

# 19<sup>TH</sup> Annual National Teaching Awards

## 2019

25 YEARS OF FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY





# CONTENT

FOREWORD BY THE MINISTER . . . . .	.iv
FOREWORD BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER . . . . .	1
EXCELLENCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHING . . . . .	2
EXCELLENCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP . . . . .	7
EXCELLENCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHING . . . . .	13
EXCELLENCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP . . . . .	18
EXCELLENCE IN GRADE R TEACHING . . . . .	24
EXCELLENCE IN TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING . . . . .	29
EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING MATHEMATICS (FET) . . . . .	33
EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING PHYSICAL SCIENCE (FET) . . . . .	40
EXCELLENCE IN SPECIAL NEEDS TEACHING . . . . .	46
LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD . . . . .	51
THE KADER ASMAL AWARD . . . . .	56



## FOREWORD BY THE MINISTER

MRS AM MOTSHEKGA, MP  
MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION

The 19th National Teaching Awards (NTAs) marks a significant landmark in the calendar of our basic education sector. Through the NTAs, we shine a spotlight on dedicated and caring teachers. Collectively, we are doing everything in our power to ramp up our efforts in improving learner outcomes. Ideally, every learner in the basic education system must master at least three critical skills i.e. numeracy, digitally literacy, and become confident readers. Thus they have an equal chance to become true and complete citizens of our new South Africa that turns 25 this year. By its very nature, public schooling has lofty ideals of enhancing democracy, human rights and social justice. In this regard, through our basic education ecosystem, we shall contribute to the building of a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic society. The NTA is part of the Department of Basic Education programme on Teacher Appreciation and Support (TASP) which is aimed at ensuring that the celebration of teachers is not a once off event.

We owe a debt of gratitude to thousands of teachers who dedicate every minute of their lives to our delivery Outcome 1, that is, improved learner outcomes. The progress we have made as a sector was registered despite huge challenges the country and basic education system face. Chief

among these is the persisting high levels of poverty, high rate of unemployment, violence and abuse of all forms, lack of proper infrastructure especially in rural communities, and low morale amongst teachers. As Government, we are doing everything in our power to turn this around.

We salute all schools and teachers who have entered the National Teaching Awards since the year 2000. The extraordinary efforts of our teachers and schools often in very difficult conditions can't go unnoticed.

On behalf of all Education MECs, and Government as a whole, we wish to thank our teachers profusely for their unyielding commitment to the children of South Africa. We are indeed proud to have men and women who are worthy to be honoured as the crème de la crème in our system of basic education. We acknowledge your selfless service aimed at the betterment of the lives of the South African child. Thank you for nurturing and developing these precious young lads who are in your care for the better part of their schooling lives.

The 19th National Teaching Awards takes place as we mark 80 years since the death of Mama Charlotte Maxeke. She is indeed our newly minted Isithwalandwe/Seaparankoe recipient. As we know, Isithwalandwe/Seaparankoe is the highest honour

awarded by the people of South Africa, through the African National Congress, to those who have made an outstanding contribution and sacrifice to the liberation struggle.

Mama Maxeke was a teacher, pioneer, freedom fighter, diplomat, women rights campaigner, and the founding President of the Bantu Women's League, the forerunner of the ANC Women's League. She led the first women's march against pass laws in 1913 in Bloemfontein.

This year, we are honoured to present the 2019 NATs in honour of this giant of our history, Mama Maxeke. We do so because she was first African woman from South Africa to graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree (B.Sc.) obtained from the Wilberforce University in the United States of America, in 1901.

On her return to her home soil, she raised funds from all the AME churches world-wide, and used the money to build a primary and a high school as well as a teacher's training college. Her pursuit and passion for education, the entire story of her life, is an inspiration from which we can draw lessons for today. Mama Maxeke defied the architects of both colonialism and apartheid. Hers was a triumphant spirit that powered on in spite of the multitude of odds staked against her. We dare not fail your people.



## FOREWORD BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER

MR ME SURTY, MP  
DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION

**W**e celebrate the 19th Teacher's Awards on the cusp of the twenty fifth year of our democracy, founded on a Constitution which entrenches human rights, including the right to basic education. Our Constitution is underpinned by the values of human dignity, equality and freedom. We also host this event in the immediate aftermath of the centenary of the birth of our struggle heroine and hero, Albertina Sisulu and Nelson Mandela. They together with the many thousands of heroines and heroes fought resolutely and relentlessly for our equality and freedom. This democracy is the product of their struggle.

Our journey in creating the non-racial, non-sexist, united and democratic society that we aspired for, meant that we had to pay attention to the historical disparities, address the issues of equity, promote the interest and rights of the girl child and embed a culture of human rights to achieve unity and social cohesion in the curriculum, policy and practice in our schools.

To this end, we introduced the generic outcomes of a human rights culture, promoted lifelong learning, freed the potential of our children by opening the doors of learning and culture by improving access and opportunity to the millions of deprived learners, established assessment and evaluation,

and promoted Mathematics, Science and Technology. We also promoted early childhood development, having more than nine hundred thousand children attending preschool (Grade R). Consistent with our commitment to fulfill the dignity of our children we have succeeded in feeding more than nine million children daily.

Yet at the heart of what we do must be the provision of quality education. In order to achieve sound education outcomes we rely on the unstinting support of our educators, many thousands of whom teach in deep rural areas, hard to teach and reach environments and sometimes in under resourced and overcrowded schools. As we build hundreds of new state of the art schools the challenges of overcoming the huge disparities created by an Apartheid system of education persists.

Yet there is a steady rise in quality outcomes, and our efforts in reading with understanding and being numerate is paying dividends and has created post-school opportunities for more than a million of our learners. This we would not have achieved without teachers, especially teachers in the classroom.

These awards are a recognition of our leaders, the competent and motivated educators who inspire change and contribute to excellence in the learning

and teaching environment. This is the best recognition we can give to these brave, smart and industrious cohort of educators. We are proud of you and please continue be the catalyst of radical change in your schools and society.



# EXCELLENCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHING



**PHENYO VICTORIAN  
VIOLET KOKA**

Dikobo Primary School,  
Limpopo



**P**henyo Victorian Violet Koka, a Grade 2 teacher at Dikobo Primary School in Limpopo Province, completed her degree in 2012 and is a teacher at her old school in her home town. "I wanted to become a doctor, but teaching chose me and now I am making a difference in my community. Teaching is about laying the foundation blocks and observing learners discovering their talents. I have a special bond with my learners," she says.

According to Ms Koka, one of the challenges in primary school teaching is to put the smaller kids at ease and to create a comfortable classroom environment. Some learners confide in her and share the problems that they face at home. Routines are important to teach the learners a sense of discipline. As many parents are uneducated, she often remains at school with learners to assist them with homework. "I view myself as an ambassador and role model for these young ones".

"I am privileged to be surrounded by excellent, caring teachers at my school, and I have learned many valuable lessons from my peers. Teaching is truly a calling for dedicated teachers who often work long hours to add value to the lives of their learners. I would like to believe that I am such a teacher. I agree with those who believe that teaching is a rewarding career that adds value to the life of the educator, as well as the life of the learner."

Ms Koka views the NTAs as an opportunity to be rewarded for diligent work, often under difficult circumstances, and encourages educators to become part of the challenge to make a change within their schools and communities. I would like to acknowledge the support from my seniors, my District and my Province without whom I would not have been able to make it this far," she concluded.



**NICOLA MACPHERSON**

Barberton Primary School,  
Mpumalanga



**N**icola Macpherson enrolled as a student at Unisa to complete her studies as a single, determined young mother. She became a swimming instructor when her son was born and worked as a pre-school teacher before venturing into primary school teaching. Ms Macpherson is currently teaching Grade 2 learners at the Barberton Primary School in the Mpumalanga Province.

"There are tangible rewards in teaching when a child who has been failing, finally passes or when a child says, 'I want to be in your class next year'. However, it is emotionally challenging when one wants to assist a learner who requires professional guidance without the commitment and support of its parents. It is important to maintain a good relationship with both learners and their parents to enable the child to receive the support necessary to develop holistically."

Ms Macpherson is involved in many extracurricular activities. She is a mini-hockey coach and organiser for

fundraising events to assist learners who cannot afford sporting equipment. She is also a swimming coach and a team manager for junior gala swimmers (foundation phase), and is involved with development swimming coaching. Teaching is also about empowering one's peers and she had also trained Life Orientation teachers to become swimming coaches. In addition to the above, she organises concerts, cultural events and poetry competitions.

"Everyone gets a turn to do something in class; I believe in equity, not equality. Despite all the challenges experienced in teaching, the kids, their reaction and the appreciation and dedication from committed parents motivate one to keep going." She believes that teamwork is important to share best practice with other teachers.

Ms Macpherson maintains that her participation in the NTAs has ignited a new passion for teaching within herself, and that she feels valued and supported by the backing from her colleagues and the School Management Team.



## PULANE SELINA MOTLOUNG

Motshepuwa Public School,  
Free State



**P**ulane Selina Motloug believes that teaching is indeed the mother of all professions as it can touch lives and make change happen. As she teaches at a full service school, there is diversity in the classroom. Although classes are full, she strives to provide each learner with the individual attention required to feel valued. “As a teacher, it is important to build a relationship with learners for a trusting two-way relationship to be fostered and for providing solutions to the challenges they experience on a daily basis. An excellent teacher should therefore be a good listener.”

Ms Motloug also emphasises the importance of extramural activities to enhance the holistic development of learners. When she arrived at the school, she introduced Netball as a sporting code. She is a Netball coach and a professional Netball umpire. She believes that Netball, and sport in general, enhances the self-esteem of her learners.

Ms Motloug, who teaches Grades 5 and 6, commenced with her teaching career in 2015 after completing her Honours

Degree at the University of the Free State.

Ms Motloug believes that it is important for learners to read with understanding and to inculcate a culture of reading. She subsequently established reading clubs for learners at the School Resource Centre on Wednesdays where books are reviewed and discussed.

Ms Motloug feels that her determination and hard work is rewarded when the vocabulary and sentence construction of her learners improve. She initiated a Support Wall in the classroom – translating English words into Sesotho. In addition to the reading initiatives already mentioned, she also initiated an international pen pal project for learners.

“It is important to bring new initiatives and creativity into the modern day classroom to stimulate learners. Every child is a masterpiece in the making and learning barriers can be overcome if every learner is supported according to their needs.”



## MATSIDISO MARY MNGADI

Boneha Primary School,  
Gauteng

**M**atsidiso Mary Mngadi, a Grade 7, Senior Phase teacher, did not intend on becoming a teacher and studied Psychology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. However, she had a change of heart and decided to study teaching through Unisa and finds the profession both emotionally rewarding and enriching.

“I imagine myself in the learners’ shoes, asking what type of teacher would I want to have teaching me,” she says. “I am not a traditional educator and like to experiment with new techniques and approaches. The best way to learn is through play. Diversity is the spice of life and each learner brings his or her own set of skills and personality to the classroom.”

Ms Mngadi, who teaches Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST), as well as English First Additional Language (EFAL) explains that although she teaches in a Quintile 4 school, the challenge is that there are no Science laboratories at the school and classrooms are also packed to capacity.

“I feel supported by my School Management Team, my colleagues and my learners,” she proudly states. “I look forward to every new day of teaching and hopefully my learners do as well.”

“Educators must also be learners. They have to continually develop themselves through teacher development programmes, courses and further studies. I have completed my BEd Honours in Education Management, Law and Policy and have applied to commence with my Masters Degree in 2019, to tutor FET Mathematics.”

Ms Mngadi agrees that ICT integration is important when teaching MST to develop 21st Century learners. Data obtained from the SASAMS assists her with administration functions in the classroom. The modern teacher will have to familiarise himself/herself with technology to stay ahead in the classroom. “It is my responsibility to equip my learners with the necessary knowledge and skills to turn them into technology savvy youth.”

# EXCELLENCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHING



**JOHANNA  
CATHARINA BULL**

Laerskool Proteapark,  
North West

**J**ohanna Catharina Bull teaches Afrikaans, English, Mathematics and Life Skills at Laerskool Proteapark, Rustenburg, in the North West Province for Grade 3 Foundation Phase learners.

Ms Bull made teaching her career of choice during 2011 owing to her love for children and her desire to make a difference. "I like to challenge my learners. It is fulfilling to see learners achieve that 'Aha-moment' with something that they have been struggling with. I teach in innovative ways using fresh techniques. The importance of learning through play cannot be underestimated".

I particularly enjoy teaching Mathematics. A stimulating experience for me was to teach South Africa's young Mathematics champion, Stiaan Scheepers, a Grade 3 learner in my school. Stiaan, who has been described as a Mathematics Wizard, came second in the international Junior Mental Calculation World Championships held in Germany during 2018, his achievement

sandwiched between the two 11-year-olds who took first and third place.

Teaching is an honourable profession – educating future South African leaders. Being a teacher one touches the hearts and lives of both learners and parents. It is also important for a teacher to have a strong support team – both at school and at home – to be able to walk the extra mile with learners. I assist learners with learning challenges at the school. I also often assist learners and their families with transport to their homes, and provide meals to the needy. My learners and I support a home for abused women and children who are trained towards recovery via skills development.

Life is not only about winning, but about having the courage to try again until one succeeds. It is therefore important to teach with compassion and empathy. I encourage all teachers and learners to step out of their comfort zones and to become involved in community outreach programmes, as it is extremely rewarding.



**NOKUTHULA  
PATIENCE SONGWAXA**

Zimbane Primary School,  
Eastern Cape

**N**okuthula Patience Songwaxa, who has been Head of Department (HoD) at the Zimbane Primary School, Umtata, Eastern Cape Province for the past two years, commenced her teaching career in 2001. Ms Songwaxa loves to interact with children on a daily basis and she believes that "teaching is about grooming learners" until they become professionals under one's hand. It is also necessary to have listening skills as young, enquiring minds demand to be heard and acknowledged.

Teaching is also about teamwork and collaborating with other teachers to share best practice. As HoD, she presents various workshops to guide other teachers in the surrounding Districts. Ms Songwaxa has a passion for choral music and is a conductor of the school choir. She is also involved in creative arts and language festivals.

The challenges experienced often include working with learners with multiple intelligences, as well as impoverished learners who are struggling financially.

There are also many child-headed families within the community where unemployment levels are high. These socio-economic and socio-psychological challenges are serious barriers to learning and teaching. Another challenge is the non-involvement of parents or parents with a negative attitude who are not willing to work with the teacher.

"As a teacher for Life Skills Orientation, I am able to discuss issues considered taboos with my learners such as puberty and sexual awakening. These issues are often not discussed at home. I host regular sessions inviting Love Life, and work closely with the Masiza Rehabilitation Centre in promoting personal values. "I would like to have a closer working relationship with the Department in respect of school safety campaigns to address the current challenges, as our school is located in a high crime area. However, it is my role as a teacher to ensure that I teach my learners a spirit of sharing and mutual respect to overcome these trials".





**DUDUZILE  
SITHEMBILE PROMISE  
NYEMBE**

Casino Primary School,  
KwaZulu-Natal

**D**uduzile Sithembile Promise Nyembe, a Natural Science and Mathematics teacher, commenced teaching at the Casino Primary School in Nqutu, KwaZulu-Natal Province during 2015.

When studying Natural Science at the Mangosuthu University of Technology, Ms Nyembe, who enjoyed mentoring the juniors, decided to follow teaching as a career. As a single parent and breadwinner of her family, she feels comfortable with the care-giver role she had been entrusted with.

Mathematics is her favourite subject and learners have been enjoying her classes since she commenced teaching at the school. Ms Nyembe ensures that her classes are interactive, and believes that learning through play is the most practical way for learners to acquire skills. "I introduce the topic and mediate the learning process in the classroom. I enjoy it when a learner says, 'I get it!' I improvise when some of the basic

resources are lacking and encourage teamwork with other schools as we assist each other with the exchange of resources and best practice."

Being in a rural area surrounded by forests and wetlands, Natural Science classes are usually a hands-on experience. Her learners have been involved in the Youth Citizens Action Programme (YCAP), as well as the Eco-Schools and the School Environmental Education Programmes. Cultivating responsible future citizens starts in the classroom, and expands to the school and eventually fosters change in the community at large.

"I am not only a teacher, but also a part-time parent to these learners. It is therefore important to be an empathetic listener. My role as a teacher is to equip my learners with the skills for them to, not only look after the future of their environment and their community, but to ensure that they are prepared to access job opportunities in the long term. My learners leave footprints in my heart".



**STELLA KEDISALETSE  
MUTLANE**

Kim Kgolo Primary School,  
Northern Cape

**"A**lthough not many people enjoy Mathematics, it is my favourite subject as it requires the learner to be creative when applying solutions," says Ms Stella Kedisaletse Mutlane, a teacher at the Kim Kgolo Primary School where she teaches Grade 4 Mathematics and Creative Arts.

I was "pushed into teaching by my mother"; however, I loved working with children and discovered that teaching fit me like a glove. It is a challenge to develop learners to think for themselves and to solve problems. I am inspired by the thought that my contribution can brighten someone else's future.

Learners, who reside in my immediate environment, have the self-assurance to come to my house to finalise their homework. They often bring their siblings along and the house has turned into a buzzing homework centre.

Ms Mutlane aspires to inculcate a culture of reading in her learners. The school does not have a Library, and she has

established mini-libraries for Grades 3 and 4 in the classroom. She also believes that cleanliness is close to godliness and promotes handwashing and hygiene awareness in the school.

"I feel supported in my school owing to the positive support of my HOD. It is also important to continue one's personal and professional development through lifelong learning. She is currently busy with her Master's Degree. Ms Mutlane encourages networking, discussion sessions and the sharing of knowledge through Professional Learning Communities to enhance career development. She is involved with the mentoring of younger teachers through lesson study teams with Foundation Phase for Mathematics Team (Grade 3) teachers.

Ms Mutlane believes that "hard work does not kill" but has its own rewards; although these are not always immediately visible. "Life has taught me that the more you do, the more you get done, and then work becomes a pleasure, not a chore."

# EXCELLENCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHING



**WAYNE DE JAGER**

Citrusdal Primary School,  
Western Cape

“As my father was an Anglican Priest, I was inspired to become a Sunday School teacher in my youth. This ignited my interest in teaching at a young age. Also, almost my entire family are teachers: myself, two sisters and a brother,” Mr Wayne de Jager, a Grade 7 teacher in Afrikaans Home language and Natural Science at Citrusdal Primary School in the Western Cape Province, explains.

“I joined the school in 2017. As a teacher, you are in a position to change lives around and to mould learners to become the best that they can be. I find it disheartening when teachers make learners dislike subjects as negative teachers breed negative learners”.

“I organise anti-bullying campaigns and in-class discussions to combat bullying behaviour in my school. Bullying in all its forms – physically, verbally and emotionally – has a negative impact on learning and teaching”.

“I am blessed with a ‘smart class’. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) contributes to excellent results and to injecting fun into teaching. ‘When a data projector lights up, so do the eyes of my learners,’ he jests. I am also an ICT master trainer for my school and teachers”.

Mr De Jager, who has a passion for reading, says that he has been involved with the development of the school library, as well as a project to encourage the donation of books to inculcate a culture of reading. He envisages the introduction of a newsletter for the school during 2019.

“A principal who believed in me, enabled me to be the provincial winner of this category. It is important for every teacher to know your strengths and weaknesses, and to be actively involved in self-development programmes to better yourself and your skills. I entered the NTAs for this reason as the platform enables teachers to share best practices.”



# EXCELLENCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP



**MARCUS THOBYA  
MATSEBANE**

Rapoho Primary School,  
Limpopo



**M**arcus Thoby Matsebane, a determined principal from Rapoho Primary School in the Limpopo Province, believes that every battle can be overcome. He lives by the words of Martin Luther King: “If you can’t fly then run, if you can’t run then walk, if you can’t walk then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward”.

As the first born, Mr Matsebane had to take responsibility for assisting his younger brother and sister with their homework. “When I passed matric, I heeded the call to become a teacher. My learners have ‘hijacked my heart’ and I have found great satisfaction in my career as a teacher,” he explains.

Mr Matsebane, who joined the school on 01 February 2010, spends most Saturdays with learners – teaching them Mathematics and using the Workbooks for practical lessons and guidance through the curriculum. “In our school, we are fortunate to have access to ICT resources, owing to a donation from Cell C.”

“We are blessed with adequate infrastructure at the school; these include an administration block, additional classrooms, as well as a Resource Centre, Grade R Centre and a NSNP kitchen. The NSNP assists with the feeding of learners to ensure that they are only ‘academically hungry’. We also have a reading nook to inculcate a culture of reading. In general, I am proud to say that my school is a vibrant, well-performing school with supportive parents.”

Mr Matsebane always reminds his teachers that the individual skills and abilities of each learner should be nurtured and developed for them to develop holistically.

Although the NTAs reward exceptional teachers and principals, many educators are not recognised in their “little corners”. He therefore encourages all teachers to continue to inspire and encourage everyone within their respective schools because, “all teachers leave footprints in the hearts of their learners”.



**JONAS MOJALEFA  
MATSOLO**

Hohle Primary School,  
Free State



**M**r Jonas Mojalefa Matsolo has always understood the value that teachers add to the lives of learners, and he fondly remembers the teachers who impacted on his life. The lesson he learned from their teachings was that it is necessary to teach with compassion. He is of the opinion that good teachers make excellent principals.

Mr Matsolo views himself as an excellent motivator who is able to mobilise learners and teachers alike. Learners want to be heard and feel valued. He therefore identifies two or three learners during assembly every morning and provides them with an opportunity to share inspirational words. “This initiative builds their confidence in public speaking.”

According to Mr Matsolo, the greatest gap that must be closed in education is the quality of the teacher versus the quality of teaching. The NTA greatly assists in identifying and rewarding excellent teachers and principals who

must share best practice through continued networking.

“My success is secretly embedded in the life of every learner and teacher in the school and the seeds that you sow on a daily basis will bear fruit for harvesting in the long run. Some of my past learners are now teaching at my school. Once I saw children, but now I see colleagues. This is extremely rewarding.”

He maintains that the professional development of the educators at the school remains one of his priorities. Owing to fundraising initiatives, which are part of a professional investment crusade, study tours for principals and teachers are possible. These have enabled me to travel to SADC and other countries to gather quality information on education systems and best practice.”

My motto is, “education has changed my life, it is now my responsibility to also change the lives of others placed in my care”.



# EXCELLENCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP



**ZIBUYILE ANGELINA  
NZAMA**

Spearman Primary School,  
KwaZulu-Natal



**M**s Zibuyile Angelina Nzama, joined Spearman Primary School, Durban, in the KwaZulu-Natal Province as principal during 2016. She has been a principal since 2007 and has gathered a wealth of experience from her teaching at deep rural and disadvantaged schools, which she enthusiastically shares with her colleagues at the school.

“Teaching is not a profession, but a personal mission. Teaching also provides an independence as I am able to inject my personality and creativity into the curriculum. I enjoy the inquisitiveness of my learners as it provides me with an opportunity to maximise their skills and to mould them into young, functional adults – ready to take on the world.”

Ms Nzama believes that every learner, teacher and principal must engage in lifelong learning for personal development. “I cannot stress the importance of continued learning enough,” she added.

“Although our school is a Quintile 5 school, disadvantaged learners from neighbouring squatter camps and children’s homes are also enrolled. This

is challenging as the school is not part of the NSNP, and the Al-Imdaad Foundation and Food for Life assist with feeding schemes for the needy at the school. Bata and the Sydenham Association also donate school shoes to more than 200 learners. We remain grateful for the support we receive from these organisations.”

The school interacts with parents and involve the community to ensure the safety of learners through the local Community Watch.

Ms Nzama believes that, “one should walk the extra mile in everything one does”. She manages the school in a functional manner through teamwork from committees for regular reporting and assessment. A winning instrument that has changed the management of the school, was to ensure the proper implementation of policies. General performance is improved when learners and teachers are motivated and contented.

Ms Nzama is of the view that relationships and academic results can improve when neighbouring schools partner to share best practice.



**JOSEPH CHILIS  
MAREMA**

Bogosi Primary School,  
North West

**M**r Joseph Chilis Marema joined Bogosi Primary School, Lebotloane Village as Deputy Principal during 2010, and was promoted during 2012 when the principal retired.

Mr Marema, who initially intended to become a Traffic Officer, was inspired to take up teaching as a career by an English teacher who adopted him in Grade 10 as a vulnerable learner from a child-headed household. “Now he directs the lives of his learners instead of directing traffic,” he jests.

This Quintile 1 school, faces many challenges such as a high unemployment rate amongst parents and a lack of resources. However, notwithstanding these, the school is performing well academically, as well as in the sporting arena. Mr Marema does more than what is required from him to ensure that the curriculum is implemented for quality learning and teaching to take place. He believes that it is his responsibility, as well

as the responsibility of all teachers, to sacrifice their time and energy to “plough back” into the school and the community.

As the principal, he is constantly involved in fundraising programmes to improve the conditions at the school, which has a full service school status. The school is situated next to the local travel office, which has adopted the school in order to maintain the school fences, and to ensure the neatness of the surrounding environment.

He is proud about the fact that he has been selected as the provincial winner in his category. Mr Marema, who has spent 18 years in management, believes that there are many lessons that he has shared, and will continue to share with colleagues to enable them to become accomplished and motivated teachers. He believes that teachers should network and share best practices to better their teaching environment.





## LINEO VIOLET KOLOBE

Sedibeng Primary School,  
Gauteng

**L**ineo Violet Kolobe, a principal at Sedibeng Primary School, Tembisa proudly states that, “Our once small school has grown into a school with 1000 learners. It is fulfilling to see learners grow and develop over the years. Some learners cannot even write their own names when they commence with schooling, but they are able to do calculations and write essays when they leave the school”.

As a township school, Sedibeng Primary School often does not have all the resources required, but one makes do with what is available. “Challenges tests your creativity and ingenuity. It is; however, disheartening that township schools such as ours are being plagued by burglaries resulting in the disempowerment of teachers and learners when ICT resources are stolen. In an attempt to be vigilant, we have beefed up security at the school, engaged in ward meetings and had consultations with the community.”

Ms Kolobe believes that she is an approachable leader. “I tell my teachers to share their problems with me, for us to turn these challenges into manageable approaches. As a principal, the development of my teachers remains one of my priority areas. I have benefitted from the Thomson’s Personality Assessment course I attended; it has taught me to develop emotional intelligence by identifying my strengths and weaknesses, to improve my leadership skills. It is important to understand yourself first, before guiding others. I have learned that you will be richly rewarded if you put your trust in others.”

She would like to see all learners, teachers and parents inculcating a culture of reading. “Our school has Walk to Read Campaigns, as well as Drop All and Read sessions every morning from 07:30 to 08:00 when classes commence. We also have a reading club for adults, targeting cleaning staff, janitors and nutrition food handling volunteers.”



## BERNADINE SAMANTHA BOSTANDER

Vaal-Oranje Primary School,  
Northern Cape

**M**s Bernadine Samantha Bostander is proud of the fact that, owing to her intervention and leadership, her school is no longer an underperforming school.

Her father was a teacher and a school principal, but she initially wanted to become a social worker. Ms Bostander says that there are many similarities between teaching and social work. A teacher guides and mentors the youth to rise above their psycho-social challenges to develop holistically to embrace their future as well-adjusted professionals.

Ms Bostander explains that the school is involved with numerous projects and activities. “Being a principal enables me to put mechanisms and strategies in place to achieve academic excellence at my school. We experience challenges in respect of resources, but sponsorships and fundraising initiatives help us to rise above these challenges.”

She has a good relationship with her colleagues and parents alike. “Supportive parents lighten the load of teachers. Collaboration is the only way in which

our learners can be assisted to succeed academically.”

“I also value my teaching staff and continually encourage them to attend professional development programmes and workshops training sessions.” Ms Bostander presents workshops on SA-SAMS, which she maintains is an excellent system for the administration and the data management of schools – ensuring that the latest relevant data is validated and available at district, provincial and national levels.

The school is also involved in social programmes and community activities such as Isolabantwana (Eye on the child) to protect learners when their safety is being threatened, by placing them in safe houses. There are 65 orphans and 6 child-headed homes as young as Grade 2 in the school. Announced and unannounced home visits are also a way of ensuring the best interest of the child.

She encourages teachers and schools to share best practices to ensure that all the schools in the various Circuits, Districts and Province benefit.

# EXCELLENCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP



## MZUKISI MXUNYELWA

Khulile Primary School,  
Eastern Cape

**M**r Mzukisi Mxunyelwa, a principal from Khulile Primary School in the Eastern Cape Province, followed in the footsteps of his parents, who were also teachers by profession. “My passion for teaching was inculcated from an early age when I noticed the visible fruits of my parent’s labour. I too wanted to make a difference to the lives of the learners within my school and my community,” he says.

“It is fulfilling to observe the various development stages within learners and their change in behaviour as they grow – developing their personalities, skills and competencies. One can only say that you have achieved your goal when your learners achieve excellent results.”

He explains that there is poverty and unemployment within the area, and a combination of learners from various socio-economic backgrounds currently attend the school. Fortunately, the Central Energy Fund in Johannesburg assisted the school with a sponsorship to acquire ITC equipment such as computers and notebooks. “I believe that access to technology will enable learners to equip

themselves with the 21st Century skills required to prepare them for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. I am proud of the fact that I have achieved in turning the school around from a dilapidated structure into a successful institute where quality learning and teaching takes place.”

Mr Mxunyelwa maintains that he has a good relationship with the teachers at his school and stresses the importance of co-operation amongst the members of the School Management Team.

Mr Mxunyelwa explains that continuing teacher development is on his list of priorities and that he encourages teachers to become engaged in lifelong learning. “I appreciate the commitment of the teachers at my school and continually motivate them to remain dedicated despite various challenges facing them on a daily basis,” he adds.

“I also organise annual team building workshops in East London. Networking and the sharing of best practice go hand-in-hand with the improvement of learning and teaching in schools.”



## THEMBI BUSISIWE NKOSI

Mhlosheni Primary School,  
Mpumalanga

**T**hembi Busisiwe Nkosi says that her Grade 5 Afrikaans teacher made a lasting impression in her life by teaching her moral lessons that she continues to teach today. For Ms Nkosi, it is a privilege and opportunity to share valuable lessons with learners that will change their lives forever. She enjoys addressing learners every morning for 15 minutes during assembly. “It is a good way to start the day,” she maintains.

One of the main challenges facing the school is the fact that it is located along the border of the Kingdom of Eswatini. This situation creates admission challenges when the parents are not able to submit the required documentation, i.e. birth certificates or ID documents to allow the learners to enrol. “As a principal this is a painful position to be in, as the affected party always remain the child who is thus denied a quality education.”

“The support from my family and colleagues keep me going despite all the challenges; my husband and children are supportive and understanding when

I spend most of my time at the school,” she adds.

Ms Nkosi is as passionate about the environment as she is about her career. The school has been participating in the Eco-schools programme, winning consecutive awards from 2012 to 2017, as well as consecutive Municipality Awards for the cleanliness of the school and surrounding environment from 2012 to 2017.

“A leader works through the people he or she serves. My responsibility is to encourage and support them.” Ms Nkosi participated in a leadership programme, the Penreach Courageous Leadership Programme, which has helped groom her leadership skills. She agrees that the development of her colleagues through teacher development initiatives and Professional Learning Communities is essential to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to add value to the teaching profession. She also hosts workshops for parents for them to understand their role at the school as their contribution is essential.



## BEVERLEY DANIELS

Athlone North Primary School,  
Western Cape

**M**s Beverley Daniels has been a principal at Athlone North Primary School in the Western Cape Province since April 2010. “Initially, I wanted to become an air hostess,” she smiles, “but I have been teaching now for 40 years. I am glad that I made the right choice because I know that I have made a positive contribution to the lives of all the learners whom I have mentored”.

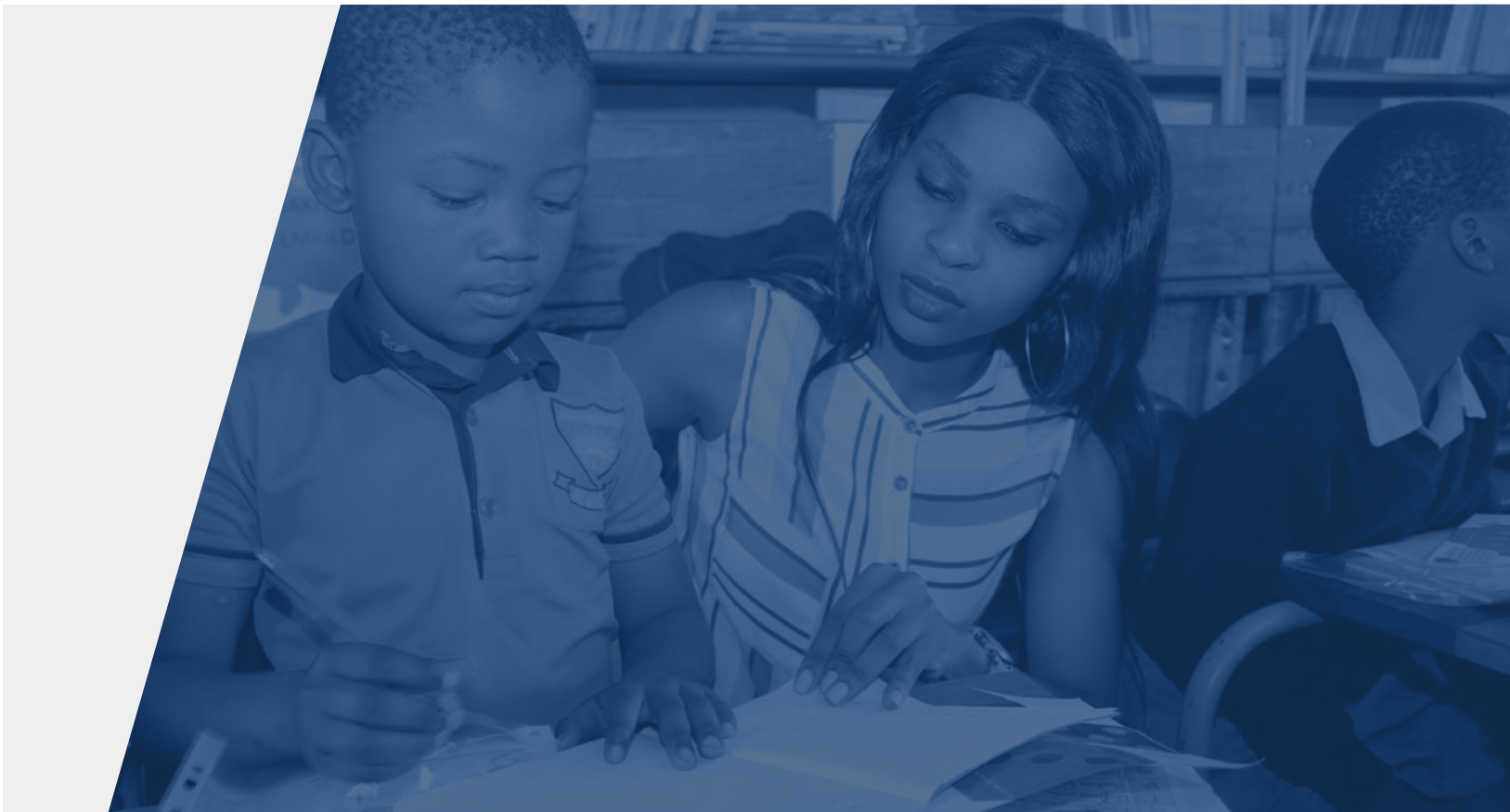
Although Ms Daniels will be retiring during 2019, she intends to continue her calling to mentor and to build capacity in school leadership, assisting with the process of Whole School Evaluation in disadvantaged townships in the Western Cape Province.

“As a teacher, it is essential to transmit positive energy to learners to motivate them to achieve academic excellence despite their dire circumstances of abuse and neglect. Although our school is exposed to gangsterism, shootings and violence on a daily basis, I remain committed to assist my learners to rise above their circumstances to become

well-adjusted adults. Here at the school, we do not only assist them academically, but on all levels for their holistic development.”

Being passionate about reading, she was disheartened when the school library burnt down a short while ago. “A school without a library is like a house without windows,” she added. Oxford University Press donated a mobile library to the school and a permanent state-of-the-art Library and a Grade R classroom will be built through the ASIDI Programme during 2019.

“I want to encourage teachers and principals to overcome their challenges by working together, and through community involvement to make changes in their various schools possible by sharing best practice.” Ms Daniels maintains that it would not have been possible for her to become a provincial winner without the continued support she receives from family and colleagues, the Circuit, District and the Province.





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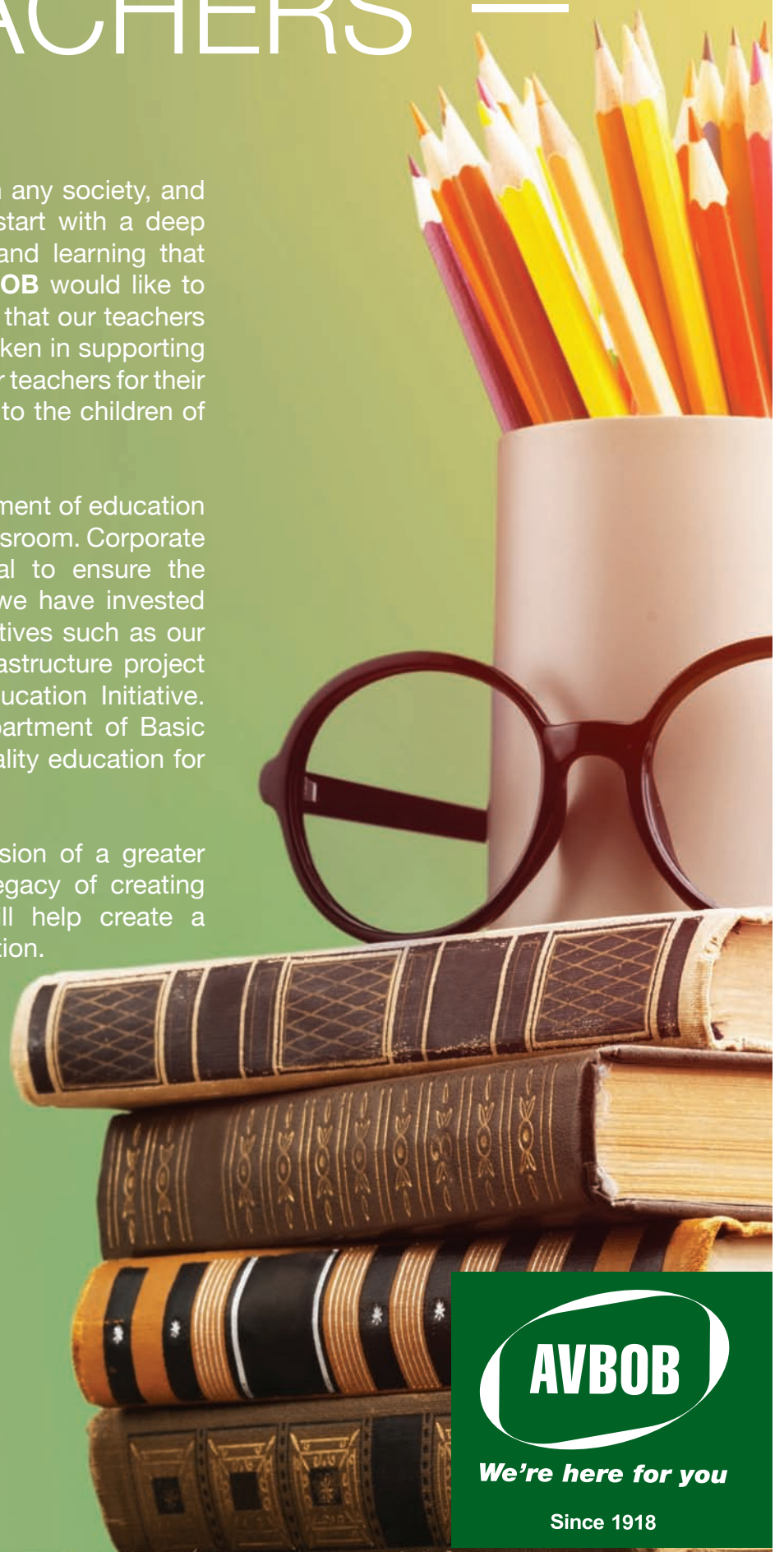
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# EXCELLENCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHING



**AZHAR RAJAH**

Ahmed Timol Secondary School,  
Gauteng



**A**zhar Rajah, who has been a teacher for the past eight years, currently teaches Life Science and Life Orientation at the school.

“Teaching is exciting because every day is different; bringing its own rewards and challenges. I miss the youthful energy of my learners when I am not in class. I am motivated to make a positive impact on their lives as their achievements become your achievements.” He explains that issues such as substance abuse and teenage pregnancy have a negative impact on learning and teaching. He therefore tries to guide his learners to make them aware of the seriousness of the matter, as they have to ultimately accept responsibility for their own futures.

Mr Rajah emphasises the importance of revision sessions before tests and examinations. “I go out of my way to ensure that all my learners comprehend subject matter and encourage them to ask questions in class. It is important to focus on the positives and to change what

you can in your immediate environment as change happens slowly, but surely. This cannot happen without commitment and teamwork. When teachers work together, they can make a well-felt impact towards the education of every child in that school.”

“The NTAs brings faith and confidence back to the education sector. I am honoured being a provincial finalist in my category – representing my school, my district and my province. The initiative is both developmental and rewarding,” he explains.

“As part of an Operation Dignity Project for the school, we have raised funds, (R40 000), towards a sanitation project and have built 10 additional toilets and 3 urinals. We also have an annual Winter Warmth Campaign where Grade 12 learners collect socks and food for under privileged residents in the Kagiso Township. Community outreach projects contribute to the holistic development of a learner.”



**SHARNELLE JENNY  
BEETON**

Kokstad College,  
KwaZulu-Natal



“**T**eaching is a career, not just an occupation; it is a joy, not a routine chore. Every day is different and interesting, filled with a sense of personal satisfaction,” says Ms Sharnelle Jenny Beeton, a Grade 7 teacher at the Kokstad College in the KwaZulu-Natal Province. “Teaching is very rewarding and I am happy when my learners achieve.”

She describes her teaching style as balanced teaching for stability. Her classes are interactive, using creative and innovative ways of teaching. Her learners are like empty vessels yearning to be filled with knowledge. “It is a pleasure teaching for knowledge-thirsty learners,” she maintains.

“My school is based in a small town, close to rural areas with many cultural differences and language barriers. I am a tri-lingual teacher, teaching in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa. Hailing from a disadvantaged background, I understand the challenges that my learners face, and I constantly remind them that education opens the doors to a successful future.”

Technology assists her in breaking down barriers and providing access to global information. Owing to MTN’s intervention, she utilises a smartboard to enrich the teaching and learning experience of her learners. “I am always willing to provide colleagues with Information and Communication Technology assistance; we support each other at my school. All teachers must experiment with new and innovate ways of teaching, and not only utilise traditional methods. It is important for us as teachers to upgrade ourselves constantly as lifelong learners.”

Ms Beeton believes that a committed teacher cannot sit back, but must be an activist and impart knowledge and best practice with the entire community. “One of my personal community initiatives is a Friday soup kitchen for the disadvantaged community members of Twist Valley. I am also involved in all sport at school and district level, including umpiring and coaching, swimming and athletics. A physically fit learner, is a mentally fit learner.”

# EXCELLENCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHING



## LOUISE FULLARD

Hoërskool Bergvlam,  
Mpumalanga



“Since I can remember, I’ve had an inner desire to teach. As a young girl, I used to gather the neighbourhood children to my make shift classroom and teach them – whether they wanted to learn or not. I believe that teaching is my calling,” says Ms Louise Fullard, a teacher at Hoërskool Bergvlam, Nelspruit, in the Mpumalanga Province.

Ms Fullard’s teaching career spans 25 years. She is the Head of Department for Afrikaans Home Language (HL) and First Additional Language (FAL).

Ms Fullard believes that to be a teacher is to be an “agent of change” as one has an opportunity to change the lives of learners for the better. “As a teacher, I witness the daily challenges of social injustices amongst my learners, but my biggest challenge is to help my learners to deal with, and to overcome such challenges.”

The greatest reward is seeing the difference she makes in the lives of her

learners and to thereby enthuse them with a spirit of hope and encouragement. This is what keeps her going.

“My unique and sincere approach towards learning and teaching, as well as my passion to empower both my learners and my colleagues, so that they can take up the baton and uplift others, has probably brought me this far.”

Ms Fullard believes that it is important to continually grow professionally. “As educators, we need to equip ourselves to stay abreast of the professions’ changes on an ongoing basis and ensure that we are truly connected with our learners in the classroom. “They don’t care what you know unless they know that you care.”

“If, I am fortunate enough to win in this category, I will remain on course to continue to invest in others, to further broaden my vision and mission and to, hopefully, eventually leave a lasting legacy.”



## BEAUTYBIRD LERATO MOGWERA

Relebohile-Sibulele Combined  
School, Free State

According to Beautybird Mogwera, teaching provides her with an opportunity to mould and develop learners to their full potential. She remains fascinated by the way young adults view the world and also learns from them on a daily basis.

Ms Mogwera joined Relebohile-Sibulele Combined School in the Free State Province during January 2015. After studying Cost and Managing Accounting at first, she decided to switch to teaching and sees it as “her calling”.

“Being a rural school, there are numerous challenges to face. The school has many child-headed households and these young adults have to face many other socio-economic trials on a daily basis. When I look at my learners, I see hope in their eyes and it is my responsibility to enable them to turn their dreams into a reality and to make their lives meaningful despite the various challenges they are facing. An effective teacher cannot only be focussed on the school, but has to become involved in the upliftment of the

entire community. I am involved in The Gedagte Movement to assist with social issues in the community.”

The school already commences with camps for Grade 11 learners during the December holidays to prepare them for Grade 12. Ms Mogwera agrees that it is a teacher’s duty to provide learners with all the necessary support and encouragement to make a success of their academic career.

“My advice to fellow teachers is to listen more, and to speak less; let the learners direct you. In doing this your teaching practice will become more effective. Learners crave attention and flourish when their contributions are acknowledged. They see themselves as adding value in the classroom, thus crawling out of their shells.”

Ms Mogwera encourages colleagues not to lose hope or to become weary of going the extra mile, as the reward that accompanies teaching is priceless.



## EKNES MMAKOLE PHASHA

Motlalaohle Secondary School,  
Limpopo

**E**knes Mmakole Phasha who is a Grade 12 teacher in Agricultural Science, says that teachers do not fully comprehend the impact they make in the lives of their learners. “I was inspired by my Agricultural Science teacher to follow in his footsteps. His teaching style promoted my self-esteem and self-confidence. A teacher who believes in his or her pupils, and supports them, motivates and inspires them to become successful adults.”

Ms Phasha is inspired by the youthful energy of her learners. “They learn from me and I learn from them,” she smiles. They see her as a pillar of strength and confide in her as she has managed to win their trust.

Ms Phasha is a “hands-on” teacher who manages and harvests the school’s food garden. Agricultural Science involves conducting practical observations and practical technical techniques. It is a very interactive teaching process.

“Due to facilities and inadequate resources one often has to improvise. We

do not have a dining hall where learners can sit down around a table to eat their daily meal as part of the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), or sport grounds for sporting activities,” she explains.

“In my subject one has to honour the earth and the elements as they give life. I initiated a Green School Project for the Earth to improve the school environment focussing on six thematic areas – waste, water management, energy saving, beautification, involvement of the school community and leadership. This project teaches learners to stop the exploitation of our natural resources, deforestation, soil degradation and the extinction of animals.”

Her advice to teachers is to stand up and do something to better the lives of those around you. Together we can become the change we want to see through teamwork. “I could not have made it this far without the support of my school, my community and my province,” she concludes.



## MONA MATTHEWS

Gansbaai Academia,  
Western Cape

**M**ona Matthews was teaching English at a government school in Taiwan for eight years (Grades 1 – 6) before the former principal of Gansbaai Academia requested her to return to South Africa to teach English First Additional Language for the Grade 11 and 12 learners at the school. Ms Matthews has therefore travelled full circle and returned to her roots to plough back the knowledge and experience that she gained teaching abroad.

“Teaching is in my blood and I have a good relationship with learners and teachers alike. Teaching is also a journey that you embark on with learners, helping them to reach their intended destination. My classes are exciting and I use practical observations and demonstrations to interact with learners. Teaching is a rewarding career when learners succeed, as their successes become your accolades.”

“Absenteeism is often a challenge in my school. Learners do not realise that they

jeopardise their own future when they miss class time. I am a strict, in your face teacher. Parents work with me for the good of their children’s education. They all get involved with projects and fundraising activities.”

There is a long list of community projects that Ms Matthews and her learners are involved with to foster a culture of activism. Project Citizen is an initiative of the Western Cape Education Department, which teaches learners how to use the Constitution, Provincial and Local laws to put together policies at school level. Being part of the Junior Commissioner Project, launched by the local police, learners work with schools and the community in respect of social issues. As part of the Junior Town Council, learners do community work at old age homes, donate blood and are involved with fundraising projects. The school also has an Adopt-a-learner project where Grade 8 learners are ‘adopted’ and mentored by Grade 11 learners. She is also the manager of the school’s food garden.



# EXCELLENCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHING



## NOMBULELO GECO

Valspan High School,  
Northern Cape

After completing her matric, Nombulelo Geco opted for teaching as a career because of the integrity of the profession. "Teaching is the mother of all professions. I wanted to contribute towards the education of my community and shaping the young minds of the future."

As teaching is her passion, she does not have to force myself to wake up every morning. "I am motivated by the positive attitude of my learners, which make me feel fulfilled. I see myself as a beacon of hope to my learners and a living testimony that anyone can turn their dreams into reality, irrespective of one's underprivileged background. It is my responsibility as a teacher to educate responsible future citizens."

The lack of proper teaching and learning materials, furniture and infrastructure are a few of the challenges she faces on a daily basis. "I do not believe in challenges, but in the will and strength to overcome these challenges by using

one's resources and ingenuity in a creative manner."

Ms Geco says that, "the hope and trust that my learners place in my guidance, motivates me to persevere. I have positively encouraged a few of my former learners to follow in my footsteps and to follow the teaching profession and many are now my colleagues".

She believes that all stakeholders in the education sector must work together to protect the integrity of the profession, and to ensure that quality teaching takes place in the classroom. "We need to be as innovative as possible and share practical ideas. Teamwork and best practice will contribute to enhancing teaching styles and positive attitudes."

Ms Geco also maintains that the teacher is accountable to the community. "I will continue to mould, motivate and instil excellent values in my learners. I remain committed to promote teaching as a fulfilling career choice."



## PHILIPS BABATUNDE ABOSE

Siwali Secondary School,  
Eastern Cape

Philips Babatunde Abose has been a teacher at Siwali Secondary School, Lusikisiki in the Eastern Cape Province since September 2009. When he joined the school, there were only five classrooms, limited resources and no Physical Science teacher at the school; however, he managed to turn the school around.

Mr Abose wanted to become a teacher when he was in Grade 10. "Teaching offers an opportunity to leave a legacy and to make a meaningful contribution to the lives of others. "Being a teacher is a privilege, not a right," says this Physical Science and Mathematics teacher. "When I look at my learners, I see engineers, doctors and teachers." I therefore assist them with additional classes in these gateway subjects. Mathematics Grade 12, is challenging, and I ensure that they start with the basics. Since Mr Abose has been at the school, the pass rate has increased dramatically.

Many learners are not motivated to be in school and have no long-term vision. He sees it as his calling to go the extra mile to inspire these young adults to take charge of their future and to excel academically.

During 2013, the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), through their schools development programme, adopted the school and they received a smart classroom, a Science Laboratory and much needed ITC Resources.

I view myself as a practical man of action. My mission is to make an impact in the lives of my learners, surrounding schools, as well as the community as one must open one's eyes to see the bigger picture in everything.

Ms Abose says that it is also important for teachers to learn from the learners in their class. "There is a reason one has one tongue and two ears; we should talk less and listen more," he says with a smile.





## AMERALDA ANUCHKA MULLER

Grenville High School,  
North West

“Teaching provides me with an opportunity to contribute positively to the holistic development of my learners,” says Ms Ameralda Anuchka Muller, a teacher at Grenville High School, Rustenburg, in the North West Province. “Teachers should be the support structure for every learner and offer support where needed. One of my ambitions is to create an atmosphere of hope where hope is diminishing on a daily basis. Teaching is not a comfort zone and every day is different. One is kept on one’s toes as one is continuously faced with different challenges.”

“Being a youthful educator, I have many years of teaching before me that present me with an opportunity to truly make a lasting impact in the lives of my learners, my school and the teaching profession in general.”

Ms Muller intends to prove the stigmatism regarding young educators wrong. She explains that the energy the youth offers contributes to innovative and fresh ideas towards teaching – seeing teaching from a new perspective. “I cannot over-

emphasise the importance of learning through play. Both teaching and learning must be a fun activity.”

“Technology enables me to adequately prepare the learner for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Information and Communication Technology should be an integral part of the teaching process. We, as young teachers, understand this transition to the digital age as a means to cultivate young entrepreneurs and successful professionals.”

Ms Muller appeals to South Africans not to lose hope in the education system, but to continue to contribute positively to the advancement of the future leaders of the country. “It is important for educators to remain focussed on their core function which is providing quality teaching without being side-tracked by negativity and cynicism.”

She views the NTA process as a developmental process - enabling teachers to assess their strengths and weaknesses. It is both gruelling and rewarding.



# EXCELLENCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP



**OLGA EFIDILE  
MOTSHWANEDI-  
MARIMO**

Matale Secondary School,  
North West



**M**s Olga Efidile Motshwanedi-Marimo chose teaching as a career to enable her to impart knowledge and to transfer skills to make a change in the lives of her learners. She finds the teaching profession extremely stimulating and emotionally rewarding.

Being a principal, empowers her to manage and implement change for the school to function optimally. “One has to be committed and determined to effectively and efficiently achieve one’s life goals. You cannot wait for change to happen, but must be the change that you want to see in your school and in your community,” she believes.

“Change happens when everyone pulls together in the same direction to realise a shared vision. My school was once a Middle School, but has since been transformed into a Secondary School. Teachers should manage change in original and innovative ways as the teaching profession has changed to empower learners for the 21st Century. Teachers and learners must embrace technology and become technology smart to keep up

with the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.”

“The fact that I am determined to overcome challenges and to be a winner keeps me going, despite all the challenges I encounter in my career on a daily basis. Perseverance is a trait that all principals should foster. It is important to work smarter, not harder, and to never give up on your dream to touch the lives of learners, parents and colleagues,” she added.

Before teaching the curriculum, she believes that it is imperative to, firstly instil a set of values to guide both learners and teachers like a personal compass. The following “PRIDECHAP” principals are advocated by the school: Punctuality, Respect, Integrity, Determination, Empathy, Cooperation, Cleanliness, Honesty, Appreciation and Pride.

Ms Motshwanedi-Marimo is proud of the vegetable garden project that she initiated to supplement the NSNP at the school.



**MARTIN VICTOR  
NKUNA**

Makhosana Manzini High  
School, Mpumalanga



**M**artin Victor Nkuna, a principal at Makhosana Manzini High School, Hazyview, in the Mpumalanga Province, committed himself to the teaching profession in an attempt to plough back his knowledge and skills into the community that once contributed to his personal development.

Mr Nkuna enjoys the interaction with learners as they inject a fresh and invigorating energy into the classroom. The teachers at the school are cooperative and supportive.

Some of the challenges experienced are discipline issues with some of the learners, as well as non-cooperative parents who are not committed to the holistic development of their children.

Owing to the involvement of external partners, the school is well-resourced in respect of infrastructure and ITC equipment such as laptops, desktops, projectors, tablets and internet connectivity.

“It is important to remain positive at all times to face the challenges you encounter

in your daily interactions at your school. With patience and determination, it is possible to see change happening, even if it is happening slowly, but surely,” Mr Nkuna encourages fellow-teachers.

“I am a provincial NTA winner owing to the support from my colleagues and my School Management Team. Teamwork lays the foundation for a fully functioning school. I therefore urge my colleagues to not lose hope, but to endure despite of all the challenges facing the teaching profession on a daily basis.”

Owing to Mr Nkuna’s intervention, the school has been transformed into a Mathematics and Science Focus School. In addition, he has also initiated capacity building partnerships to enhance teacher development at the school, and ensures that representatives of the Council of Learners attend induction courses to enable them to lead their peers in an exemplary manner.

During the 2017 annual NTAs, Mr Nkuna was the second-place winner of the Lifetime Achievement Award – an accomplishment he is extremely proud of.



## THUMELO JONAS MAHLABA

Makabelane Technical High School, Free State



“**M**akabelane Technical High School, QwaQwa, in the Free State Province will be converted into a fully-fledged technical high school from 2019,” Mr Thumelo Jonas Mahlaba, principal at the school, explains. “This is in line with the National Development Plan (NDP) strategic objectives to train more artisans by 2030.”

Mr Mahlaba has a passion for unlocking the potential of learners and teachers alike. He ensures that his colleagues attend development programmes as the importance of life-long learning cannot be underestimated. “Teachers are the role models of academic success: excellent teachers will cultivate competent learners. It is easy to lead committed individuals who lead themselves,” he believes.

Mr Mahlaba is of the opinion that all learners should study Mathematics and Physical Science to produce highly competent engineers and artisans with technical skills in accordance with the NDP, Chapter 9.

“The school and the community must form partnerships and schools must

become community centres. Working together will curb vandalism, which is currently a serious security challenge at the school. “When possible, I use artisans within the community to transfer skills such as professional welding, woodworking and motor mechanics to learners and teachers. Thereafter, these learners can be integrated to assist the community in a cycle of mutual symbiosis and sustainability.”

His advice to teachers is not to only focus on challenges, but to think outside the box to overcome these hurdles. Schools must also assist each other. Mr Mahlaba invites teachers of neighbouring schools to developmental and motivational sessions which take place in the school. He has also established a book reading club at the school.

“Robin Sharma’s book, “The leader who had no title” is my motto. Sharma writes about how individuals, regardless of title, have the power to demonstrate leadership in their immediate environment, and to rise to a new level of innovation and performance to lead the process of change management.”



## JEFFREY PETERSEN

Riebeeck Valley Special School, Western Cape

**J**effrey Petersen, a principal at Riebeeck Valley Special School in the Western Cape Province, has more than 25 years teaching experience in special schools. He has also been a professional, qualified sign writer for the past 14 years. Mr Petersen also gained valuable experience in youth development initiatives working as a teacher at a reform school earlier in his career.

“I find it inspiring to see how learners advance after joining us from mainstream schools that could not assist them with their personal development. We do not only develop their skills, but their confidence and self-esteem for them to believe in themselves. When some of the learners arrive at our school, 20 to 30% cannot read at the age of 14 years old as they are faced with reading disabilities. It is fulfilling to see them overcoming these challenges.”

When Mr Petersen was appointed as principal in 2011, he was responsible for the transformation of the school into a Special School. The initial two workshops

were converted into ten workshops and the classes were renovated. In addition, he had to find sponsors to procure equipment needed for these workshops, such as welding and woodwork equipment, industrial sewing machines, etc.

The teachers at the school have a vision for these learners even when their own parents cannot foresee a future for their own children. “Some of our learners have qualified in Hospitality Studies and are working in top restaurants and hotels in the Western Cape Province,” Mr Petersen proudly states. “It is rewarding to see them functioning optimally and providing for their families after they leave the school.”

“My advice to parents and teachers is to never give up on learners with disabilities. The approach that I have brought to the school supports the Three Stream Model to address the shortage of skills development in the country, to improve the state of South Africa’s economy,” Mr Petersen concluded.



# EXCELLENCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP



**MALAHLELA EVELYN  
MATLAKALA**

Phusela Secondary School,  
Limpopo

When she was in primary school, Ms Malahlela Evelyn Matlakala, was inspired by her primary school teacher to pursue a career as a teacher. Ms Matlakala was appointed as Deputy Principal at the school on 01 January 2017.

“I work with an inspired team of educators who care about the welfare of the learners at the school. We network and share best practice to enhance the learning and teaching experience. I provide them with direction and they appreciate my contribution. I am passionate about teacher development programmes and organise ITC training workshops to empower my colleagues with the ITC skills required to tackle the digital age head-on,” she says.

As with everything in life, there are always challenges to face in the work that you do. The two major challenges are the lack of parental support and a shortage of resources, as the school only has 17 classrooms for 1,035 learners.

“I feel rewarded when I see the smiles on the faces of the learners in my classroom as it is an indication that they comprehend the work, and are enjoying the learning experience.”

Ms Matlakala believes that teaching is not restricted to official working hours or the school building. She reaches out to the community and has even assisted one of the community members to acquire an automatic wheelchair.

“Exceptional teachers serve from the heart with a driving force that cannot be extinguished. They will keep pushing the boundaries and are not deterred by challenges. On the contrary, these teachers are innovative and will look for fresh ways to overcome these challenges,” she explains.

Ms Matlakala encourages teachers to enter the NTAs, as it is a developmental exercise. “I have grown professionally through this experience and would like to mentor other teachers for them to also enhance their learning and teaching experiences.”



**CHARLOTTE MATTHYS**

Saul Damon High School,  
Northern Cape

Ms Charlotte Matthys, a Deputy Principal at Saul Damon High School, Upington, in the Northern Cape Province, maintains that she did not choose teaching, but that teaching chose her. “Mamma Damon”, as she is called by her learners, enjoys counselling and guiding her learners to provide them with an opportunity to shine in their own way. “Teaching is hard work, but it offers many rewards,” she says.

“I am a no-nonsense person who believes that you cannot blame your circumstances, but must keep focused and work hard to rise above them to excel. Every child has his or her own story to tell, and I particularly enjoy working with the “underdog”. Teenagers want to test you. I like to see the transformation in a child when they feel that an adult can be trusted; they then confide in you and their lives are turned around for the better. Discipline and routine are important to cultivate respect.”

She explains that many learners in the school come from disadvantaged backgrounds and are involved with social ills or are pregnant teenagers due to absent or young, inexperienced parents. “This results in insecure, aggressive learners. We also experience a lack of resources at the school, and face challenges such as vandalism and gansterism within the community.”

Ms Matthys says that she is part of a supportive team at the school. Networking, teacher development and the sharing of best practise is the only way that teaching and learning practices can improve.

“The credibility of committed teachers is evident within the community and will bear fruit in the long run. This is one of the reasons that I have been chosen as a NTA finalist for my category,” Her vision is to continue to turn the lives of learners, parents and teachers within her town and province around for the better.





## MELITA BAGSHAW

Collegiate Girls High School,  
Eastern Cape

“I made the choice to become a teacher in Grade 2 and never changed my mind. Teaching is in my blood and the profession has defined my life,” says Ms Melita Bagshaw, principal at Collegiate Girls High School, Port Elizabeth, in the Eastern Cape Province.

She explains that it is the interaction with learners that inspires her most. “It has been an incredibly rewarding journey to witness the growth of young people, and being able to walk a path with them. It is important for a teacher to teach with empathy.”

According to Ms Bagshaw, A Transformation Task Team was established and the recommendations made adopted by the SGB in 2016, for every child to feel at home and to be comfortable in their own skins in keeping with the school’s motto, Facta Non Verba (Deeds, not words).

“I have noticed the challenging nature of teenage learners who speak out more frequently and question the status quo. Learners are more aware of

environmental and world issues through the use of social media. The youth must, however, learn to use social media responsibly and be taught the principles of responsibility and accountability. The use of technology in the classroom must be embraced to inject new life into teaching.”

Ms Bagshaw has a passion for the youth. “They are our leaders of tomorrow and it is our responsibility to educate them well. I feel a strong sense of duty to mould and guide them.”

“I work with an excellent team, have wonderful support, and I am part of a strong culture of learning and teaching at a highly functional school,” she proudly states.

Her advice to others is to always do your best, but to be detached from the outcomes, and to trust that they will unfold in the way they are meant to be. Ms Bagshaw intends to continue to serve her school community and the education system in the country to the best of her ability.



## ALEX MONASHI TAU

Noordwyk Secondary School,  
Gauteng

“It is fulfilling to see the lives of children, parents and teachers change as a result of my involvement in their lives,” says Alex Monashi Tau, principal at Noordwyk Secondary School in the Gauteng Province.

Mr Tau explains that he chose teaching as a career to become an active role player in educating the youth, adding that respect for others and a passion for everything one does are the main ingredients for career success.

“As a torch bearer for hope I always maintain that seemingly hopeless situations can be turned around through dedication and determination. The visible progress and improvement evident in my school is a testimony to the positive change which is possible through teamwork and a shared vision.”

Mr Tau adds, “I have improved my school through the upliftment of staff morale, infrastructure development, curriculum delivery, effective administration, improved learner performance and

discipline in a period of two years. My school is the only school in the district reflecting improved matric results from 65% to 90% during 2016. We maintained similar results during 2017.”

A leader should lead through example and can only achieve excellence when diverse individuals combine their collective effort towards achieving a shared goal. A major challenge in teaching is to find enough time to balance teaching, learning and leadership responsibilities to make a lasting contribution.

Mr Tau explains that he is a provincial winner owing to his commitment, perseverance and leadership skills. “My consistent drive to achieve excellence despite challenges enables me to achieve success. I aim to broaden the scope of my impact in education by establishing a National Association for Teachers Striving for Excellence (NATSE) to motivate, inspire and offer practical support to teachers in their daily duties; share good practices and methodologies; and to provide opportunities for teacher exchange programmes”

# EXCELLENCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP



**GUGULETHU  
THOKOZILE MKHIZE**

Newton Pre-vocational School,  
KwaZulu-Natal

“As a Deputy Principal you require people skills in dealing with stakeholders, learners, parents and fellow-teachers. Being in a managerial position enables me to steer the direction of the school towards excellence, and away from mediocrity,” says Ms Gugulethu Thokozile Mkhize. Her mother is a retired teacher and she is now responsible for carrying the baton further.

“I feel a sense of fulfilment when my learners succeed and acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to enable them to lead meaningful and rewarding lives. Many learners at the school experience mild to moderate intellectual disabilities.”

According to Ms Mkhize, a major challenge at the school is that they do not have a school nurse to assist the learners with their physical needs. She therefore assisted with the forming of a partnership with health services for emergency assistance. Most learners are benevolent learners from a disadvantaged community background.

Some parents are also in denial that their child is a special needs learner. This results in a lack of parental support and they become frustrated - sabotaging instead of assisting the teaching and learning process.

“There is a striking honesty in working with these learners, who express their emotions without pretence. Empathy and patience are the characteristics required for working with the learners whom I care for very much. For my learners, the greatest achievement is when, after a four years cycle of acquiring the relevant skills at the school, and obtaining the relevant experience during their holidays, they are initiated into projects that open the doors to their career development. Their achievements are my personal achievements, as I play a crucial role in their development and empowerment as an agent of change and a symbol of hope.”

Ms Mkhize sees the NTAs as the ideal platform to share and develop one’s own personal knowledge and teaching skills.



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*“If a child can’t learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn.”*

*- Ignacio Estrada*

#### Contact Details:

info@schoolnet.org.za  
www.schoolnet.org.za

@schoolnetsa

14th Floor Rennie House  
Ameshoff Street  
Braamfontein  
011 – 403 5777





# EXCELLENCE IN GRADE R TEACHING



**LEZANNE DE BEER**

Sunrise View Primary,  
North West



Her Grade 2 teacher's unconditional acceptance had such a profound impact on young Lezanne De Beer that she decided right there and then that there was no other career option for her besides teaching. This resolve, coupled with her absolute love for children, has been a guiding light in Ms De Beer's career: "I absolutely enjoy children; seeing their ecstatic smiles when they've achieved something through my help is all I need in my life!" Besides the delightful rewards of toothy smiles bestowed on her on a daily basis, Ms De Beer finds fulfilment in being able to build a better South Africa through teaching her learners to accept others as they are.

Dealing with young children is not all sunshine and roses; there are those instances where one will be faced with challenges, most complex of which are barriers to learning. Ms De Beer has found a creative way, or rather the perfect accomplice, to address them: Fiona, a naughty but shy puppet with a lisp who helps learners feel safe enough to participate in class activities and

adjust to the new environment. Another challenge, as cited by Ms De Beer, is the lack of parental involvement in their children's lives, which has necessitated that she take on the role of being a mother, caregiver, nurse; all of which she does to ensure that her learners know that she is there for them through thick and thin.

Ms De Beer advises newly-qualified teachers to consider teaching in rural communities even though the schools there might not conform to the concept of a 'perfect' schooling environment. "You might find the most enjoyable and rewarding teaching experience teaching in rural communities as they really appreciate teachers who invest their time in enabling learners to face life's trials with a confidence that belies their social standing." Ms De Beer believes that even though the dividends of her commitment might be paid long after she has left, just knowing that she has laid down a good foundation is enough to keep one going despite challenges one might come across.



**MARTHA BLESSED  
MAGAGULA**

Ifaletu School, Mpumalanga



Ms Martha Magagula is a testament that there is no running away from one's true purpose. A former nurse, Ms Magagula used to rush home after her shift in order to be on time for the school children she used to help with homework. "I was more fulfilled with the tutoring I did than the nursing, and the love I have for education made the decision to switch careers very easy. I love being the one that gives learners the foundation upon which to build their future."

Ms Magagula cites her learners' energy and inquisitiveness as an inspiration to give her best every day despite the many challenges she encounters. From lack of parental involvement in their children's education to being under-resourced as a school, Ms Magagula believes that involving all stakeholders when faced with challenges is the key

to finding lasting solutions. "During our regular meetings with the community, I encourage them to adopt the culture of being involved in all aspects of their children's education as it's not a one-man show; we all have a role to play."

A member of various committees, Ms Magagula is a big proponent of lifelong learning, whether through formal developmental courses, research or communities-of-practice. She advises other teachers to engage with their peers, even from other schools, on a regular basis to keep up to date on education-related matters. "As teachers, finding continued inspiration is very important in our journey. The sky is not the limit; constantly pushing ourselves for the benefit of our learners should be the norm."



**TAMARA LEIGH  
CAMERON**

Nottingham Road Primary,  
KwaZulu-Natal



**M**s Tamara Leigh Cameron has always wanted to make a positive impact on South Africa and she feels that teaching affords her a chance to achieve this goal a thousand fold. “For me teaching was a natural progression as I’ve known from a very young age that influencing young children is my destiny.” As much as she has imparted essential skills onto her learners, Ms Cameron has in turn been reminded of a few important values by her learners; being grateful, fair and being able to appreciate the small things in life.

Ms Cameron enjoys finding solutions to the challenges that come with the learners’ growth, whether physical, emotional or mental. Giving out warm hugs and allowing blankets on cold days, providing a fun and bright learning space, and being in constant contact

with the parents via an instant messaging service, are but a few of the many ways Ms Cameron ensures that her learners feel safe and secure in her classroom, especially those who have never been in a formal schooling environment before.

Assisting other teachers to reach their full potential through mentorship is important to Ms Cameron. She advises them to never give up on their quest of being the difference in learners’ lives. “We need to be the best educators that we can be to ensure that our learners get the best grounding that they deserve.” Being part of a dynamic teaching staff complement that brings positive change in the children’s lives means a great deal to Ms Cameron and the gratitude expressed by the learners is priceless: “I love making a difference in these little people’s lives; I love the way that they love me.”



**LIEZEL LEE-ANNE  
BENSON**

Concordia Primary School,  
Northern Cape

**S**ince her formative years Ms Liezel Lee-Anne Benson has always known that teaching is something she had to do. Choosing to work in a community on the low side of the socio-economic spectrum is not a coincidence either, as she explains: “To know that the work I do makes a tangible difference not only in the children’s lives but in the community as a whole is such a surreal feeling.”

With the many instances of ill-discipline in our schools, Ms Benson believes that from a young age children need to be given rules so as to guide and manage their behaviour in new environments. “The moment you have rules in your classroom, learners will get used to the boundaries set and discipline, through your unwavering but caring support, will be achieved.” As much as she is a disciplinarian Ms Benson also regularly dishes out hugs to her learners, not only for comfort but to also reward good behaviour and she says that has

worked well as an incentive to behave. “Our learners are no different from us; just knowing that there is someone who appreciates and notices them makes them eager to do better.”

Having dealt with a lot of challenges in her years in teaching Ms Benson has depended on research and advice from her peers to overcome them. Having worked in an inclusive school has challenged her to treat her learners as individuals in order to improve and develop each learner’s performance in a way that best suits the learner.

Ms Benson advises teachers to keep abreast of new developments in the sector through continued education as that has assisted a lot in ensuring that she keeps her skills set up to date. “In this profession we are never too old to learn; we learn every day!”

# EXCELLENCE IN GRADE R TEACHING



**GERTRUIDA SOPHIA  
JOHANNA COETSEE**

Bellpark Primary School,  
Western Cape

**M**s Gertruida Coetsee's teaching 'experience' dates back to when she was a nine year old girl, using a pergola her dad had made for her as a classroom for her dolls that doubled up as her enthralled learners. Although her learners' physiognomies might have changed, Ms Coetsee's love and passion for teaching small children has remained constant throughout her 35 years as a teacher. "It is a privilege to be part of the Grade R children's stages of development; their enthusiasm, honesty, unrestrained and unconditional love and the abundance of energy they apply to any activity is a deeply satisfying experience."

Cognisant of the fact that not all children have been privileged to pre-Grade R schooling, Ms Coetsee conducts baseline studies early on in the year to identify any barriers to learning, the results of which allow her to customise her teaching methods accordingly. Not one to shy away from challenging circumstances, Ms Coetsee also handles the delicate

task of providing emotional support to the parents of learners who struggle in class, giving them advice on how to assist the learners at home. "I believe that education is a partnership between a school and a parent, and the parent has to help the teacher for the child to develop to the best of his ability."

Ms Coetsee's advice to other teachers is to never doubt themselves and their abilities. She believes that keeping company with peers who inspire one is a motivating factor in keeping one dedicated to their craft. Going forward, Ms Coetsee plans to impart the experience and lessons she has learnt in the three decades she's been teaching to other teachers through mentoring and support initiatives.

"I'm truly blessed to do something that I really love. As teachers, having a solid support system, both at home and school, and a healthy sense of humour help during challenging times."



**MARTHA SYLVIA  
KOETJIE**

PT Sanders Combined School,  
Free State

**"**I've never failed a test, I've just run out of the right ideas!" is not only the motto Ms Martha Koetjie lives by but what she teaches her learners as well. Her wish to change the world influenced her to gravitate towards teaching and that is a decision she does not regret to this day. A lifelong learner, Ms Koetjie believes that opportunities for self-development are abundant in the classroom: "I'm in absolute awe of the children's spirit of honesty and their easy display of forgiveness. As adults we can learn a lot good values from them."

While learning a lot from her learners, Ms Koetjie also teaches them important life lessons alongside the academics, one of which is consequences of the choices they make. "I always give my learners a choice: either behave well or be troublesome; whichever choice they make they know to expect a swift response. It's important that we teach our children that for every action there is an opposite but equal reaction."

A people's person by nature, Ms Koetjie has involved the schooling community in dealing with a lot of the challenges she has come across; from language barriers to first-day-of-school fence-climbers. She has had to learn basic Sesotho phrases overnight to ensure that she is able to communicate with a new learner with no prior knowledge of Afrikaans, which is the medium of instruction in her class. She's also conducted one-on-one orientation sessions, especially of the playgrounds, to acclimatise new learners to their new environment.

Ms Koetjie's advice to teachers is: "From the first day of school, make sure that what you pour out to the learners is genuine. Come to school each day with a purpose; we must live up to our calling because we are preparing a nation for the future."





### **O'DILHEA KEULDER**

Steelpoort Academy, Limpopo

**“Y**ou are special, and you are here, on my path; you are my calling and I will be there for you!” These are the words every learner who has come through Ms O’Dilhea Keulder’s Grade R class has heard at some point in their time with her. Passionate about what she does, Ms Keulder approaches each day with the purpose of learning and experiencing life through the eyes of her precious learners.

Language barriers, absent parents and poverty are just some of the challenges Ms Keulder has faced but she has always ensured that all her learners treat each other equally, with love and respect. According to Ms Keulder, the most important task in a Grade R teacher’s life is looking after the children’s emotional states: “My goal is to produce confident

Grade 1 learners; sometimes children struggle emotionally, my job is to get them to a point where they are able to focus at the activity at hand.”

Ms Keulder advises other teachers not to skip out on resource work and class preparations and to keep up to date with the curriculum through self-development courses. She also encourages them to make use of all the resources they have at their disposal, most useful of which are their senior colleagues. Having already started a skills-transfer programme with teachers from other schools in the surrounding communities, Ms Keulder is a firm believer in the process of collective learning. “It would be a most tragic disservice if I were to die without having left a lasting legacy of sharing my vast knowledge with other teachers.”



### **ANNA MARIA KENNEDY GIBSON**

Laerskool Piemeef, Gauteng

**A**ccording to Ms Anna Maria Gibson, she has never worked a day in her life! “When you see teaching as a calling, you don’t need external motivation and you’ll never work a day in your life!” Along with a healthy dose of enthusiasm and self-motivation, Ms Gibson’s determination is set on developing her Grade R learners into empowered human beings who are able to join the efforts of changing our future for the better.

As much as she enjoys teaching, she admits that it is not without challenges. Lack of discipline in learners and absence of parental support are just some of the challenges Ms Gibson encounters on a regular basis. However, she sees every challenging situation as an opportunity to teach her learners how to confront their challenges head on, even though they may require one to leave their comfort zone. “These challenges have made me a stronger, better teacher; one who is able to take a stand for her learners.”

To ensure that her first-time Grade R learners feel safe and loved, Ms Gibson simulates a home environment in her classroom and structures her initial lessons around familiar subjects. She has found that this builds the learners’ confidence, increasing their participation in class activities. She advises teachers to be aware of their learners’ different abilities and to customise their teaching methods to suit the individuality of the learners: “Our hard work only pays off when the strategy and tools used are fit for purpose.”

As a final remark Ms Gibson urges other Grade R practitioners to take pride in their work and operate with high levels of integrity. “As Grade R teachers we have the responsibility of laying the foundation of knowledge and experiences where parents might not necessarily have the time or technical resources to do so. Because of that, we must never stop learning, and must always be willing to listen to advice.”

# EXCELLENCE IN GRADE R TEACHING



**TAMLYN MALAN**

George Randell Primary School,  
Eastern Cape

Having been taught by great teachers and being supported by attentive mentors inspired Ms Tamylyn Malan to heed the calling to become a teacher. She feels that one's purpose is only fully realised when they have found their calling, and helping her learners master a skill they've been struggling with brings her immense joy. "I have an indescribable passion for developing children to reach their full potential; but equally important is ensuring that you grow along with the children in order to continue enjoying what you do."

That everything she does is in line with the expectations that come with being a teacher has meant that Ms Malan has had to deal with some of the socio-economic challenges that beset the community she works in. One of these challenges is absent parents, who in most cases are working away from home, resulting in their children not being well-adjusted

and needing extra attention. Combined with using play as a learning resource, gaining her learners' trust through being the constant in their lives has been instrumental in getting the learners to feel welcome and free enough to participate in classroom activities.

Ms Malan would like to change the persisting mind-set that Grade R teaching is easy, saying that Grade R is just as valuable as the other grades and requires as much work and preparation. She advises other teachers to be open to criticism, taking directions from senior teachers and to learning constantly. She encourages that teachers make use of learning platforms that encourage interaction with peers as they are a valuable resource: "At the end of the day our collective goal is the same. When you operate from a place of sound knowledge and best perspective, you do your best work."



# EXCELLENCE IN TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING



**MMATLAKE LINFORD  
MOLAODI**

Masemola High School,  
Limpopo



When Mr Mmatlake Linford Molaodi says he absolutely loves helping people he is not merely paying lip-service, he demonstrates this over and over again not only within his class or schooling community but across education districts in Limpopo. “Experiencing people’s transition from a sense of being disadvantaged to being resourceful through technology gives me great fulfilment.”

Mr Molaodi uses ICT in his classes in various ways, from gamifying content for maximum understanding to using online simulations for instances when apparatus for conducting science experiments is not available. He also avails himself after school via social media platforms to learners who need further clarification on topics covered in class. Besides his classroom work, Mr Molaodi also assists principals from other schools with professional development strategies and provides advice to circuit managers on ICT integration in schools.

As with any profession, Mr Molaodi’s teaching career has not been without challenges: substance abuse and attaining buy-in for his projects from stakeholders are just some of the major ones; but he continues to be steadfast in his mission. It helps that he runs a lot of projects in various schools whose successes he is able to use as evidence when convincing stakeholders on the merits of any new projects he wants to implement. In terms of substance abuse in school he says “I believe in talking with children if you want to bring about lasting change in terms of their behaviour. I talk a lot about the impact our actions have on others and the lasting of impression about ourselves that they leave.”

His advice to fellow teachers is to keep company with teachers who have a sound vision for their learners: “Align yourself with people who go an extra mile for their learners and the community within which they operate.”



**TSHEGOFATSO  
MATJILA**

Botsalano Primary School,  
North West



Inspired by Madiba when he said that education is the most important tool which we can use to change the world, Mr Tshegofatso Matjila studied teaching in order to be part of the collective that creates these change agents. Producing independent and critical thinkers who would go on to change the world for the better is what keeps him motivated to do his best every day. “Imparting knowledge through quality teaching is important to me. I strive to ensure that excellence is provided for all of my learners, regardless of their social position.”

With his current school based in a rural community rife with poverty, a lot of the learners come to school with physical and emotional issues which, according to Mr Matjila, need to be dealt with before any effective learning can take place. He believes in the importance of studying and correctly applying official policies, with a good measure of ubuntu, when solving these challenges.

Since incorporating ICT in his Mathematics teaching arsenal, Mr Matjila’s learners have become more enthusiastic in attending and participating in his class and there has been a marked improvement in their performance. “Technology has brought a new and exciting pictorial dimension to my lessons; my learners don’t have to depend on their imagination alone anymore as we now use simulation and videos to ensure further understanding of the concepts.”

Mr Matjila’s advice to new teachers is to approach teaching as a way of living and not a career, saying “Teaching is not a job, it’s a way of living where we need to constantly work hard in order to provide quality teaching to our learners.”



# EXCELLENCE IN TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING



**KIM RANWELL**

Herbert Hurd Primary School,  
Eastern Cape



Primarily borne out of her love for children, another reason Ms Kim Ranwell chose to study teaching was because of the opportunity it provides in making a difference in the lives of others. “I love giving children a chance to excel, especially those who might be struggling with their learning; watching them engaging with the content and enjoying the lesson gives me great fulfilment.”

Technology permeates every learning area in Ms Ranwell’s school; the school insists on having it included as a lesson in each subject taught. Learners are also given an opportunity to independently demonstrate their understanding of the various ICT applications by creating various multimedia content, which they then present to the class.

Ms Ranwell not only champions the learners’ cause but has been instrumental in empowering her fellow teachers to

effectively use the technology that is at their disposal. Mindful of people’s natural resistance to change, she uses her dedication and absolute passion she has for technology to convince them of its benefits. “Everything that I do comes out of the belief that technology does enhance the children’s learning and can improve our teaching.”

According to Ms Ranwell, staying abreast of technological developments in one’s area of interest and the willingness to constantly redefine oneself is critical in today’s education system. She advises other teachers to move with the times and try new ways of doing things. “You cannot do things the way they’ve always been done, you have to find out what works best for the learners you currently have in your class because they’re very different to learners we’ve ever had before.”



**DOCTOR MATHONSI**

Mketse Primary School,  
Mpumalanga

Passionate about moulding children’s minds and exposing them to concepts that may be beyond their immediate reach due to their socio-economic circumstances, Mr Doctor Mathonsi realised early on that the only way to achieve this is through spending time with them, and teaching was the perfect platform. “It gives me great pleasure to see them apply their minds to new situations, adapting the tools and skills that I have taught them.”

Incorporating ICT in his lessons has been a challenging journey for Mr Mathonsi due to lack of appropriate resources, but this did not deter his resolve to expose his learners to technology. From sourcing technical gadgets through corporate donations to collating relevant multi-

media content from the internet, he ensures that his Mathematics lessons are always interesting and enjoyable. “Infusing my lessons with ICT has borne great improvement in my class; I have found that my learners respond most favourably to lessons presented through audio-visual aids.”

Mr Mathonsi believes that love for what one does goes a long way in making a positive impact on projected outcomes. He advises would-be teachers to have other motivating forces for choosing teaching besides money: “When you enter this profession you have to be prepared to take on the responsibility of changing the world for the better through producing good global citizens.”



### ANSIE DE KOCK

Hermanus High School,  
Western Cape

Being a self-confessed 'extreme introvert' did not deter Ms Ansie De Kock from following a career that she says she was destined for. "I was born a teacher; I did not choose teaching, it chose me", proclaims Ms De Kock. Because she gives teaching her all, she has found herself in a tricky situation where she has to make appointments for the other areas of her life, but she will have it no other way.

Coming back from a 16-year hiatus, with her fingers itching in anticipation of holding chalk again, Ms De Kock did not let the fact that in her absence schools had swapped chalk boards for smart boards discourage her. In the 5 years she has been back she has fully immersed herself in technology, surpassing her own expectations and even managing to inspire her fellow teachers to use it

in more ways than officially prescribed. "Through using various applications I have shown my colleagues that technology does not only save time when teaching but it also enriches interaction with learners during lessons." Ms De Kock credits her principal's support and trust for her success in implementing the school's e-learning strategy which has yielded positive results in terms of effective teaching and learning.

Ms De Kock strongly believes that a teacher's major role is to make a difference in any way possible. "If you find that technology affords you a better way to make a difference, embrace it! You're not too old to learn to master technology."



### AARON MPHOMASOWA

Motshepuwa Public School,  
Free State

Inspired by one of his primary school teachers while still a child, and driven by the spirit of ubuntu to bring about positive change in his community in adulthood, Mr Aaron Masowa chose to be a teacher to pay it forward. "The positive change that was brought into my life by one of my primary school teachers inspired me to take up teaching as a career as I also wanted to make that positive impact on other people's lives."

Teaching his learners to aspire to the same levels of service, Mr Masowa and his class identify challenges that affect their communities and using lessons learned in class they - with the help of technology - design and implement solutions to these issues. When it comes to infusing ICT in his classroom, he has found taking advantage of the devices the learners already have to be cost-effective. He

installs various apps on learners' phones and uses Google Classroom to encourage group engagement. He also makes use of online assessment so that learners can gauge their preparedness for any upcoming assessments. "Incorporating ICT in our lessons has greatly improved our learning outcomes; the learners also enjoy these lessons because they get to learn differently."

Mr Masowa emphasises the importance of going the extra mile, especially when it comes to career development. He says one's age is no excuse for not keeping abreast of technological developments in the educational space. "In today's times it is very easy to refresh one's skills. Find out how technology can make you work better and enrol for the relevant course; make your life easy and work smarter."

# EXCELLENCE IN TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED TEACHING AND LEARNING



**BILLY-JEAN ROSSOUW**

Keimoes High School,  
Northern Cape

Her parents having both been teachers, Ms Billy-Jean Rossouw has been captivated by teaching for as long as she can recall. It therefore came as no surprise when several years later she chose to follow in their footsteps. “The example set by my parents while growing up stimulated my desire to make a difference in people’s lives; sharpening young people’s minds and motivating them to achieve better lives fulfils me.”

Not one to stand down from a challenge, Ms Rossouw sees each challenging situation as a learning curve, and constantly encourages her learners to adopt the same “If you don’t try, you will never know!” attitude. Meeting new people and experiencing different

cultures are some of the incentives that sustain Ms Rossouw’s interest in teaching. New technological developments in the education landscape are also of interest to her; and with coding being the current buzzword, Ms Rossouw has started teaching her learners to write their own programs. As she succinctly puts it “we live in an era where if you don’t adapt you will be left behind.”

Ms Rossouw places great importance on being prepared and organised for one’s classes. “The best thing that any teacher can give their learners is a well-prepared teacher. You can’t expect your learners to reach high levels of performance while you are not setting an example.”



**STEPHANIE TRACEY PETERSON**

Kokstad College, KwaZulu-Natal

Ms Stephanie Tracey Peterson was in church, listening to the sweet angelic sounds of the youth choir when she received her calling. Although it was not the burning-bush type, it was powerful enough to convince her to leave her chartered accountancy studies and switch to teaching. Ms Peterson believes that the passion and enjoyment that one shows towards their job inspires others to become better people. “The most important task as a teacher is to leave a positive mark on a child’s life so that they can realise that they are better than what they have. I love being able to bring out the best in them.”

It is hard for the social challenges that beset the community not to affect learning and teaching, and Ms Peterson has had to take on counselling courses in order to assist and equip the learners to deal with these challenges. She also encourages

her learners to use ICT to find solutions to some of the challenges they come across, especially those related to peer-pressure, cyber-bullying and self-esteem. “I design a lot of motivational challenges where learners have to use the internet for research and social media platforms as a positive communication tool. They get to create slide presentations which they then present to the rest of the class, and this helps them with their public-speaking skills.”

Also serving as a mentor to new teachers, Ms Peterson is big on professional development, especially skills programmes on ICT-enhanced teaching. She encourages her peers to take advantage of technology in their planning activities. “The power of being a good teacher lies in well-structured lesson plans; let’s not be afraid to use technology to help us be the best teachers.”





## ALEX SHANTY SONGO

Erebonwe Primary School,  
Gauteng

“I enjoy the anticipation of not knowing what each day will bring,” says Mr Alex Shanty Songo, a proud teacher of young children who constantly encourages them to be bold about voicing their opinions. Mr Songo has always felt that teaching should be much more interactive, learner-centred and engaging; which is why he has committed to being flexible in his class, providing a safe space for each learner to let their ‘flair and vibe’ shine through. “I have always been critical of the traditional teaching and learning methods; I feel that they are not accommodative of different learning styles.”

Mr Songo cites the lack of parental involvement as a pressing issue especially when it comes to dealing with learners’ ill-discipline. His school is also challenged with overcrowded classrooms which in turn lead to inadequate distribution

of resources. To counteract this, he supplements his lessons with digital resources, some of which have been sourced through donations, with content downloaded from the internet. From using quiz games to incorporating videos and simulation in his lessons, Mr Songo says technology enables his learners to engage with the content. “I’ve always been passionate about ICT. It has been of great use in getting learners au fait with difficult terminology and content of the subjects I teach.”

According to Mr Songo, teachers should not be dejected when they encounter criticism but should rather see it as an opportunity for personal and professional growth. “It’s a fact, you’re going to have to deal with criticism at some point; it is up to you how you receive it. My advice is for you to reflect on your attitude, grow and change if necessary.”



Via Afrika understands and appreciates the on-going commitment that teachers like you make to the growth and prosperity of our country.

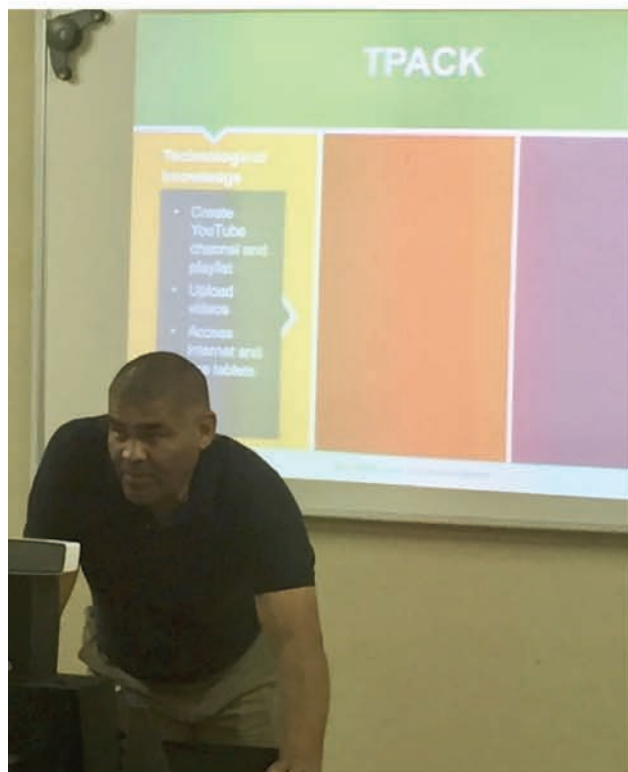
It is never easy, it often seems thankless, and exhausting; but unlike so many other professions you can rest in the knowledge that every day you make a difference.

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# EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING MATHEMATICS (FET)



**FARZANA SULIMAN**

Zinniaville Secondary,  
North West



Inspired by her former teachers who served as good role models, Ms Farzana Suliman strongly believed that she would find personal fulfilment as a teacher and she has found that she was not wrong, as she continues to make a difference 'one learner at a time'. Although as a senior teacher she spends a lot of hours doing administration work and interacting with parents, her greatest joy is derived from the learners. "My classroom remains my precious domain; this is my valued space where I plant seeds and I treasure seeing them grow and blossom."

Ms Suliman believes that the large amount of assessments and emphasis on data collection is a burden to teachers which could lead to there being no room for higher-order teaching. Her firm belief that teaching is vital to an emerging nation keeps her going despite the

challenges she has experienced, some of which stem from the persistent attitude that Mathematics is hard. She dispels this particular notion by using play to get her learners conversant with the concepts. "The sense of accomplishment my learners feel when they come to the conclusion of a theorem on their own is motivating. The knowledge that I can shape my learners' future, no matter how humble my contribution may be, keeps me going despite the challenges."

According to Ms Suliman, negativity, which often threatens to stifle initiative, is to be avoided by teachers at all costs. She advises them to push themselves out of their comfort zones so as not to smother the urge to make a difference. "Surround yourself with positive colleagues where you continually hold up the candle of hope for one another."



**SIPHO NYATHIKAZI**

Mjokwane Secondary School,  
Mpumalanga



Mr Sipho Nyathikazi realised that he is capable of conveying complex content in a simplified manner when he started assisting his fellow learners with Mathematics and Physical Sciences while still in high school. This realisation, and his desire to contribute in shaping people's futures, influenced his decision to take up teaching as a career. "The knowledge that I am moulding learners for their future careers gives me a great sense of accomplishment."

With the community his school is situated in being close to the border with Swaziland, Mr Nyathikazi says his learners are exposed to a variety of unsavoury activities, which include exposure to drugs. But his most challenging situation to date has been trying to motivate his learners, most of who are dejected due to the social ills that are prevalent in the community. "Most of my learners are demotivated

because of a lack of positive role-models in their immediate environment; they don't see themselves overcoming the poverty and unemployment that is rife in the community." When it comes to teaching Mathematics, he has employed a number of creative ways to ensure great outcomes in his learners' performance. From incorporating play-based activities to integrating technology in his class, Mr Nyathikazi believes keeping learners captivated maximises the chances of his lessons being absorbed.

Mr Nyathikazi advises other educators to continue working hard despite the challenges they come across. "Let us be motivated as educators in the knowledge that even though our rewards might not be physical but the influence of our hard work goes beyond the individual, we shape the future of households, communities and the country."



# EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING MATHEMATICS (FET)



**THOTO SAMUEL  
TSOTETSI**

Suncrest High School, Gauteng



It did not take long for Mr Thoto Samuel Tsotetsi, who had taken a gap year after matric, to decide that teaching is what he wanted to study. He made this discovery while helping Grade 12 learners in his community with their school work. “Despite teaching not having been on my radar as a career option, seeing understanding dawn in a learner’s eyes and experiencing their excitement when they finally grasp a concept made me realise that I was born for this.”

If it were up to Mr Tsotetsi, more time would be allocated to teaching Mathematics as he believes that the time currently stipulated for topics is inadequate for learners to fully-grasp the concepts. He gets around this issue by providing extra lessons to his learners, during recess, before or after school

hours and on weekends. He also depends on rigorous planning and selection of relevant teaching and learning material which he says enable him to deliver engaging lessons. “Showing the relevance of Mathematics by using everyday-life application scenarios when presenting the lesson goes a long way in making learners understand the various theories; I also make it relatable by discussing the history of the various concepts and theorems.”

Mr Tsotetsi advocates a positive disposition, dedication and enthusiasm as character traits that should be cultivated if one is to excel in teaching. He advises teachers to develop strategic plans for foreseeable challenging situations, saying “The only way to survive in this industry is to think ahead, but equally important is to enjoy what you do.”



**PHILIP WILLIAM  
FRANKLIN JANSEN**

Fezekile Secondary School,  
Western Cape

Mr Philip William Franklin Jansen’s love for Mathematics, and his determination to get more people to appreciate the subject as much as he does, was his main motivation for becoming a teacher. He prides himself on being accessible to his learners as he realised that most times children’s voices aren’t being heard. He acknowledges that teaching them about the curriculum alone is not sufficient to prepare them for life after school and has had to become a life coach as well. “At the end of the day I need to prepare them for life after school, whether it’s studying further or working.”

According to Mr Jansen it is important that parents and caregivers be careful of their choice of words when talking with children as they have a profound and lasting effect on their performance. “My biggest challenge has been trying to convince my

learners that Mathematics is not difficult, because somewhere along the line someone had told them that it is difficult and only a select few can understand it.” To overcome this challenge, he starts out with the most basic concepts in order to build their confidence. When explaining more complex topics he uses real-life analogies that resonate with the learners’ experiences as he says recalling them is easier than recalling facts.

His advice to fellow teachers, especially those who are fairly new to the profession is to remain calm and centred in all situations. “The first year of teaching is especially difficult, but by taking small steps at a time and reflecting on your performance you, and your learners, will make it through. Don’t worry about accolades at this stage; your learners’ success is all the recognition you need.”



## ROSAMMA VARKEYCHAN

Ulwazi High School,  
Eastern Cape

Looking to make a contribution in shaping tomorrow's world and to assuage her passion for working with numbers, Ms Rosamma Varkeychan decided to choose teaching as a career. Because she believes that her learners are special, she has strived to nurture and develop each one to their own individual potential. "I care about helping children and making an impact in their lives and future. Seeing them gain a new dimension to their personality fills me with joy."

According to Ms Varkeychan, one requires a good head and a good heart to face the myriad of socio-economic challenges that beset rural schooling communities; as such she has had to be creative in getting her learners to understand the more complex theories of Mathematics. She

says that getting learners to practically apply the formulae through models made with material easily available to them, and teaching them to adjust the various variables accordingly, makes it easier for them to visualise the concepts. "Each time I witness learners getting excited when they see how Mathematics applies directly to their lives I am convinced that I made the correct decision by becoming a teacher. Knowing that I have exposed them to skills that they will be able to use for the rest of their lives fulfils me."

She advises teachers to be constantly aware of and sensitive to their learners' emotional state, as their participation in class and the effectiveness of the lesson revolves around their feelings. "If students aren't responding, do something different."



## SIMPHIWE NGUBANE

Banqobile High School,  
KwaZulu-Natal

Teaching was never Mr Simphiwe Ngubane's intentions for his future, but circumstances conspired to change his well-laid plans. A brief but hugely successful stint as a Mathematics tutor in university and a request for assistance from a rural school with a shortage of Mathematics teachers convinced this BSc Applied Mathematics and Statistics graduate that his future lied in uplifting the disadvantaged through education. "I truly believe that teaching chose me and I am glad that it happened this way. Through teaching I have discovered how fulfilling it is to help people be strategic and creative in tackling their problems."

Mr Ngubane says that teaching in rural communities requires one to improvise in order to address some of the challenging issues prevalent in those areas. From inadequate infrastructure to shortage of learning support material, Mr Ngubane has had to come up with various fund-raising strategies in order to ensure

that his learners are not disadvantaged. He also harnesses the power of mobile technology in presenting his lessons, which has proven to be a good strategy for piquing his learners' interest, thereby improving class participation rate. "As much as technology in the classroom assists, learners still need a present teacher, most especially for Mathematics which needs regular practice. I provide extra classes and revision programmes and that has helped improve my learners' performance."

For fellow teachers, Mr Ngubane's advice is to always conduct in-depth research on new developments in the sector and to seek guidance from experts in the field whenever in doubt. He believes diligent work produces excellent results at the end. "Do not become despondent if your learners' assessment results are unsatisfactory; continue working hard, try various strategies and eventually your hard work will begin to bear fruit."

# EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING MATHEMATICS (FET)



## MALETSATSI SELINA BLESS

Setshabela Se Maketse  
Combined School, Free State

Had her high school Mathematics teacher not recognised Ms Maletsatsi Selina Bless' above-average aptitude for the subject and subsequently encouraged her to tutor her fellow learners, she would not have discovered her love for teaching. "I am thankful for the encouragement he gave me; the confidence he instilled has ensured that I offer the best of myself to my learners. I enjoy seeing them being actively involved during our lessons."

Issues of ill-discipline, absenteeism and substance abuse are some of the social challenges that Ms Bless says hamper teaching and learning in her school, but with persistence in enforcing disciplinary measures and getting parents involved, things have taken a turn for the better. When it comes to learners' negative attitudes towards Mathematics, Ms Bless strongly believes that if a teacher

is motivated from within, they will be able to influence their learners to follow suit. "I walk the talk, my learners know that I am crazy about Mathematics, and as a result they take it seriously as well. I always show them that it is not about solving for 'x' and 'y', but it is all around our daily lives."

Ms Bless' love of Mathematics teaching is not only confined to her school - which has consistently been in the top in terms of Maths performance in the province - but she spreads it across districts and provinces. "I go wherever my services are needed; I don't hesitate to lend a hand when I am called upon."

She advises anyone who is considering teaching as a career to be certain that it is what they want to do as dejected teachers have a negative impact on learners.



## THANDI KHETHANI KHOSA

Morakolo Secondary School,  
Limpopo

Ms Thandi Khethani Khosa believes in the power of positive affirmations and motivation to develop the self-belief that one has the power within them to change their circumstances for the better; and she has found the perfect environment for her practice, the classroom, where she inspires her learners to give their all in the quest to be the best versions of themselves. "The satisfaction I get from the positive feedback I receive from my former learners on how I was instrumental in them turning their lives around has convinced me that I am in the right profession," says Ms Khosa.

Displayed prominently in Ms Khosa's Mathematics class is a plaque with the words 'Maths is for everyone; we're all geniuses'. Ms Khosa believes that motivating learners is the key to effective learning and is certain that sowing seeds of positivity in learners is important in

getting learners to enjoy and excel in Mathematics. "Give me a hardworking, dedicated learner and I will show you that anyone, with the right frame of mind, can do Mathematics".

According to Ms Khosa it is impossible to keep to business hours in teaching, which is why she encourages teachers to cultivate a solid support system at home. She has roped in her husband, who happens to teach Mathematics at another school, to provide revision lessons to her learners, and this she says keeps her on her toes as she has to ensure that she has covered all topics effectively. For new teachers she has this to say: "Be confident in your skills. Always remain true to yourself and do what you set out to do when you made the decision to become a teacher. It does not matter which school you're placed in, all the tools for your success in this profession lie within you."





## LADY KWEBU

Moedi High School,  
Northern cape

Having the love of Mathematics instilled in her while still a learner, Ms Lady Kwebu planned to study engineering studies after matric, but an encounter while teaching bible studies to her precious Sunday school children inspired her to study a field that would combine her two loves. "I fell in love with working with kids and decided to share my knowledge of Mathematics through teaching."

Ms Kwebu has been fortunate in that community challenges rarely affect her teaching, as such most of the challenges she has come across are mostly classroom-related. Two of the challenges she has had are new learners' pre-existing attitudes regarding Mathematics being difficult and having to work with insufficient

resources, but incorporating real-life implements in her lessons, coupled with patience and a bit of technology, resolves both these challenges. "Getting learners to bring objects from their daily life to use in our lessons helps them see that Mathematics is not some abstract subject but something you can use to solve real-life problems."

Besides developing oneself constantly in terms of keeping up to date with current educational practices, patience and passion are two attributes that Ms Kwebu advises all teachers to cultivate. "Patience affords all learners an opportunity to understand the concepts at their own pace; and showing passion for your work is important, because as we know children do as they see."



# EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING PHYSICAL SCIENCE (FET)



**MFANAFUTHI JOSEPH NKOSI**

Panorama Combined School,  
KwaZulu-Natal



By the time the perfect Geology job came along it was too late as Mr Mfanafuthi Joseph Nkosi, a Geologist by profession, had already been bitten by the teaching bug. “I stumbled into teaching while waiting for feedback on a few jobs I’d applied for, but truth be told, teaching is the best field for me. There’s nothing as fulfilling as helping learners conquer achievements that they’d never even thought of attempting.”

Mr Nkosi cites learners’ ill-discipline, lack of parental involvement and insufficient science apparatus as some of the challenges he has had to overcome. He is able to address issues of discipline through the schooling community meetings and by providing mentorship to the learners. According to Mr Nkosi, establishing relationships with companies that operate within the school’s radius

is beneficial when one needs assistance, especially in terms of providing resources. He also uses audio-visual media at the start of each lesson to establish interest which he then sustains through recording an audio of the lesson along with any learner interactions that take place. “Podcasts have become a popular form of revision with my learners; I record all my lessons and then share the audio files for learners to save on their phones for later use.”

Emphasising the importance of seeking support, Mr Nkosi encourages teachers to regularly consult with their assigned subject advisors, saying “With a positive attitude and the appropriate support structures in place, there is nothing you can’t achieve if you put your heart in it.”



**DELIGHT MTHETHWA**

Bombani School, Mpumalanga



His desire to eradicate poverty and to improve disadvantaged people’s life situation led to Mr Delight Mthethwa opting for teaching as his community development tool of choice. “I love seeing people beating the odds of poverty. Witnessing their positive progress in life through education is rewarding.”

Mr Mthethwa is a great advocate of improvising when one encounters resource-related challenges. He has not allowed the absence of a science laboratory to disadvantage his learners in any way. From using his car battery and learners’ pencils to collecting used soda bottles in order to demonstrate chemical reactions, he has not only ensured that his learners receive the practical component

of the Physical Sciences curriculum, but has also taught them the value of creativity when solving problems. “It’s important to use a variety of teaching strategies so that every type of learner is accommodated. In my class we do not place emphasis on any one learning technique; I ensure that each lesson contains both theoretical and practical components, and where applicable I use simulation.”

According to Mr Mthethwa, knowledge-sharing is very important in advancing the quality of teaching. He believes teachers should band together and motivate each other to reach their common goal of building the nation, saying: “As teachers we should work together in preparing future generations for our nation.”



## MATSENTSHE WILLIAM MATHIPA

Florapark Comprehensive High,  
Limpopo



Having known whilst still in Grade 1 that he would someday be a teacher, it came as no surprise when, after finishing school, Mr Matsentshe William Mathipa received funding to study teaching. A beneficiary of government's Funza Lushaka Bursary Scheme, Mr Mathipa says he appreciates that he is able to make a contribution to people's lives. "I love interacting with people, and am especially proud that I am able to assist them through giving them my time and support."

Mr Mathipa is of the view that no challenge is insurmountable and believes in speaking out whenever one is encountered. "The sailing has been good so far. Whenever I've had challenges, whether with learners or fellow educators, they've been due to either a misunderstanding

or miscommunication, and addressing them head on has prevented them from festering." He applies this same proactive attitude to the lack of science apparatus for his learners to conduct experiments. "Because I don't want my learners to be disadvantaged in terms of practical experiments, I make use of computer simulations which I download from the internet and then project on the interactive board for the class to engage with."

According to Mr Mathipa the energy and dedication to excellence one displays cultivates confidence in their abilities. He advises other teachers to ensure that their love for the subjects they teach shines through.



## MARCUS MADODA MGOBOLI

Dr. EP Lekhela High School,  
Northern Cape

Having chosen teaching as a last option after his matric has not stopped Mr Marcus Madoda Mgboli from giving it his all. Because of his love for all things Physics he has found the classroom to be the perfect arena to express his love through sharing the vast amount of knowledge he has on the subject. "Although teaching was not my first career choice, I am in awe of the opportunity that it affords me to contribute in moulding young minds to become good and responsible citizens."

To overcome the challenge of the lack of science apparatus in his school, Mr Mgboli has initiated partnerships with neighbouring schools whose science laboratory facilities are well-resourced. "For schools with inadequate resources,

establishing bonds with surrounding schools and cultivating trust is critical if one wants to succeed against the odds they've been dealt."

Believing that one is never completely perfect in what they do, he suggests that teachers should constantly strive to do better by finding areas in their work that would benefit from improvement. Mr Mgboli also emphasises the importance of modelling good behaviour for learners to emulate, saying "Our profession is very important; we need to keep a good public profile because we have so much influence on our learners' impressionable minds."



# EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING PHYSICAL SCIENCE (FET)



**MARISA SMIT**

Jim Fouchè Secondary School,  
Free State

The desire to turn the country's national assets to competent global citizens drove Ms Marisa Smit to become a teacher. "I love science. The feeling I get when seeing learners go from zero understanding to getting an 'Aha' moment is indescribable."

As much as technology has simplified our lives, Ms Smit believes it is taking away the learners' interest in solving problems on their own through critical thinking, a downside which is her biggest challenge in class. "I've seen learners struggle to extract information from texts because they're used to pressing buttons. We need to teach them that in real life you can't always Google a solution to your problems." As such, she prefers using examples from the physical

environment in order to show them how Physical Science is applicable to every facet of life. She also offers extra classes, grouped according to ability levels, where she applies the relevant teaching technique to accommodate the different learning styles.

Ms Smit encourages new teachers to avoid being demotivated by the challenges they are sure to come across in their careers. She urges them to piggyback on the experiences of senior teachers who, amongst other things, will show them how to incorporate discipline and various learning styles in their classes. In her mentorship programmes she always tells her mentees to "be like a proton and stay positive!"



**CHARLOTTE MARX**

Hermanus High School,  
Western Cape

Before falling in love with Physical Sciences and Mathematics Ms Charlotte Marx only wanted to be a teacher so that she could dole out 'well done' stickers to deserving learners, but then she discovered the power that teaching provided to shape South Africa. "I feel teaching is the vehicle through which one can make the most impact in changing people's lives for the better. It also helps that it's the fountain of youth, as the kids keep me young and feeling excited."

There is no dull moment in Ms Marx's class; her enthusiasm about her subject is not only palpable but contagious as well. To deal with the challenges of discipline and fear that Physics is difficult she ensures that her lessons

are interactive and fun. Her 2018 Grade 11 class would have been great contenders in USA's National Pass Gas Day had they bottled the results of their flatulence experiment; yes, her class is that fun! "We do a lot of experiments and use a lot of demonstrations, videos and simulations to keep the learners' attention and interest in the subject."

Ms Marx advises other teachers to constantly attend self-development courses so as to guard against being complacent, saying "Be passionate about your subject; if you happen to lose your passion along the way, find it again because it is the most powerful resource in your teaching cache."



## **TSHEKISHI DINAH MOFOKENG**

Jet Nteo Secondary School,  
Gauteng

The way Ms Tshekishi Dinah Mofokeng radiates an infectious energy of passion and excitement when she talks about her learners, it's hard to believe that she wanted to be anything but a teacher. "I actually never thought of choosing teaching as a career, however circumstances dictated otherwise, but boy was I pleasantly surprised to discover that I not only excel at it but I enjoy it immensely!"

Discipline issues, which she attributes to adolescence and lack of enthusiasm for the subject, are some of the challenges Ms Mofokeng faces, especially in the lower grades. She has found that providing a change of scenery in terms of where lessons are conducted is beneficial in capturing the learners' attention.

"Taking them out of the classroom, which is their comfort zone, calms them down and piques their interest in the topic being covered." Ms Mofokeng also uses videos to provide an audio-visual element to her lessons, and says she mimics the way learners speak through the use of acronyms to enable them to retain information easier.

Ms Mofokeng advises teachers to guard against complacency and limit their contact with negative people. She also urges teachers to give their best at all times, as the future of the nation's children depends on it. "Teaching is more than a means to gainful employment; we're rendering a service to better our beloved country," she concludes.



## **KEORAPETSE KWALATE**

Sunrise View Secondary School,  
North West

Mr Keorapetse Kwalate grew up wanting to be a scientist but as his life progressed he realised that there is no better science than teaching. "I am a scientist. I get to analyse every day, perform miracles by revealing the unknown to my learners," says Mr Mthethwa, adding that he especially relishes seeing the parents' joy when they see their children surpass their expectations, which inspires him to work harder.

Having previously taught in rural schools, Mr Kwalate says he is aware of the personal sacrifices that come with ensuring one's learners are not disadvantaged by lack of resources, especially when it comes to the teaching of Physical Sciences. Now teaching in an urban school, he has taken full advantage of technological developments by incorporating various

science-related applications in his teaching material. "We're living in the 4th Industrial Revolution, our learners are technologically savvy and we therefore need to transform our teaching methods to be conducive to this new way of assimilating information."

Because he is convinced that the current environmental challenges the world is experiencing will be solved by the generation born in this millennium, he encourages science teachers to motivate their learners to engage in science-related extra-curricular activities such as competitions. He advises all teachers to put in extra work in order to bring out the best in their learners, saying "Our success is not measured by how much we have, but by the quality of our products, our learners."

## EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING PHYSICAL SCIENCE (FET)



### ZINGISA GCABO

Isolomzi Senior Secondary  
School, Eastern Cape

From being a stand-in Physical Science teacher for his fellow grade 12 learners to being a tutor during his BSc in Physical Sciences studies, it has always been clear to everyone but Mr Zingisa Gcabo that he should be a teacher. "I only realised when I was about to complete my BSc studies that teaching is my destiny. I absolutely enjoy sharing information, especially with young people whose excitement upon new discoveries renews my passion for Physical Sciences."

Besides the challenge of not having a fully-equipped science lab, another main challenge that Mr Gcabo has to deal with each time he gets new learners is the preconceived idea they have about Physical Sciences being a difficult

subject. To dispel this notion, before he starts each topic he gets the learners to bring various common implements from home to show them how science links to the real world. "I'm a great believer in doing what you can with what you have. Enabling learners to physically interact with material makes it is easy for them to extract the theoretical concepts from the practical experiments."

Mr Gcabo advises teachers to be a motivating force not only in their learners' lives, but to other educators as well. He believes establishing signposts for one's teaching career is important, saying: "Setting goals and constantly tracking your progress in attaining them is important."





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# EXCELLENCE IN SPECIAL NEEDS TEACHING



**HANNELIE LOUW**

ES Le Grange School,  
North West



For Ms Hannelie Louw, giving her learners tangible skills to face the challenging issues they encounter every day is the most important legacy she can leave behind. According to Ms Louw, for learners living with Sensory Integration Disorder (SID) mastering a skill which hardly requires an effort for learners in mainstream education can take months. “Words cannot describe the emotions by both learner and educator when a basic skill has been mastered; it is priceless!” she says.

One of the major challenges Ms Louw experiences is with parents not being concerned with the well-being of their children, saying “It is heart-breaking how some of the learners are not well-looked after; of special concern being

those with no parents at all,” she says, citing the importance of nursing and cherishing those special unexpected moments all the more. She says that behaviour and discipline are the other challenging issues which she addresses with sensitivity - not to be confused with enabling - using positive reinforcement.

Ms Louw’s advice to other Special Needs Educators is to cultivate self-confidence and believe in their abilities. She encourages them to be life-long learners for the benefit of their learners, saying “Never give up. You have the skills and experience to empower the youth to achieve their goals.” Ms Louw also hopes to share her passion for SNE through coaching and mentoring new SNE educators.



**LESETJA MOSHUPYA**

KaMagugu School,  
Mpumalanga



“Choosing teaching as a career felt like responding to a calling,” says Mr Lesetja Moshupya, who had been working as a carer for the handicapped when he was offered a chance to be a teaching assistant. Used to taking care of the physical needs of people living with disabilities, Mr Moshupya was inspired to enrol for teaching studies so as to stimulate and develop their mental aptitude as well.

Of the many challenges he has had to overcome, Mr Moshupya says the lack of parental involvement in their children’s education is one that has required a multi-pronged approach. Together with the school counsellor and social workers, he conducts home visits to garner the

cooperation of parents in responding to the difficulties learners experience in the schooling environment. “It is important that the parents are kept up to date with their children’s progress and any challenges they might be experiencing in the school,” he says.

Mr Moshupya advises prospective LSEN educators to be certain that they not only love teaching but are also able to exercise patience for the children, as, otherwise, they will not cope with the frustration that comes with the job, saying “When the love for what you do comes from within, you will not need constant motivation and it will be easy for you to go the extra mile needed in investing in your children’s success.”



## MARISA VERMEULEN

Bartimea School for the Deaf and Blind, Free State



S spurred on by the lack of teacher proficiency in South African Sign Language (SASL) which has had a negative effect on the quality of education offered to deaf learners, Ms Marisa Vermeulen decided on a teaching career to contribute to the efforts of turning things around for the deaf community. “Seeing a student, who started out with no communication, develop to a confident one who is able to apply knowledge and present his ideas in a self-assured manner, is very rewarding,” she says.

With Ms Vermeulen being involved within the deaf culture on a personal level, she is conscious of the daily challenges that deaf learners experience and works towards ensuring that the negative impact posed by the inadequate supply of

appropriate resources for deaf learners, such as Hearing Assistive Technology, is minimised. She is also involved in a research project aimed at uplifting literacy skills in deaf education. “I’ve been nominated to represent the Free State at the Wise Hub Summit, part of a community research programme where we investigate ways of uplifting the adult members of the deaf community so that they can make a positive contribution in the communities they live in,” says Ms Vermeulen.

Her parting shot is advice to fellow educators on the importance of planning: “You cannot change the injustices of past education overnight but you can make a difference in children’s lives by providing access to better education opportunities, one well-planned lesson at a time.”



## CYNTHIA NTOMBIFUTHI SHEZI

Inkanyiso Special School, KwaZulu-Natal

E ven when she was a learner herself, Ms Cynthia Ntombifuthi Shezi had always looked out for learners who experienced challenges with learning. Encouraged by her teachers to take up teaching after schooling, she put her dream of studying law on hold and took up teaching, specialising in remedial education. “This profession for me was not just about teaching; it’s always been about helping those that are having learning barriers overcome them. It makes me happy to know that I am making a difference in someone’s life.”

According to Ms Shezi developing and educating learners with special education needs is much more than academic progress. “As special needs educators, we cannot rush the pace that the learner is functioning at, we need to allow progress to take its natural course,” she says, lamenting the fact that some parents put unnecessary pressure on their

children by comparing their attainment of development milestones to that of their siblings. Even before the three-stream model was introduced in schools, Ms Shezi had long been spearheading the School to Work programme at her school where she ensures that the technical skills they offer match the skills needed by the local employers. She says studying the CAPS and using them as guidelines has assisted in differentiating the activities and adapting them while still ensuring that their skills training is compliant with the curriculum.

Ms Shezi’s advice for new teachers is to be prepared to play the role of parents to their learners, saying “As young as you may be, you must be prepared to take the position of the parent, you become a social worker and you provide pastoral care to your learners. But take care not to have favourites, strive to treat all your learners the same.”



# EXCELLENCE IN SPECIAL NEEDS TEACHING



**ANJE COETZEE**

Jannie Brink Special School,  
Northern Cape

**M**s Anje Coetzee has always had a passion for education and having an educator as a mother not only fuelled that passion but prepared her for the challenges that she would eventually experience in her teaching career. “I love children. The hugs and the smiles I receive mean everything to me, and considering that my learners are living with autism, I feel extra special to be bestowed with such spontaneous displays of love,” says Ms Coetzee, adding “I wish the world could be a bit more understanding about children living with autism and not too see them as different or less.”

Although she is grateful for the confidence that the parents have placed on her to teach their children, Ms Coetzee says that they could show a bit more effort in being involved in

their children’s education. To encourage this, together with the school, she runs awareness campaigns on how to manage autism. “We’ve come to realise that most parents are uninformed on the finer points of the autism spectrum, as such we continually share tips with parents via video clips on how to better manage this disorder.” Funding to address the lack of adequate resources is another challenge that she has to overcome, but she says her passion for her children pushes her to give her best in the school’s efforts at securing sponsors.

Stressing the importance of forming good relationships, she urges other teachers to be kind and helpful towards new teachers, saying: “Always remember the first day you walked in as a new teacher in a new school.”



**MICHELLE ROBERTS**

Alta Du Toit School,  
Western Cape

**I**nspired by being a communicative bridge between her mother, who is hearing-impaired, and the rest of the world, Ms Michelle Roberts believes she was called for Special Needs Education (SNE) from a very young age. While SNE might require a lot of patience and determined effort before any tangible results can be seen, Ms Roberts says to finally see a learner succeed in executing a task is worth the wait. “Little changes mean a lot in our line of work, however long they may have taken to manifest. To see my children succeed in attaining skills and exude certain values feels unbelievably great!”

According to Ms Roberts, teaching is the work of the heart, and as such it becomes difficult not to get involved in the learners’ lives. “My challenge is my inability to separate my work from my personal life, I become emotionally

invested in the lives of my learners, but I guess at the end it works out for the good of my learners,” she says. Striving to lead and leave a legacy of love and hope, Ms Roberts urges parents to become involved in their children’s education because as she says, “We are a team, the teacher and the parent together determine the success of our children.”

Ms Roberts encourages collaboration in raising awareness and recognition for SNE. Through advocating for the rights of learners with special learning needs she hopes to encourage other educators to be constantly aware of and respond appropriately to the learners’ emotional state. “Children with special learning needs experience so many blockages in their lives, it’s important that as teachers we don’t add to those,” concludes Ms Roberts.



**NGCEBO PRICIA LUBISI**  
Sizanani LSEN School, Gauteng

“I chose teaching as a career because I have a knack for imparting knowledge and skills, especially to learners living with disabilities,” says Ms Ngcebo Pricia Lubisi. She says her love and passion for development stem from the excitement she experiences each time she unexpectedly uncovers a new skill in a learner. Ms Lubisi says she has learnt a lot through interacting with the learners, saying their curious minds, hungry and ready to assimilate knowledge inspire her to keep learning as well.

One of the major challenges her school regularly experiences involves learner intake, whereby the community misunderstand the purpose of the school, enrolling children with behavioural issues. “The lack of integration of

people living with disabilities within our communities also poses a problem whereby people equate disability with mental illness,” says Ms Lubisi, adding that as a result of this misperception some learners drop out. To deal with these challenges, she says they regularly develop and implement awareness campaigns in the various communities that the school serves.

Ms Lubisi’s advice to new teachers is to take the role of providing guidance and being someone’s role model seriously. She says proper planning and being organised are very important, adding “despite the challenges you will experience along the way, I urge you to remain dedicated to achieving the goals you have set for your career.”



**NYAMEKA MBEWU**  
Merryvale Special School,  
Eastern Cape

“During my teenage years I used to assist my fellow learners with their homework, and it was then that I decided that I would become a teacher after my schooling,” says Ms Nyameka Mbewu. Opting to teach learners with special education needs, Ms Mbewu says although the road has been frustrating at times, she does not envision teaching anywhere else as her learners have taught her to project her most authentic self.

Ms Mbewu says one of the challenges she encounters is the refusal of parents to accept that their children are candidates for special needs education, which puts excessive strain on the learners as they are expected to perform at a pace not suited to their abilities. She mentions that another challenge has been regarding the curriculum not having

been specifically developed for special needs education, which has necessitated that the teachers apply differentiation techniques to ensure that the academic needs of each individual learner are met.

To ensure that the advances made at school are not lost when learners go back to the community, Ms Mbewu runs disability-rights awareness campaigns in the community. The second focus of her campaign being on prevention, and with alcohol abuse rife in her community, she cautions pregnant women about the effects of consuming alcohol whilst pregnant. “In our community we have a noticeable number of children affected with Foetal Alcohol Syndrome, and I have made it my life’s mission to provide information on how to curb this totally preventable condition,” she concludes.

# EXCELLENCE IN SPECIAL NEEDS TEACHING



## ANNELIE ELIZABETH SCHMIDT

Susan Strijdom School of Skills,  
Limpopo

**M**s Annelie Elizabeth Schmidt believes that it takes more than just a transfer of knowledge and skills to get learners ready for the world of work, but that equal importance should be placed on the development of each learner's physical, social, emotional, mind and spiritual growth. "I love sharing knowledge and skills, but I think we should also concentrate on the holistic development of learners when preparing them for the workplace," she says.

According to Ms Schmidt, her desire to make a difference in her learners' lives has kept her going despite all the challenges she has come across. Although a lack of adequate resources in her school is one of them, Ms Schmidt cites the lack of internal motivation in

her learners as a major challenge, which takes concerted effort from both school and parents to overcome. "I constantly do my best and give my all in everything I do; being able to help learners trust in their ability and believe in themselves despite the many barriers they have to overcome is something I never take for granted," she says.

Ms Schmidt urges other SNE teachers to continually develop themselves and keep up to date with new developments in the SNE sector. She encourages them to take each challenging situation as an opportunity for further learning. Going forward, Ms Schmidt plans to plough back her knowledge and skills in the schooling community through mentoring and coaching sessions.





# LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



**RONALD BENJAMIN FRANS**

Klapmuts Primary School,  
Western Cape



“Everything and anything is possible; if you think it, you can do it!” This has been Mr Ronald Benjamin Frans’ motto for the past 38 years that he has been working in a poverty-stricken community, and if his having turned around the dire future prospects of his school is anything to go by, it is a motto that should be adopted by everyone. Hugely influenced by his Mathematics teacher to take up teaching, it only took 14 years of teaching before Mr Frans’ passion and vision for community development got him promoted to being a principal, a position he has held for the past 24 years.

With over 85% of the pupils in Mr Frans’ school being recipients of the social grant, he has had to carefully manage the school’s budget as fundraising events don’t bring in any noticeable monetary gains. He has had to cultivate profitable partnerships in terms of resources, and these have worked out very well as, resource-wise, the school lacks for nothing. “I had a vision to create a culture where the community

views the school as a beacon of hope, a lighthouse providing guidance. Through partnerships and dedicated staff, our school boasts a fully-functional public library complete with ICT resources that is accessible to all members of the community,” says Mr Frans.

Mr Frans’ advice to other principals is to ensure that they promote their vision – through building trust amongst stakeholders - in order to speed up the adoption thereof. “Don’t wait for the perfect conditions to start implementing your vision; start small but keep moving,” he says. He also encourages them to empower their teachers by identifying those with potential to be leaders and refining their skills through professional development initiatives. A proponent of inclusive decision-making, Mr Frans believes its collaborative nature yields more success in motivating the teachers and stakeholders to work towards attaining the goals.



**ARLENE HOLDING**

Fields College, North West



Believing that she could make a profound change in the lives of children entrusted in her care Ms Arlene Holding has for the past 31 years dedicated her life to education. “Having been given the opportunity to reach as many children as I have has brought me joy and responsibility in equal measure. I am blessed to have been part of their whole educational journey; I have not only delivered education but have built lasting relationships with generations of families,” she says.

Acknowledging the positive effect of stable families on the ability of children to learn to their full potential, Ms Holding laments the breakdown of traditional families and its negative impact on children. To offset this, she says her school provides counselling and academic support to the affected learners, adding “We also subsidise school fees, outings and other activities to enable every learner to reach their full potential.” Another challenge she has had to overcome is maintaining stability at the school whilst embracing

innovation in order to remain relevant in an ever-changing world. “I believe that the consistent delivery of quality education far outweighs any challenge I encounter,” she says.

Ms Holding facilitates capacity building through knowledge-transfer sessions where she allows SMT members and educators to shadow her, ensuring that her knowledge and skills can be transferred before she retires. Certain that by the time she retires she will have left a legacy in terms of providing strategic vision and sound financial management, Ms Holding deems her personal success as having been a prominent role player in nation building and the promotion of transformation in her province. “Through mentoring I wish to inspire the new generation to push boundaries and expectations about what is possible and reimagine their own ideas of what success looks like,” she says.

# LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



**AGNES MAZIBUKO**

Ifaletu School, Mpumalanga



**M**s Agnes Mazibuko's love for children and her commitment to being a change-agent for underprivileged communities sustained her through being exposed to the harsh weather elements when she began her career 38 years ago, teaching under a tree for a monthly salary of R76.

Although times have changed, challenges – although now different – still remain, with the most prevalent being the far-reaching effects of rhino poaching. Ms Mazibuko's school, located a few kilometres from the Kruger National Park, has a high rate of learner-dropouts which she largely attributes to the negative influence of the flashy lifestyles being led by suspected poachers in the community. To combat this challenge, she has partnered with an environmental organisation to activate awareness campaigns aimed at dissuading her learners from joining these syndicates. She is also piloting a skills-development programme for academically challenged learners, on the brink of dropping out, whereby she gets qualified artisans to train them on the relevant technical skills. Another challenge is overcrowded

classrooms which she has tried to address through donor funding and other means. "While waiting for our funding initiatives to pan out, we use the community centre for additional classrooms and with the help of matriculant volunteers and dedicated teachers we have been running a successful homework assistance programme to complement our classroom teaching," says Ms Mazibuko.

On the verge of retirement, Ms Mazibuko has put in plans to ensure that her gains don't disappear when she leaves. "I wish I could wind the clock back but I am at peace with my impending retirement because through my mentorship programme I have ensured that I have passed on my knowledge and skills to the next generation of education leaders. I have also ensured that all the donors I have secured during my tenure are standing donors who will continue supporting the school long after I am gone."

Ms Mazibuko urges other teachers, especially principals, to work very hard as "the output is so pleasing that one forgets the challenges surpassed."



**CATHERINE MASIANE**

Boitshoko Primary School,  
Northern Cape

**M**s Catherine Masiane discovered her passion for teaching when she was 15 years old and teaching Sunday school. "To put a smile on a learner's face and making them feel loved and accepted as valued members of society, is an achievement I constantly strive for," says Ms Masiane, who emphasises the importance of showing love and caring for learners regardless of their background.

Having taught in both political dispensations, Ms Masiane provides an interesting comparison of the two education systems. From having to manage learner absenteeism during harvest times to working 10-hour shifts because of insufficient numbers of schools in communities, she says even though there is still more to be done in terms of uplifting communities, a lot of positive changes have taken place in the 25 years since the end of apartheid, and with it the Bantu education system. Ms Masiane says getting electricity installed in the school simplified many admin-related tasks, thereby providing more time for the classroom; but the one change she is most grateful for is

the provision of meals to learners through the National School Nutrition Programme. "The school feeding scheme has greatly assisted us, not only in keeping learners at school, but also ensuring that they are attentive and have enough energy to participate in class activities," she says.

Mindful of the fact that her days as a school teacher are numbered, Ms Masiane has been sharing her skills with younger teachers through mentoring. She says "teaching is like a relay, when I reach the end of line I must hand over the baton to someone else to continue the race." To aspirant mentors, her advice is not to overlook the importance of providing feedback to the mentees, through evaluation and monitoring activities. She counsels to aspirant teachers to join the profession with commitment, saying "In this profession you'll never be financially rich, but you will be rich in spirit. Come with the idea that you are in it to build a nation."

On retirement Ms Masiane plans to go back where it all started, back to her beloved Sunday school, coming full circle in her teaching career.



## QAPHELISANI OBED KHUZWAYO

Hlakahle Primary School,  
KwaZulu-Natal

For the past 37 years Dr Qaphelisani Obed Khuzwayo has been on a quest to provide quality contact knowledge to learners and develop skills and competencies in communities within which schools operate. “My goal has always been to brighten the future of our nation through providing access to education at a high standard, thereby developing global citizens who are able to fit in well in this ever changing world,” he says.

A believer in the saying that it takes a village to raise a child, Dr Khuzwayo has a great working relationship with the local community structures who he regularly involves in resolving the various challenges facing his school. From assisting with issues of late-coming and absenteeism to addressing the lack of adequate resources, he taps into the skilled expertise available in the community and says this has worked well so far. “It’s important to get the community to take ownership of the school, this makes it easier to pool resources for the common good and benefit of the learners. Learners also need to pull their weight to ensure the smooth running of the school; we have an

understanding with mine whereby we’ve agreed upon appropriate penalties for late-coming and absenteeism.”

Guided by the National Development Plan that encourages education institutions to play a critical role in driving the country’s economic and social development, Dr Khuzwayo has run various projects to uplift the community, the latest of which is the roll-out of computer training to the community. “I’ve developed an ICT training strategy for the whole schooling community, with the first phase of implementation having been targeted at learners and school staff. We’ve now moved on to SGB members, with the general community to follow.”

Dr Khuzwayo advises future school leaders to stay well-versed in policies and regulations that govern schooling as this will guide and support them in the proper running of the school. He encourages team building and rewarding good performance, saying “The main job of a leader is to build confidence and motivate the staff because they are the main contributors in the attainment of the goals you’ve set for the school.”



## MZONDWA LUCKY MASHABA

Magangeni Primary School,  
Limpopo

His aspiration to contribute towards the development of rural communities prompted Mr Mzondwa Lucky Mashaba to enrol for teaching studies, and for the past 30 years he has been making a tangible difference in the lives of learners who come through the gates of his school. From churning out national sport coaches and boxing champions, Mr Mashaba is dedicated to producing role-players in the economy of the country, and encourages his learners to dream big. “I always tell my learners that despite their current economic conditions they can realise their dreams if they are determined, exercise will-power and put in the required effort,” he says.

Mr Mashaba cites lack of adequate infrastructure and insufficient resources as the major challenges he has had to overcome, but says he has learnt to soldier on and do what he can with what is available. His efforts to better-resource his school have not gone unnoticed, as he has managed to secure funding for minor renovation from donors such as

the National Lottery Board, with the Department of Education set to provide major refurbishment in 2022, turning the school into a state-of-the-art institution.

To ensure that he passes on the knowledge and skills he has amassed throughout his career he coaches and mentors teachers in his school, providing an avenue for targeted staff development. Being part of the Circuit Management Committee has given him access to neighbouring schools where he conducts motivational talks and leadership development sessions. According to Mr Mashaba it is important that teachers identify a purpose for their career, saying “If you are to be a successful teacher you need to set goals and targets for your career. I have managed to achieve a lot in my career through setting objectives and working towards attaining them,” says Mr Mashaba, light-heartedly adding that next on his bucket list is “to shake hands with the president.”



# LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



**BARBARA MARIE FICK**

Florida Primary School, Gauteng

With 42 years spent not only teaching but also caring for every pupil in her school, Ms Barbara Marie Fick credits her determination and staying power to the profound impression left on her by her former teachers while she was still a learner. "It's such a joy to know that, just like my former teachers did, I have contributed to raising every child in our school, from shy and dependent Grade 1's to the independent critical thinkers they become when it's time for High School," she says.

According to Ms Fick, a major challenge she has had to deal with in her school is the lack of parental support in terms of school activities and lack of involvement in their children's education. "Although we understand that today's pace of life is fast, we insist that moulding and shaping the lives of learners cannot depend on teachers alone; parents need to play their part and get involved in every aspect of school life," she says. Another

issue that affects teaching and learning is late coming, with both learners and educators being the perpetrators. But because she has a positive relationship with each educator, she is able to address this issue by reminding them to honour the profession and respect their ability to change the course of learners' lives.

Ms Fick's advice to aspirant leaders is to be willing to learn from others, saying "In order to grow and develop your leadership skills you need to accept criticism and advice offered. You also have to be prepared for the hard work that comes with this position." She emphasises the need to keep one's staff motivated saying a leader's role is to encourage educators to continue on their journey of fulfilling their purpose. In anticipation of her retirement, Ms Fick plans to mentor and coach newly appointed principals, ensuring that her four decades' worth of experience is utilised for the betterment of the education system.



**TSELANE FRANCINA POSHOLI**

Williamstrip Farm School,  
Free State

Having experienced the same challenges whilst growing up in a rural farming community, Ms Tselane Francina Posholi knows exactly how tough her learners have it and has made it her life's work to alleviate some of these difficulties. "I couldn't have been where I am now if it wasn't for the love showered upon us by my grade 3 teacher, who managed to sow seeds of hope in each of the 80 children crammed in her class," says Ms Posholi, who has been planting the same seeds for the last 28 years of her teaching career. Desolate as their socio-economic situation may seem, she constantly encourages her learners to work hard, saying "I always tell my learners that they should not let their current situation blind them to the opportunities available for a better life. They should, through education, stay ready to grab that opportunity when it eventually surfaces."

Faced with a multitude of challenges prevalent in rural communities such as poverty and learners having to walk

long distances to reach the school, Ms Posholi says the most frustrating yet has been getting learners to an acceptable level of reading competency. Requiring a lot of effort and dedication to improve, she has, on numerous occasions, had to stay late after school to assist those who struggle. "Seeing as there is no access to reading material at home, or even the motivation to read, I've had to go back and employ the traditional methods of teaching reading we used in the past," says Ms Posholi. To assist with motivating learners she regularly invites her former learners who've managed to further their education and are now gainfully employed to give talks at her school.

Ms Posholi's advice to other teachers, especially principals, is to empathise with learners and be careful of the words they use when addressing them as they greatly influence how they turn out in the future. She also urges them to "persevere and make the best out of situations they encounter."



## WENDY JEAN ROSSOUW

Pearson High School,  
Eastern Cape

Although teaching might not have been her career of choice because of the limited options available to women in the past, the 43 years Ms Wendy Jean Rossouw has been a teacher have afforded her a platform to pursue the two things she has always been most passionate about: History and athletics. "Teaching has given me an opportunity to guide the youth on their journey to adulthood. In the classroom I share my knowledge of history and create opportunities for students to realise their full potential, whilst I use the sports field for cultivating the values of discipline and commitment," she says.

When the dawn of democracy was imminent, Ms Rossouw's vast knowledge of history and awareness of the inherent injustices thereof enabled her to assist schools she worked in with the transition from being racially exclusive to having culturally diverse classrooms. Using sports – long touted as an effective unifier – proved to be an effective tool to help her learners deal with diversity and foster respect

for each other. Having participated in sports from an early age, Ms Rossouw believes in the holistic development of learners where importance is not only placed on academics but also on healthy participation in sports. "Carefree days seem to be a thing of the past; it's sad to witness teenage depression and burnout due to the pressure to perform at high levels, both academically and in sports. I believe that physical education needs to focus on healthy participation instead of the acquisition of skills," she says.

According to Ms Rossouw, who coaches and mentors junior teachers to ensure continuity after she's retired, passion, enthusiasm and eagerness to go the extra mile are important in maintaining one's commitment despite any difficulty one might come across. "Be an involved teacher, inside and outside of the classroom. Love what you do and always present the real you; if you have a passion and a feeling for something, it becomes much easier to manage," she advises other teachers.



# KADER ASMAL AWARD



**JOHN SAMBO**  
MPUMALANGA

I was the first programme director of the South African School Schools Choral competition under Professor Kader Asmal.



**RICHARD OKHAA**  
NORTHERN CAPE

I extended successfully the curriculum in my school because it limit the choices of learners.



**OLGA PEEL**  
WESTERN CAPE

I promote research amongst the youth in Mathematics, Science, Technology and Innovation.



**JOHN VESAZIE**  
KWAZULU-NATAL

For twelve years, I have ensured that children from my community do not go to bed on empty stomachs.



**MADIMETSA KOLOTSI**  
LIMPOPO

After Mfuleni School was burnt down, I made sure that the school was rebuilt.



**BAPETUXOLO KUTUKA**  
EASTERN CAPE

I am a chairman of a development trust. I ensure that funds are available to support learning.



**TSELANI POSHOLI**  
FREE STATE

I ensure that every child in my community is registered at a school every single year.



**LERATO MEKGWE**  
NORTH WEST

I encourage learners and parents to grow vegetables in their gardens in schools and in their communities. This encourages healthy living and boosts their immune systems.



**ZANELE MTHEMBU**  
GAUTENG

I have a passion for learner achievement. I convene meetings where there are parents and learners.











## DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

222 Struben Street, Pretoria, 0001  
Private Bag X895, Pretoria,  
0001, South Africa

Tel: (012) 357 3000 • Fax: (012) 323 0601

Private Bag X9035, Cape Town,  
8000, South Africa

Tel: (021) 486 7000 • Fax: (021) 461 8110

**Call Centre: 0800 202 933**

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