



THUTO

PRODUCED BY:
THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION



NEWSLETTER

Top performing education districts and schools honoured at the 7th Annual National Education Excellence Awards



Tshwane South Education District from the Gauteng Province broke the record as it scooped the majority of awards at the 7th Annual National Education Excellence Awards held at the Glen High School in Pretoria today. The district won several prizes including tablets, framed certificates and trophies, amounting to the value of R80,000. In second place was Bojanala District from the North West Province, followed by Thabo Mofutsayana from the Free State Province in third place.

Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie Motshekga also used the Awards to honour the top performing schools in the country. The winner was Fezile Dabi Education District in the Free State Province which walked away with the special Ministerial Award in the 2020 edition of the Excellence Awards. This award was dedicated to the only district that consistently performed above 90% in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examinations for the past four consecutive years.

Minister Motshekga said that education districts are one of the most critical bodies of Government, playing an essential role in serving communities. "These districts carry the whole system on their shoulders, as well as the hopes and aspirations of their schools and communities. It is an excellent gesture for a large and complex system such as ours to celebrate the gallant efforts of a select few amongst its structures such as districts and schools. These Awards provide us with an opportunity to shout over the rooftops about sustained excellence in our basic education system, focusing on districts and schools."

"Both districts and schools are indeed a vital cog in the overall management of the public schooling system. You are living proof of the wise words of Ralph Marston: *Excellence... is not an act, but a habit*. What you do at district and school level is what matters the most. The nation put the future of our learners in your hands, and you delivered," concluded Minister Motshekga.



Minister Motshekga briefs media on developments in the Basic Education Sector



Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie Motshekga, briefed the media on 9 March 2020 on the recent Council of Education Ministers (CEM) meeting to flag important matters affecting the Basic Education Sector.

In addition, the CEM has approved the 2020 National Senior Certificate (NSC) and Senior Certificate Examination calendars. This year's NSC Examinations will commence on 19 October and will be concluded on 26 November 2020. The May/June 2020 matric re-write will take place from 4 May to 11 June 2020. The results for these exams will be released on 30 July 2020. The 2020 timetables were also drafted after consultation with all religious organisations to accommodate their religious holidays.

The CEM has also approved the 2022 School Calendar, which states that schools will close a week later than the previous year to ensure the protection of learning and teaching time. The opening of schools in 2022 will be staggered, with schools in the inland provinces (Free State, Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North-West) opening on 10 January 2022; whilst schools in coastal provinces (Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Cape and Western Cape) will open on 17 January 2022 for learners to have 202 days of actual learning.

Following the Presidential proclamation, the DBE will take immediate responsibility and leadership for the delivery of Early Childhood Development (ECD), including the convening of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for ECD.

The Examinations of the General Education Certificate which all Grade 9 learners will write is expected to generate credible assessment data from standardised assessment which will be used to guide learners and parents to decide to pursue the academic, technical vocational, or technical occupational pathways. CEM appreciated the progress made by Teacher Unions and officials in concluding the *National Assessment Framework*, comprising of Systems Assessment which replaces the Annual National Assessment, Diagnostic Assessment, and Summative Assessment. The Early Learning National Assessment (ELNA) will also be introduced for Grade 1 learners.

In conclusion, Minister Motshekga reminded schools that the admission of undocumented learners in public schools is an immediately realisable right in terms of the judgement handed down in this matter during December 2019. Any school that does not admit undocumented learners, may be faced with litigation.

Director-General Mweliso acknowledges significant improvements by the sector in quality learning outcomes



The improvement of quality learning and teaching among schools in remote areas is one of the core focal areas targeted for intervention during the 2020 academic year. The key indicators retracted from the National Senior Certificate (NSC) data presented during the Director-General's provincial engagements in various provinces, have suggested an urgent shift of focus from Further Education and Training (FET) to the General Education and Training (GET) band during 2020.

Through his engagement, Basic Education Director-General, Mr Hubert Mathanzima Mweliso, has succeeded in stimulating an accountability culture in provinces, through which gaps and challenges observed in the education system are affirmed. Mr Mweliso commenced this programme in February 2020, with an attempt to gauge strides made by schools in terms of improving curriculum coverage, especially in the GET band. In his remarks, Mr Mweliso said that provinces are hard at work to ensure that schools are fully resourced to deliver quality education. "The engagement with key education stakeholders in provinces has assisted both the DBE and Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) in cascading critical information required at provincial up to the school level".

Mr Mweliso further alluded to the fact that given the increasing trend of progressed learners in provinces, it is imperative for education districts and schools to be on top of their game to deal with factors that have the potential to interrupt schooling. He then pointed out several aspects that needed to be prioritised during 2020 to sustain the national overall pass rate. These included reviewing policies on learner progression, putting measures in place to prevent community protests from interrupting schooling, a decision to divide Accounting and Business Studies into two examination papers, setting the bar high for under-performing districts and schools, as well as paying attention to declining subjects such as Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Home Languages. "We need to come up with solid strategies and mechanisms to deal with challenges arising in the Basic Education Sector," remarked Mr Mweliso.

He also commended the DBE and PEDs for having increased the number of learners completing Grade 12 since 1996 to date. As a sector, we have to consider increasing the minimum pass mark to at least 40% to be on par with the minimum requirements applied in bachelor studies offered at institutions of higher learning. Mr Mweliso informed key education stakeholders that the sector is making significant improvements in terms of supporting learners in Quintile 1 to 3 schools. "Many learners in these schools are beginning to compete with learners in the affluent schools. The 2019 NSC Examinations saw learners in Quintile 1 to 3 achieving a high volume of distinctions, with the majority of them entering bachelor studies at institutions of higher learning. This is evidence that our education system is on the rise. We also need to invest more resources and energy in learners with special needs and assist them to complete Grade 12. These engagements should allow provinces to learn from each other and further initiate strategies and intervention support programmes that would yield positive results during 2020."



DBE to host Mathematics Indaba to increase participation and throughput rate in schools

Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie Motshekga, is set to host a Mathematics Indaba at the DBE Conference Centre in Pretoria from 19 to 20 March 2020, to address the declining trend of Mathematics throughput rate in schools.

The Indaba, which will draw in expertise from various organisations specialising in Mathematics including Institutions of Higher Learning, will assist the DBE in exploring high impact interventions towards the achievement of the *National Development Plan* (NDP) targets. According to the NDP, foundational skills in areas such as Mathematics, Science, Language, the Arts and Ethics are essential components of a good education system. It also indicates that the quality of the education system impacts significantly on higher education and innovation. The DBE therefore has set a target to increase the number of learners eligible for Bachelors Programmes to 300,000 by 2024, 350,000 learners who pass Mathematics, and 320,000 learners who pass Physical Sciences. The NDP has mandated the DBE to increase the number of students eligible to study Mathematics and Sciences at Universities to 450,000 by 2030.

Chief Education Specialist for Mathematics, Mr Leonard Mudau, said that, “to improve learning outcomes in this subject, provinces should teach learners Mathematics for conceptual understanding. Learners should be exposed to regular assessments to understand Mathematics components better, and teachers should be empowered in mastering Pedagogic Mathematical Content to deal with challenging topics. Learners should be taught how to draw graphs and be assisted to master interpretative skills. Mathematics cannot be tested only on classroom activities, hence understanding is crucial,” he elaborated.

Building a South Africa inclusive of disability rights



An Interprovincial Meeting on Inclusive Education took place at the DBE building in Pretoria from 11 to 12 March 2020 under the theme, “Together building a South Africa inclusive of disability rights”. The Interprovincial Meeting was chaired by Mr Jabulani Ngcobo, Director for Inclusive Education, who maintains that, “Inclusive Education must be deployed as a mechanism for achieving access to education for all. To this end, the DBE will conduct oversight visits in all typologies of schools: public ordinary schools, full-service schools including, special schools and special care centres to strengthen implementation across the system”.

Mr Baba Malaka, Assistant Director for School Safety at the DBE, made an interesting presentation on Disaster Risk Management in special schools as contained in the *National School Safety Framework*. Mr Sifiso Sibiya from the Enhancement of Programmes and Evaluation of School Programmes Directorate spoke about the court order on the Provisioning Braille Learning and Teaching Materials (LTSM). The court order is being implemented in 23 Schools for the Blind across the country. Regarding master copies, he reported that they have four identified schools that will verify the copies before distribution.

The meeting also discussed the following key issues regarding the sector’s efforts to ensure that no child is left behind: progress in the implementation of *Circular S4 of 2019*; placement of children from special care centres in schools; implications of the SAHRC report on safety and security in special schools in the North West; subject specialist support in special schools; strategic introduction of the skills-based curriculum in special schools; strategic implementation of inclusive education as a mechanism for achieving quality education for all; participation of learners from special schools in the road safety debates; evaluation of the performance of Learners with Severe to Profound Intellectual Disabilities (LSPID) conditional grant; teacher and parent friendly screening of learners with autism spectrum disorder.

A Task Team was established to prepare for a one-day strategic session to review implementation of Inclusive Education and map out key issues and plans to position and gear the system towards full implementation by 2030. This was regarded as significant given the importance of consolidating the gains made and addressing the challenges of efficiency and quality that persist. The Task Team will comprise representatives from various provinces.

The meeting concluded by adopting the following strategic priorities going forward: strengthening designation, conversion and resourcing of full-service schools in terms of *Circular S4 of 2019*; implementing the *Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support* (SIAS), including training of ECD practitioners; access to education for learners with severe to profound intellectual disability (LSPID), especially the placement of children in schools, not in special care centres; implementation of CAPS for learners with SID Grade R to 6; system-wide implementation of accommodations and concessions; training of teachers in specialised areas following an interventionist approach; information and advocacy programme on Inclusive Education; mainstreaming the implementation of Inclusive Education in all schools, not only in full-service schools, special schools and special care centres.



SCMP embraces people with disability



The DBE hosted the Disability Roadshow on 5 March 2020 at the South African National Council for the Blind in Pretoria. Officials present at the event included Dr Lesiba Malapile, Prof Orbert Maguvhe, Mr Nad Ramsarup, Ms Refiloe Ndziba, Ms Nozipho Mpontshane, officials from Tshwane District office and 40 deaf and 70 blind learners from various municipalities from the Gauteng Province.

The Roadshow, directed by Mr Ramsarup, provided a platform for participants to ask questions, express concerns and share their feelings on the Second Chance Matric Programme (SCMP). Ms Ndziba, the Coordinator of the Disability Sector SCMP, welcomed delegates and encouraged learners with disabilities to grab hold of the new opportunity offered by the SCMP.

Dr Malapile, Director of the SCMP, provided an overview of the programme; explained the nature of support to be provided by the DBE; and informed the cohort of learners about their eligibility to participate in the programme. Prof Maguvhe encouraged learners to take the programme seriously as it will open many doors for people with disabilities. He stressed that the teaching and learning of the SCMP for the disability sector will not be compromised, but that it will be of a high quality and standard. Officials from the Tshwane District office discussed the learner registration processes; identification of examination centres; and the format of question papers for learners with special needs.

Learners who were thrilled at accessing the SCMP for the first time, were registered by a team of officials from the Examinations Section of the Tshwane District Office and officials from the DBE Communication Chief Directorate. Registered learners will be provided with tuition in various special schools across the country. They will write their very first matric examination through the SCMP in October 2020.

Additional Roadshows will also be taking place across all provinces during the coming months.

Strong focus on Agricultural Education



In South Africa Agriculture is one of the key economic sectors. It has a central role in building a strong economy and farming is an important direct source of employment in the economy. The Agricultural Sector is significant because of its potential to create jobs. SA is self-sufficient in all major agricultural products and a net food exporter. The role of education, with a focus on how the education system could contribute to further economic and social development in rural areas within the scope of agriculture is crucial. Through education rural people can be equipped with better tools, skills and capacity.

The Rural Education Directorate established the National Agricultural Education Committee comprised of provincial officials responsible for Agricultural Education. The committee meets quarterly to discuss and share strategic matters to strengthen and improve Agricultural Education. During the discussions, Dr Langa stated that, “the sector must focus on strategies that will expand Agricultural schools and improve access for learners from poor socio-economic contexts”.

The committee met on 11 March 2020 and the highlights of the meeting included: provinces sharing key achievements and best practices; partnerships as key to sustaining Agricultural schools; and the planned audit of Agricultural schools which will give an overall picture of Agricultural Education in the country. Mr Mtshontshi from the New Leaders Foundation said, “Such an audit will assist as the sector embarks on its quest to attract partnerships to support Agricultural schools”.

In closing, Dr Langa said: “I am pleased that compared to when the project started in 2018, there is progress in a number of new Agricultural schools in provinces and in the support that provinces have shown”.



DBE rolls out Quality Management System to strengthen accountability in schools



The training of Collective Agreement 2 of 2014: Quality Management System (QMS) for school-based educators commenced in earnest when the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) hosted three training sessions to capacitate the National Training Team (NTT) as facilitators. The training was facilitated from 27 February to 3 March 2020 by a Core Team of 30 experts in performance management from the DBE, Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) and Teacher Unions across three venues. A total of 147 participants were trained as national facilitators who will be responsible for the roll-out of the initial training on the QMS for all school-based educators from April to September 2020.

Ms Cindy Foca, the General Secretary of the ELRC mentioned that the QMS Collective Agreement, which was finalised on 3 September 2019, not only gives effect to the mandate of the Council to maintain labour peace in the public education sector, but also seeks to fulfil the vision of the *National Development Plan* (NDP) on accountability and the standardised framework for employee performance within the system.

The QMS is designed to measure the performance of educators in line with their respective roles and responsibilities. It also introduces a work plan agreement which must be completed and signed by Principals, Deputy Principals and Departmental Heads with their immediate supervisors at the commencement of each academic year as from January 2021.

Mr Habib Karimulla, Director for Educator Performance Management and Development and Whole School Evaluation, indicated that the QMS is a performance management system for school-based educators, designed to evaluate their performance levels to achieve high levels of school performance. The QMS focuses on educator appraisal and accountability and has delinked the Personal Growth Plan (PGP), which formed part of the IQMS framework. This avoids duplication as the professional development of educators is addressed through structures provided in the Integrated Strategic Framework for Teacher Education and Development (ISPFTED). He added that the performance standards in the QMS have been streamlined with enhanced descriptors for educators on different post levels.

The training sessions concluded on a positive note with the NTT committing itself to ensure that the training of teachers on the QMS will be undertaken in all provinces from April 2020 and concluded by September 2020. The full implementation of the QMS will commence at school level from January 2021.

DBE Spelling Bee South Africa encourages reading with meaning



TODAY A READER. TOMORROW A LEADER!

As part of the national reading initiative, the Department hosts the DBE Spelling Bee South Africa (National Spelling Bee Championship) annually. A spelling bee is a game in which the participants compete in spelling words orally. The National Spelling Bee Championship, which targets learners in Grade 4 to 6 (the Intermediate Phase), is aimed at improving learners' performance in languages.

A call is hereby made for all schools with an Intermediate Phase to encourage learners to participate in the 2020 National Spelling Bee Championship. The Intermediate Phase is the only category for the competition whose winners will proceed to the National Championship. Schools are requested to first host the competition in class, before the joint Intermediate Phase championship. It is expected that schools will hold circuit/cluster spelling bees before the winners proceed to the district and provincial championship.

The procedure for participation in the 2020 Spelling Bee is to complete the registration form which must be stamped by the school and faxed/sent through to the provincial coordinator of the Spelling Bee. Parents of learners enrolled for Home Education are advised to request the principal of the nearest school to support and stamp the form for them. Upon receipt of the registration form in which three top names of the Intermediate Phase winners are entered, the provincial coordinator will organise a workshop for schools to explain the rules of the competition, as well as conduct elimination rounds up to the provincial level.

The DBE will host the National Spelling Bee Championship in Pretoria on 19 September 2020 for English and on 10 October 2020 for African Indigenous languages.

For further enquiries, kindly contact Mr PJ Ngoepe, Sport and Enrichment on tel: 012 357 3442 or via email: ngoepe.pj@dbe.gov.za. All schools, including special schools, are invited to enter. Participation in the programme is free.

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

DBE issues guidelines on Coronavirus

The DBE has issued a set of guidelines to all schools and child care facilities on the management of the Coronavirus.

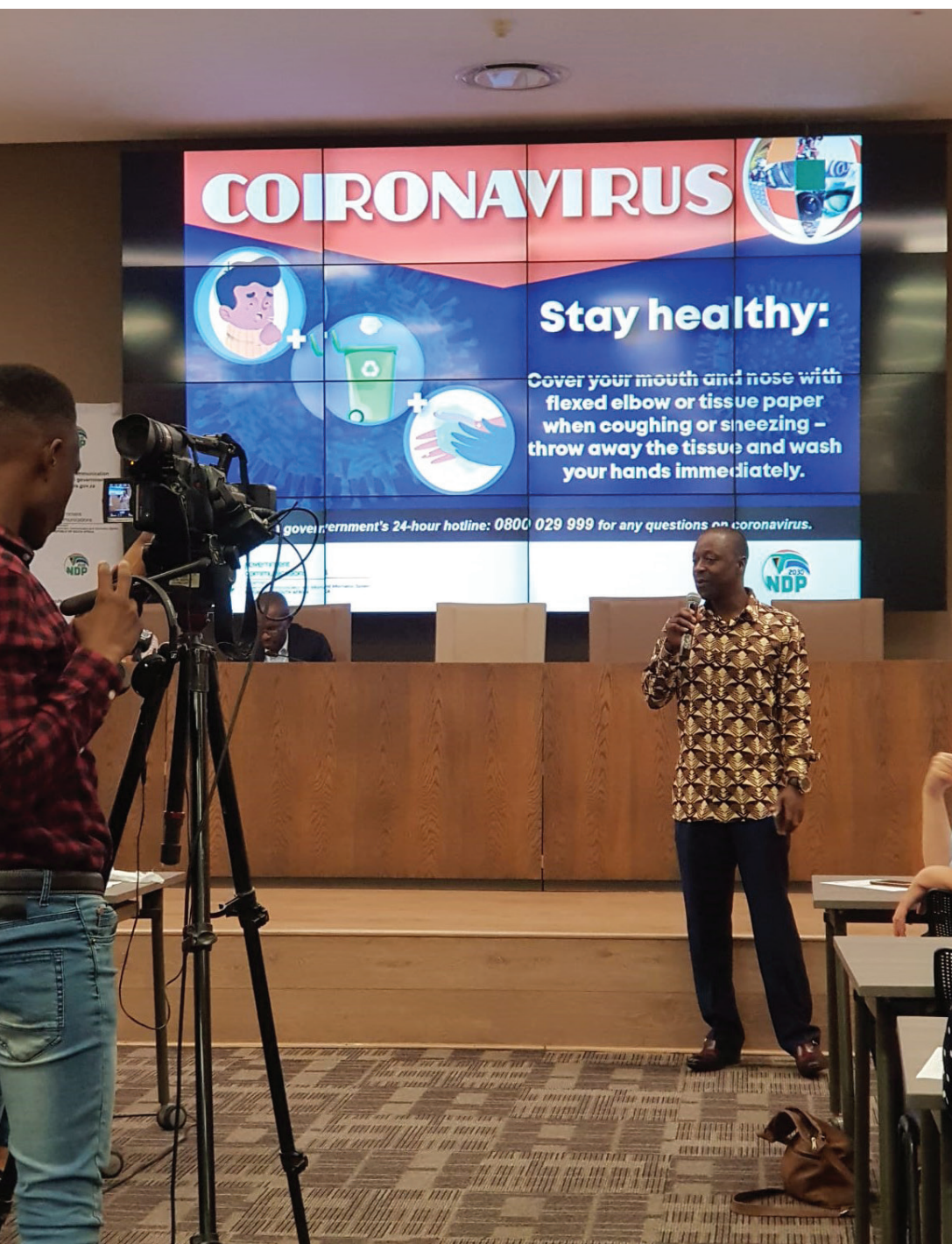
The guidelines contain detailed information on the steps to be followed in schools and they provide protocol to be followed should a case of infection be suspected.

It is clear in the guidelines that only the Department of Health can make a decision on whether a school can be closed temporarily or not, and it urges all schools to contact their local health departments on all matters regarding the virus.

The Department, together with Unilever has distributed posters and leaflets with information on how to stay healthy and prevent the spread of the Coronavirus and germs in general.

The circular with the guidelines is available here:

<https://www.education.gov.za/COVID19.aspx>



Symptoms of Coronavirus Disease 2019

Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness.

Symptoms can include:

- FEVER**
Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure
- COUGH**
Seek medical advice if you develop symptoms, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19
- SHORTNESS OF BREATH**

Protect yourself and others from the disease

#coronavirusupdate **#COVID-2019**

 **health**
Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Provincial Round-up

Eastern Cape Province



Eastern Cape matric pupils will soon be able to write their final National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examination in isiXhosa. The Council of Education Ministers (CEM), last week, approved the implementation of the bilingual examination, starting in the Eastern Cape. Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga, explained that all preparatory work would be subjected to the mandatory period of 18 months before the bilingual examination in the Eastern Cape can be effected. The province has conducted research and provided evidence that their learners could be struggling with English as a language of teaching and learning. The province therefore proposed an examination in both English and isiXhosa in Grade 12. Research on African languages confirms that orthographies and the linguistic structures of African languages are unique and different to the English language. “We will take lessons from the Eastern Cape as we continue with the implementation process in other provinces,” said Minister Motshekga.

Gauteng Province



Grayston Preparatory School underwent a deep-cleaning process before re-opening its doors to learners on 11 March 2020, after the school closed on 9 March 2020. The school closed after a staff member came into contact with one of the people who tested positive for Coronavirus last week. The school's executive team subsequently met with representatives of the Grayston school board, the Gauteng Education Department, the Gauteng Health Department and the Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa. The staff member in question remained in self-imposed isolation for the quarantine period and will receive guidance from the NICD (National Institute for Communicable Diseases) going forward. Upon their return, children received age-appropriate guidance from their class teachers on general hygiene and precautionary measures in such situations. As per its school policy, Grayston Preparatory advised parents to keep their children at home and consult a medical practitioner if they feel unwell.

KwaZulu-Natal Province



KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Education, Mr Kwazi Mshengu, addressed and motivated all participants at the Interprovincial Athletics Championship that was organised by the Department of Education together with the Department of Sport and Recreation. The event was held at the Kingsmead Athletics Stadium in Durban on 8 March 2020. In addition, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education's 2020 National School Nutrition Programme Annual Capacity Building Workshop and Best Practice Awards was held in the Ugu District on the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal on 10 March 2020, to honour its deserving participants.

Western Cape Province



The CEM has welcomed the online safety curriculum which is being piloted by the Western Cape Education Department. The Department, together with Google, have developed a set of guidelines with the aim of teaching learners the fundamentals of digital safety so they can be safe, confident explorers of the online world. Topics covered include cyberbullying, online reputation, privacy, online harassment and inappropriate content.

Upcoming Events

- 12 – 16 March 2020: Basic Education Director-General, Mr Hubert Mathanzima Mveli, will be engaging with district and provincial officials during his Provincial Engagement Visits to the Western Cape Province
- 13 March 2020: The DBE National Excellence Awards for Districts and Schools will be taking place at the Glen High School in Waterkloof Glen in Pretoria, Gauteng Province
- 13 March 2020: The DBE will be tabling its Annual Performance Plan (APP) and Strategic Plan 2020 in Parliament, Cape Town in the Western Cape Province
- 16 March 2020: The NSNP Best School Awards and Kitchen Handover ceremony will be taking place at the Sefako Makgatho School in Atteridgeville, Pretoria in the Gauteng Province
- 19 March 2020: The Second Chance Matric Support Programme Disability Sector Road Show will be taking place at the School for the Deaf in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal Province
- 19 – 20 March 2020: Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie Motshekga, will host a Mathematics Indaba at the DBE Conference Centre in Pretoria, Gauteng Province
- 25 – 27 March 2020: The DBE will be hosting a delegation from the Ministry of Education and Training from Lesotho on Early Childhood Care and Development

Enquiries:

Editor: Mr Elijah Mhlanga

Chief Director: Media Liaison - National and Provincial Communication

Tel. No: 012 357 3773

Published by the Department of Basic Education
222 Struben Street
Private Bag X895, Pretoria, 0001
Telephone: 012 357 3000 | Fax: 012 323 0601
© Department of Basic Education

website
www.education.gov.za

facebook
www.facebook.com/BasicEd

twitter
www.twitter.com/dbe_sa



basic education
Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



