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THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION



NEWSLETTER

Minister Motshekga presides over the Matric Pledge Signing Ceremony at Maphutha Secondary



Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie Motshekga and Gauteng Education MEC, Mr Panyaza Lesufi, officiated a National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examinations Pledge Signing Ceremony today, 16 October 2020. The ceremony took place at Maphutha Secondary School in Commerica, Extension 34 Mayibuye Section in Midrand, Gauteng Province.

South Africa is ready to host NSC Examinations; however, the only threat that remains is the COVID-19 pandemic and the unreliability of the electricity grid. The Pledge also serves as a reminder that COVID-19 rules and regulations must be adhered to at all times, as set out in the COVID-19 Examinations Protocol. To prepare against the ever-present threat posed by violent protests, the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster is providing all the necessary support and, law enforcement agencies are ready for any eventuality.

“Today, we urge the Class of 2020 to sign a pledge to commit to a corruption-free examination. The pledge is an attempt to adopt a more proactive, rather than a reactive approach to the elimination of examination related irregularities. We urge learners and teachers to publicly demonstrate their commitment to comply with the examination’s code of conduct. Candidates are warned not to bring into the examination centres any electronic devices such as cellphones, unauthorised material and other related examination dishonest misdemeanours. Failure to adhere to these rules means any candidate found guilty will face consequent management measures, including being disbarred from writing the examination for a minimum of one, and a maximum of three subsequent examinations,” said Minister Motshekga.

In conclusion, the Minister extended her gratitude to all dedicated teachers and conveyed her warm wishes to all the matriculants who will be sitting for the historic 2020 NSC Examinations that commence on 5 November 2020.

Minister wishes Class of 2020 all the best ahead of the NSC Examinations



Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie Motshekga this week, addressed the Class of 2020 ahead of the National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examinations saying, “To the matric class of 2020, the examinations are here. Yes, you will be anxious as you will be writing under unusual circumstances due to COVID-19, but all the necessary interventions have been put in place to ensure your safety at the various Examination Centres. Stay focused, work hard and revise past papers. You can achieve excellence. Good luck!”

The countdown to the NSC Examinations has begun in full swing, with the writing of examination papers commencing on 5 November and concluding on 15 December 2020. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) rescheduled the examinations to accommodate the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. All examination centres, both public and independent have been audited in preparation for the 2020 combined examination. In addition, a protocol, to ensure compliance with COVID-19 rules, has been developed and distributed to guide all the chief invigilators, invigilators and all other officials involved in the management of the conduct and administration of the examination.

Provinces put in place measures to support learners, including Saturday and Sunday classes. In addition to the extra classes provided at schools, the Department also launched Woza Matrics, in collaboration with the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT). This is an initiative designed to provide additional support to the Matric Class of 2020, as they prepare for the 2020 NSC Examinations. Schools will reopen on 25 January 2021.

DBE stresses the importance of hand hygiene for all during Global Handwashing Day



The DBE commemorated Global Handwashing Day in the John Taolo Gaetsewe District, Kuruman in the Northern Cape Province and in the Sedibeng West District in Gauteng on 15 October 2020. The DBE has been implementing the National School Hygiene Programme, supported by Unilever through its brands, Lifebuoy, Mentadent and Domestos. This programme involves a 21-day behavioural change intervention regarding the washing of hands with soap; the brushing of teeth with a toothbrush and toothpaste, and cleaning of school toilets with chemical detergents.

Global Handwashing Day, marked on 15 October, is an annual global advocacy day dedicated to increasing awareness and understanding about the importance of handwashing with soap as an effective and affordable way to prevent diseases. The 2020 Global Handwashing Day key message is that handwashing with soap must become a priority for all as it is a proven, cost-effective way to improve health, nutrition, education, economic development and equity.

Addressing learners and teachers at Omang Primary School, Deputy Minister Mhaule said: “This year’s Global Handwashing Day comes at the opportune moment as the world battles the global COVID-19 pandemic. To beat the virus today and ensure better health outcomes beyond the pandemic, handwashing with soap must be a priority now and in the future. This year’s theme, *Hand Hygiene for All*, calls for society to achieve universal hand hygiene. I urge all learners and teachers to join the global handwashing movement; let us wash our hands with soap regularly to protect ourselves and others from infections. At a local level, we are joining this global handwashing movement because our long-term basic education strategy enjoins us to use schools as vehicles to promote access for learners to public services such as health, poverty alleviation, and psychosocial support services amongst others”.

Deputy Minister Mhaule expressed her gratitude to the primary sponsor of this programme, Unilever South Africa. “The National Hygiene Programme has reached over 3 million learners through teaching them proper hygiene habits, including handwashing with soap. Furthermore, Unilever has recently, as part of the measures to halt the spread of COVID-19, extended its support for our hygiene measures by providing 2 million bars of soap and hand sanitisers to the value of R40 million to assist in the implementation of these essential handwashing lessons. In addition, the MTN Foundation will also be donating 1,000 masks and sanitisers to the school, along with 50 tablets, to the District.”

Marking this important day also serves as a call for all South Africans to wash their hands regularly, especially after using the toilet, handling waste and preparing food. Minister Motshekga, Unilever, UNICEF, African Publishers Association (APA) and Publishers Association of South Africa (PASA) signed a Declaration of Intent under the umbrella of #H4Handwashing.



DG Mweli's school monitoring programme proceeds to the Northern Cape Province

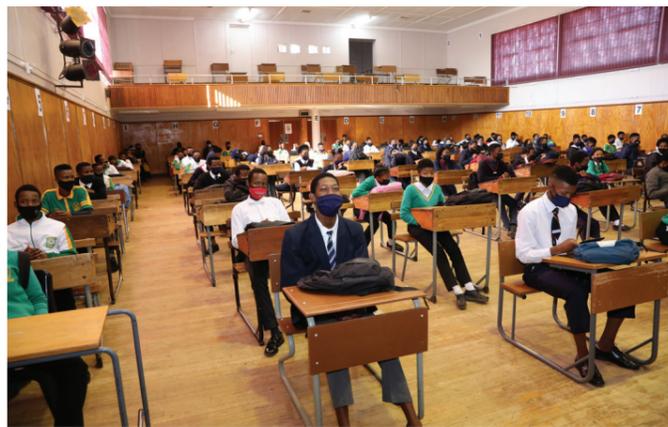


South African education district directors have proved that the sustainability of relationships between schools and various education stakeholders are key in achieving improved quality education.

Following an inevitable return of learners during Level 4 of the National Lockdown, the majority of education districts have put adequate resources in place for schools to facilitate effective weekend classes for all Grade 12 learners. During the past few weeks, the Class of 2020 has determinedly been attending Saturday and Sunday classes organised to improve learning outcomes, especially amongst those learners performing at Level 3 and below across all nine provinces. During his school visits to the Northern Cape province during the past weekend (10-11 October 2020), the Director-General for the Department of Basic Education, Mr Hubert Mathanzima Mweli, advised Grade 12 learners to use the remaining days ahead of the NSC Examinations sparingly, in a bid to take the province to a greater academic performance. "As the Class of 2020, you need to be determined and work towards achieving a 100% pass rate. It is possible to achieve this target, if you listen to your teachers and work hard," motivated Mr Mweli.

"Time is not on your side. I encourage you to come to school regularly and to work with teachers in revising the scope of curriculum content before the commencement of the NSC Examinations. My study tips to you are simple; make sure you study two subjects daily. All official languages are as important as content subjects. As part of your study time-table, ensure that you pair a content subject with an official language. This will assist you in achieving good academic results. One thing you must know is that, a learner may obtain distinctions in all content subjects such as Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Life Sciences and Accounting, but may still fail if a score for an official language is below a minimum requirement". Mr Mweli further acknowledged the intervention support from Provincial Education Departments (PEDs), Education Districts and schools towards the improvement of quality education. I have no doubt that through your contribution and efforts, Grade 12 learners will be fully prepared for the NSC Examinations," Mr Mweli concluded.

During their engagement with DG Mweli, the Grade 12 learners committed themselves to working hard towards achieving a 100% pass rate, despite the setback caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.



Supporting schools to manage COVID-19 infections

The DBE, in collaboration with the National Department of Health and the National Institute of Communicable Diseases, held webinars on 6 and 7 October 2020. The purpose of the webinars was to build the capacity of education officials, stakeholders and health officials on the case management and disinfection practices in schools. The webinar followed virtual workshops that had been hosted by the Department with district directors and circuit managers.

Participants included DBE officials across Branches, the national Integrated School Health Programme (ISHP) task team, Provincial Education Department (PED) COVID-19 response teams, PED ISHP managers, District COVID-19 response teams, circuit managers, education stakeholders (Teacher Unions, SGB Associations, SAPA) as well as national, provincial and district health officials and school health nurses. A number of school principals were also in attendance. Over 240 persons participated in the webinars on each of the two days.

Dr Kerrigan McCarthy, a consultant pathologist at the NICD and the former head of the national Outbreak Response Team, gave a presentation titled *“Keeping Children and Families Safe”*. In her presentation, she discussed the management of various COVID-19 scenarios. Importantly, Dr McCarthy explained the scientific basis for the response to each scenario. The participants expressed their appreciation for this information which assisted in their understanding of the DBE Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). Dr McCarthy further supported the approach taken by the DBE in the revised SOPs, indicating that the SOP are aligned to the available science and advisory by the COVID-19 Ministerial Advisory Committee.

The webinar was also addressed by Dr Charlene Andraos, a medical scientist in the Toxicology and Biochemistry Department at the National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH), the webinar hosts. Dr Andraos is the author of the publication *“Guidance On Routine and Deep Cleaning Of Workplaces When COVID-19 Positive Cases Have Been Identified”*. She detailed the approach to cleaning and disinfection, including the environmental disinfection after a positive case has been identified. She emphasised that fogging, fumigation and the use of chemical tunnels is ineffective, costly harmful to people and the environment, and should be prohibited.

“The webinars confirmed the correctness of our SOPs. It is critical for education officials and stakeholders to work together and with the Department of Health, to keep our schools safe for staff and learners alike. We must stay vigilant and adhere to the SOPs to ensure safe examinations in the sector”, says Dr Kumalo, the COVID-19 Sector Response Lead at the DBE.



“ Having worked through a number of larger public health crises in our country, I’ve learned that every outbreak leaves a legacy behind it that allows us to harness the good, or the gift, that there was in that outbreak in terms of the way we organise ourselves as people, and the way we look after and care for ourselves.

- Dr Kerrigan McCarthy,
Specialist Pathologist, NICD

Learn more to Be READY for #COVID19:
www.sacoronavirus.co.za

NICD Hotline: 0800 029 999
WhatsApp 'Hi' to 0600 123 456



Early Childhood Development shift to be presented to Portfolio Committee



The Departments of Basic Education (DBE) and Social Development (DSD) will be briefing the Portfolio Committee on Education on 20 October 2020, on the migration of the function to the DBE. During the February 2019 State of the Nation Address (SONA), President Cyril Ramaphosa directed that the responsibility for ECD will migrate from the DSD to the DBE. This will take effect as soon as the Proclamations are signed and published, which is likely to be in April 2021.

During a recent Inter-Departmental Project Steering Committee meeting, represented by both the DBE and the DSD, Dr Janeli Kotze from the DBE's Research Coordination Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate, presented an update on the ECD function shift. "Although access to Early Learning Programmes has increased over the past 10 years, with 69% of four-year-olds attending in 2018, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on attendance;" said Dr Kotze.

The responsibility of this Committee is to provide strategic guidance and to coordinate the implementation of the function shift, along with the Government Technical Advisory Centre (GTAC), providing technical advice. Six technical teams have been established to consider implications in respect of finance and budgets; human resources; data, monitoring and evaluation; legislation; assets and stakeholder management and communication issues related to the shift. A diagnosis of the ECD function was conducted between March and June 2020, focusing on analysing implications for the function transfer, and sessions to validate the findings and filling of the gaps found in the provisional diagnostic report, have been held with provinces between July and September 2020.

These draft Proclamations were reviewed to determine whether all relevant provisions of the *Children's Act* are included to ensure that the function can be transferred, and the final Proclamations have been sent to the Office of the State Law Advisor for a certified opinion. The next step in the process will be the joint submission on the ring-fencing of the function and associate resources, as well as the Proclamations being finalised, approved and gazetted. The proclamations will give MEC's and Heads of Department (HODs) in provinces the responsibility for developing a provincial ECD strategy, as well as the registration and funding of centres and programmes.

This new envisioned ECD system will deliver on the constitutional and legislative obligations to the country's youngest citizens and their caregivers to embrace a vision to, by 2030, provide all children with access to quality early learning opportunities, so that they have the opportunity to be developmentally on-track and reach their full potential, and to have put in place a comprehensive ECD ecosystem that is built to serve and support children, families, practitioners, centres and communities.

Learner Support Agents assist with the psychosocial development of learners

Life can be difficult sometimes, if you need someone to talk you may contact any of the call centres below:



Childline Hotline: 08000 55 555



LoveLife Free Plz Cal Me 083 323 1023



LifeLine Toll Free: 086 132 2322



SADAG

**Suicide Crisis Line 0800 567 567/ 0800 212 223
or SMS 31393**

Substance Abuse Line 0800 12 13 14 or SMS 32312

The DBE has appointed Learner Support Agents (LSAs) who are placed in schools to provide support to learners with psychosocial support needs. Many of the LSAs enter the education system without any prior training on child development, counselling or child and youth care. There is thus a need for the DBE to capacitate and support them to effectively provide support to learners. It is recommended that LSAs are first oriented on the Guide for Learner Support Agents and Schools on Providing Psychosocial Support to Learners developed by the DBE, prior to receiving the basic counselling skills.

The DBE Psychosocial Support Directorate envisages a Basic Counselling Skills Training Manual, targeted at educators as they are often exposed to learners who experience difficult emotional situations. The integration of the subject knowledge by the educator and counselling skills will enhance their effectiveness in the identification and support of vulnerable learners. In addition, the relationship between the educator and their learners is central to an individual's educational experience and growth process. Learning basic counselling skills is thus critical for all educators, as it will enhance the ways in which they relate to learners, even if they do not necessarily have time to be engaged in lengthy counselling processes.

This guide is based mainly on the work of Jacqui von Cziffra-Bergs, who developed the *Solution Focused Counselling Skills for Teachers*. It further draws from Insoo Kim Berg who is the earlier author of the Solution Focussed Approach and other various authors in counselling. Solution-based counselling places focus on a person's present and future circumstances and goals rather than on past experiences. It also focuses on strengths and explores what behavioural changes are required to get there. The fundamentals of Solution Focus Approach are that focusing on solutions is much more productive and empowering. The counsellor works collaboratively with the client due to the belief that this approach is to arrive at a solution that is practical and realistic to fit their needs (Kim Berg, 2004). The approach encourages the development of a vision of the future, including the skills, resources, and abilities needed to achieve that vision successfully. This is then facilitated by the counsellor.

Free State Province



education

Department of
Education
FREE STATE PROVINCE

The Free State Department of Education and the South African Air Force have partnered to improve learner performance in Technical Mathematics. “The performance of Grade 12 learners in Technical Mathematics has been a challenge during the past two years, since its introduction as part of the National Senior Certificate,” said Free State Department of Education Chief Director, Tsatsi Montso. In a bid to improve learner performance, the province has maximised partnerships as one of the intervention strategies. The partnership will ensure that 1,004 learners from 19 schools taking the subject, benefit from the programme. Free State Education MEC, Dr Tate Makgoe explained that, “the relationship between the department and the South African Air Force can be traced back as far as 2015, and was necessitated by the need to support Grade 12 learners who progressed from Grade 11 after failing twice. The department subsequently approached the Air Force for support and this has yielded positive results with many of the learners gaining university entrance”.

Gauteng Province



GAUTENG PROVINCE
EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Gauteng Education MEC Panyaza Lesufi, in collaboration with law enforcement agencies, recently visited schools allegedly operating in Ivory Park and Ebony Park. It was found that the schools were not registered with the Gauteng Department of Education. According to Steve Mabona, Gauteng Department of Education’s spokesperson, it was discovered that a school in Ivory Park was operating from four different locations. “Some educators failed to produce legal identification documents and SACE compliant documents, which are a requirement for an educator to teach learners in our schools,” said MEC Lesufi. The educators and principals were taken to the local police station for questioning on possible contravention of immigration legislation.

Mpumalanga Province



education

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MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

A total of 56,330 Grade 12 learners signed a Pledge of Good Conduct as a commitment on their part to observe and respect the examination rules and regulations during the writing of the 2020 NSC Examinations. Mpumalanga Education MEC Bonakele Majuba, officiated the signing of the pledge at Kiriyaatswane Secondary School in Embalenhle, Govan Mbeki Local Municipality, on 16 October 2020. MEC Majuba used the occasion to extend his appreciation for the courage and hard work that the Class of 2020 has displayed during the COVID-19 lockdown period. He further encouraged them to stay focused and to use the remaining days productively whilst preparing for the examination. “2020 has been a difficult year. The fact that we made it this far is really encouraging and we should no longer look back, but soldier on with greater determination to pull through with great results. There was a time when all indications were suggesting that the 2020 academic year could be cancelled, but through the resilience of teachers, learners and stakeholders in education, we made it to this point. Now is the time to make a final commitment and we are really pleased to see the resilience and hard work coming to fruition against all odds. We wish the Class of 2020 all the best with their examination,” said MEC Majuba.

Northern Cape Province



Northern Cape
Department of Education

Basic Education Deputy Minister, Dr Reginah Mhaule, celebrated Global Handwashing Day at Omang Primary School in Mothibistad on 15 October 2020. The Deputy Minister also paid a visit to the John Tauolo Gaetsewe District in Kuruman to meet with District Directors and Local Mayors to discuss the District Development Model. The District Development Model is a new integrated planning model for Cooperative Governance which is a district-based, service delivery approach aimed at fast-tracking service delivery to ensure that municipalities are adequately supported and resourced to carry out their mandate.

Upcoming Events

- October 2020: Teacher Appreciation Month will be celebrated in the Education Sector
- October 2020: Transport Month will be commemorated
- 15 – 19 October 2020: National Obesity Week will be commemorated
- 30 October 2020: Closure of October Teachers' Month
- 03 November – 03 December 2020: November 2020: South Africans will be celebrating Disability Rights Awareness Month
- 05 November – 15 December 2020: Grade 12 learners will be writing their NSC Examinations

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