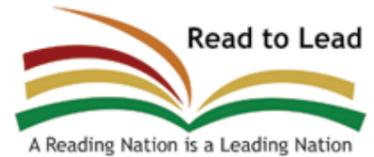




basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

THUTO



NEWSLETTER

Minister Motshekga hosts first AgriEd Imbizo to promote Agricultural skills in rural communities



Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie Motshekga, addressed a team of agriculture education experts during the first AgriEd Imbizo held under the theme, “*Towards an Inclusive and Responsive Agriculture Education.*” The event took place at the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in Pretoria on 19 April 2018. The Imbizo was organised by the DBE, in partnership with the Provincial Education Departments (PEDs), to recalibrate the agricultural education sector in South Africa. It was further intended to conceptualise a self-sufficient Agricultural Model whilst conceptualising best practice in strengthening effective functionality of agricultural schools in the country.

In her speech, Minister Motshekga mentioned that the immediate task at hand is to distil the most intractable problems facing the agricultural education sector: “We must puzzle fit all pieces of knowledge, research and anecdotal evidence so that we emerge here with a comprehensive plan to overhaul the system in its entirety”.

According to Professor Frans Swanepoel from the Centre for Advancement of Scholarship, University of Pretoria, “there are only a few agricultural secondary schools in the country.” His research report was published in the journal, *The Conversation* in 2017. In his research report, Prof Swanepoel revealed that, at secondary school level, Agricultural Science as a subject is a popular choice. However, the curriculum makes provision for two other significant subjects such as Agricultural Technology, and Agricultural Management Practices.

Minister Motshekga further added: “Our own research confirms Prof Swanepoel’s diagnosis. Looking at the National Senior Certificate data for 2017, it emerges that out of some 25,000 schools in the country, only 2,528 of them offer Agricultural Science as a subject. Sadly, only 11 offer Agricultural Technology and approximately 55 schools offer Agricultural Management Practices. We have a total of 112,242 learners registered for Agriculture Education, and of these only 930 are registered for Agriculture Technology and 2,556 are registered for Agricultural Management Practices. A staggering 108,756 are enrolled for Agricultural Science. These dismal participation rates in mainstream Agriculture Education decreases awareness of a variety of careers offered by this industry. The most affected learners are those in Quintal 1 to 3. This is the bulk of learners from very poor provinces and communities wherein agriculture is often the only source of livelihood including job opportunities.”

Agriculture is viewed as a vital means through which poverty and unemployment can be addressed and one of the long-term strategies conceived so far to improve participation is education and training. The Imbizo concluded with AgriEd experts discussing the issues facing the sector during commissions to share best practices.



DBE and IEC mobilize KwaMhlanga community to participate in Democracy Week



The Department of Basic Education (DBE), in partnership with the Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC), launched the 2018 National Schools Democracy Week (SDW) programme at KwaMhlanga in the Mpumalanga Province on 17 April 2018. The programme is expected to reach out to all high schools across the various provinces from 23 to 27 April 2018.

During the launch, Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie Motshekga, joined by Mpumalanga MEC for Education, Mr Sibusiso Malaza and IEC Deputy Chairperson, Mr Terry Tselane, took to the podium to address more than 1,000 learners from KwaMhlanga and surrounding areas. Mr Tselane encouraged young people of 16 years and older to register for the elections: “The future is in your hands; take responsibility and register to vote”. According to South African statistics, 29 million out of the entire population of 57,398,421 million South Africans are youth.

IEC Spokesperson, Ms Kate Bapela said: “The SDW programme mobilises learners to participate in electoral democracy. Research shows that voting at an early age often results in those voters becoming regular participants in electoral democracy; encouraging first-time voters to vote is therefore critical for the long-term sustainability of our democracy”.

The programme was initiated in 2013 to afford young people an opportunity to learn more about critical values and responsibilities enshrined in the *Constitution* of the Republic of South Africa.



Encouraging the youth to follow in the footsteps of struggle icons



After the School Democracy Week (SDW) engagements, Minister Motshekga proceeded to Kwaggafontein Stadium to launch the Nontsikelelo Albertina Sisulu and Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela's Centenary Celebrations. The two struggle icons made an immense contribution to the liberation of South Africa and the nation will be celebrating their legacy during 2018. The ABC Motsepe Schools Eisteddfod Award winning Silamba Secondary School Choir from the Mpumalanga Province, paid tribute to these two icons through song.

Minister Motshekga engaged with community members, principals, School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and learners about the Prevention of Bullying Campaign. Minister Motshekga strongly condemned bullying, saying that, "Learners need to be properly guided to stay in school and succeed academically because bullying comprises Government's efforts in delivering quality education and affects positive learning outcomes".

Minister Motshekga also used the opportunity to inform members of the Kwaggafontein community about the Second Chance Matric Support Programme advising young adults, who failed to meet the requirements of the National Senior Certificate Examinations, to register with the Programme.

In closing, Minister Motshekga encouraged learners to model their behaviour on the examples and values that the two struggle icons stood for, as this will direct their focus and inspire them to become model future South African citizens.



DBE and Impala Platinum enter into partnership to improve learning conditions in the North West Province



Basic Education Deputy Minister, Mr Enver Surty, joined by the North West MEC for Education, Mr Sello Lehari and Impala Platinum Chief Executive Officer, Mr Mark Munroe, delivered three new schools to the Boitekong community on 13 April 2018.

Sunrise View Secondary School, Platinum Village Primary School and Platinum Village Secondary School were built as part of the multi-million rand partnership officiated by the DBE and Impala Platinum's Social and Labour Plan projects, as well as the Impala Bafokeng Trust. The partnership was formed to improve learning conditions and school infrastructure in the Bojanala District. The new schools will uplift the standard of education as they offer critical features such as a school hall, sport facilities, storerooms, a multimedia centre and an administration block.

Speaking during the handover ceremony, Mr Munroe stated that education is an important component of success, adding that it is mutually beneficial for Government and the private sector to collaborate in improving quality education in the country.

In his address, Mr Surty said that learners deserve good learning environments to acquire quality education. Mr Surty advised learners to respect and treat their teachers as role models, adding that, "teachers play a crucial role in shaping the character of society and they should be saluted". Deputy Minister Surty used the opportunity to congratulate Ms Agnes Rasesemola, the School Principal of Sunrise View Secondary School, for having won the *Most Competent and Efficient Principal Award* during the 2018 National Teaching Awards.

The Director-General supports Autumn Classes in provinces



The phenomenon of extra classes is not new. Globally, this trend is observed in both developed and developing countries. There are many reasons for holding extra classes, but the underlying reason is to improve learning outcomes so that learners are given the opportunity to better their lives and employment chances, and thereby break the cycle of poverty that besets many of them.

In the South African schooling context, it is heartening to note that provinces are using additional time to provide extra classes to all Grade 12 learners. What started out as winter classes in the July vacation have now been extended to autumn and spring classes in April and September vacations. This effectively means that all vacation times in the year are used to support learners to apply themselves to their studies. From past experience, provinces attest to the positive impact these classes have had on learner performance.

Mr Hubert Mathanzima Mveli, the Director-General of the Department of Basic Education, has earned the reputation of being a “hands-on” DG. He took all available opportunities to visit the autumn camps where he encouraged learners to make the most of the camps by attending regularly, asking the questions that provide challenges to their conceptual understanding of content, and ensuring that all content is covered extensively and intensively. He gave the learners very sound advice: “the autumn classes have been arranged for your benefit so please don’t leave the classes with unanswered questions. Your teachers have sacrificed much to ensure that you are assisted with all challenging areas of the curriculum.”

Learners and officials applauded the DG’s visits citing that they “feel supported”, “important” and “motivated” that the DG should take time off from his busy schedule to pay the autumn classes a visit. Some learners, in engaging with the DG, said that these classes enable them to stay focused on studying and offer a conducive learning environment to learn with, and from, fellow learners and teachers.

In this week’s *Thuto*, the DG’s visits to autumn classes in provinces are featured.

Click on the below link for additional information:

<https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Publications/2018%20autumn%20school%20programme.pdf>



Laying a solid foundation towards reading to lead in African languages



The orthography of African languages is different from that of the English language with dissimilar linguistic structures. Researchers therefore agree that there should be a differentiated reading approach for Nguni, Sotho and the minority African languages with an emphasis on decoding, comprehension and response. It must also be noted that the reading approach used is significant for the transitioning from learning to read, to reading to learn and also from an African language to English.

Dr Mamiki Maboya, DDG for Curriculum Policy, Support and Monitoring, stated that: “The main purpose of the workshop was to engage reading and language experts to provide inputs on the development of a National *Framework for Reading in African Languages* that will address the teaching of decoding and comprehension. After the Workshop, Task Teams will be appointed to develop reading manuals and lesson plans, as well as high quality digital and print reading materials, said Dr Maboya”.

The development of phonemic and phonological awareness during Early Childhood Development (ECD) and in Grade R is important to prepare children to read with fluency and comprehension. These five reading components must be incorporated into reading programmes namely phonemic awareness (sound identification, blending and segmenting), phonics (letter identification, blending, segmenting), word recognition with an emphasis on syllabication, oral reading fluency and comprehension.

Participatory Action Research, including teachers, will assist to identify the challenges being experienced by teachers. Enablers such as the reduction of class sizes, effective teacher training and support programmes, availability of quality reading resources, print rich classrooms, reading corners, school libraries, parental and community development are fundamental to improve reading outcomes.

Click on the below link for the full article:

<https://www.education.gov.za/ArchivedDocuments/ArchivedArticles/AfricanLanguagesWorkshop.aspx>.



Provincial Round-up

Gauteng Province



On the first day of opening applications for 2019 school admissions, the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) reported that it received 144,124 online applications for Grade 1 and 8. Within the first 10 minutes of going live on its system, the GDE received over 10,000 successful applications. Applications for Grade 1 and 8 will close at midnight on 28 May 2018. To apply and secure space for their children, parents must visit www.gdeadmissions.gov.za to submit their online applications. Parents without access to the internet or require face-to-face assistance are encouraged to visit one of the decentralised application centres or a community library. The GDE will operate 57 admissions centres across the 15 education Districts. Parents with Grade R learners must apply online for Grade 1. For all other grades, Grades 2 to 7 and Grade 9 to 11, parents should apply at the school.

Parents can contact the GDE at the following telephone or email address:

Call Centre on (011) 355 0000;

Toll free number 0800 000 789; or

Email: Gdeinfo@gauteng.gov.za

Eastern Cape Province



The Eastern Cape Education Department (ECED), in partnership with Anglo-Gold Ashanti, recently hosted a career expo for 2,329 Grade 12 learners from 13 schools in the Or Tambo Inland District. Mr Thamsanqa Mahlathi, Anglo-Gold Ashanti co-ordinator said that Anglo-Gold's Human Resource Department offers annual bursaries, learnerships and internships. Other participants included the South African Defence Force, the Nelson Mandela Museum, the provincial department of Social Development and the South African Police Services who encouraged the learners to take advantage of the opportunity to receive additional information about possible career choices. The Walter Sisulu University (WSU) Marketing Department informed learners about the more than 171 qualifications on offer at the university at its four WSU campuses in Mthatha, Butterworth, Queenstown and East London. These career expos have proved very beneficial in assisting learners with their career choices.

Upcoming Events

- 06 April – 10 May 2018: Physical Education Month
- 23 – 25 April 2018: The DBE will be hosting a General Education and Training (GET) Assessment Lekgotla to discuss issues relating to assessment in Grades 1 – 9 in Pretoria, Gauteng Province
- 23 – 27 April 2018: Schools Democracy Week
- 09 May 2018: Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie Motshekga, will be delivering her annual Budget Vote Debate in Parliament in Cape Town, Western Cape Province
- 17 May 2018: A Lunchbox Lekgotla seminar will be taking place at the DBE in Pretoria, Gauteng Province
- 27 May – 03 June 2018: Child Protection Week will be launched in the Eastern Cape Province
- 21 June 2018: A Lunchbox Lekgotla seminar will be taking place at the DBE in Pretoria, Gauteng Province
- 26 – 29 June 2018: The annual ABC Motsepe Schools Choral Eisteddfod will be taking place at the Rhema Church in Randburg, Gauteng Province
- 28 – 29 June 2018: Minister Angie Motshekga will be hosting her second quarter meeting with District Directors at the DBE in Pretoria, Gauteng Province
- 19 July 2018: A Lunchbox Lekgotla seminar will be taking place at the DBE in Pretoria, Gauteng Province
- 16 August 2018: A Lunchbox Lekgotla seminar will be taking place at the DBE in Pretoria, Gauteng Province
- 20 September 2018: A Lunchbox Lekgotla seminar will be taking place at the DBE in Pretoria, Gauteng Province
- 20 – 21 September 2018: Minister Angie Motshekga will be hosting her third quarter meeting with District Directors at the DBE in Pretoria, Gauteng Province
- 06 – 07 December 2018: Minister Angie Motshekga will be hosting her fourth quarter meeting with District Directors at the DBE in Pretoria, Gauteng Province



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