



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

THUTO



NEWSLETTER

President strongly condemns corporal punishment in South African schools



“Government will take action against any teacher who breaks the law and uses corporal punishment in schools,” said President Jacob Zuma during the 17th Annual National Teaching Awards (NTA) ceremony that took place at Gallagher Convention Centre in Midrand on 25 March 2017.

A KwaZulu-Natal teacher from Prince Tokotoko High School in Nongoma was suspended last week after a video of her beating Grade 12 girls in the classroom went viral.

President Zuma described the beating of learners as an unlawful violation of children’s dignity and personal safety. He said action would be taken against those breaking the law. Corporal punishment was banned in September 1997. “Let us continue to guide them and lead them on the right path, working with them. We must build a better future for our children together,” President Zuma advised.

The President also referred to the case in which a 14 year-old student, Sphamandla Choma, was brutally beaten by his school principal. As a result of the assault, the student was left paralysed and subsequently died a few months later.

Education stalwarts honoured for their excellent contribution towards education



The continuous journey towards lifelong learning endures owing to the commendable efforts of dedicated teachers and their selfless service to education. Teachers are the backbone of the schooling system and their huge role in imparting knowledge to young minds has to be saluted. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) hosted the 17th National Teaching Awards at Gallagher Convention Centre in Midrand on 25 March 2017 to recognise and acknowledge the efforts of committed teachers who educate the future leaders of the country with passion and dedication.

The legacy of Oliver Tambo, the former ANC President, was also honoured through a special category, called the OR Tambo Lifetime Achievement Award. Tambo was a Mathematics and Physical Science teacher and later became a lawyer and national leader. The top teachers excelling in various areas of teaching specialisation were awarded with certificates and trophies of excellence, as well as prizes donated by Vodacom Foundation, OR Tambo International Airport, AVBOB, Novus Holdings, SchoolNet, Massmart Walmart and Legacy Resorts; which included cars, tablets, laptops, cellphones, training courses, cash prizes and weekends away.

Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie Motshekga, said that the NTA remain a pivotal platform for raising the morale of teachers: “Through these Awards we are able to focus public attention on the positive aspects of Basic Education, thereby raising the public image of the teaching profession. We further recognise and promote excellence in teaching performance and honour dedicated, creative and effective teachers and schools whilst encouraging best practice”.

In his opening remarks, President Jacob Zuma stated that the Awards afford an opportunity to celebrate hard work and excellence amongst teachers: “What excites me this evening is that the 17th Annual NTA finalists come from all economic, racial and geographical backgrounds, including deep rural areas. We are particularly pleased with the success of teachers from public schools. You have demonstrated that excellence in public schooling is a reality in our schools. This event also recognises school managers who play a pivotal role in ensuring the health of a school”.

President Zuma also pointed out that teenage pregnancy continues to pose a serious challenge to the functionality of schools. “We have to join hands as a nation to deal with teenage pregnancy in our schooling system. We also still have serious cases of crime in our schools such as gang violence, drug use and alcohol abuse. We also have cases of bullying in some schools which have a negative impact on our children. We must not give up and must continue working together to eliminate these social ills and protect our children. Let us continue to guide them and lead them on the right path, working with them. We must build a better future for our children together,” President Zuma concluded.



Minister Motshekga calls upon civil society to unite in building safer learning environments - free from harmful religious practices



School safety and learner wellbeing remain one of Government's priorities. The Safety in Education Directorate organised a National Roundtable on the *Charter on Rights and Responsibilities for Religious Conduct in Learning Environments* in Pretoria on 28 March 2017.

The objective of the Roundtable was to engage various education stakeholders on aspects of religious practices in ensuring that every religion being practiced within the schooling system falls within the confines of the *Constitution*. The Roundtable, which was chaired by Deputy Director-General for Social Mobilisation and Support Services, Dr Granville Whittle, was used as a point of departure for enabling civil society, Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) and other education stakeholders to work towards promoting social cohesion in the country.

Safety in Education Director, Mr Paseka Njobe, made a valuable presentation on the draft Charter to afford the education constituency an opportunity to provide input and comment before its implementation. The Charter, which can also be referred to as a framework, will help schools in creating a culture of accountability and responsibility for the councils and fraternities within various religious organisations; and for offering guidance in terms of standards of good conduct, as well as the identification of misconduct. The purpose of this Charter is to set out the expected conduct that all religious national bodies are expected to adhere to and to advocate for these standards by informing the public of the principles and standards embodied in the Charter.

This Charter forms part of the wider range of legislation, standards of practice, universal norms, *Constitutional* principles and other procedures that religious organisations need to adhere to. Faith groups are responsible for ensuring that their conduct does not fall below the standards set within the Charter; and for ensuring that no action or omission on their part will pose harm to the well-being of themselves or others.

Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie Motshekga, took to the podium to highlight the significant role that can be played by FBOs in strengthening school safety in the country.

In her address, Minister Motshekga stated that schools need to take responsibility to educate learners on the issues of religious practices: "We belong to a diverse society; therefore our children need to acknowledge and respect the religious beliefs of people from other ethnic groups. The *Constitution* should also be utilised as the main source of the *Bill of Rights* to prevent religious practices that are harmful to learners. We have to work together to deal with any harmful religious practices that disrupt quality learning and teaching in our schools".

In conclusion, Minister Motshekga pleaded with parents to assist Government in guiding their children to value and respect the religious beliefs of others, as long they fall within the parameters of the law.

Minister celebrates investment in the advancement of MST infrastructure by MTN Foundation in support of rural schools in Schweizer-Reneke



Minister Motshekga, in partnership with the MTN Foundation, has honoured Mampho Secondary School learners and Educators in Schweizer-Reneke, with the donation of a Computer Laboratory with 30 computers and two fully equipped Educator work stations. The school achieved 93,94% in the 2016 National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examinations and Minister Motshekga challenged the school to increase the number of learners taking Mathematics, Physical Science, Technology and Engineering in the Dr RS Mompoti education district.

The Minister acknowledged and expressed her joy for the continuing partnership between the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the MTN Foundation in their generous donation of state-of-the-art Multimedia Centres to more than 300 public schools across the country. She also went on to say how delighted she was to join the MTN Foundation in handing over school shoes and bags to 780 learners at the school. "We trust that this small gesture will indeed lighten the burden of the less fortunate children in the community of Schweizer-Reneke." Motshekga added.

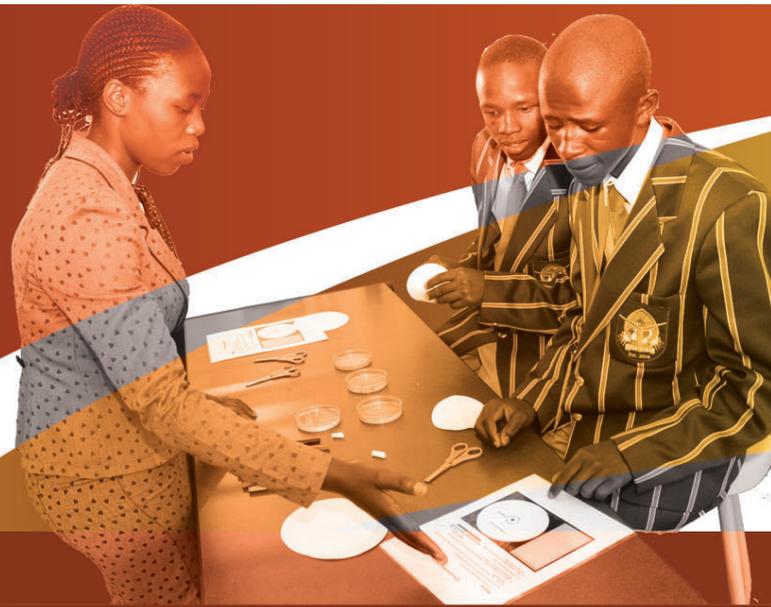
Minister Motshekga utilised the opportunity to also reflect on the work that the DBE is doing in the Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST) sphere of the basic education sector. She mentioned that the initiation of the Ministerial Task Team (MTT) in 2013 to advise the sector on an integrated MST Strategy, recommended that the DBE must establish a MST Directorate to drive a sector wide improvement programme. The Minister confirmed that this key MST Directorate is now fully functional.

There was also an emphasis on the mantra that Basic Education is a societal issue where no single stakeholder acting independently will produce the desired outcomes as envisaged in the *National Development Plan (NDP) 2030*. It is through partnerships, like the one between the MTN Foundation and the DBE, which yields international results for our learners that reap the benefit of improved learning and teaching infrastructure, allowing them to take part in international science fairs and to fly the South African flag of achievement:

- Taiwan International Science Fair, Taipei = 1 award
- INTEL ISEF, United States of America = 6 awards
- INESPO International Awards, Netherlands = 3 awards; and
- I-SWEEEP, United States of America = 1 award

The contribution made by the MTN Foundation is lauded for investing in the advancement of MST activities throughout the basic education sector in South Africa, especially through the support of rural schools.

Minister Motshekga to host the National Education Excellence Awards



07 April 2017

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On 07 April 2017, Minister Angie Motshekga, will be hosting the National Education Excellence Awards at the Capital Menlyn Maine Hotel in Pretoria. Minister Motshekga initiated the Awards four years ago to celebrate excellence and hard work in the country's 81 Education Districts. The Awards have now been expanded to recognise and celebrate performance excellence in districts and schools that have, over the last four years, showed exceptional positive improvements in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examinations in the following areas:

District with the highest percentage pass: NSC 2016;

- Top Performing District NSC – using an Inclusive Basket of Quality Indicators;
- Most Improved District: 2014 - 2016
- Top Performing District in Bachelor passes: 2014 - 2016
- Top performing District: Mathematics, Physical Science and Accounting: 2014- 2016
- Top performing public schools: Quintiles 1 to 5;
- Top performing LSEN school; and
- A Ministerial Award to recognise outstanding contribution to growing the number of quality Mathematics passes in the most disadvantaged communities.

The Awards encourage districts and schools to go beyond the call of duty and to register improvements in the system, which will meet the highest standard of education in the country. Approximately 200 guests attended the 2016 ceremony on 01 April 2016 with representatives from partners, including the Tiger Brands Foundation (TBF), Regenesys Business School, Sky Net, South African Airways (SAA), Nexus Travel, Vodacom, AVBOB and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) attending.

It has been a very long challenging journey for Education Districts to claim their rightful place in the education landscape. For many years Districts were viewed as the weak link in the education delivery chain. Not anymore. Districts have come into their own and Minister Motshekga now calls them “the backbone of education” – and rightly so.

For many years there was no clearly defined role for Districts although they were considered a useful conduit through which the national and provincial departments conveyed policies and programmes to schools. They were also considered very useful in “processing paper” from schools through to the various provinces. Their professional role was often forgotten in the process. All this changed when the *Policy on the Organisation, Roles and Responsibilities of Education Districts* was published in March 2013. This started a chain of events that did not only recognise the importance of Education Districts, but placed them at the centre of education delivery. Not only were the roles and responsibilities of Districts clearly defined, but space was created to work directly with Education Districts in their development and support

The quarterly meetings of the Forum of Education Districts have become the highlight of the annual calendar of District Directors throughout the country and are rarely attended by less than 120 participants. The success of these meetings lies in making sure that the agenda for each meeting is rich, substantive, informative and relevant to the work of District officials. Through this Forum, the Sector has ensured that District Directors, who are at the coal face of education delivery, meet and reflect on critical policy together, share best practice and together plan for the improvement of the delivery of education throughout South Africa. Minister Motshekga, who spearheaded the formation of this Forum, and Deputy Minister Enver Surty attend each of these meetings, engaging and guiding delegates throughout the two days. It is this commitment from our top leaders that has made every District Director want to attend the meeting.

During these meetings, District Directors have an opportunity to reflect on a wide range of weighty topics during robust engagements. These meeting also reflect on issues affecting the day-to-day operations of District Directors. There is no doubt that this Forum has added immense value to the business of education and has established a working model for a professional community of practice with peers sharing best practice and growing together.



Consultative workshops on the draft *Professional Development Framework for Digital Learning*



The DBE is undertaking consultative workshops with various stakeholders on the draft *Professional Development Framework for Digital Learning*. The first workshop took place from 22 to 23 March 2017 in Pretoria, and involved Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) whilst the second workshop was directed at Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) and took place from 27 to 28 March 2017, also in Pretoria.

The draft Framework has implications for both the basic education and higher education sectors, and the objective of the workshops were therefore to consult as well as to invite inputs from these sectors.

The revised *Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications, 2015* (MRTEQ) identifies a minimum set of competences required of newly qualified teachers, including highly developed Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills. The involvement of HEIs in implementing this Framework is therefore critical as it supports the realisation of the goals of MRTEQ.

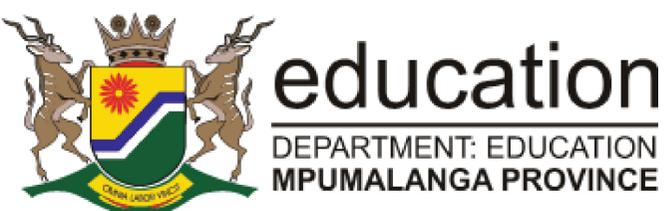
The purpose of the Framework is to provide guidelines for professional development, specifically in order to provide “qualified and competent leaders who use ICT for planning, management and administration” and “qualified and competent teachers who use ICT to enhance teaching and learning.” Goal 16 of the DBE’s *Action Plan to 2019: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2030* commits the Department and its partners to improving the professionalism, teaching skills, subject knowledge and computer literacy of teachers throughout their careers.

The Framework is a tool that provides a different approach to the professional development of teachers in that it encourages teachers to design learning activities that maximise the impact of learning technologies and digital content resources on learning. Other important stakeholders whose buy-in is also critical are teacher unions and the South African Council for Educators (SACE) and training providers.

The DBE will embark on its implementation plan as soon as the consultation processes have been concluded. This will also involve working with all relevant stakeholders in the adoption of the Framework.

Regional Round-up

Mpumalanga Province



Minister Angie Motshekga strongly condemned the torching of school infrastructure at Bushbuckridge in the Mpumalanga Province. Eight classrooms and the Administration block of the Lamulelani High School were torched on 25 March 2017. The criminals took tools, food and other valuable items before setting the buildings alight. The damage was only discovered the following morning by community members grazing their cattle as the location of the school is secluded from any residential homes. “This type of behaviour by members within our communities cannot be allowed to continue,” said Minister Motshekga.

As Government we have taken a decision that schools that are destroyed through vandalism will not be prioritised at the expense of schools that are already on planning lists to be built, and sadly as a result, it is the children of the very communities who burn schools who ultimately suffer,” said Minister Motshekga. The burning of this school follows disruptions of schooling in the Bushbuckridge area by community members who are demanding the immediate construction of a tarred road. It is suspected that the burning of this school and the community protest could be linked, however police are still investigating. The police are requesting community members with any information to come forward. Minister Motshekga condemns the deliberate destruction of educational property in the strongest possible terms and will be approaching law makers to strengthen penalties when it comes to the destruction of school infrastructure.

Upcoming Events

- 03 April 2017: A Multi-grade Toolkit workshop in support of Multi-grade schools will be hosted in Gauteng Province
- 07 April 2017: Minister Angie Motshekga to host the National Education Excellence Awards at the Capital Menlyn Maine Hotel in Pretoria, Gauteng Province
- 07 April 2017: Closing date for the submission of the 2017 Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secondary Schools Essay Competition entries to the Provincial Education Departments
- 11 April 2017: 17th Annual National Teaching Awards Repeat Broadcast on SABC 2 at 10:30
- 12 April 2017: The DBE to host an Agrimbizo at the Department in Pretoria, Gauteng Province
- 14 April 2017: Good Friday
- 17 April 2017: Family Day
- 19 April 2017: Director-General, Mr Mathanzima Mveli, to continue his Provincial Engagement Visits in Rustenburg, North West Province
- 20 April 2017: Director-General, Mr Mathanzima Mveli, to continue his Provincial Engagement Visits at Mahikeng Convention Centre, Mahikeng, North West Province
- 21 April 2017: Director-General, Mr Mathanzima Mveli, to continue his Provincial Engagement Visits at Chief Albert Luthuli School, Daveyton, Gauteng Province
- 24 April 2017: Director-General, Mr Mathanzima Mveli, to continue his Provincial Engagement Visits at Grace Bible Church, Pimville, Soweto, Gauteng Province
- 25 April 2017: Director-General, Mr Mathanzima Mveli, to continue his Provincial Engagement Visits at Soshanguve East Secondary School in Shoshanguve, Gauteng Province
- 27 April 2017: Freedom Day
- 25 May 2017: Africa Day
- 27 May 2017: A special Africa Day commemoration will be taking place at Freedom Park in Pretoria in honour of the late Oliver Reginald Tambo
- 29 July – 19 August 2017: National Schools Moot Court Competition essays are to be submitted to the University of Pretoria <http://www.education.gov.za/Programmes/MootCourt.aspx>
- 19 August – 22 September 2017: The hosting of the provincial rounds of the National Schools Moot Court Competition
- 04 – 08 October 2017: The National Schools Moot Court Competition finals to be hosted at the University of Pretoria and the Constitutional Court in Johannesburg



OUR FUTURE - MAKE IT WORK

South Africa belongs to all its peoples. Now, in 2030, our story keeps growing as if spring is always with us.

Once, we uttered the dream of a rainbow.
Now we see it, living it. It does not curve over the sky.

It is refracted in each one of us at home, in the community,
in the city, and across the land, in an abundance of colour.

When we see it in the faces of our children, we know: there will
always be, for us, a worthy future.