

24 January 2020

Dear Parents / Guardians

WELCOME BACK

2020 has arrived and in many ways the year seems 'old' already in spite of us still being in the first month of the year! I have said in various forums – staff, parent and learner – that I believe that this year will be challenging year for us in the sense that we have to bed down some of the systems and programmes initiated last year and that will take hard work), but it will also be a year of victories I believe as we follow through on what we have started.

Our nation in general, and education specifically, faces serious challenges in 2020. While we were enjoying our Festive Season with family and friends economically, socially and educationally, things continued to unfold in our country. The government has revealed that almost 80% of provincial budgets were allocated to education and most of that to teachers' salaries. In spite of this high percentage spend, we still struggle to deliver consistently good outputs. This high spend is not sustainable in our poorly performing economy.

The SARS Report that was published towards the end of 2019 revealed truly alarming statistics. It was revealed that out of 3.2 million companies registered in South Africa, only 380 are responsible for paying 52.7% of ALL Company Income Tax. In the Personal Income Tax category 0.3% of all tax payers in South Africa pay 36.9% of all PIT collected. Our national budget is supported by a narrow wedge of companies and individuals who are propping it up. This is clearly not sustainable.

Early this year we were greeted with the disheartening news that even though we managed to achieve a national matric pass rate of 81.3%, if one took the actual number of learners enrolled in Grade 10 in 2017, the actual national matric pass rate in 2019 was in fact 38.9%, i.e. only four out of every 10 learners enrolled in Grade 10 in 2017 successfully completed their matric exam.

I know the first newsletter of the year is not supposed to be filled with bad news. It is supposed to be upbeat and only focus on the positive things. While I believe there is some positive news and I will come to it shortly, we have to face the realities of where we are and the current challenges facing us if we want to work towards sustainable growth and victory for South Africa in general and Curro Helderwyk in particular.

In these trying times, how must we respond? I believe we are reminded, encouraged and challenged to understand what we have been called to:

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light so shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Mark 5: 13-16)

How will we respond to this call to be the salt and light in our area and our nation?

- We need to find innovative educational strategies that will be best suited to provide our learners and your children with the best opportunities to succeed in a very tough environment locally and globally.
- We have got to be good stewards of what has been entrusted to us – each of us doing what they have undertaken to do faithfully. Parents – support their children with their presence, discipline and paying the school fees they owe on time. Children – being fully present at school in body and mind, making the most of the opportunities being given to them. Teaching staff – to be thoughtful and innovative in their academic preparation and compassionate towards the learners to always seek their best. Support Staff – to ensure that the school campus is well-maintained, neat, safe and a pleasure to be on. To provide an atmosphere that makes all who use or visit our school to feel valued and welcome. The Senior Management Team – to ensure that we lead the school in a responsible manner, never exposing it to poor financial management or poor systems, but to have a clear vision, accountability and good work ethic.
- We must work together as partners bringing our unique perspectives, skills and priorities together to serve the best interests of the children entrusted to our care.

I would like to encourage all parents to become active participants in the school. Some can support with their presence at events, others with their skills, yet others by introducing us to their networks and still others with their resources. Some concrete opportunities for us to work together to be the salt and light is:

- Attend the Whole School Meet & Greet on Saturday, 8th February from 12h00 until 15h00. Bring a picnic or braai on the fires we will provide.
- Join the Champion Parents Team – these are parents who help us to promote the school to recruit new families to the school and helps support new families who have just joined Curro Helderwyk. (If you are interested in this contact Ashley our marketer at ashley.d@curro.co.za .
- Join the Parents Supporters Club – this will be launched later this term and more details will follow.
- Join us at our monthly Parents Prayer Meeting – details will be distributed next week.
- We would like to establish a Parents Committee who can support us with catering and serving at school events – parents love meeting other parents. If you are interested please email Ashley at the email address above.

To summarise then, how will we face the challenges of 2020 by working together, by holding one another to high standards, by speaking the truth, by stepping forward to help. In other words...being salt and light. I look forward to a victorious 2020 with you.

Yours in education,

Mr R Helleberg

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL 2020

