a wealth of talent amongst our staff and students.

SLC debating teams are very active in Limpopo and have started the year on a high note.

Exciting new productions and a planned Culture Camp are also on the cards.

Boarding

The move of the termly boarders to Serala House at the beginning of this year seems to have gone smoothly and for the majority of the staff, it does make supervision over weekends far easier.

The staffing in the girls boarding houses is very tight. Most staff members have to do two duty nights a week, compared to their male colleagues' one.

Mr. Van der Walt is satisfied that the new configuration of Founders House will assist the effective running of boys boarding.

There is good spirit in the different sections of the boarding house, with early morning house runs becoming a tradition.

Wattle patrol seems to have the desired effect on boy's discipline.

Finances

Mr. Coetzer reported favourably about our finances. The external auditors are currently auditing our statements.

Estate

Mr. Van der Walt has the estate well under control.

Chances are excellent that SAPPI might sponsor the much needed recycling plant.

The final plans for the new classroom and library cluster were submitted and will go out on tender. The Board will decide upon the building project at a special meeting in April.

It was decided that the existing Outdoor Centre should be converted to an indoor sports centre. WE hope to have our indoor cricket nets ready for the third term.

Marketing

Mrs. McGaffin submitted a comprehensive marketing plan to Board.

Mr. Quibell represented the school in Gaborone, Botswana recently. SLC will also be very visible in Gauteng during school exhibitions this year.

We have started with interviews for 2012. I would like to encourage parents with siblings to make your appointments soon. Interest for 2011 is good and we have only 50 vacancies!

An independent Client Satisfaction survey will be conducted later in the year.

Conclusion

It is a very busy half term. Mountain bikers will be racing in Sabie, rowers will attend the Blyde X-festival and there will be a scuba diving course at home.

I will fly fish the Sabie River and will be playing two rounds of golf!

I hope that you all will have time to "chill"!

Kind regards



Johann Ueckermann
HEADMASTER

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