



**Southern
Ontario
Collegiate**

SOC Update

School Newsletter

Educating Students from Around the Globe for Over 40 Years

November 2023

From the Principal, Alison Currie



Photo Credit: View from Blue Mountain by Halimat Adeoye

Our first semester of the academic year is more than half over. We've been very impressed with the way students have adapted to the new curriculum and styles of learning. This cohort of students reflect a very positive, collaborative, and supportive approach to their time in Canada. Teachers and other SOC team members are impressed with their focus and determination.

OSSLT

Most of our students are focused on preparation for the OSSLT (Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test) which they'll write November 22nd – 24th. A minimum mark of 75% on the test is required to pass the test and meet the

literacy requirement for graduation; SOC's guidance counsellor, Abeer Ghorieb is working hard to prepare students for the test. If you have questions about your child's work in this area, please contact her. In addition to specialized tutorials and assessment of submitted work, Abeer will be supporting students to write OSSLT practice tests online.

Each student has received written notification of the date and time that they will write the OSSLT in November. All tests will be written in the school's computer lab. Please encourage and support preparations for the OSSLT. Students who don't achieve the requisite 75% can meet the literacy requirement by taking the Ontario Literacy Course in a later semester.

Activities and Events

The highlight of October was the school's trip to Blue Mountain in Collingwood, giving students a chance to hike some amazing trails, cross the breath-taking suspension bridge and explore the caves. It's important to experience life outside of the city, to see landscapes and geological formations unique to this part of Canada. Results of our school-wide photography contest will be out soon; in the meantime, here are some samples of students' experiences at Blue Mountain.



Hallowe'en was a chance for students to show off their creativity; great costumes abounded, and the pumpkin carving contest was a great success. Thanks to staff and students for making this such a great day.



Supporting Your Child's Progress and Success

Educators, psychologists, and advisors agree that keeping the lines of communication open is vital, even more so when your child is studying overseas. As they master a new curriculum and new academic challenges, students continue to require support from well-informed parents. Younger students in grade 11 are still considering prospective careers; grade 12 students are trying to determine which universities and colleges offer the programs they seek. Tuition, residence, scholarships, entry requirements vary from institution to institution. Our young people are learning to take on more responsibility and to make informed choices; at the same time, they still need advice and support from trusted family members and academic advisors.

One of the most useful sites you can access is Ontario Universities Information website <https://www.ontariouniversitiesinfo.ca/>. This enables you and your child to research individual programs; for example, you can pull up all the universities in Ontario that offer a specific program, like computer science; this enables you to compare minimum marks required, costs, and prerequisites. You can also look at one particular university to see the full range of degree programs it offers. This is important in identifying options; if a student's marks don't meet the requirements for computer science, for example, is there a business course with a focus on computer studies? Don't be hesitant to explore all the options available. We are always here to offer resources and recommendations.

Some students are considering attending university outside Ontario. Talk to them about distance, climate/weather, potential access to family/friends, costs, and post university opportunities. They welcome your questions and support as they consider big decisions about their next steps.

Check on your child's attendance, punctuality, and academic results through Edsembli; Catherine Mcfarland can assist you with access as needed. More importantly, ask your child about their subjects and classes. Our academic and guidance staff discuss student progress consistently; our guidance counsellor, Abeer Ghorieb meets regularly with students to ensure that everyone gets the support they need.

Remind students about the importance of a healthy routine: students who are away from home need advice on maintaining a productive study schedule, putting time aside for fitness, sport or play, and of course, it's crucial for teens to get lots of rest. Every year, the temptation amongst a few students to stay up late and play video games arises; we talk to students about the impossibility of learning if you're not well rested. We urge you to have a conversation with your child about how they schedule and manage their time.

Look for our Guidance Newsletter later this month for information about ranges of scholarships available. While admission scholarships loom large, even a small scholarship can cover the costs of textbooks.

Upcoming Events

Visits from Laurentian, Wilfred Laurier, Carleton and Ottawa Universities will take place in November. These give students opportunities to meet with university reps face to face and discover ongoing options around post-secondary education.

November 7 – A visit from the **Hamilton Police Force** ensures that students understand how to maintain personal safety in daily life and online. From practical issues like protecting your personal information and ID to avoiding scams, to interacting safely in the city, this is also a chance for students to meet a member of the local police force and ask questions about flourishing in a new environment.

November 10 – Remembrance Day Assembly

Remembrance Day is marked across Canada with public and individual events and ceremonies. Particularly focused on our country's experiences in the first and second World Wars, this is a time for serious reflection on the sacrifices of

many young men and women over the years. Our assembly also provides opportunities for students to reflect on their places and roles in valuing and striving for peace in tumultuous times.

November 22, 23, 24 – students write Ontario Secondary School Literacy Tests (OSSLT) by appointment.

November 28 – As you know, all students are required to complete a minimum of 10 hours of community service per academic year. One of SOC's projects is to support The Living Rock, a local organization that supports families and young people in need in Hamilton. On November 28, we'll deliver the food staff and students have been collecting over the past two months to The Living Rock. Small efforts on our parts can make a huge difference to others.

December 1, 4 – Final Exams for Semester 2

Thursday December 7 – Southern Ontario Collegiate's Graduation Ceremony will be held in our auditorium. We welcome parents to attend onsite if you're travelling to Hamilton or online. You'll receive information regarding how to join online soon.

December 11 – Semester 2 begins

December 15 – Last day of classes for students; holiday celebrations

Thank you for your ongoing support of Southern Ontario Collegiate and its students. If you have any questions or comments, please contact alison.currie@mysoc.ca.

Contact us at SOC:

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