



basic education  
Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



National  
Teaching  
Awards

## **Address by Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga, MP, at the 21<sup>st</sup> Reimagined National Teaching Awards held at Emperors Palace**

**06 October 2021**

Programme Director, I rise to officially congratulate all NTA finalists and winners.

As I have said before, let's make winning a habit not just for one's individual satisfaction, which is important but as single-minded pursuance of excellence in teaching as a virtue.

I also applaud all our teachers in the public sector and beyond for making the task of raising conscientious children possible.

Your relentless commitment to the national cause of educating the young ones gives all of us strength and, of course, pride.

I hope this glitzy NTA affair of today will spur more excellence in the sector, especially in the foundation phase teaching in literacy and numeracy.

As I said earlier, teaching is a mother of all other professions.

Unfortunately, it requires grit and less glamour.

Most importantly, it has to be done right the time around to avoid a generational catastrophe of adults with the poverty of the mind.

According to a review by the World Bank (2012), many studies have found that teacher effectiveness is one of the most critical school-based predictors of student learning.

Interestingly research confirms that experience is irreplaceable-- several years of teaching by outstanding teachers can offset the learning deficits of disadvantaged students.

A range of studies exploring what makes school systems effective have looked for common characteristics in the top-performing education systems.

All found that the key is well trained and motivated teachers.

The key strategies that researchers have identified for improving student outcomes centre around developing a quality teacher workforce, which aims to:

- Attract, recruit and retain high-quality candidates into teacher training.
- Train with extensive school-based practice.
- Train with high-level subject specialisation and academic rigour.
- Provide teachers with personalised continuing professional development (CPD) through mentoring and coaching.
- Involve teachers in research and education policymaking.

As a sector, through various initiatives, including the much-vaunted Funza Lushaka Bursary scheme and our world-class research-intensive universities, we do offer the best in the initial teacher training.

There are also many opportunities to further university studies while in employment, and I am happy to say our teachers are truly lifelong learners.

In addition to training and further varsity studies, our teachers have shown sustained resilience in the recent past, and more so during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic.

To mitigate the potential devastating consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, let's resolve to work diligently without ceasing, work in concert and work purposely for the common good.

On behalf of the Government, I salute every teacher in South Africa.

You are indeed one of a kind worthy of being praised.

We know that teaching in our context means teachers must go beyond the call of duty to succeed amidst social ills and socio-economic challenges.

As a result, most teachers tell me that they play the roles of caregivers, mothers, fathers, counsellors, friends, and godparents on

any typical day to many of our learners from troubled homes and communities.

Your toils in the service of our nation cannot go unnoticed.

As we have learned to appreciate over the years, education is not only a fundamental human right; it is often touted as an enabling right with a direct impact on the realisation of all other human rights.

By educating our citizens, we are contributing to the success of our democratic project.

Education is a common good.

It is not just an instrument to promote economic growth.

The values of public education are essentially the values that underpin democracy and our prosperity as a people.

Education fosters principles of equity and equal opportunities, of non-discrimination and social justice.



When education systems collapse, society regresses to pre-democracy chaos.

As teachers, we carry on our broad shoulders the dreams and aspirations of millions.

Thus, let's continue to be masters of our own destiny and help our country to soar to new dizzying heights.

Go forth and conquer in the upcoming global or continental awards for best teachers.

I believe in you and love you all.

I thank you.