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THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION



NEWSLETTER

Minister Angie Motshekga releases the findings of the 2017 School Monitoring Survey



Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie Motshekga, officially released the findings of the 2017 School Monitoring Survey (SMS) at the Department of Government Communication and Information Systems (GCIS) in Pretoria on 8 April 2019. The 2017 SMS allows the Department an opportunity to both reflect on the progress made in terms of service delivery, as well as focus on the areas which require further intervention. One of the major achievements that emanated from the survey has been the increased provision of libraries or media centres to schools, with the main improvements made in respect of no-fee schools.

Basic Education Director for Research, Monitoring and Evaluation, Dr Stephen Taylor, mentioned that the Survey examines the key goals and indicators set out in the *Action Plan to 2019: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2030*, as well as the *Medium Term Strategic Framework 2014-2019*. The Report focused on 13 indicators, most notable among them being the percentage of schools where all allocated teaching posts are filled; the percentage of teachers absent from school on an average day; the percentage of schools where the School Governing Body (SGB) meets the minimum criteria of effectiveness; and the percentage of schools which comply with nationally-determined minimum physical infrastructure standards.

During her address, Minister Motshekga said: "More learners in poor and rural schools have access to libraries compared to 2011. The Survey concludes that at a national level, learners' access to libraries increased significantly from 45% in 2011 to 62% in 2017." Minister Motshekga also touched on Teacher Development, saying that the overall average hours of professional development per teacher each year reflected an improvement since 2011, up from 36 to 42 hours, although the target for the year 2024 is 80 hours per year per teacher.

On the issue of sanitation, Minister Motshekga concluded by reporting that, "we have managed to break through the glass ceiling and President Ramaphosa has made funding available to eradicate pit latrines within the next three years." On infrastructure, the survey indicated that only 59% of schools comply with nationally-determined minimum physical infrastructure standards. Teacher absenteeism has also peaked by 2% from 8% in 2011 to 10% in 2017.

The 2017 SMS provided insights on some interesting trends concerning school management practices, such as the increased practice of centralised procurement of textbooks by provinces, as well as the importance of various school management documents. The information provided by the Survey will enable the department to fulfil its mandate of monitoring and evaluating education provision across provinces.



DG hosts Provincial Engagement meetings in the Free State and Gauteng provinces



Basic Education Director-General, Mr Hubert Mathanzima Mveli, hosted a series of meetings in the Free State and Gauteng provinces this week to reflect on progress made by the Basic Education Sector since the current administration took office in 2014. Approximately 6,207 senior provincial and district officials and 4,218 schools principals attended the DG's meetings. As a result, knowledge gained from various presentations made by representatives from both the National Assessment and Public Examinations and the Curriculum Directorates will be cascaded to schools.

During the visits, Mr Mveli addressed education stakeholders on the areas that still needed to be improved on to assist the Sector in responding to the targets set out in the *National Development Plan* (NDP). These include the improvement of reading across the curriculum; the strengthening of the effective implementation of the Three Stream Model; and the sustainability of learner support programmes to achieve quality learning and teaching in underperforming schools.

According to Mr Mveli, the sector has, undoubtedly, made inroads in addressing social justice principles, including access, redress, equity, and inclusivity. However, Mr Mveli mentioned that there is a room for improvement in the area of quality and efficiency across all nine provinces. Another aspect that was viewed as a stumbling block for the Sector to attain efficiency was the dropout and repetition rates in Grades 8, 9 and 10 in particular.

"We have made strides, but we have not yet arrived. Unless we meet the demands of the NDP, our work remains incomplete. According to the NDP all learners across all grades should perform at an average of 50% and above in all Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) prescribed subjects by 2030. We need to inject additional effort into improving learner performance in all international standardised assessments. These assessments are critical because they assist us in diagnosing where we are lacking as the Sector," said Mveli.

As reported in the 2016 *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study* (PIRLS), the Sector is expected to ensure that learners in lower grades are able to read with understanding. "In terms of quality, our schools still need to do more to contribute to a high number of passes that enable entrance to bachelor studies at universities. The NDP has put the DBE to task to ensure that in the next three years, 80% of passes that enable entrance to bachelor studies at universities are attained by learners in quintile 1 to 3 schools. This will assist Government in transforming the quality of life of our learners in disadvantaged communities as they will be granted an opportunity to pursue various careers at institutions of higher learning," concluded Mr Mveli.



Four learners exhibit their inventions at the Kenya Science and Engineering Fair



On 07 April 2019, four brainy South African wizkids, who recently participated in the Eskom Expo for Young Scientists, departed from the Oliver Tambo International Airport in the Gauteng Province to represent South Africa at the Kenya Science and Engineering Fair taking place from 7 to 12 April 2019.

Ntendeni Nephawe from the Mbilwi Secondary School in Vhembe will be presenting his invention, a solar powered umbrella with a cellphone charging port and a cooling fan. The device is able to charge four to five mobile cellphones in an hour. Ntendeni's invention is a creative response to the warm climate experienced in the Limpopo Province.

Norman Mashiri from the Dr Joseph Shabalala Secondary School in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Midlands designed and programmed a mobile application that would simplify the task of writing a Curriculum Vitae (CV)

and other documents. It essentially takes the mobile application at least three minutes to successfully build a CV on a cellphone without any computer skills.

Caroline Boshoff from the Cape Recife High School in Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape Province, came up with a project titled, *Sakha Isizwe Ngemfundo*, which translates to *Build the nation through early education*. Caroline has designed and written resources, based on a long study of Early Childhood Development (ECD) pupils from underprivileged backgrounds.

Sphehile Sithole from the Mehlokazulu High School in Pietermaritzburg in the KZN Province designed and developed a Water Treatment System from recycled materials which can be used in households. Sphehile's prototype at no cost is able to transport water from a river using creative pumping methods. The Umgeni Water Board tested samples of water from Sphehile's prototype and concluded that there were significantly reduced amounts of microbials and turbidity, implying that it was fit for human consumption. Sphehile said: "I plan to scale my invention and help many families in my community who still rely on water from the local river".

NSNP sod-turning ceremony at Sefakho Mapogo Makgatho Primary School



Following the hand-over of a brand new state of the art kitchen to Ratanda Primary School in the Gauteng Province, the DBE, in partnership with the Tiger Brands Foundation (TBF), held a sod-turning event at Sefakho Mapogo Makgatho Primary School, popularly known as "The Township School of Choice".

The sod-turning ceremony took place in the presence of representatives from the Department, the TBF and the school in Atteridgeville, Pretoria on 09 April 2019.



The ceremony was a demonstration of the TBF's commitment to building a kitchen to the amount of R500,000 for the winning school of the 2018/19 Best Schools and Districts Awards for their noteworthy contribution to improving the effective implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP).

During 2011, an in-school breakfast programme was initiated between the DBE and the TBF to provide a healthy breakfast for more than 90 schools across the country. This has since helped in developing schools in various communities to benefit, not only the learners who are better nourished to enhance their classroom performance, but also to provide accredited training to Volunteer Food Handlers within the community to sustain excellence in school feeding.

Deputy-Director General from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE), Mr Vuyani Mpofu, in his keynote address, reminded learners of the importance of the programme in providing a daily nutritious meal to learners to enhance their academic achievements.

Ms Neo Sediti, Director of the NSNP at the DBE congratulated the principal, Ms Jane Tshirwane, in the effective management of the programme within the school. In turn, Ms Tshirwane expressed her gratitude to the Department for recognising the hard work and dedication that the school and the community has injected into ensuring that the school remains "The Township School of Choice".

Igniting a Reading Revolution through the establishment of Reading Clubs



In response to President Cyril Ramaphosa's call to inculcate a culture of reading in the country, the DBE, in collaboration with the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT), launched the National Reading Coalition (NRC) on 15 February 2019. The NRC brings together leaders in education, community, government and the private sector to improve children's literacy, and aims to mobilise and coordinate reading initiatives.

The NRC calls upon South Africans to support a culture of reading through the establishment of Book Clubs and by visiting local libraries to "get the nation to read", and to ignite the Reading Revolution. To further strengthen the above collaboration, President Cyril Ramaphosa will be launching the Presidential Reading Club Initiative on 24 April 2019 in the Gauteng Province.

Literacy underpins growth in various aspects of our lives and is central to development and advancement of nation-building. Book Clubs are one of the simplest, cheapest and most practical mechanisms to encourage a culture of reading whilst at the same time playing a crucial role in promoting social cohesion. Book Clubs are established with the purpose of creating interactive platforms where members share their reading experiences and encourage one another to read for pleasure. South Africans are, through the Enrichment in Sport Directorate, encouraged to establish Reading Clubs following five basic steps as guidelines: find book club members; elect a committee; choose good books; generate a calendar; and host discussion sessions.

"In a school environment and the community, Book Clubs become Reading Clubs as small children need to be read to by adults such as teachers and volunteers who are passionate about reading for pleasure and love to transfer this passion to the children. A Reading Clubs Competition (RCC) is therefore being introduced to encourage these Reading Club members to sustain these Reading Clubs after they have been formed. All learners in Grade R and primary schools, including learners with special educational needs, are encouraged to join Reading Clubs and will be eligible to be entered into the competition. The Guidelines for the RCC, a project to develop the reading habit in learners, also allows participation by Reading Clubs in the community that can be linked to participating schools by approved volunteers," said Potledi Ngoepe from the Enrichment in Sport Directorate.

Click on the below link for additional information about the RCC:

<https://www.education.gov.za/Programmes/Read2Lead/BookClubs.aspx>

Project Managers and SISCOs are turning the tide against underperforming circuits



Underperformance remains a challenge for many Circuit Managers within the various provinces. A common mistake made in the past was developing one intervention programme for all schools. It is also good to share best practices, but understanding one's own circumstances first is critical.

The intervention via Project Managers and School Improvement Support Coordinators (SISCOs) was a turning point for underperforming schools. A thorough analysis of the National Senior Certificate (NSC) results had to be made to identify areas of intervention. The learner performance data was used to inform the intervention programmes in the development of the Circuit Academic Performance Improvement Plans. Circuit Managers visited individual schools to ascertain learner performance data presented to the School Governing Bodies (SGBs), School Management Teams (SMTs) and teachers. Subsequently, Circuit Managers, principals and relevant stakeholders analysed their own circumstances before developing intervention plans. Intervention plans obtained from other provinces or sharing best practices also proved meaningful. Academic Performance Improvement Plans, which were informed by learner performance data and strengthened with shared best practices were developed, analysed and monitored on a quarterly basis.

Improvement in the NSC results during 2017 to 2018 was therefore noticeable in many underperforming circuits owing to identified intervention strategies. There is, however, still more work to be done. Thorough and more detailed learner performance data analysis must be compiled. It must be understood that there are underperforming schools in high performing circuits and underperforming learners in high performing schools. Project managers, SISCOs and Circuit Managers have proved that effective data utilisation can change the performance of the education sector, through the effective analysis of learner performance data to turn the tide against underperformance in identified circuits.

Provincial Round-up

Gauteng Province



GAUTENG PROVINCE
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Gauteng Education MEC, Panyaza Lesufi, launched the Soshanguve Engineering School of Specialisation (SoS) with an automotive focus. The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) has initiated the establishment of Schools of Specialisation to nurture talent in young people across key disciplines and develop the country's future leaders. "Schools of Specialisation respond to the skills shortage and unemployment crisis among the youth in the country. Our learning and teaching outcomes cannot be realised without industry and private partnerships that will provide learners with workplace experience, learnerships, artisanship and entrepreneurial skills," Lesufi said. The GDE is excited about the partnership with BMW SA, who donated and also handed over one of its first model X3s to the school for educational gain to the learners. BMW SA will also support the school with training services and material.

The Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDOE) School Enrichment, Social Cohesion and School Safety Directorate, this week, hosted an Adjudicators and Programme Directors Workshop at Mpekweni Resort in Port Alfred. The workshop forms part of the preparations for the provincial school choir competitions that will be taking place later this year in the province. This will ensure that as the ECDOE reaches the provincial level, and that the best choirs are chosen to represent the Eastern Cape at the national ABC Motsepe South African Schools Choral Eisteddfod (SASCE). During the previous year, the Eastern Cape Province bagged the number one spot in the nationals and this is a position ECDOE hopes to maintain. Adjudicators play an important role in ensuring that choirs of high quality are selected and ready to represent the province, whilst teachers have a significant task of identifying these gifts and ensuring that they encourage and harness what each learner possesses.

Upcoming Events

- 06 April – 10 May 2019: The DBE and PEISA will be celebrating Physical Education Month
- 24 April 2019: President Cyril Ramaphosa will be launching the Presidential Reading Club Initiative in the Gauteng Province
- 24 – 25 April 2019: A Basic Education Retreat (BER) will be taking place at African Pride Mount Grace Country House & Spa in Magaliesburg, North West Province
- 26 – 27 April 2019: The DBE, in collaboration with PEISA, will be observing annual Physical Education Month in Mmabatho in the North West Province
- 27 April 2019: South Africa will be celebrating Freedom Day
- 3 May 2019: The DBE, in collaboration with PEISA, will be observing annual Physical Education Month in King Williams Town in the Eastern Cape Province
- 31 May 2019: Deadline for the submission of the SADC Secondary School Essay Competition entries to the SADC Secretariat

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