



basic education

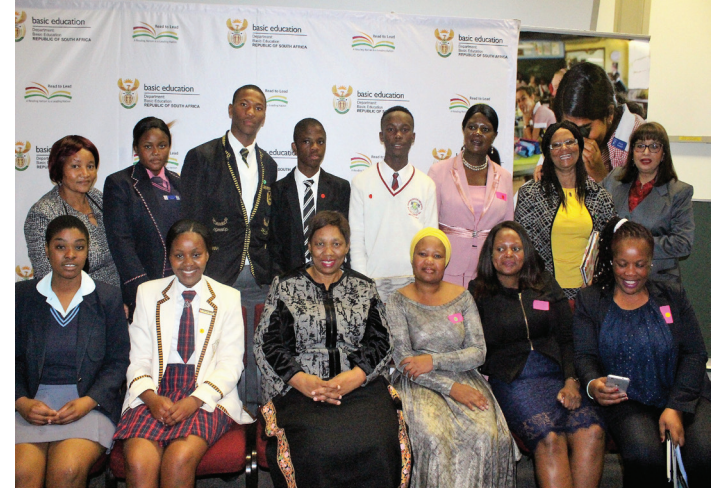
Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

THUTO



NEWSLETTER

NEEDU – Schools That Work



It proved to be a truly inspiring day for those who attended the launch of the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) **Schools that Work Report**. The event held on Tuesday at the University of Pretoria was an in-depth look into the inner workings of the top echelon of the South African Education system.

The report looked at 111 schools from across the system, this included all provinces and all quintiles. The high performing schools had to meet a certain set of criteria to be included in the study. They had to attain a pass rate of above 95% in the four consecutive years prior to the study (2016), and the schools had to present more than 100 candidates in the NSC 2016 examinations. The schools also had to meet the “inclusive basket of criteria”, this is a measure of critical quality indicators which includes performance in Mathematics and Physical Science as well as Bachelor passes and distinctions. The schools in the study had to perform above 70% in this inclusive basket of criteria. Meaning in essence - they are the best of the best.

Attendees of the event which included a number of education stakeholders as well as representatives from the top schools themselves, were treated to a riveting panel discussion on what makes a school work. Panellists were principals, teachers and even learners from schools that participated in the study.

The study found that there were some remarkable schools in the lower quintiles (1-3) that were producing excellent results despite difficult circumstances. The panel focused in the main on these shining examples of excellence against the odds.

Panellists shared anecdotes of what makes their particular schools successful and among the top performing schools in the country.

Dendron High School Principal, Mr Moloko Matsapola moved the audience when he spoke of the love and passion he has for all of his learners. “You have to love them,” he said. The first rule in his school environment is - no excuses. He says purpose of his school is to ensure his learners pass, their motto is, if it is not 100% it is not good enough.

Principals in the audience agreed with Matsapola when he said it is important for a principal to lead by example and that is why he still teaches learners despite being a principal. He has never gotten less than 100% in his maths class and is of the opinion that every child is able to do mathematics, and at his school mathematics, science and accounting are compulsory subjects for all learners.

Mrs Nosipho Mnguni the HOD of Menzi High School in KZN said it is all about maximising teaching time. She said they have six, one hour sessions and those must be honoured by all teachers every day. At Menzi the duty load of teachers is determined by the School Management Team (SMT) to ensure that the strengths of teachers is developed. The teachers and Menzi also sit in on each other's lessons to assist and develop each other.

Also from Menzi High School was learner Nompumelelo Khoza, she attributes the schools success to the relationships between teachers and learners. She says the school has taught its learners to value time and excellence in all that they do. “They teach us to solve X in all aspects of our life,” she said. She ended off by sharing the value system of her school. “Shine wherever you are. Whenever you see a Menzi High pupil you will see they are shining. We are Menzi – the mighty doers”.

The schools that work have many things in common, strongest among them is school leadership, a visionary, hardworking and accountable school leadership team appears to be the vital component of a successful school. However what the report revealed is that “these schools do nothing out of the ordinary – they simply do ordinary things extraordinarily well.”

The Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga said she was humbled by the experience of listening to the panellists. “I am in the presence of greatness here,” she commented.

Play Conference 2017



The Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga made the opening address at the 2017 Play Conference, held at the Saint George’s Conference Centre in Irene on Wednesday.

The two day Conference is aimed at addressing the need for play-based learning particularly in early childhood focusing on children from birth to nine years old.

The theme of this year’s conference is: *Preparing our children for challenges and opportunities for the 21st Century.*

True to form the first presentation was on Robotics by Danie Heymans, of Robotics for Care for Education. The presentation focused on the work being done with the Lego Foundation around training teachers as well as compiling resource material and manuals for schools. It also looked at the impact of a Robotics outreach programme in township schools. The robots have learners enthralled while introducing them to modern technology and innovation.

In her speech the Minister noted the importance of innovative learning mechanisms for children in the 21st century.

“In an increasingly complex, changing, competitive, and interconnected world, we all want to ensure that our children gain the life skills needed to be successful. Experts worldwide acknowledge that today’s children need more than the traditional 3 Rs (reading, writing and arithmetic) to prepare for 21st century careers.”

The Minister also informed delegates of the work being done with the help of partners to train ECD practitioners in learning through play.

“I am happy to report to this conference that the consortium of UNICEF, the Lego Foundation and Cotlands, in partnership with the DBE, has begun develop an online training programme aimed at in-service training to 150 000 Early Childhood Development (ECD) practitioners, Grade R and Foundation Phase educators across South Africa. The online training programme – the PLAY-based learning, will be delivered over the next two (2) years. PLAY stands for “Powerful Learning Around You” in-service training programme course that compliments existing and formal training,” said Minister Motshekga.

The Minister endorsed the objectives of the Play Conference which is to facilitate an understanding and commitment of policy makers and influencers on the important role of play in preparing children for the opportunities of the 21st century and the achievement of sustainable development at a national and global level.

Other noble objectives include:

- a) Ensure that the importance of play, supported by evidence, shapes a national commitment that will drive play as an essential part of children's learning, development and well-being in the national policy discourse and development and programme implementation;
- b) Reflect on the adequacy of national policies and programmes against national and international evidence to prepare children for the opportunities of the 21st century.
- c) To facilitate a critical dialogue between science, policy and practice on advancing children's learning and preparedness for new opportunities and challenges.
- d) Support policy makers, through evidence, to define their role and space in promoting play-based learning.

Government is taking the lead in ensuring that there is universal coverage with regard to the Early Childhood Development sector. It has done this through the appropriate policies and strategies. Through the approval of South Africa's *1st National Integrated Policy for Early Childhood Development*, government departments are developing an Integrated ECD implementation Plan that links the policy implementation to commitments set out in it, the current Medium Term Strategic Framework as well as the National Development Plan's commitments to the nation.

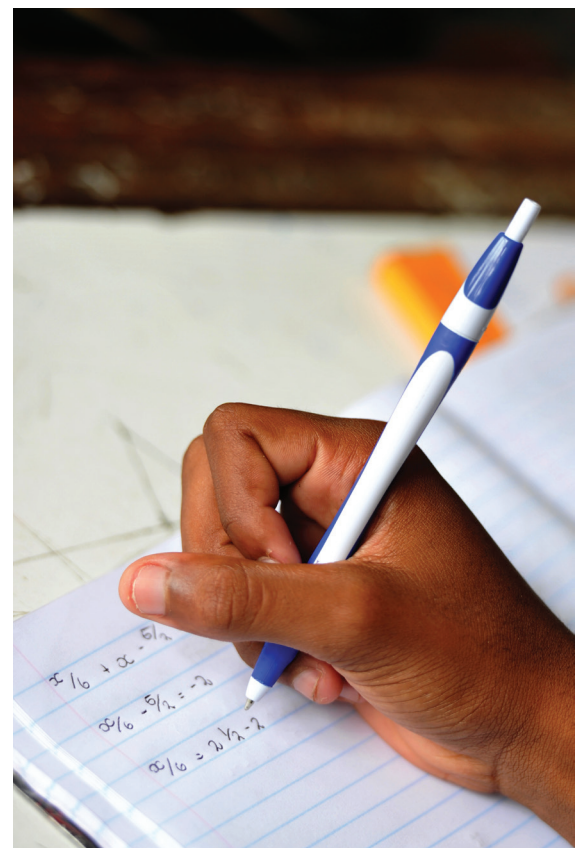
The Minister reported to much applause from delegates that, "news just in, the recent ANC National Policy Conference has recommended that the ECD as a function be moved from the Department of Social Development to the Basic Education. This is in line with the earlier resolution to reinvigorate the whole basic education sector to reposition it as a leader in addressing the triple challenges facing the country."

When children play they become actively involved in activities, they take control and display that they have an ability to solve problems. The role of adults is to guide and direct them when they do things in their environment. Play should be the basis for facilitating learning and development in all ECD settings. The best way to achieved this is going to be intensively work shopped during the course of the two day conference.

Mathematics to remain compulsory in the South African schooling system



Mathematics is compulsory from grade 1 to 9 in the South African schooling system. From grade 10, learners have an option of offering one of the following three forms of mathematics, (a) Mathematics (as we know it) (b) Mathematical literacy (for learners who do not intend pursuing Post Schooling careers that will require mathematics as part of the admission requirements and (c) Technical Mathematics (for learners who intend pursuing technology related careers). It, therefore, needs to be understood that there is no learner in the system who at any point does not offer one or another form of mathematics until they complete their grade 12. This makes mathematics, in whatever form, compulsory for all learners in the system. This is the position of the department regarding the offering of mathematics by the South Africa learners and the department is not intending to change this position now or in the near future.



We have, however, noted with great concern the misinformation to the nation by certain quarters of the media that suggests that the sector is intending to bring changes by making mathematics optional. This is far from the truth and is misleading as the Department of Basic Education continues to recognise the role that mathematics plays and will continue to play in the development of our nation.

We have made great strides as a nation in improving learner performance in mathematics, and this is demonstrated by the recent improved performance of our learners in national, regional and international assessments as reflected in the National Senior Certificate, SACMEQ and TIMMS respectively. The number of learners passing mathematics at 50% in grade 12 has increased in recent years as well as the number of learners passing the subject with distinctions. We have also seen learners from quintile 1 to 3 (these are schools from disadvantaged and economically poor communities) performing as well as learners from quintile 4 to 5 schools. South Africa has registered great improvement in the recently released SACMEQ tests, where South Africa was reported to be the most improved country in the mathematics scores. The same trends were observed in the TIMMS results where South Africa registered the highest improvement of all participating countries.

These improvements did not come by chance, but came as a result of concerted effort by all stakeholders, from the sector, social partners and the civil society. This included, improved development and supply of good learning and teaching support materials, teacher supply, by both government and partners like Teach SA as well as teacher development initiatives rolled out by government and non-government organisations supported by key partners like Centre for the Advancement of Mathematics (CASME), Statistics South Africa, Interactive Simulations, ETDP SETA, and the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT), EDUTRADE, Pearson and Vodacom, amongst others.

The 2017 ABC Motsepe Schools Choral Eisteddfod concludes on a high note



KwaZulu-Natal Province has once again come out tops in the 2017 edition of the ABC Motsepe Schools Choral Eisteddfod. The Province collected the highest number of trophies at the prestigious competition which saw more than 8,000 learners from across the country participating. The winning schools won prizes that included prize money to the value of R150 000, trophies and certificates. The Eisteddfod took place at Rhema Bible Church in Randburg which, for five days, was a hive of activity with choirs from various schools occupying every corner of the premises for rehearsals.

Approximately 88 trophies were awarded to the top three provinces: KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and the North West Province. KwaZulu-Natal Province dominated the awards with many of its secondary schools leading the pack in the Secondary School Section. Scoring above 80% in this year's competition were:

- Mthethomusha Primary School (KwaZulu-Natal Province) in the Boys' Choirs Category;
- Imizikayifani Primary School (KwaZulu-Natal Province) in the Mixed Choirs (African) Category;
- Umlazi Secondary School (KwaZulu-Natal Province) in both the Mixed Choirs (Afrikaans) and the African Union (AU) Anthem Categories;
- Empangeni Senior Secondary School (KwaZulu-Natal Province) in the SATB Choir Category;
- Mthwalume Senior Secondary School (KwaZulu-Natal Province) in the Duet Category;
- Vuli Valley Senior Secondary School (Eastern Cape Province) in the Mezzo-Soprano/Alto Solo Category;
- Lithlithemba Senior Secondary School (KwaZulu-Natal Province) in both the Tenor Solo and Small Ensemble Categories; and
- Impunga Senior Secondary School (KwaZulu-Natal Province) scored above 90% in the Folklore item.

Limpopo Province was honoured with a trophy in the Special Schools Category for being the best performing province during the Eisteddfod. Isikhokelo Primary School in the Western Cape Province won the Best Conductor Award in the Primary Schools Section and Zama Secondary School in KwaZulu-Natal won the best Conductor Award in the Secondary Schools Section. The 2017 Best Soloist was Akhoma Matshoba from Vuli Valley Secondary School in the Eastern Cape Province.

Basic Education Minister and Deputy Minister, Mrs Angie Motshekga and Mr Enver Surty, the Limpopo MEC for Education, Mr Ishmael Kgetjepe, the Mpumalanga MEC for Education, Mrs Reginah Mhaule, the Founder of the Motsepe Foundation, Mr Patrice Motsepe and

Co-Chairperson of the Motsepe Foundation, Dr Precious Moloi-Motsepe were also in attendance.

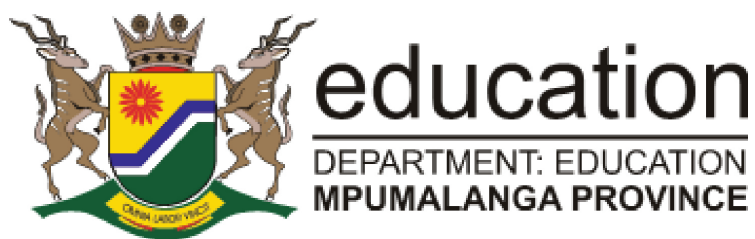
During the announcement of the results of the Eisteddfod, Adjudicator, Dr Santisa Viljoen, said that the quality of music performed by the learners during the entire competition was “amazing”. Dr Viljoen applauded the conductors for their contribution in ensuring that all choirs performed up to the required standard of choral music.

Mathematics teacher, Ms Pindi Maxongo from the Western Cape Province, remarked that the participation in the competition should be strengthened to promote choral musical talents within the education sector: “I attend this competition on an annual basis and it always gives me pleasure to see learners from various ethnic groups competing”.

A learner from Banksdrift High School in the Eastern Cape Province said that, “I enjoy this competition because it encourages us as learners to practice harder in order to become better choral music performers. Performing at this level of the competition is a huge achievement for me. Owing to Government this programme helps to keep learners off the streets during school holidays”.



Regional Round-up



Mpumalanga

The Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Education (PED) will convene the 2017 Grade 12 winter vacation classes for underperforming schools from 03 to 14 July 2017, except for the Marita Circuit which will be taking place from 03 to 21 July 2017. The programme is part of the 2017 Provincial Performance Improvement Plan (LPIP), which is informed by the *National Strategy for Learner Attainment* (NSLA) which primarily seeks to improve learner performance in the Province to ensure that learners are provided with dedicated support on a continual and sustainable basis whilst preparing for the 2017 National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examinations.

Upcoming Events

- 18 July 2017: Nelson Mandela International Day
- 21 July 2017: Launch of the Monetary Policy Committee Schools' Challenge at the Reserve Bank in Pretoria, Gauteng Province
- 26 July 2017: Nelson Mandela Day Celebration and official handover of the NSNP Best School and District Awards in partnership with Nestlé SA at Makeneng Primary School in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province
- 28 – 30 July 2017: The National Championships of the Youth Citizen Action Programme (Y-CAP) to be hosted at the Garden Court Hotel in Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal Province
- 29 July – 19 August 2017: National Schools Moot Court Competition essays are to be submitted to the University of Pretoria
- 07 – 08 August 2017: A Mobile Learning Expert Panel on Designing an Effective Large-scale Mobile Learning Initiative for public schools will be taking place at the Protea Hotel, Menlyn in Pretoria, Gauteng Province
- 09 August 2017: National Women's Day
- 19 August – 22 September 2017: The hosting of the provincial rounds of the National Schools Moot Court Competition
- 23 September 2017: The 2017 National Spelling Bee Competition to be hosted at the University of South Africa (UNISA)
- 24 September 2017: Heritage Day
- 27 September 2017: World School Milk Day will be celebrated in the Western Cape Province
- 01 – 03 October 2017: The Transnet Rural and Farm Schools National Tournament to take place at the Germiston Stadium, Gauteng Province
- 02 – 07 October 2017: The Sanlam Kay Motsepe Schools Cup National Championships to take place in Johannesburg, Gauteng Province
- 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
- 05 October 2017: World Teachers' Day
- 09 - 22 October 2017: A National Nutrition Week "So Chef" workshop will be taking place in partnership with the French Embassy in four provinces (Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Western Cape) and in five cities (Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town)
- 23 October 2017: Start of the 2017 National Senior Certificate Examinations
- 28 November 2017: End of the 2017 National Senior Certificate Examinations
- 10 – 14 December 2017: The South African School Sport National Championships (Summer Games) to take place in Cape Town, Western Cape Province
- 04 January 2018: Ministerial Announcement of the 2017 National Senior Certificate Examination Results
- 17 January 2018: Start of the 2018 Academic School Year
- 01 – 31 March 2018: School Governing Body (SGB) Elections



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.

