



BELLAVISTA

NEWSLETTER

A SAFE HARBOUR SCHOOL



23 January 2023

Ma'am, I passed Afrikaans.

Across the country this week, pupils receiving outstanding matric results are lauded and applauded. The top one percentile gets many special mentions. Those that achieve distinction in nearly double the prescribed subject quota are celebrated and held in awe. Rightly so, academic success does not come without effort and commitment.

Achieving an objective like completion of schooling is worthy of congratulations and celebrations. It is a milestone and a societal rite of passage. Our new matriculants carry the hope of our community forward. However, it is the stories of those that defy the odds and overcome their disadvantages that should be placed front and centre of every newspaper, newsletter or social media feed. The truly inspirational successes are the results of pupils who showed mettle and grit. Sometimes the best outcome is communicated as plainly as, "Ma'am, I passed Afrikaans". In this young man's instance, learning an additional language was a significant area of challenge.

It is 00:04, 18 January 2023 and the Whatsapp alerts start. “Ma’am, I passed Afrikaans!” It is the release date of matric results for IEB schools in South Africa and the class of 2017 starts reaching out to let their principal of their remedial primary school know how they fared. Later, as the sunrise soaked Johannesburg’s crisp skies, sleep deprived parents reached for their phones and forwarded SMS messages; ping! More news in: 92% for Mathematics; 90% for Accounting; top History result; three distinctions; five distinctions; four distinctions; a bachelor degree pass; we are so proud.

Ma’am, I passed Afrikaans.

The day progresses. Pupils pop in, emails arrive in the inbox, DM alerts ping, calls come through. The principal beams and is excited to share it with an extraordinary team of professionals, currently and previously employed. Tears well up. These are results from children who found themselves struggling in a rigid system of education some 7 to 12 years ago. These are learners who met with barriers to learning within the system and had to conquer the fear, anxiety and shadows that beset any human being faced with relentless challenges and brutal feedback around weakness and failure. The principal’s mind goes back to conversations with parents who desperately sought an avenue of hope for their young child, who believed that with the right input, their child’s unique strengths would shine brighter than their perceived difficulties. These were parents who held hope, optimism and a ‘growth mindset’ long before that became a common postulate in places of education.

Ma’am, I passed Afrikaans.

What does it mean to ‘pass Afrikaans’? Why is this the immediate communication of a young man who also earned multiple distinctions but only shared these outcomes later?

The answer to this question calls for context. It is not about the language or the subject, far from it. Another pupil might say ‘I passed Mathematics’ or ‘I finished the year’. The pupil’s personal measure of success is directly correlated to their greatest challenge.

If you have apraxia of speech, ‘I passed Afrikaans’ represents the end result of years of strenuous effort to master an additional language when language is your area of greatest difficulty. The achievement is a trophy when you have carried labels like dyspraxia or reading disability that were pronounced as limits by experts in the field.

‘I passed Afrikaans’ is symbolic of persevering courageously when the system is against you and well-meaning people have suggested that you don’t even try. It means that in the face of failure over and over again, you try harder.

‘I passed Afrikaans’ captures the conclusion of a marathon called basic education, not the short sprint of an academic year. It implies that alongside you, there were supportive educators,

parents or friends who advocated for you, believed in you more than you believe in yourself and used their skill, influence or energy to push for your right to achieve your potential.

In the context of completing your education with learning difficulties, 'I passed Afrikaans' is an emblem of grit. It describes deliberate practice, regular and realistic goal setting, unwavering resolve and explicit amplification of other personal strengths.

Ma'am, I passed Afrikaans.

It is 00:03, 20 January 2023. The matric results for DBE schools in South Africa begin to roll out. Ping! Ping! Ping!

Ma'am, I did it.

We are so thrilled.

She did so well; we are bursting with pride.

We always knew he could do it.

Thank you for believing in me.

The long walk to freedom begins.

The principal responds to the matriculants:

I knew you could do it.

You are an inspiration.

You're over the line.

You're ready to soar!

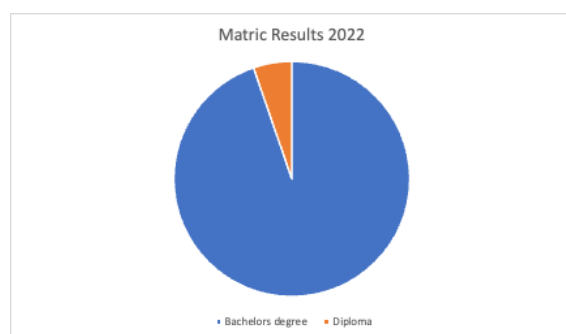
That's true grit.

As we read the front covers of newspapers and listen to interviews with pupils who have excelled, let us consider those who really learned to fail forward. They are the collaborators, problem solvers, critical thinkers and resilient individuals who are ready to face the world of work that we do not yet understand. They are the future we need.

Ma'am, I passed Afrikaans. Look at you... you passed Afrikaans!

Matric results 2022

As you may have gathered, the matriculation cohort of 2022 are starting to send their results through. Twenty six distinctions were achieved across various subjects including Maths, AP Maths, Life Sciences, Physics, English, LO, Geography and History. We will publish a final report when all the children have checked in, but to date, the snapshot looks like this:



Power outages

Some parents are wondering about the school's response to Eskom's power outages.

- We have backup inverters for all wifi, communications and network to keep us connected with cloud based classrooms and both the internet and intranet.
- The devices for personal learning that we use are all mobile so can be charged when there is power in readiness for when there isn't.
- We use solar in the day and put excess back into the grid to help the system in general and to save costs on our monthly expenditure. This has been in place for many years now.
- We are receiving a proposal from the above supplier to extend our existing solar to full storage.
- We won't use petrol or diesel generators from a safety and runaway cost point of view.

Our challenge with our current solution is when there are back-to-back planned and unplanned outages; for example, a power outage and 4,5 hours load shedding twice in a day. The lithium batteries do need to charge up and require more time to run the hall specifically. If the outages are stage 4 and below, we are not interrupted.

Enjoy the week

Alison M Scott (Mrs)
Executive Principal

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