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HEADMASTER'S REPORT FOR THE PARENT ASSOCIATION AGM 2011

ADDRESS TO PA AGM : 30 AUGUST 2011

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for attending tonight's AGM. It is important that parents retain a healthy interest in the affairs of the school, if collectively, we are to work towards ensuring that the school is equipped to educate your children effectively.

The purpose of my report is simply to provide some insight into the major issues we are dealing with at present and to summarise the state of the School, since I last addressed you, early in term 2.

Enrolments

Our present enrolment remains quite stable, as parents realise the value of their children attending Umhlanga College. The number of Grade 7 leavers winning scholarships to the best high schools in KZN, next year, is a clear indication that we are providing a quality and balanced education here and are preparing our children well, for entry into high school.

Feedback that I receive from Heads of the large independent schools in respect of our pupils, has only been positive and encouraging.

So, we look forward to a 4th Grade 1 class in 2012 and a third Grade 4 class, as early indications are that very few of our Grade 3's are leaving us, something that has been the case in the past. This, I think, indicates the confidence that parents have in Umhlanga College.

Academics

There is much in the way of legislation being applied to curriculum matters in schools across the country. Fortunately, our independent status, safeguards us against having to follow the Dept of Education's directives to the letter. Do not under-estimate the value then, of having your child in an independent school, where we still have the freedom to determine what we teach, how we teach it and how much time we allocate to it.

Sport

We have devoted a great deal of time this year to sport across the School. We looked very carefully going into this term at how we were going to manage our hockey and I think our efforts have paid off. Our teams get better and better each week, with our 1st XI beating Girls' College on their Astro on the weekend as an example of how well our teams are developing.

I have also been very happy with the level of coaching being applied down in the JP and parents had an opportunity a fortnight ago to come in on a Saturday morning to join their children for a session. We have another two sessions to go, the 2nd being this weekend and we look forward to another good turn-out of Mums and Dads.

“EDUCATING HEAD, HEART AND HANDS”



Cross Country has been very successful this term with our runners improving each week. With only two races left in the calendar we have looked ahead at how best to keep fitness levels up and will be introducing our **HOT 100** competition as soon as the season ends. This initiative asks the child to run 100km in order to achieve a merit certificate. Auditing of the laps will be done by myself or my son and any child interested, can turn out on a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday to put in their laps. It means that the runner has to complete 200 laps of our short course, which will bring their distance covered to 100km. I am sure this will be met with enthusiasm by the children and that it should do wonders for their fitness.

Don't forget though...our School is still small and we most often box above our weight division when taking on the larger, more established schools. It is easy to accuse the School of inferior coaching when we lose, but remember to give credit where it is due, when our teams win.

Former major league baseball coach, Whitey Herzog said this :

If you recruit good players and they play well, you're a genius. So for a year or two, you'll be called a genius.

Sometimes a genius manager will recruit bad players, who play poorly, which will make people wonder how come a genius, got so dumb, so fast!

Term 4 sees the return of cricket and swimming and we shall be announcing our revised swimming structure within the next few weeks, which will take us through to the end of the 2011/2012 summer...that is till Easter next year. We will do our best to reduce the number of galas in which we swim, as most of the children have commitments to other sports too and we found in term 1 that too many galas, pulled children away from other team sports, or forced them to make difficult decisions in terms of which sport they supported.

We shall utilise the same coaches for cricket as we did in term 1 and revise at the start of 2012 if necessary. Other sports on offer for the boys will include, tennis and water polo.

We are exploring the option of indoor hockey for our girls, with both Danville and Maris Stella, both of whom are offering indoor leagues. The girls also have tennis and water polo to choose from next term.

Down in the JP, the children have cricket (boys and girls), dance, swimming and flipper ball to choose from.

Wayne has already addressed you on the matter of the new Astro. This is where the PA is such a vital organ within the life of a school and where so much good work is being done. Together with your generosity in giving, the nice-to-haves, like an Astro become a reality. They allow for more effective teaching and learning to take place, from which your children and those still to come, will benefit. Thank you parents, PA and especially, Darrell Hill, for working so hard to bring this project to fruition.



Cultural Affairs

Term 3 is traditionally our cultural term and the various grades across the School are busy working on all manner of plays, productions, recital and songs. You'll get to hear all of these very soon.

Our Art has been on display at a local schools' exhibition and the feedback we had on the quality of our work, was very encouraging.

We now offer 7 different instruments to our pupils as an after-school activity and much enthusiasm is being generated in music by our very dedicated music teachers.

Umhlanga College believes in providing a balanced education and I firmly believe that every child should be schooled in an instrument. My dream for UC is to offer music as part of the daily curriculum and my Senior Management team has agreed that we should work towards the establishment of a School of Music, Drama and the Arts here, that will set us apart from any school in our area.

We shall continue to work towards this dream, which I believe can become a reality.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the opportunity to address you this evening. There are exciting plans afoot for Umhlanga College for 2012, which I shall spell out in my regular newsletters, as well as in my Speech Day address in November.

Thank You