

NEWSLETTER

Deputy Minister Surty engages captains of industry on digitisation



The year is 2019. Learners and teachers in the schooling system are highly motivated because learning materials are not only readily available, but are also easily accessible and customisable owing the digitisation of these materials.

It was with this vision in mind that Basic Education Deputy Minister, Mr Enver Surty, invited business leaders to a business breakfast - hosted on 09 October 2017 in partnership with Deloitte - to discuss funding for the development and digitisation of the remaining state-owned textbooks. Cold and rainy weather conditions notwithstanding, representatives from more than fifteen organisations made their way to East London, in the Eastern Cape Province, to engage with the Deputy Minister on how they could leave their “digitised footprints” in the sands of time.

Welcoming the guests, the MEC for the Eastern Cape Department of Education, Mr Mandla Makupula, spoke about how the province has been using digital technology - through SA-SAMS and DDD Dashboard - in tracking learner progress and in extracting school-level reports to make informed data driven decisions. The MEC said the province has seen how “technology, if effectively used, can have a tremendous impact on learner performance”. Giving the overview of the digitisation initiative, Mr Seliki Tlhabane, the Acting Chief Director for Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST) and Curriculum Enhancement Programmes, echoed the MEC’s views, saying: “The education sector cannot ignore ICTs as they are here to transform how we do the business of teaching, learning and administration. This is why the Operation Phakisa Lab has produced costed detailed plans for, amongst others, the development, curation and distribution of digital content”.

After presentations from Siyavula, Sasol Inzalo Foundation, Sun International, MTN and Vodacom - organisations who have already partnered with the DBE on the development of educational content resources - Mr Henry Kavuma took the attendees through the process and benefits of digitisation. “The benefits of digitisation in the schooling system cannot be over-stated: free access to textbooks whose content can be further enhanced; numerous formats for accessibility and redistribution; and longevity of material in terms of textbook retention leading to reduced printing costs,” said Kavuma. “Digitisation is not only about education, it is about the environment, equity and access,” added Mr Surty.

In principle, most of the organisations in attendance supported the initiative, with some having pledged not only monetary support, but their expertise in the field as well. “Ours is a journey about social entrepreneurship, our willingness to collaborate; our journey is about commitment to public interest,” said Mr Surty in appreciation. In support of the DBE’s vision regarding digitisation, Mr Gaba Tabane, Deloitte’s Public Sector Leader, said: “If you do not build a global learner today, you will not have a global leader tomorrow”.

In his final remarks about the initiative, Mr Surty said: “Providing digitised educational content is a gift to our young learners growing up in the Fourth Industrial Revolution; if we do not bridge the digital divide, the Sustainable Development Goals will not be realised.” The DBE is intensifying its efforts in ensuring that before we can fully immerse ourselves in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, all our learners, teachers and school administrators have been brought up to speed in regards to the Fourth Industrial Revolution i.e. the Digital Revolution. We need determined and measurable actions from partners across all sectors to accelerate the digitisation initiative, thereby ensuring that in moving forward no learner is left behind.

So Chef! workshops cook up a storm in South African schools



In celebrating National Nutrition Week (NNW), the DBE, through the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), and in partnership with the Embassy of France and the French Institute of South Africa, visited Ivory Park Secondary School in Tembisa, Gauteng Province, on 09 October 2017.

The *So Chef!* workshops are aimed at demonstrating culinary skills for learners whilst promoting healthy lifestyles as part of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with the Embassy of France to celebrate the diversity of French cuisine and share a few healthy recipes with participating schools. His Excellency, Mr Christophe Farnaud, the Ambassador of France in South Africa, was impressed with how well learners prepared the various dishes.

With this year's theme for NNW being, "Rethink your drink, choose water", the workshops also teach learners how to use water wisely and to use organic food that they are able to cultivate themselves. The *So Chef!* workshops, that are taking place during the Life Orientation and Life Skills classroom periods, provide learners with an opportunity to make career choices in Consumer Studies and Home Economics.

The learners expressed great interest in everything the chefs had to show them on the day and were amazed at how simple it could be to create healthy, appetising meals. "We never thought that herbs could be used in so many different ways to enhance food and to create such tasty meals," the learners complemented the chefs. The workshops will continue in various schools and parts of the country throughout NNW to encourage healthy eating habits.



7th National Schools Moot Court Competition winners announced at the Constitutional Court of South Africa



Deputy Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development (DOJ&CD), Mr John Jeffery, awarded the 7th National Schools Moot Court Competition winners with bursaries towards their first year studies at any South African university to study law.

The Competition, hosted by the Department of Basic Education (DBE), the DOJ&CD, the Foundation for Human Rights, the universities of Venda, Western Cape and Pretoria, the Law Society of South Africa and Cliff Dekker Hoffmeyr Inc. was held at the Constitutional Court of South Africa in Johannesburg on 08 October 2017.

The main objective of this prestigious event is to create greater awareness in South African schools and communities about the *Constitution* and the values that it embodies through active participation in human rights education. Another objective of this Competition is to encourage talented young people to pursue careers in law.

A total number of 159 teams submitted essays with 83 teams progressing to the provincial rounds. A total of 76 learners from 38 teams participated in the national rounds. Deputy Minister Jeffery said that, “The case that you were given to argue is, of course, a hypothetical case. But the issue of hair policies in schools has been the topic of much interest, as we’ve seen in the media. The right to religion, to cultural expression, to language and so forth are but some of the many human rights we find in the *Bill of Rights*. All of these aspects make us who we are – unique human beings. The *Constitution* seeks to protect us from discrimination and prejudice when others infringe these very rights that make us who we are”.

The 2017 best oralist at the Competition was Kian Terwin from Beaconhurst High School, East London in the Eastern Cape Province. The winning team consisted of Sibulele Mbambi and Athenkosi Mthiya from the Holy Cross High School and Qhayiya Moyinje and Kian Terwin from Beaconhurst High School.

“I want to congratulate you on your remarkable achievement. I know that in a few years from now, many of the judges that you see here today will still be on the bench and many of you will be appearing before them in this court, as attorneys or advocates,” said Mr Jeffery congratulating the winners.

Deputy Minister Enver Surty echoed Mr Jeffrey’s sentiments and expressed his gratitude to the various institutions and individuals who contributed to making the competition a success.



Lesson Study Seminars planned to improve Mathematics training and teaching in primary schools

Welcome to Mathematics

One of the targets from the *National Development Plan* (NDP) is to increase the number of students eligible to study mathematics and science at universities to 450,000 by 2030. One of the approaches to improve teacher proficiency in Mathematics is through the Lesson Study approach which has been practiced in Japan for decades and has gained prominence in numerous countries around the globe.

The approach, which includes the training of Subject Advisors, is being rolled out and institutionalised in the various provinces, and is currently being implemented in the Eastern Cape and the North West Provinces. The Eastern Cape Province will therefore host the first provincial Lesson Study Seminar from 12 to 13 October 2017 in the Maluti District and other provinces will host their seminars during 2018. The provincial seminars will culminate in the national Lesson Study Seminar in 2018.

The focus of the Seminar will be to strengthen the effective learning and teaching of Mathematics in primary schools to ensure that South Africa's learners acquire 21st Century Skills and are adequately prepared for the Fourth Industrial Revolution era. The implementation of the Lesson Study in the Eastern Cape and North West Provinces contributed to the conceptualisation of a uniquely South African Lesson Study approach that emphasises the use of error analysis to identify challenging concepts in Mathematics. This unique characteristic will be shared through an article to be presented at the World Association of Lesson Study Conference taking place from 24 to 27 November 2017 at Nagoya University in Japan. Officials from the Eastern Cape Provincial Education Department (PED) were part of a delegation that attended a Mathematics workshop hosted by Naruto University of Education in Japan during 2016.

A Community of Practice (CoP) Forum in Mathematics and Science Seminar, which took place at the Department of Basic Education (DBE) from 26 to 27 September 2017 confirmed that Mathematics teachers are experiencing challenges with number sense, progression, developing productive learning dispositions, communicating Mathematics thinking and teaching, and that coherence and connection is problematic across all primary grades. The focus should be on substance, and primary Mathematics knowledge for teaching is essential, whilst the broadening and deepening of Mathematics teaching to teachers should receive attention. Multidirectional systems and spaces for new ways of dialogue are being explored with universities, teachers, districts and subject advisors to allow for a blended approach, where partnerships are inspirational for regeneration and stakeholders are no longer working in silos. The objective of the Seminar was to critically engage and interrogate possible solutions to issues facing Mathematics and Science education in the country.

Provincial Roundup

Gauteng Province



The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) reports that they are working with relevant stakeholders to appoint service providers to repair two schools that were damaged by the severe hailstorm that hit the province on Monday, 09 October 2017. The Department's MEC, Mr Panyaza Lesufi, has expressed concern over damage caused to Laerskool Protearif and Laerskool Muldersdrift in Krugersdorp in the West Rand. Teaching and learning at both schools did not take place on Tuesday, 10 October 2017 due to the damages caused and MEC Lesufi was alarmed that the tragedy occurred at a crucial time when learners were busy preparing for their final examinations. Infrastructure inspectors were dispatched to both schools to assess the extent of the damages, and the damage is estimated at approximately R4 million.

KwaZulu-Natal Province



KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education MEC, Mr Mthandeni Dlungwana, has expressed confidence that the Province will show a marked improvement in matric results for 2017. Two events have been organised in preparation for the 2017 National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examination on 23 October 2017. These included an interfaith provincial examination prayer meeting that took place at the Enyonini Church in Madadeni on 12 October 2017 and the signing of an examination pledge at the Community Hall in Umlazi on 13 October 2017. Approximately 155,000 matric learners are expected to write the National Senior Certification (NSC) examination in the Province.

Upcoming Events

- 09 – 15 October 2017: A National Nutrition Week Commemoration will be taking place under the theme: *“Rethink your drink – Choose Water”* in the Gauteng and North West Provinces
- 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)
- 11 October 2017: The Director-Generals Spring School Monitoring visit will be taking place in Johannesburg West, Tshwane South, Tshwane North and Gauteng North, Gauteng Province
- 14 October 2017: The Director-Generals Spring School Monitoring visit will be taking place in Manenberg, Gugulethu, Bonteheuwel, Langa and Athlone, Western Cape Province
- 23 October 2017: Start of the 2017 National Senior Certificate Examinations
- 27 October 2017: The DBE and the South African Council for Educators (SACE) will host the 2017 World Teachers' Day Seminar at Bolivia Lodge in Polokwane, Limpopo Province
- 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



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