



## ST STITHIANS COLLEGE

### DIVERSITY STATEMENT: 2010

As a South African, Methodist Church School we commit ourselves to becoming a more diverse school in terms of both our student and teacher bodies. We want to be a school where each individual feels welcome and affirmed, and where each one is encouraged to explore and develop their cultural and religious identity as South Africans and as global citizens/leaders. Within our school we want to develop learners who celebrate diversity and who are comfortable with debate and discussion, because the school provides a safe space within which we can all explore difference, experience dissonance and recognise our common humanity.

We recognise that to achieve this we have to constantly explore our assumptions, challenge our prejudices, learn to understand the experience of others and allow each one to be him/ herself. We believe that this builds on our tradition of critical thinking and our core values. It is recognised this is not easy and will involve a lot of hard work.

We want to do this because we believe it is a crucial part of building leaders – it is necessary if we are to grow individuals who can lead in the complex world in which we live and work.

When we talk about diversity, we wish to emphasise particularly, the dimensions of race, gender, ability, religion, culture and socio-economic position.

Our commitment to diversity should not in any way contradict our Methodist identity and our commitment to the values in The Saints Charter, vis-à-vis:

*“St Stithians strives for excellence in all spheres and a continuation of its fine reputation as a leading South African school at the cutting-edge of innovation and educational issues.*

*St Stithians encourages learners to do their personal best, fostering a healthy sense of competition while at the same time teaching learners to work collaboratively. It encourages and teaches a sense of self-confidence, self-discipline, humility and respect avoiding any form of arrogance.*

*St Stithians recognises the need for both educators and parents to provide educational resources and support. All our learners develop a love for learning, through effective communication, respect and courtesy, which forms the basis for the partnership between parents, learners, teachers, management and support staff.”*

All decisions at the College are subject to four key criteria:

- The values espoused by the College, as articulated in the Saints Charter.
- The Methodist Church identity of the College.
- Excellence in education, as articulated in the Saints Charter.
- The long-term sustainability of the College.

The Strategic Plan (2005-2008) sets the following Goal for diversity at the College: The diversity of students and staff will be increased (Goal 9). The following will indicate the extent to which the Goal is achieved by 2010:

- Diversity will be clearly defined in terms of race, gender, academic ability, religion, wealth and disability.
- Specific goals/ targets will be set for each area of diversity.
- There will be a growth in diversity year by year.
- There will be a plan in place to define the market for diverse candidates.
- Facilities for the disabled will be in place.
- The academic support programme will be fully staffed and effective.
- A greater number of families will be able to afford Saints.

All Heads, Deputies and campus shared services Directors met in workshops in late 2006 and early 2007 to discuss in more detail the above strategic goal. This Diversity Statement comprising five goals on Diversity and an implementation strategy was developed at these workshops.

Each school that makes up the St Stithians College village of schools will develop their own implementation plan of the five goals at their own school. These plans will be adopted in each of the schools by the third term 2007.

#### **Goal 1**

**To foster and communicate our commitment to diversity and our diversity statement so that it is understood, accepted and supported by all stakeholders.**

#### **Indicators by 2010**

All stakeholders (parents, teachers, students, Council members etc) will understand and most stakeholders will support our diversity strategy.

#### **Goal 2**

**To establish an environment:**

- **That is welcoming to all;**
- **Where learners, parents and staff value themselves and learn to respect differences that exist in our society;**
- **That understands that we are united in diversity and that diversity brings strength;**
- **That promotes dissonance and discourse in a safe space, within a framework of ethical and value based rules, and which leads to a greater understanding of the social relevance of identity and diversity.**

#### **Indicators by 2010**

- The physical and interpersonal environment will be welcoming to all.
- Diversity will be valued and celebrated.
- Debate will be encouraged especially around issues of identity and diversity.

**Goal 3**

**To continue to diversify the learner population in terms of race and ability and, if possible, socio-economic status.**

**Indicators by 2010**

- Increase the numbers of learners of colour by at least 5% - from 2007 figures by 2010, across the College.
- Continue with our current approach, as defined in the Learning & Teaching Policy, regarding disabled students.
- By 2010 we will have developed a strategy to increase our socio-economic diversity.

**Goal 4**

**To ensure that the College Staff is more diverse in terms of race, gender, abilities, opinions and cultures.**

**Indicators by 2010**

- Meet our Employment Equity Plan targets.
- Parents and learners will be more accepting of teachers from diverse backgrounds.
- All levels of school administration, management and governance are more representative.

**Goal 5**

**As an institution, the College is committed to assisting in the transformation of the South African Economy by supporting in our procurement and tendering policies and other business practices companies owned by blacks, women and small business economic empowerment.**

**Indicators by 2010**

- The College will understand the BEE Scorecard published at the end of 2006, and will use this to set specific targets for its procurement policy.
- A Procurement Policy will be adopted and will govern all procurement in the College by January 2008.

**ADOPTED BY THE COLLEGE EXCO: 05 MARCH 2007**  
**TABLED AT COUNCIL: 15 MARCH 2007**