



Results from the Class of 2016!

We are thrilled with the HSC results from the Class of 2016. I am so proud of them all – I know they are great, strong, compassionate and admirable young women and they did so well in their examinations!

And I know you will want to know some “facts and figures” about the results too. But first, I would like you to show a letter I sent to the Editor of the Sydney Morning Herald on the day after there was information in that paper (and similar information in other outlets too).

You know the scene in Muriel’s Wedding where Deidre comes in to the Chinese restaurant where her lover Bill is having dinner with his whole family.... Bill says: “Deidre Chambers... What a coincidence...!”? Because of course, it isn’t a coincidence at all. It’s engineered that they would meet up there!

I felt the same this morning when I opened the Sydney Morning Herald and read the headline: “HSC results 2016: James Ruse Agricultural High School tops the HSC for the 21st year running”.

Because, of course, this is not a coincidence either! James Ruse Agricultural High School is the most selective school in the state. They take the top students – a tiny fragment of the academically most able, as determined by the selective high schools tests. Is anyone surprised by the fact that most of those same students then go on to get over 90 in their HSC examinations? Indeed, they had 773 ‘mentions’ out of 1058 entries. I actually wonder how come they didn’t get 1058 mentions and a perfect 100% in the merit lists!

And other lines in the media coverage are just as meaningless. “PLC (Croydon)... plunged 16 places”, or “Wenona was the rising queen of 2016, picking up 17 spots”.

Now don’t get me wrong. I think James Ruse is a fine school. So are PLC and Wenona. So are the many, many fine schools who don’t ever rate a mention in the meaningless analysis written about the HSC results every year – comprehensive government schools, schools in disadvantaged areas, schools working in their communities to engage and challenge and fully educate their students, whatever abilities and circumstances present themselves.

I received an email yesterday from a parent whose daughter goes to SCEGGS. She said: *“I know you don’t rate league tables, but I wanted to congratulate you anyway on the HSC results. I had many phone calls and texts today from very happy parents, so that can only be a good thing...”* I was really heartened by that email. I think I am slowly educating my school community that the Leagues Tables are pointless, that I will never gloat or demonstrate pride in where SCEGGS comes in them, or use in marketing, or give credibility to in any way. And this parent understood, I think, that there are measures to say whether a school should be pleased. Happy students and parents is a “soft” measure, and there are more mathematical or statistical ones, but it isn’t a bad first test! You get the idea. It’s about whether someone achieved at or above their expectations, their potential, what they thought they were going to get.

Because these leagues tables are influenced in the main by the ability level of the students in the cohort, not the standard of teaching demonstrated by the school.

I care deeply about providing the best education we can possibly imagine for SCEGGS girls. I want us to have a really excellent academic standard, where girls think deeply about all of their subjects, so that they are curious, passionate, thoughtful young women. I want our girls to be confident, articulate, compassionate and resilient. I want them to value creativity, and collaboration, critical thinking, diversity of thought. I want them to be accomplished and well-rounded.

And none of these things are demonstrated in the slightest by the trivial leagues tables published every year in all of the media outlets!

So, firstly and most importantly, to the Class of 2016, I am so proud of you. We were so happy with many of the results – so many fine achievements, great individual and cohort accomplishments. As I said at Speech Night: *“And to my Year 12s, in their blue uniform one last time, I have loved every minute of having you with us. You go with our blessing, to make a difference to the world, to live with purpose and high ideals, to live, and love and laugh...”* So our heartiest good wishes and congratulations to the Class of 2016.

Having said that, I know you will want to know a little more specifically about how we have gone! This summary provides an overview of some of the different statistics for the different courses and highlights many successes - but naturally there is still a lot more work for us to do to understand them all thoroughly. And as always, it is important to say that these are just statistics, they are not the stories of students or individual journeys.

Top All-Rounders:

Seventeen of our girls made the state’s “Top All-Rounders” list this year, having gained a mark of at least 90% in ten or more of their HSC units, which is a great achievement for these girls.

They were:

- Audrey Armstrong-Bailey
- Lucy Baker
- Isabel Barter
- Isabel Black
- Olivia Capelin
- Jemma Everingham
- Samantha Fendall
- Niamh Gallagher
- Ilsa Hattam
- Isabella Kadi
- Lianne Koinis
- Claudia Mirabello
- Charlotte Munns
- Georgia Niederer
- Ursula Paetzholdt
- Angelica Pettaras
- Francesca Spry

I am really pleased with this result and am so proud of all of these girls!

In individual subjects, we had 287 mentions in the Distinguished Achievers lists from 98 different girls. This means that 98 of our girls gained in the top band with a mark over 90% in one or more of their subjects – this is an excellent achievement for each of them in those subject areas, showing a particularly strong performance in one or more of their subjects.

Of particular note this year:

- Ursula Paetzholdt came 3rd in the state in Extension 1 English
- Nadia Vidor came 2nd in the state in German Beginners, with Ursula Paetzholdt 3rd and Samantha Fendall 5th
- Isabella Emanuel came 5th in the state in Music 2
- Elliott Ainsley-Miley came 17th in the state in Business Studies

The table below represents the number of students, as a percentage of the SCEGGS candidature, who have achieved a mark in one of the top two bands for the course. For comparison, the state percentage achieving in the top two bands is also provided. In a 2 unit subject, such as Ancient History, a mark in one of the top two bands means a mark over 80%.

Subject	SCEGGS Candidature	State Percentage in top two bands	SCEGGS Percentage in top two bands
Ancient History	22	30.68	95.5
Biology	29	35.11	69.0
Business Studies	25	34.33	88.0
Chemistry	27	40.94	92.6
Design and Technology	14	40.8	100
Drama	17	42.6	94.1
Economics	22	45.2	86.4
English (Standard)	9	13.39	88.9
English (Advanced)	97	61.92	93.8
English Extension 1	32	94.94	100
English Extension 2	8	79.35	100
Geography	8	40.93	62.5
IPT	6	27.71	83.3
Mathematics General 2	39	25.63	69.2
Mathematics	60	52.51	75.0
Mathematics Extension 1	28	79.37	96.4
Mathematics Extension 2	10	85.34	80.0
Modern History	43	40.84	81.4
History Extension	7	80.59	100
Music 1	5	62.74	100
Music 2	3	89.53	100
Music Extension	1	93.59	100
PDHPE	22	34.41	68.2
Physics	10	29.94	80.0
Visual Arts	46	54.38	97.8
French Continuers	17	65.33	94.1
French Extension	6	88.76	100
German Beginners	12	61.05	100
Japanese Continuers	2	56.46	100
Latin Continuers	2	80.48	100
Latin Extension	2	98.24	100

ATARs:

As you would all be aware, we do not receive any information about the ATARs (Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank) achieved by our girls. These were released to the girls directly online but we do ask girls to email or ring in and let us know how they went – we love to hear from them all – whatever mark they achieved.

Our top ATAR was a tie with two girls on 99.60 – Charlotte Munns and Ursula Paetzholdt. We will ask both of them back to our first Assembly of the year. This is an outstanding performance from both of them and they counted high levels of English and Mathematics, History, the Social Sciences, Languages and Visual Arts in their subjects.

We have again used an external consultant to estimate the ATARs and help us analyse the results so that we can advise students in future years, and to build up our knowledge base of processes and procedures.

It is important to remember:

The ATAR is a rank, not a mark, so for example an ATAR of 90 indicates that the student has performed well enough in the HSC to be placed in the top 10% of their age group.

Overall, it appears that we gained the following ATAR rankings:

- 6 girls over 99
- 15 girls over 98
- 45 girls over 95
- 68 girls over 90
- 83 girls over 80

I received a lovely email from Amy Morrison, a student from the Class of 2016, just a few days ago, part of it read:

Thank you so much for the support and encouragement you gave during my final year of SCEGGS. I didn't get an ATAR over 90, but I am very happy with how I have gone - the person that SCEGGS shaped me to be is of the greatest value. Through an application and interview processes, I applied for and was accepted to both the RMIT Bachelor of Communications (Design) and Bachelor of Communications (Advertising). I am incredibly proud that my English, Drama and Art works constructed a folio which resulted in my being offered a place from the field of over 700 students who applied to each degree... the confidence, the passion and the dedication I gained at SCEGGS gave me this brilliant opportunity! My gratitude is inexpressible.

I'm telling a few girls in the year below that even if you're no 90+ student, you can continue your passion and determination after HSC exams finish so you get all the opportunities possible.

I want our girls to strive for excellence and to achieve their own personal best - whatever that might be. I want them to have a broad liberal education, studying a range of subjects to encourage them to grow as people and to broaden their thinking. I want us as a community to be just as proud of an 70% or an 85% or a 99%, if the girl has worked as hard as she can. I want our community to value excellence, and the challenge of academic rigour and most of all - striving for and achieving your own personal best.

Where to from here:

We will continue to undertake a more careful analysis in the next couple of months of all the data we can acquire. So, we will look at how individual girls performed against their ability level; we will construct graphs of Year 10 results against HSC results, comparative information of how different subjects did against each other and so forth. We will look at the ATAR each student gained, which subjects counted in the calculation of her ATAR and which didn't. We will look at which options and electives we chose within courses, and how our students performed in each of these. We will use all of this to help us assess how this group of girls performed against their potential. And next year, as with all years, we will identify the areas that we can do even better for the following year. And of course we will continue to work on all aspects of our programs to ensure we are delivering the best education possible in every area.

Our full analysis of all the results has yet to be completed, and of course each year's cohorts are different – they select different subjects based on their differing interests, strengths, talents and abilities, and hence there will always variation between years, but overall the Class of 2016 appears to have done well, and we are all very happy.

Jenny Allum