

ST JOHN'S COLLEGE BULLETIN

Term Four, Issue Four, 2024

"Keep in mind that you must always be setting an example through your moral life and your actions." - Saint Anthony the Great

From the Principal

2024 will figure prominently as a standout year for St John's College.

The visit by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, on the 15 October was a once in a generation event and our students shone at this life-changing celebration held at our school. A week earlier we were invited to Westminster Abbey – one of only 150 people or organisations from 58 Commonwealth countries to be invited to the 75th Anniversary of the Commonwealth to recognise achievement in all spheres of life. Along with the 100 years of the Archdiocese and the 45th year of our beloved College, this year has truly been a landmark year.

Alongside all of this, our community grew in stature, confidence and achievement with the steady improvement and growth of our students evident. I feel blessed to be part of this community and I warmly commend our people and thank the many who have both the heart and desire to build something special.

May you all enjoy a safe, fruitful and well-earned break at this very special time of the year.

Congratulations – 2025 Captains

School Captains:

Daniel Bridgeman and Angelique Tsiounis

Vice Captains:

Panayiotis Diakoumakos and Maria Pop

Junior School Captains:

Serafim Antoniou and Anastasia Sousamli

Junior School Vice Captains:

Christian Stefanidis and Mariah Burns

Community Connections Leader:

Eleni Stefanidis

Environment Leaders:

Rosie Trevorrow and Zoe Henricus

House Activities Leaders:

Evangelos Partsenidis and Gia Nicolaidis

Sport Leaders:

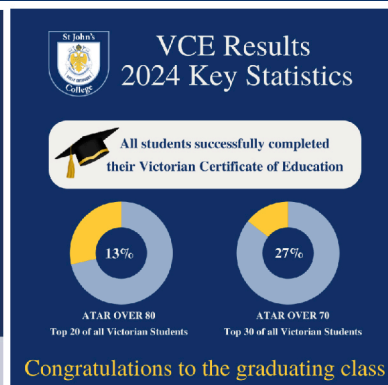
Nicholas Antoniou and Poppy Sarigianoglou



PANTELIS S
ATAR 89.95
COLLEGE DUX

ANGELIQUE F
ATAR 81.65

VCE 2024 RESULTS



VCE Results
2024 Key Statistics

All students successfully completed their Victorian Certificate of Education

13% ATAR OVER 80
Top 20 of all Victorian Students

27% ATAR OVER 70
Top 30 of all Victorian Students

Congratulations to the graduating class

Our students come to us with their own gifts, skills and abilities and we encourage all to attempt Year 12. The emphasis in the VCE in 2024 has been on achieving personal best and we are delighted that our VCE results reflect this, as we wish the class of 2024 all the very best with their future endeavours.

Above all else, they are fine young adults as shown by the way they conduct themselves and the standards set at our recent Awards Ceremony on Monday 2 December. We are forever grateful for their contributions. The wider world will be a better place for their participation and involvement.

Proud Moments - Well done Years 7 and 9!

As mentioned elsewhere in this Newsletter – the world is far too quick to criticize and the younger generation is frequently a 'regular target'. I wanted to share the following with you – both happened during the last week of school when things can become a little busy and more challenging and sometimes people are tired and not at their best. Enjoy:

- An 80-year-old lady who is a daily user of the Mernda train had this to say. She was so impressed that she rang the College to voice her delight.

She wanted to let us know that our Yr 9 students and teachers were the most behaved school she has seen on public transport – "no pushing, shoving and bad language that she normally sees and that "we should be very proud".

I was very pleased to know that our teachers are behaving themselves!

- We received a phone call also on the same day as the matter above, from a new family to the College in 2025, following the Year 7 Transition Day. She made the following comments:
She had never seen her son so happy, with a smile to prove it. "It was the best decision ever to join SJC and the parents, teachers and students were all very welcoming" SJC had exceeded her and her son's expectation and that "they were very grateful to attend."

This year we have spoken about finding a higher gear at important moments – two great examples of this. There are of course times that we let ourselves down and disappoint, this is only human. But, from where I stand, these times are becoming fewer and of diminishing concern and our students are keen and genuine in their endeavours to make amends. Well done!

VCE Results

On behalf of the St John's College community, I warmly congratulate our Class of 2024 on their success in the VCE program this year. I am delighted to announce that all students who participated successfully achieved their VCE completion and the results this year were again among some of the most positive in the history of St John's College.

We warmly congratulate the 2024 Dux, Pantelis Stefanidis, who achieved an ATAR of 89.95 and Dux Proximus, Angelique Fardis, who achieved an ATAR of 81.65.

These positive academic results were achieved by students who participated fully in the co-curricular life of the College and regularly contributed to wider community activities. They also demonstrated impressive leadership qualities in their final years as our senior students.

A combination of supportive parents, effective schoolwide initiatives to improve teaching and learning, a positive culture and a committed and professional staff have all contributed to these achievements.

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From the Principal

The opportunity to step up

As advised at the recent Awards Ceremony of Monday 2 December for Yr 3-12 students and their families, I mentioned that Ms Sarigianoglou will take a year's leave to pursue growth and opportunity beyond SJC. Franziska has been a wonderful member of our community over two stints totalling 12 years. I believe, at certain times, it is important to step outside the everyday and smell the roses – this frequently is a very positive, rejuvenating exercise and I wish Franziska every success with this decision.

In the interim, this also provides the opportunity for growth and the empowerment of other talented and capable staff, while at the same time, broadening and expanding our leadership base and capability. This is such an important component of organisational growth. In saying this, I am delighted to advise that:

- Ms Chiara Constanzo has accepted the position of Senior School VCE Curriculum Co-Ordinator (10-12) for next year. Chiara has been a standout performer at the VCE level and this platform will enable her to share her skills more widely to the benefit of both students and staff.

- Mr Joe Hedditch will undertake the role of School Operations and Events (7-12) for 2025. Joe has held several key positions in his independent school career prior to SJC, including Head of Senior School and Deputy Head of Senior School (10-12).

We wish Chiara and Joe every success; both staff will continue to play a very active role as lead teachers in the classroom to the benefit of our students.

- With Ms Laura Wilcox's departure at the end of 2024, a gap in our gifted and talented programs is left and I am delighted that Ms Laila Sarraf has accepted our invitation to lead this important part of the College's offerings and by doing so, ensure that our momentum in this area continues to grow and expand. Ms Sarraf will continue to undertake key leadership responsibilities in Mathematics and Science, along with 'leading from the classroom' through her teaching role.

- Ms Trish Vu – Lead Maths consultant within the independent sector. Ms Vu will strengthen our extension and support programs in the senior school.

- Ms Daniela Capaldo - Our heartfelt thanks to Dani for her warmth, competence and dedication, as our face of the College at Reception. Sadly for us, Dani has accepted a significant career promotion and we are the poorer for her departure.

Our ability to change, grow and expand continues as a key theme (Good to Great), within the parameters of managed growth and continuity. I would like to emphasise that staff departures are at the lowest number at any time over the past 10 years.

Highly commendable PAT and Growth Achievement results

Student progress is at the very core of our strategic goals and this year, on the back of some excellent results last year, 2024 growth data does not disappoint. For the second year in a row, average student growth across the College (F-10) in Mathematics and English, according to extensive Performance Achievement Testing (PAT) testing, indicated that the average student progress, irrespective of age or capability, was again 14 months. That is to say, 14 months of progress over a 9-month academic year. This is an outstanding result.

NAPLAN

I am also delighted to share the following results of annual NAPLAN testing results.

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is a literacy and numeracy assessment that students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 sit each year.

93%

of our Year 3 students are in the strong or exceeding category in Writing

92%

of our Year 5 students are in the strong or exceeding category in Reading, Spelling and Writing

90%

of our Year 5 students are in the strong or exceeding category in Numeracy

88%

of our Year 5 students are at or above the national strong category in Grammar and Punctuation

90.5%

of our Year 7 students are in the strong or exceeding category in Writing

81%

of our Year 7 students are in the strong or exceeding category in Spelling

Setting up for an Exciting Future

One of the very important strategic items for our Board which I have been delighted and privileged to participate in, has been the futureproofing of our College. This has been an extended undertaking and with the vision, passion and generosity of the Beniko Family Trust and other very positively disposed benefactors this is being achieved. My special thanks to our Board who have been highly active in this regard.

As announced by the Chair of our College Board, Father John Frangos at the recent Awards Ceremony, plans for the following facility are well advanced and in the pipeline for 2026/27.



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From the Principal

The Wizard of OZ

Our Awards Ceremony is an occasion where we recognise success, we celebrate growth and achievement and applaud those among us who have demonstrated excellence - be that in their studies, their personal efforts over 2024 or just as importantly through their qualities and behaviours and interaction with others which we describe as Philotimo.

While we are here to honour and applaud those accomplishments, just as significantly, I wish to spend time recognising those who efforts have created the conditions for this success - be they teachers, support and general staff, our Reverend Fathers, other students, parents and guardians and the supporters of our College and our Board. When I think about the theme of success, I immediately think of one of my favourite films. For the record, it was not initially a commercial success, however over time it has become known as:

- the most watched film in history.
- frequently ranked in the 10 best movies of all time.
- and its signature song, 'Over the Rainbow' has been voted the greatest American movie song of all time.

The film features a young girl - 12-year-old Dorothy, who with her dog Toto and the family farmhouse are transported to the Land of Oz. On her way to the Emerald City as she travels along the yellow brick road, she meets 3 wonderful characters – the stars of the show:

- A Scarecrow (who lacks a brain and seeks to be the wisest man in all of Oz)
- A Tin Woodsman (who without a heart feels he cannot be kind nor loving) and
- A Cowardly Lion (who as the king of all beasts is ashamed at his lack of courage and embarrassed by his timid and fearful ways).

While some people see these 3 characters as the stars of the show, in my opinion it is not them, but rather the Wizard of Oz or as he is sometimes known – the great and powerful Oz who is the real star! Unseen for most of the movie, he is the ruler of Oz, highly regarded and feared by his subjects. Believing he is the only person capable of solving their problems, Dorothy and her 'strange group of friends' travel to the Emerald City to meet him.

However, Oz is reluctant to greet the group, each time appearing in a different form – a giant head, a ball of fire and a horrible monster. Eventually, it is revealed that the great and powerful Oz is actually none of these, but rather, a very ordinary looking man. He is not the great magician nor sorcerer as believed, all 'knowing and powerful' – he is in fact somewhat disappointing and somewhat underwhelming. But he is, nonetheless, GREAT !!

What makes him so great is his ability to make these 3 characters believe in themselves:

- through encouragement
- by revealing to them their true strengths and abilities
- and instilling self-belief

My sincere thanks to 'those who create this magic' in our College by helping our students to believe in themselves and take important steps to becoming the person they would like to become.

- Finding the courage, like the Lion, to tackle things they believed beyond them and were previously too afraid to try
- Or like the Tin Man to discover passion or interests of the heart in areas where this did not previously exist
- Or like the loveable Scarecrow who had written himself off as a no-hoper – to develop new understandings and skills and in doing so reach a higher level of achievement and confidence

Thank you for the belief you have shown in others who walked across our stage at our Awards Night – your encouragement, kindness, time, and energy invested; has allowed others to shine. Their success is yours as well.

And thinking of yellow brick road – the theme of OZ, dear to my heart if you haven't already worked it out, has to do with seeing and believing in others and accentuating the positive.

In a world that is far too quick to judge, even quicker to tear down and remind people of what they are not doing ... or should be doing ... or how bad the world is; you are our beacons, you create the dreams and give wings to others in order that they may fly.



2024 Annual Magazine

Families should have received by this stage a copy of the 2024 Yearbook. My congratulations to Mrs Foundoglou on the compilation of this remarkable record of the events that made up the 2024 school year. This latest edition captures both in words and pictures the activities that were considered the highlights of the past 12 months by our students, together with some very special community events across our school.

Confirmed Calendar Dates

19 DEC 2024	- Office Closed
2 JAN 2025	- Cutting of the Vasilopita - Axion Estin
19 JAN 2025	- Archbishop's Name Day Church Service
21 JAN 2025	- Office Opens for Term 1
25-27 JAN 2025	- Philotimo Festival - Red Hill
26 JAN 2025	- Australia Day
28 JAN 2025	- All Staff Return for Term 1
31 JAN 2025	- Foundation/Year 7/ VCE Orientation Day
3 FEB 2025	- First Day of School - All Students