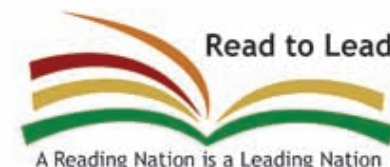



**basic education**

 Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**THUTO**

**NEWSLETTER**

# Basic Education Deputy Minister Lays Wreath at South African War Memorial Site in France



The Deputy Minister of Basic Education Mr Enver Surty has visited the site where thousands of South Africans died during the First World War while doing battle alongside French troops. The Delville Woods memorial - which includes a museum - is located in one of the battlefields of WW I in Longueval, in northern France.

Deputy Minister Surty took the 2-hour drive out of Paris during a break from his working visit to France where he is attending the 39th General Conference of UNESCO. He had a wreath laying ceremony at the site before being led on a tour of the memorial site.

The Museum Director Mr Thapedi Masanabo, who is based at the site, told the SA delegation that Delville Wood was well-known in South African military history and it represented the national symbol for bravery and sacrifice as the 1st South African Infantry Brigade accomplished one of the finest feats of arms of the First World War.

On 15 July 1916 the brigade comprising 121 officers and 3 032 men received orders to take the woods “at all costs”. For 5 nights and 6 days the South Africans fought against various units of the 4th German Army Corps. Outnumbered and being fought against from three sides, they were almost decimated but managed to hold on and fight back until most of the woods had been captured. When they were finally relieved on 20 July, only 142 men came out of the woods unscathed, eventually 780 men from the SA brigade assembled. Ravaged by the fighting in 1916 the woods were replanted in the 1920s and restructured to house the South African national memorial. It was decided that the woods would forever stay the burial ground for those soldiers who still lay there.

Upon visiting the site Deputy Minister Surty said the experience strengthened the case for history to be taught comprehensively in the Basic Education Curriculum. He said it was clear that the representation of some of the elements of the history was biased against black people. He said their role and contribution was diminished and misrepresented this needed to be corrected appropriately in the history books.

Deputy Minister Surty said all learners in schools needed to know that some of their ancestors remained buried on foreign soil where they perished while fighting in the various wars.

“The saddest part is that some, if not many of them, were never identified and therefore could not be given proper headstones to honour their sacrifice. Some remain nameless with words that say “South African Private of the Great War, Known unto God” written on their headstones,” he said.

The Deputy Minister said the Department of Basic Education would ensure that the history is recorded and taught properly in schools because the site was part of the heritage of the country. He said the land on which the memorial site was located belonged to South Africa and that was important for every citizen to know. The museum commemorates the 25,000 South African volunteers, men and women of all races and religions, who fell during the two great wars and during the Korean War. The concept of the museum was inspired by the Castle of Good Hope, the first European fortification erected in South Africa.

The SA Delegation was supported in the tour by Deputy Ambassador Ms Nthabiseng Malefane.



# Basic Education Portfolio Committee commends plans for safety in schools for 2018



Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Basic Education has welcomed the Department of Basic Education's (DBE's) assurance that the Department will increase its focus on school safety in 2018, as part of its school readiness programme.

During a presentation in Parliament on 07 November 2017, the Committee was informed that this will include the implementation of the protocol for dealing with incidents of corporal punishment in schools. The DBE will also finalise and implement the protocol for the management and reporting of sexual abuse and harassment in schools. Committee Chairperson, Ms Nomalungelo Gina said: "It is important for parents and the community to be assured that when our children go to school, they do so in a safe and secure environment. It is equally important for South Africans to see that the Department is taking these matters seriously and is always putting the wellbeing of the child first".

Other safety measures include the prioritisation of fencing to reduce school safety challenges. This will be coupled with strengthening co-operation and collaboration with the South African Police Services, and related organisations in high-risk areas. A further 210 fencing projects and 1,356 water and sanitation projects have been prioritised for school readiness for 2018.

The Committee further heard that 494 schools were damaged by storms during September and October 2017 in KwaZulu-Natal and an estimated amount of R21 million is required to rehabilitate those schools. The Department of Public Works will conduct further assessments and carry out urgent repairs to these schools. Mobile classrooms have been provided to the affected schools in the meantime. The Committee indicated that it will continue to monitor the implementation of all the Department's projects and programmes.

## Online learning becomes child's PLAY



A Powerful Learning Around You (PLAY) open day is scheduled to take place in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal Province on 24 November 2017, and will include presentations from Early Childhood Development (ECD) specialists, exhibitions by ECD training organisations and toy libraries. The DBE, in partnership with UNICEF, the LEGO Foundation and Cotlands, developed the PLAY course as a free online training course that compliments existing and formal training, and is accredited with the South African Council for Educators (SACE). The focus of PLAY is on teaching play-based learning fundamentals to early childhood practitioners and Grade R to 3 educators. Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie Motshekga, announced the launch of the PLAY project on 09 March 2017 during a Council for Education Ministers (CEM) meeting.

Open days will also be hosted in all provinces during the first quarter of 2018 to create awareness and to activate users to commence with their online training. The PLAY

Cafés are also an initiative to assist the users to complete the course as free access to Wi-Fi and coffee will be on offer whilst PLAY co-ordinators and facilitators will be available to assist the user with any technical difficulties that they might have in navigating the platform. The PLAY Cafés are open every Thursday between 14:00 to 17:00.

The course content includes videos illustrating how to infuse teaching with play-based learning principles and activities. A host of additional activity ideas are emailed to the participants once a module has been completed. After completion, a certificate endorsed by SACE bearing 15 CPD points enhancing educator's professional development profile is issued. The PLAY programme aims to reach 150,000 practitioners and educators. On-line registration can be done through any mobile device or computer. This step is then followed by a five hour face-to-face orientation session.

Two DBE officials, Ms Isabell Matebula and Ms Ouma Buthane, who completed various modules of the online course, and subsequently obtained their certificates during September and October 2017, agreed that the practical modules enable the user to learn valuable information fast, free of charge and at one's own pace. "In ECD, resourcefulness is encouraged and practitioners can create their own material through recycling and creativity which is cost-effective," said Ms Buthane. "Our learners have a better chance at quality education if we become the champions of learning through play at an early age," Ms Matebula explained.



With a solid foundation in the early years, children have the potential to graduate from poverty and end the cycle of dependency. Evidence shows that a play-based approach to learning allows children to better understand Mathematical and Language concepts; and to become creative, solution-oriented learners who are prepared for the opportunities and challenges of the 21st Century. The act of play performs a critical role for children to develop the intellectual, emotional, social and creative skills needed to build the foundation for human development and lifelong learning.

Contact Tel.: 011 683 7200 or e-mail: [elearning@cotlands.org](mailto:elearning@cotlands.org) for additional information. Practitioners and educators are encouraged to register at: [www.playsa.org](http://www.playsa.org).



## Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme recruits motivated and academically gifted youth to the teaching profession





The DBE established the Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme (FLBP) in 2007 to recruit motivated and academically gifted youth to make teaching a career of choice. This bodes well with the broad departmental goal of meeting the supply and demand needs for high quality teachers. *Goal 14 of the Action Plan to 2019: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2030* compels the basic education sector to: “attract in each year a new group of young, motivated and appropriately trained teachers into the teaching profession”. The purpose of the Programme is to assist in the attainment of Goal 14 and the creation of a quality basic education system through the recruitment of suitable youth to become teachers.

The 2016 Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme Evaluation Report found that the Programme is able to select adequate numbers of students who meet the selection criteria, and that the number of applications had grown, from 2,801 in 2008 to 44,736 in 2013, and currently stands at 92,928 in 2017. Approximately 15,147 students were recruited and are being funded in the 2017 academic year. The dropout rate for the B.Ed. students is minimal and approximately 81% of B.Ed. and 49% of Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) students complete programmes in the normal duration time.

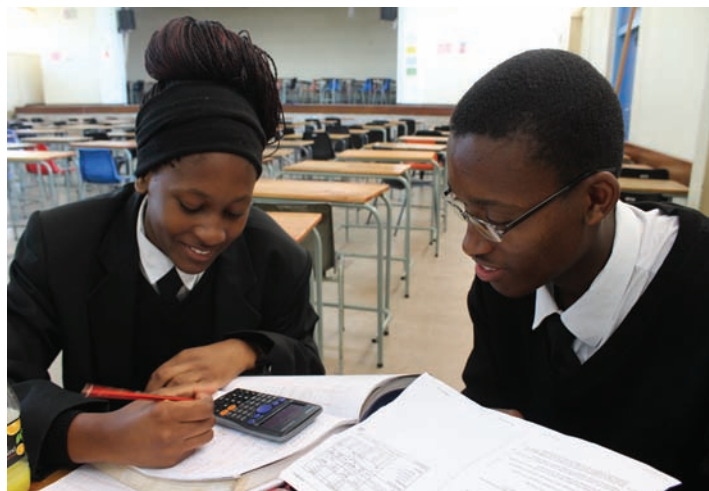
A total of 91.8% of FLBP graduates are employed as teachers. The majority of these graduates are teaching priority subjects they specialised in. Currently, the placement rate stands at 89%. The North West and the Northern Cape Provinces have the highest placement rate at 100% whilst the KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape Provinces have the lowest placement rate at 81%. A total of 5,012 students are expected to graduate in 2017.

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) published a report, *“Relationships between teacher supply and demand and the size, shape and substance of teacher education in South Africa”*, during 2015. The report suggests that by 2020, relative shortages in teacher supplies will still be evident, but that an absolute teacher supply shortage will no longer be a concern as the FLBP has made a considerable contribution to improving the attractiveness of teaching as a choice for many South African youth. The merit-based criteria for awarding the bursary have also contributed to a higher calibre of students entering initial teacher education programmes.

The roles and responsibilities of Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) in the FLBP have been broadened in recent years and additional responsibilities have been allocated to PEDs in respect of the co-ordination of the identification, recruitment, selection, monitoring and support.

The Funza Lushaka website provides valuable information for applicants and prospective teachers and can be accessed at [www.funzalushaka.doe.gov.za](http://www.funzalushaka.doe.gov.za). The online application system opened on 01 October 2017 and will close on 12 January 2018.

## Minimising learners’ stress levels during the examination period



Stress is unavoidable and every individual undergoes some form of stress in his or her life time. Stress is a state of mental or emotional strain or tension arising from a particular situation, and the body's way of responding to any kind of demand. It can be caused by both good and bad experiences. A moderate amount of stress can provide valuable motivation to learners for example, to take action and to start studying and preparing for the examinations.

Examination periods are always a stressful time for learners, as well as parents, guardians, care-givers and teachers who act as support structures to learners during this time. There are various ways in which parents and teachers can help learners to minimise their stress levels.

Parents and teachers should watch for emotional signs and behaviour such as irritability; tearfulness; negative self-talk such as "I know I won't pass"; panic attacks; breathing difficulties; smoking; and using alcohol or other drugs as coping mechanisms. Physical signs and symptoms such as sleeplessness; a loss of appetite; overeating; aches and pains that are not related to illness and dizziness could also be experienced. Professional help should be sought when these signs and symptoms are being experienced.

The Psychosocial Support Directorate, located within the Care and Support in Schools Chief Directorate in the DBE, offers the following stress management tips for learners: to have an open relationship that encourages communication with the child, this will give children the confidence to talk about difficult situations that they are experiencing; to take an interest and become involved in your child's school work; to talk to your child about how to manage and discuss stressful and challenging situations; to listen with empathy to their concerns; and to reassure them of your unconditional love, irrespective of the outcome of the examination.

In relation to exams, encourage your child to develop a study time-table; take necessary breaks; not to over study when he/she is exhausted; do some form of physical activity; get enough rest or sleep; eat healthy meals; and to avoid fast foods, fizzy sweetened drinks and caffeine during this period. For those learners without adult supervision at home, the School Governing Body (SGB) together with the School Based Support Team, can arrange programmes to support them by providing additional meals; arranging supervised study time/groups; presenting motivational talks; and encouraging learners to work towards their full potential.

The following support services are available to all learners free of charge:

**Childline Hotline:08000 55 555**

**LoveLife Free Plz Cal Me 083 323 1023**

**SADAG**  
**Suicide Crisis Line 0800 567 567/ 0800 212 223**  
**or SMS 31393**  
**Substance Abuse Line 0800 12 13 14 or SMS 32312**

**PLEASE CONTACT**



## Gauteng Province



The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) reopened the online application system for parents who missed the 12 June 2017 registration deadline. The system will be open for late applications from 01 November 2017 to 10 November 2017, and no new applications will be processed during January 2018. The GDE reported that the system was running smoothly and urged parents who were applying for the first time, to make use of this opportunity to apply online. The Department called on parents who applied during the admissions period in May, who still had not been placed, to visit the District Office for placement, adding that said these parents need not apply as their details were already on the system. A total number of 285,834 learners needed placement in Gauteng schools. A total of 222,378 children, representing 77% of all applicants, had been placed. This figure is a sum total of 123,450 for Grade 1 and 98,928 for Grade 8 learners.

## Western Cape Province



International Anti-Bullying week will be taking place from 13 to 17 November 2017. South African schools across all nine provinces struggle with bullying, and the severity of bullying in schools is increasing at an alarming rate. Two learners from the Western Cape Province have published a comic strip in a bid to end bullying at schools. Ruben and Timeon Jansen van Rensburg from Stellenbosch, who had enough of constant bullying in their school, created an interactive comic strip called *The Adventures of Bully and Boo*. The comics, which convey realistic bullying situations have been purchased in 26 countries, and have been used by teachers and psychologists to help address the problems.

## Upcoming Events

- 10 November 2017: The Bhekisiwe Primary School in Mqanduli, Eastern Cape Province, will be handed over to the community as part of the Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative (ASIDI) Programme
- 13 to 17 November 2017: International Anti-Bullying Week
- 17 November 2017: Deputy Minister Enver Surty will be delivering the keynote address at the MANCOSA Annual Dr Chota Motala Memorial Lecture which will be taking place at the Chota Motala Auditorium in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal Province
- 24 November 2017: A Powerful Learning Around You (PLAY) open day is scheduled to take place in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal Province
- 25 November to 10 December 2017: The *16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children* is an international awareness-raising campaign. It takes place every year from 05 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) to 10 December (International Human Rights Day)
- 26 November - 03 December 2017: The National Teaching Awards (NTA) adjudication process will be taking place at the Protea Hotel, OR Tambo Airport in the Gauteng 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
- 05 January 2018: Release of candidates' results for the 2017 National Senior Certificate Examinations
- 17 January 2018: Start of the 2018 Academic School Year
- 19 January 2018: The closing date for applications to the supplementary examinations
- 01 – 31 March 2018: School Governing Body (SGB) Elections



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