

09 NOVEMBER 2025

MINISTER GWARUBE TO LAUNCH SOUTH AFRICA'S FIRST NATIONAL EARLY GRADE READING SURVEY

The Minister of Basic Education Ms Siviwe Gwarube will tomorrow, Monday 10 November, launch the Funda Uphumelele National Survey (FUNS) a landmark initiative providing South Africa's first comprehensive picture of early grade reading outcomes across all 11 official spoken languages. Minister of Basic Education, Ms Siviwe Gwarube, will preside over and release the inaugural FUNS findings, marking a breakthrough in the country efforts to strengthen literacy and learning in the early years.

The launch of FUNS forms part of the DBE's broader drive to ensure that children experience success much earlier in their schooling journey, laying a strong foundation for future learning. This work builds on the national Thrive by 5 data, which highlighted the critical importance of early cognitive, socio-emotional and language development as predictors of long-term educational success.

Over seven years, the DBE collaborated with linguists and data specialists to develop national reading benchmarks for Grades 1, 2 and 3 in all 11 official spoken languages. These benchmarks define the skills children must develop each year to read with understanding by Grade 4 and is the first study to measure how many children are actually meeting those targets. The benchmarks and FUNS findings will be used to strengthen teaching and support at three key levels including tracking progress across provinces to inform planning and resourcing, District and School Management as well as overall classroom practice.

MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA ARE INVITED TO ATTEND AND WILL BE OFFERED INTERVIEWS AS FOLLOWS

Date: Tomorrow., Monday 10 November 2025

Time: 09h00

Venue: Department of Basic Education Conference Centre, 222 Struben Street, Pretoria CBD

ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

Media Relations Specialist: Terence Khala – 081 758 1546

Media Liaison Officer: Lukhanyo Vangqa - 066 302 1533



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

