basic education
Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# Keynote Address by Minister of Basic Education Mrs Angie Motshekga, MP, at the 2022 Teachers' Day SHERO Awards held at the Houghton Hotel Sandton

**05 October 2022**

Programme Director

Deputy Minister of Basic Education: Dr Reginah Mhaule

Basic Education Director-General: Mr Mathanzima Mweli

KwaZulu-Natal Education Head of Department: Mr Nkosinathi Ngcobo

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General Manager of Woolworths MTD & MySchool: Mr Peter Twine

Zinzi Mgolodela – Director of Corporate Affairs

Dineo Noganta – Head of Social Economic Performance

Marco Vazzola - Divisional Executive

Brendan Osborn- Divisional Executive

Senior Managers from Woolworths and the Basic Education

Finalists, our most important guests

Distinguished Guests

It gives me great pleasure to speak on this auspicious occasion, the SHERO Award, an Basic Education and Woolworths initiative.

Jointly, we are committed to Making a Difference. The Woolworths Difference!!!

We are proud to celebrate the 2022 annual World Teachers' Day by honouring the best amongst our teachers.

SHERO Awards recognise educators' vital role in their schools, communities and the lives of South African children.

Today South Africa joins other nations in celebrating World Teachers' Day; as we know, teaching is the mother of all professions.

The leadership of teachers in transforming education is the theme of this year's World Teachers' Day.

In short, it says the 'Transformation of Education Begins with Teachers.'

World Teachers' Day 2022 aims to highlight the work of teachers and call on governments to invest in teachers, involve teachers, and trust and respect teachers.

There's no better way than to honour all teachers for their resilience and for going the extra mile to benefit our learners.

The teacher's contribution to the national endeavours to educate our learners can never go unnoticed.

So today, we celebrate ALL teachers in our country in all kinds of schools, working tirelessly against all the odds to help our learners reach their full potential.

The nation is truly indebted to you for your service to our homeland.

With the help of Woolworth's magnanimous gesture, we are meeting here to honour the achievements of some of our best innovative, resilient, committed and dedicated teachers in the country through the SHERO Awards.

The SHERO Awards are a step in the right direction towards the recognition of, as well as restoring, the status of teachers, as we do with the National Teaching Awards and others.

For me, what makes the SHERO Awards more remarkable is that participants are nominated by learners, parents and colleagues.

None get a free pass, a serious motivation is required detailing why the said teacher has made a significant Difference in their lives.

Ladies and gentlemen, Woolworths SA, through the SHERO Awards, has not only created a refreshing competition but, more importantly, a platform for teachers to once again feel appreciated and celebrated by society.

We welcome the opportunity to partner with Woolworths to honour our teachers on the most critical day, World Teacher's Day.

Like us, Woolworths is committed to uplifting and empowering our educators, learners and schools.

Woolworths 'Making a Difference' educational programme is currently impacting over 6000 schools across the country.

They share their expertise in sustainability, nutrition and healthy eating with educators, learners and parents.

MySchool programme alone has raised R760 Million rand for schools across South Africa which is spent on enriching the teaching and learning in our schools.

I appreciate Woolworths' investment and commitment to our youth and the future of our homeland.

That's the famous Woolworth's Difference right there.

So, Mr Twine, we welcome and appreciate your vision to partner with us in one of the critical Teacher Appreciation and Support Programmes (TASP).

We thank you for acknowledging the importance of basic education and supporting educators through incentives like these awards.

All these efforts are part of a singular pursuit of improved learner outcomes and overall improved quality of basic education.

As a country and the rest of humanity, we are smarting from the losses occasioned by the Covid-19 pandemic across various sectors, especially in education.

Our immediate task is to broadly understand the impact and cost of Covid-19 on learning losses, learner dropout, and basic education in general.

At the last count, learners had lost up to 50 per cent of learning time in two years.

We must do everything possible to ameliorate the learning losses through ingenuity and hard work.

I have all the faith in our teachers, leaders and schooling communities.

Lest we forget, basic education remains an apex priority of this Government.

The national task remains the improving our learner outcomes.

In the last two years of battling the Covid-19 pandemic, South Africa needed visionary leadership and the sacrifices of a cohort of basic education leaders and teachers to weather the stormy seas.

As a country, we emerged victorious because of the calibre of teachers and leaders we have and are honoured to honour them while still part of our system.

Against all the odds, this cohort of teachers weathered the storm and made our country proud; the Matric results of the last two years tell the story.

When your country called you, you showed up.

On behalf of our Government, partners and sponsors, we say well done to all teachers, the heart and soul of our education system.

Equally, we pay tribute to fallen teachers, over 3000 of whom died in the line of duty over the last two years of battling the global pandemic.

We say today our teachers didn't die in vain. Your hard work continues to stand you in good stead beyond the grave.

Rest well! Rest in POWER!

Throughout October, Teachers' month, as it is known, society is encouraged to show some appreciation to their favourite teachers who have made an incredible difference in their lives.

Not the Woolworths Difference, excuse the pun.

We encourage each of you to shout out to your teachers, send them a bouquet of flowers or a card, and let them know their impact on your life.

After all, your successes began with your teacher, so let's acknowledge them and give them the honour they deserve.

Programme director; our purpose as the education mandarins in 2022 is to open the doors of learning widely, ensuring no child is left behind.

Our determination is to ensure that every child, regardless of their parents' socio-economic status, has adequate stationery, nutritious food, books, a qualified teacher, good sanitation, and the care they need in a secure school environment.

As basic education, we are now seized with rolling out the skills for a changing world in ordinary public schools.

I am happy to report that robotics and coding are now part of our curriculum.

We know the value of digital skills for the future generation of tech creators and e-commerce careers.

Therefore, I am happy to report that the development of the Grades R–9 coding and robotics curriculum by a team of experts was concluded in January 2020.

The coding and robotics curriculum is intended to ensure that learners leave Grade nine having acquired the necessary digital skills for the changing world and to adequately face the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

We gazetted the draft CAPS for coding and robotics Grade R-9 for public comment on 19th March 2021.

These have simultaneously been submitted to Umalusi, the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training for quality assurance.

Learner and Teacher resources have been developed and uploaded on the Department of Basic Education (DBE) Moodle Platform.

Programme director, I am happy to announce that Sasol has partnered with us to pilot the coding and robotics curriculum in 110 project schools across nine provinces.

UNICEF is providing technical input into the coding and robotics curriculum.

The pilot will benefit teachers from 1 200 schools and 60 000 Grade R-3 and Grade 7 learners.

The European Union (EU) is also funding the pilot project.

Coding and robotics lesson plans for Grades R-3 and Grade 7 have been provided to all the piloting schools.

A total of 896 Foundation Phase teachers attend the coding and robotics content training conducted by t the University of South Africa (UNISA).

Lessons from the ground make it clear that we need to provide infrastructure and training faster to many more teachers in these early stages if we are to make a difference, the Woolworths Difference!

Thus, we commend teacher unions for working with us to train teachers in coding and robotics through the Teacher Union Collaboration (TUC).

So far, more than 5 000 teachers have been trained, with a target of 22 500 teachers within this financial year ending March next year.

As part of our policy initiative to modernise our curriculum offering for 21st-century learners, we have developed the Framework for Vocational and Occupational or the Three Stream Model.

The Three Streams Model offers the Technical Vocational and Technical Occupational pathways added to the Academic pathway.

The curriculum shift towards the Three Stream Model owes its birth to the 2011 National Development Plan (NDP) policy's call for differentiated pathways in the basic education sector.

The NDP says the different parts of the education system should allow learners to take different pathways that offer high-quality learning opportunities.

The introduction of the Three Streams Model has led to a plan to incrementally establish Focus Schools (Schools of Specialisation), including Maths-Science and Technology Schools, Schools of Engineering, and Art Schools.

The Model is gaining momentum if one looks at learners' various national participation rates since its introduction in multiple subjects,

including Civil Technology, Electrical Technology, and Mechanical Technology.

We have established partnerships with the various Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs).

Other Partnerships include Ford SA, which donated 240 engines. and

The Sasol Foundation is helping in the Technical Mathematics and Technical Sciences space.

All Mobile Network Operators are assisting with connectivity issues.

The European Union supports the development of sector policies and reforms, improving governance and service delivery as part of the Education for Employability (E4E) Project.

The grand idea is to offer school technical subjects that lead to apprenticeship, some competence in a specific area before looking for learnerships, post-school education and the world of work.

One can say the Three Stream Model is a silver bullet to the dearth of skills in our country.

We need more technical support, teachers training to offer our Three Stream Model curriculum and the actual investment in rolling out the Focus Schools and Schools of Specialisation.

We will be finalising level 1-4 Curricula for Special Schools as well as revisiting the Mathematics & Science Pedagogic Content requirements in Vocational and Occupational subjects

Programme director, the Covid-19 hurricane taught me what should have been evident by now; information and communications technology (ICTs) is a game changer.

We are doing everything in our power to move with the requisite speed to roll out ICTs to all schools in need.

I present a truncated progress report on the roll-out of ICTs in the sector.

From the outset, we resolved that implementing ICT in the basic education sector required a collaborative effort between Government and the private sector.

To date, 214 special schools were provided with a school-based solution consisting of assistive devices, ICT equipment, and connectivity through the Universal Service Access Obligations initiative.

The number of schools ICT-connected schools since 2019 has increased significantly from 68,96% to 74.4% in 2021.

In recent years we have launched various initiatives in the ICT space for basic education.

In March this year, we launched with fanfare the Vodacom Virtual Classroom.

The Virtual Classroom will make a difference to teachers and learners in the selected schools by improving connectivity and making gadgets accessible, thus enhancing computing skills and appreciating the power of the ICTs.

Secondly, this solution in secondary schools will allow teachers to transform their pedagogical practices by providing them with improved educational content and more effective teaching and learning methods.

In October last year, we launched the MTN Online School.

The Online School solution was developed in partnership with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT).

This new innovation allows us to have all learning resources in one portal designed for learners and teachers with our Department and MTN Foundation experts.

The Vodacom Virtual Classroom and MTN Online School solution will improve the learning process by providing more interactive educational materials that increase learner motivation and facilitate the easy acquisition of basic skills in various subjects.

For these virtual platforms to make the desired impact, we must ramp up the ICT professional development for all teachers.

As a country, we have made a substantial push towards digitisation and technology in South Africa's education sector in recent years.

In his 2019 February State of the Nation address President Cyril Ramaphosa said that over the next six years, Government will provide every school child in South Africa with digital workbooks and textbooks on a tablet device.

We are set to meet the deadline by 2025.

Furthermore, the President said we must also expand the training of both educators and learners to 'respond to emerging technologies' including the Internet of things, coding, robotics and artificial intelligence.

We are seized with this task as the curriculum reform project takes shape.

We need more private sector partners.

Partnership in basic education seeks to unlock innovation and growth in the sector.

Ultimately it adds to the efficiency and effectiveness of the sector that is required to improve learning outcomes.

I thank you.