



ST ANDREW'S COLLEGE

4 February 2010

Dear Parents

National Senior Certificate

Every year in December when the matric results come out, the papers are full of comment on South Africa's failing education system.

To give you some stats it is reckoned that 80% of South African schools are "dysfunctional", half of all pupils drop out before taking matric and only 15% get good enough marks to get into University. Of those that start University, the throughput is very poor with barely half of the candidates entering in first year ending up with a degree. As a country we regularly come near the bottom in international benchmarking tests, especially in Maths and Science. South Africa spends more than 5% of our GDP on education and we are getting a very poor return. Education still remains divided along racial lines with major discrepancies between urban and rural schools and between the former Model C schools and their township counterparts. Teaching is often inadequate and the powerful SADTU does not allow any assessment of teacher performance.

I hear numerous stories from parents who are despondent that their children did not get into the course of their choice, usually at the University of Cape Town, and this is followed up by a comment that they feel that their sons or daughters are prejudiced by writing the **Independent Examinations Board (IEB)** exams which they feel are more difficult than the State examinations. There are many factors which influence entrance into University including quotas for race and gender and I would argue that switching examining bodies would be a very short-sighted decision. I would also suggest that one needs to apply at more than one University and for different faculties.

The Universities cannot publicly admit to favouring one exam system over another as this would be a political hot potato. The Independent Examinations Board examinations are internationally benchmarked and throughput of students at University who have written the **IEB** examinations is far superior than those candidates who have written the State examinations. In other words, the preparation of **IEB** candidates at school is an excellent preparation for University.

The **IEB** is committed to excellence and academic rigour. If South Africa is going to become more globally competitive we need to be looking at exams that are more challenging rather than less so, as the gap between University and matric remains large. The marking in the **IEB** is done thoroughly and the number of candidates is sufficiently small (approximately 8000) for the process to be efficient and manageable logistically.

Anne Oberholzer, CEO of the **IEB**, and her management team, as part of their national road show, were hosted by College last week in a report back to school principals from the Eastern Cape on the 2009 examinations. The glitch in the first Science Paper which received a lot of publicity, was caused by a technological problem not through any fault of the examiner, and the candidates who felt that their results had been seriously impacted, were offered the chance of a rewrite. Just over 100 candidates nationwide took up the offer.

St Andrew's is committed to academic excellence and the raising of the bar. It is imperative that St Andrew's produces boys who are globally competitive and who are life long learners. We are currently looking at courses which will stretch the top candidates intellectually and enhance their critical thinking skills.

Two OAs in Top 50 List

Two Old Andreans feature in the Financial Times' Top 50 business leaders in emerging markets (in the so called BRICSA countries – Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) namely **Jacko Maree**, CEO of Standard Bank (Upper 1969-1973), and **Graham Mackay**, CEO of SAB Miller (Armstrong 1962-1966), who have been named as leaders who have helped shape the economic performance in their respective regions. This is an outstanding achievement and we salute these two prominent Old Andreans.

Signal Honour for St Andrew's Boy

Ross McCreath, a Grade 11 boy in Mullins, has been invited to speak at Lord's. Ross is the mastermind behind the township cricket team, the Tiger Titans in Bathurst, and he has been invited by the International Awards World Fellowship to share details of his project at a dinner in March in the Long Room which will be attended by **HRH Prince Philip**, the Duke of Edinburgh, the founder of The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award.

Ross started this initiative as a part of his involvement in The President's Award and this is an extraordinary honour for him to be invited to address this dinner. The President's Award is based on the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and St Andrew's was the first school in the country to offer the award programme back in 1983. We currently have more than 200 boys involved in The President's Award at Bronze, Silver and Gold level. We salute Ross and wish him well as he addresses this august audience in the UK.

Water Polo

The 1st Water Polo team is enjoying a most successful season. They followed up their victory in the Port Rex Tournament two weekends ago with an outstanding performance in the Grey College Bloemfontein Tournament last weekend. Our team won through to the final with victories over Selborne, St Albans, Grey (Bloem) and Grey (PE), and in the final they lost narrowly 7-4 to the highly rated Parktown Boys 1st team. Our congratulations go to the coaches and the Water Polo team.

Cricket

The Cricket season is well under way and the Cricket Club enjoyed an excellent weekend against Kingswood recording 8 victories out of the 9 matches played. Some highlights of individual performances in the matches are as follows: In the 1st XI **Ryan Dugmore** 75, **Richard O'Mahony** 51, **Ryan Dugmore** 5/32 in 21.5 overs, **Andrew Mills** 124 (Junior Colts A), **Fletcher Grafton** 111 (4th XI), **Daniel Tharratt** 113 (Colts B), **Ethan Fortuin** 97 (Colts B), **Robert Ball** 6/12 (Junior Colts B), **Stephen Green** 5/20 (Junior Colts A), **Andrew Rushmere** 5/23 (Colts A).

Swimming

Our swimmers have also made an outstanding start to the season and we are delighted to announce that **Tudor Lacey** (Mullins 1956-1959), who was employed at the start of last year by the DSG to run their Aquatic Centre, is now also coaching the College boys. Tudor is one of the greats of South African sport and is unique amongst St Andrew's sportsmen in the fact that he was the first boy ever to be made a full Springbok whilst still at school. He is a man of great humility, wisdom and experience, and already his influence has been seen in the improved times by the boys.

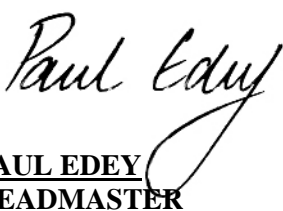
St Andrew's Preparatory 125th Birthday Parade

Last Friday 29th January, the Prep School had a hugely successful 125th Birthday Parade through the centre of town. The Preppies were joined by Old Preppies from both the DSG and College, and the streets were lined with the public waving banners and flags as the Prep cavalcade was led by the College Pipe Band down Somerset Street and left into the High Street where the Prep Headmaster, Mr Graham Gooden, addressed the crowd and made a presentation which reflected the commitment of the Prep to community development. The event was followed by a mayoral reception at the City Hall. It was a great event and a wonderful start to what we hope will be an excellent year for the Prep School.

Quote to Ponder on

It is better to be making the news than taking it; to be an actor rather than a critic.
Winston Churchill

Yours sincerely



PAUL EDEY
HEADMASTER