



THE RIDGE SCHOOL



From the Headmaster's Desk

May 2018 #7

Dear Parents

Like many of you, I'm sure, waking up under the cloak of darkness and in the grip of the frosty winter chill has certainly taken some getting used to again. Whilst many of us can be excused for wanting to stay hidden beneath the languid comforts of our duvets for a few precious minutes longer, there is a group of intrepid boys and coaches who are prepared to brave the elements in the interests of displaying loads of Right Stuff, commitment and resilience.

Each Tuesday morning for the past three weeks, forty or so of our cross country boys, accompanied by their coaches, gather in the main Ridge carpark just as dawn's glow is appearing in the sky above. Huddled together with not much more than a vest and tracksuit top to keep the cold at bay, they set off on a run through the suburb of Westcliff. Their efforts certainly deserve to be applauded, their excitement at being part of The Ridge's cross country team, and all that this means, in terms of promoting a focused sense of belonging, developing individual and team spirit, and enjoying the camaraderie associated with running together in friendship groups.

It is worth mentioning that, not surprisingly, their early morning sacrifices are being rewarded with a number of noteworthy results. Our runners are regularly achieving very well against some pretty stiff opposition at the assembled gatherings of traditional rival schools, many of which can muster teams a good deal larger than our own.

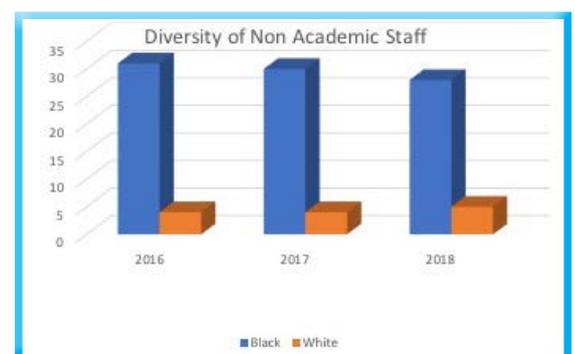
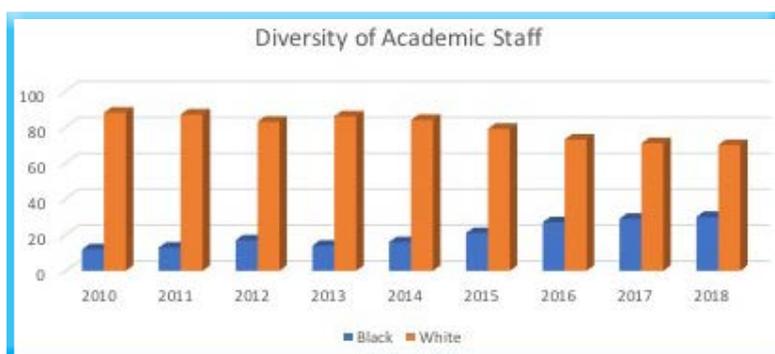
Staff News

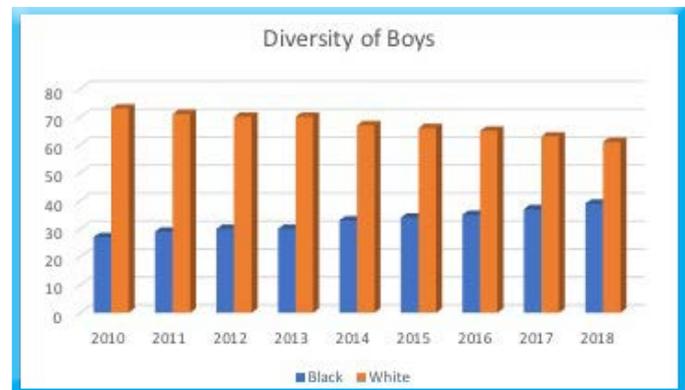
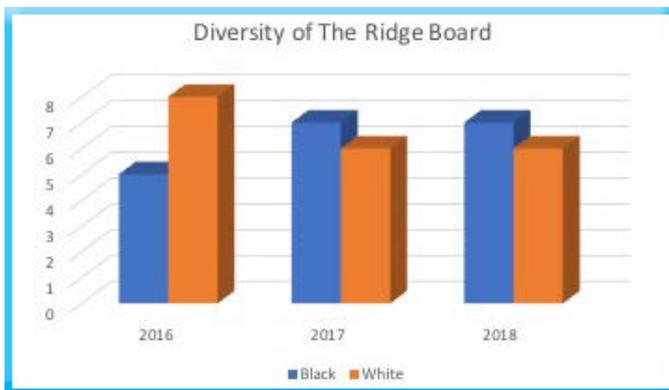
We are delighted to share the very happy news that Jacqui Haddow (Grade 2 class teacher) and her husband Ian have been blessed with the safe arrival of their firstborn son, Eli.

Our Transformation and Diversity Journey

Back in 2008, The Ridge's Board of Governors and management team at the time initiated dialogue on transformation. After extensive consultation with all the necessary stakeholders the board introduced a Transformation Toolkit that up until now, has guided our thinking and approach to the challenges of enhancing the school's diversity. Certain targets were set at the time and these have served to guide us towards meeting important milestones along the journey to becoming more meaningfully inclusive and transformed.

The following graphs give a clear indication of the important work done as steady progress has been made in order to achieve the diversity targets that were set some years ago.





It was mentioned in my last newsletter that the Transformation and Diversity Sub-Committee has been putting finishing touches to the 10 Point Transformation and Diversity Plan / Roadmap. Building on the fine work done by the previous Board, this plan has evolved as a second or even third phase strategy that we believe will take us into the crucial next phase of the transformation journey.

TRANSFORMATION AND DIVERSITY ROADMAP/PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Following a facilitated strategy session, the Board adopted transformation and diversity of the school as one of its key strategic objectives. In order to give effect to this strategic objective and to ensure that the Board properly monitors the achievement of this strategic objective, the Board has agreed to adopt the following transformation and diversity roadmap/plan. The plan looks at the holistic approach to transformation of the school to ensure that the School is a transformed and diverse environment where all members of the school community participate fully in the life of the School.

REPRESENTATION

1. Learners

- a. The Board notes that it has met and exceeded the target of 30% of representation of the learner enrolment in the school that the Board had set in year 2010. The Board recognises the need to further increase the level of representation in learner enrolment numbers. It has agreed to increase the enrolment numbers of black learners (which includes Africans, Indians and coloureds) in the School to 45 to 50% within the next five years.
- b. The Board, together with the Admission Committee, will annually monitor these representativity levels within our learner enrolment in order to ensure diversity of our school learner body.
- c. Learner leadership and sports participation will also be reviewed with a view to making sure that there is an equitable representation of all demographics of our student body. The School and the Director of Sport, in particular, will develop a plan on how to achieve this including through early skill development.

2. Staff and Management

- a. The Board also recognises the need to increase the staff representation in the school. In this regard, the Board intends to increase the representativity levels of black staff (which includes Africans, Indians and Coloureds) at all occupational levels through recruitment processes and promotion opportunities to between 35% to 45% within the next five years.
- b. Skills development and training will also be used to create a pool to which the school could tap into in order to increase the representativity numbers of staff.
- c. Remuneration and benefits including allocation of accommodation.

3. Board:

The school will maintain and monitor the representativity levels of race and gender of the Board members.

4. Other structures:

The principles above must be applied to other structures of the School. These would include the diversity make-up of the Parent Association Committee, the Centenary Committee.

CURRICULIM DIVERSITY

5. The academic team at the Ridge led by Mandy Herold and Nick Diana, together with Moeketsi Motsepe, Richard Stanley and William Gumede, have been tasked to develop a revised curriculum diversity plan including a revised Language Policy.

INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE /ENGAGEMENT/ INCLUSIVITY

6. Institutional Culture: We strive to recognise, celebrate, promote and understand religious, racial, cultural and community differences, without putting too much emphasis on difference but rather on celebration. Promoting a realignment of school policies that incorporate the school's approach and acceptable guidelines to enhancing inclusivity through intentionally embracing various cultural traditions.
7. Staff diversity talks and workshops, and parent diversity talks and workshops; i.e. 'Trading Places' forums, and so on.
8. Encouraging a cross-cultural participation at all school organised events including PA organised events and the planned Centenary events.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

9. School involvement and participation in the broader community to be orchestrated in ways that add value and meaning to a broader learning experience for our boys.

PREFERENTIAL PROCUMENT

10. The School is committed to Black Economic Empowerment. It will therefore actively seek the appointment of black service providers and will make efforts to provide opportunities to black owned businesses including black owned SMMEs.

This important transformation and diversity roadmap / plan has been very carefully thought through and designed following months of intentional discussion at various levels. Moeketsi Motsepe (our project leader) and his team have been working hard at better understanding what meaningful transformation at The Ridge School needs to look like, sound like and feel like and to learn from what other schools are doing in rolling out their own transformation strategies.

The Transformation and Diversity Plan confirms, that this is a multi-faceted and complex programme that will require the input and commitment of a number of stakeholders if we are to realize our desired objectives. Where we will work hard to apply energy and action to all the points as set down, in order to see tangible and measurable progress, it has been decided to prioritize three key areas that Moeketsi Motsepe and his team will be able to focus on.

- ⇒ Exploring a more inclusive language policy
- ⇒ Introducing interventions to highlight and deal with subliminal and institutionalized racism
- ⇒ Actively encouraging a more empowering procurement policy

At our recent Exco Indaba, the members of the management team came up with some exciting ideas to assist with being able to implement appropriate additional mechanisms that will help towards meaningfully engaging with each of these stated priorities. We will report back on the progress being made with each initiative in the weeks ahead.

A Final Word ... The Children of Africa celebration

Last Friday evening the Ridge again played host to the annual Children of Africa evening. It is a gathering of SP children from Salvazione, St Katharine's and The Ridge that is set aside specifically to celebrate our subcontinent's children through music, song and dance. Whilst this was visually commented on in our Ridge Reporter publication earlier this week, the vibrant energy and sheer delight experienced by the

children – not to mention the audience – requires that it be highlighted again.

Following weeks of preparation in respective Grade 6 and 7 class and school groupings, the boys and girls took to the Nicolson Hall stage to share their well-rehearsed song and dance routines. From the 'Indlamu' Zulu dance and the popular Sotho male dance 'Mohobelo' to a Tsongo Xibelani women's dance, Afrikaans poems and songs, and some inspiring Zulu gumboot dancing – and so much more, the children took it in turns to wow their audience.

Moeketsi Motsepe provided a wonderful narration that gave background and history to each of the performances that were so beautifully and colourfully shared. The evening captured again the wonder associated with our children of Africa and proved to be a very happy and truly enriching time for all in attendance.

With the winter term now at full throttle and in anticipation of a busy week ahead, I encourage parents to stay close to The Ridge app, the live calendar, and to the alerts and updates that will be sent out as confirmation of upcoming fixtures, events and happenings.



Warm regards and best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Stanley'.

Richard Stanley
Headmaster