

## Excellence in Grade R Teaching

Nominee: **Ms Phindiwe Raqa**

School: **Themba lethu Primary School, Themba lethu, George**

Cluster: **Eden & Central Karoo**

District: **Eden & Central Karoo Education District**

### **Motivation:**

Ms Phindiwe Raqa is dedicated and committed to making a difference in the lives of the learners in her school and also beyond the classroom. Her love for children saw the need to start a crèche on the local farm where she was staying.

She uses various projects and programmes to address specific needs within her class and the community. Her qualities and experience as a leading Grade R teacher was recognised by her IMG Manager and district office.

On Saturdays she conducts workshops for colleagues and teachers of surrounding schools to help with the implementation of CAPS and proper planning. Although not compulsory, she promotes IQMS amongst her Grade R colleagues to ensure their growth and self-development, which results in the improvement of quality teaching and learning.

She overcomes her own physical limitations by involving volunteers from the community to assist with developmental outdoor activities which forms an integral part of Grade R teaching. She also mentors and supports Grade R teachers in IsiXhosa home language.

She is enthusiastic and passionate about Grade R teaching and believes that every day is a day full of possibilities. She creates a stimulating, relaxing and creative environment to give her learners the best opportunities to develop holistically. She initiated visits to the local library to instil a love for books and reading in her learners. She uses every opportunity to improve herself by attending any course that would add value to her existing knowledge and skills.

She trains parents to enable them to help their children with homework. She has a close relationship with her local clinic to organise HIV/Aids awareness to members of the community.

## Excellence in Special Needs Teaching

Nominee: **Mr Brendon Bussy**  
School: **Battswood Art Centre, Grassy Park**  
Cluster: **Metropole South & Central**  
District: **Metropole Central Education District**

**Motivation:**

Mr Brendon Bussy is a dedicated and professional teacher who has gone out of his way to promote inclusive and forward-thinking education for his primary and high school learners. His expertise in music and the fine arts has exposed learners previously unable to participate in holistic programmes to complete curriculum standards. He has used sign language with hearing learners as a method of control and kinetic learning, while destigmatising the experience of his deaf learners.

His learners from Dominican School for the deaf have blossomed in his classes both because of his earnest work in communication and design and because of his ease with technology and his knowledge of the latest developments in the deaf community. His integration of tried-and-tested techniques and experimental improvisation with learners is inspiring and sets an example for all educators at special schools. He recently completed his second sign language course and through his persuasion sign language training is provided for the staff. Being a musician he uses different techniques in his teaching, e.g. he uses body percussion to assist in the teaching of Mathematics. He has made an in depth study of the curriculum and adapts it with ease to make its implementation more successful.

**Excellence in Primary School Teaching**

Nominee: **Ms Venessa Jacobs**  
School: **De Kuilen Primary School, Kuils River**  
Cluster: **Metropole North & East**  
District: **Metropole East Education District**

**Motivation:**

Ms Vanessa Jacobs has been in education for 11 years, teaching in the Intermediate phase at De Kuilen Primary. She demonstrates a deep passion and love for teaching children. She sets a perfect example for all educators by being well versed in the subjects she teaches and plays a leading role in the Intermediate phase of the school. She has been grade head on numerous occasions and is subject head for History and Life orientation. Ms Jacobs sees proper planning as a non-negotiable and has compiled a curriculum booklet for the staff in her phase to assist them in their planning. Added to that, she compiled Maths worksheets with step by step instructions for parents to assist their children at home.

She teaches introductory lessons to her entire grade group whenever they experience difficulties. On top of this she initiated a very successful Homework Buddy system in her class. She after school assists Xhosa speaking learners who experience difficulty because of the language barrier.

Ms Jacobs has a strong work ethic and extends her classroom by running various programs in her school and community. She runs holiday projects with Brooklands Primary. Beneficiaries for the various initiatives include De La Bat School, BADISA, workers on Hazendal wine estate. A very successful anti-bullying program ran for a month. She coordinates a Character Building programme and developed a Leadership Development program for the student council. She is in charge of value education in the school and runs a complete year long program on values. Learner social skills are developed with Higher Ground, a community-based camping association that specializes in experiential learning.

Ms Jacobs ensures collaboration amongst teachers and sets a perfect example with her modest personality. Her contributions are very much appreciated and very highly spoken of by the entire staff and parent community.

### **Excellence in Secondary School Teaching**

Nominee: **Mr Isaac Langeveldt**  
School: **Swellendam Secondary School**  
Cluster: **Overberg**  
District: **Overberg Education District**

#### **Motivation:**

Mr Isaac Langeveldt started his teaching career in 1998; hereafter he was promoted to Head of Department at Swellendam Secondary School. He is responsible for the school hostel and has created space in an unused section of the hostel for a group of disabled learners from other schools.

Mr Langeveldt believes that planning and structure is key in striking a balance between an administrative role and being a brilliant teacher. He is of the opinion that the curriculum is the core business of any school and as a passionate History teacher he boasts with a consistent achievement between 97 and 100% matriculation pass rate. He believes that pacing of assessments is essential and extra support should be given to learners who repeat or are at risk. Planning, reflecting, dramatization, cartoons, teaching how to write essays, keywords - learners hate long essays, the use of technology and continually looking for ways to make learning fun, are but some of the strategies the candidate employs to meet the needs of every learner in the classroom.

## **Excellence in Technology - Enhanced Teaching and Learning Award**

Nominee: **Mr Alan Felix**

School: **Ruststasie Primary School, Ruststasie, Moorreesburg**

Cluster: **West Coast**

District: **West Coast Education District**

Motivation:

To teach and to witness the joy and pleasure on the faces of learners and to experience their light bulb moments with them are some of the highlights in education for Mr Felix. Helping people, managing and seeing projects through to the end, to pull through, to share what is learnt, to participate, to do class room make-overs, to compare, to compete to create opportunities for all children are what excites Mr Felix.

Mr Alan Felix is currently the principal at Ruststasie Primary School. He believes that that our country's history compels us all to promote the acquisition of skills and to build the economy. He does extra-ordinary things with learners from rural farming communities such as building and repairing old computers and designing screen savers on xenophobia.

Mr Felix influences teaching and learning through Information Communication and Technology (ICT) with love and compassion and sharing. He reaches out and at circuit level he does information technology training for all the teachers in the circuit. He supports learners to use the computer with ease and he further believes in finishing what is started, understands the role of building blocks and is under no illusion that Rome was not built in one day.

He equips learners to use Information Technology in ways that support knowledge building and learning beyond the classroom. High school learners from other schools use the computer room at the school to do assignments and to do research.

## **Excellence in teaching Mathematics**

Nominee: **Ms Mariana Viljoen**

School: **Hermanus High School, Hermanus**

Cluster: **Overberg**

District: **Overberg Education District**

**Motivation:**

Ms Mariana Viljoen is the appropriate nominee for this category because of a deep sense of connectedness with learners, a genuine interest in their well-being and an almost religious belief

that through the teaching of Mathematics, only good can come from such a relationship with learners and that their mental and intellectual development must always be put at the forefront.

Ms Viljoen believes that failure is just another learning opportunity to become excellent and this is modelled in daily Maths lessons. Although peer-teaching is used as part of learning, the ultimate aim is to instil confidence and fearlessness in the learners to do Mathematics. She starts at the lower levels to accommodate learners who are struggling with Mathematics, while excellent learners are continuously challenged with work of a higher order. In this way the abilities of all learners are continuously sharpened. The interactive white board is generously used in the teaching process and "Doc Viewer" is also applied, to good effect.

Ms Viljoen goes to great lengths to promote Mathematics and especially pure Mathematics amongst learners, keeping in mind that not all learners are capable to offer the subject. Regular discussions are held with learners about career options in the field of mathematics. Learners are assisted to attend career expos and are also guided to apply for bursaries for further studies. All learners are motivated to believe in themselves and a winner feeling is cultivated amongst them.

She assisted one of the local primary schools, Zwehlihle Primary, with curriculum matters related to Maths teaching. The candidate is also involved with the tutoring of Maths at the local secondary schools, Qhayiya and Umyezo. This clearly demonstrates her commitment to improve the quality of Maths teaching in the broader community. The candidate is also a senior marker of the GR12 Maths Literacy question papers. She works tirelessly to ensure that Mathematics remains a focus subject at the school due to the status of the school as a Dinaledi School. The candidate drives the Dinaledi Project at the school. Apart from the above, the candidate is also involved in the annual Spring School project and the Kip McGrath support programme. Both projects are aimed at providing additional support programmes to learners in Maths.

### **Excellence in Primary School Leadership**

Nominee: **Mr Simon Speelman**  
School: **LR Schmidt Primary School, Genadendal**  
Cluster: **Overberg**  
District: **Overberg Education District**

#### **Motivation:**

Mr Speelman has a charismatic approach and a clear vision, is a meticulous planner and is compassionate, yet assertive. His school provides ample evidence of his consistency, effectiveness, commitment, insightfulness, passion and successful achievement of sustainability. In a very short period of two and a half years, he has had a major impact on the educators, learners and school community.

Without any reserves in the school account it seemed almost impossible to finance any improvements. The principal, however, has made many contacts in the business community and in the education sector for the benefit of the school. Many partnerships were formed between

the school and organisations, e.g. DJ Murray Trust, Butterfly Foundation, Grace Foundation, Bongiwe Trust, the University of the Western Cape, Tom Barlow and JAM. Students from the HAN University in the Netherlands, runs a reading programme at the school as part of their internship. This enabled him, amongst others, to refit the computer room with new equipment, and educators, learners and members of the community now receive regular training in computer literacy. The school buildings have been renovated, toilets have been replaced and a new library has been built and fitted with shelves. The administration block, foyer, kitchen and duplicating room were refurbished and the safety of the school upgraded.

The attitude of the community towards the school has changed from apathy to enthusiastic involvement. All school activities are now extremely well supported and attended by the whole community. In a community rife with social ills, he has become a beacon of pastoral guidance, and he manages to fulfil many roles, ranging from the counselling of drug addicts to the finding of work for the destitute. He maintains high visibility in the parent community and has a formal programme to ensure regular quarterly visits to by all staff to every learner's home – no wonder then that he has achieved 100% attendance at parents' meetings. Through his initiatives the school is represented on the management committees of eight community forums.

### **Excellence in Secondary School Leadership**

Nominee: **Mr Dennis Karelse**  
School: **Albertinia High School, Albertinia**  
Cluster: **Eden & Central Karoo**  
District: **Eden & Central Karoo Education District**

#### **Motivation**

Mr Dennis Karelse has been the principal of the school for the past four years. This very vibrant school leader has transformed a former exclusively white (former Model C) school into a successfully inclusive school catering for grades R to 12.

Mr Karelse is a creative problem solver with an open door policy that made it possible for the candidate to eradicate racism, drug abuse and gangsterism which was rife at the school. He has an excellent understanding of what it takes to transform a school community through the modelling of respect and compassion. He knows the names of all the learners at school and this, coupled with a sincere and genuine interest in their well-being and development was the perfect mix for the process of change at the school.

Mr Karelse stays well ahead of education matters by attending all Western Cape Education Department (WCED) workshops and meetings. The candidate also completed an Advanced Certificate in Education: School Leadership successfully at the University of Stellenbosch. He succeeds in keeping his staff positive towards the WCED and reminds them continuously that they are the WCED. He is well on top of the latest developments in the field of Information Communication Technology (ICT), is a South African Schools Rugby selector, leads the school choir and has a drama group at school.

Mr Karelse clearly understands what is required to establish and maintain a culture of quality education. As principal he leads by example with the high standards of excellence in teaching and learning that he sets. In the past four years the school has achieved an average pass percentage of 98% for grade 12 (2011: 100% pass; 2013: 100% pass).

He has also shown clear understanding of the impact socio-economic circumstances on the school. Through the fostering of partnerships with local businesses, which was difficult to establish in the beginning, the learners benefit further. A local business in town is sponsoring an annual leadership programme for 20 learners of the school. This is another attempt to build strong leadership and role models at the school. He has invited well-known rugby players and Louis Oosthuizen, renowned international golfer to address learners on leadership and to inspire and motivate them. Through the candidate's persistent engagement with the local authority, R15 000 was made available as bursary for the Dux learners of the school to study at a Higher Education Institution.

### **Lifetime Achievement Award**

Nominee: **Ms Mary Visagie**

School: **Heidedal Primary School, Borchersds, George**

Cluster: **Eden & Central Karoo**

District: **Eden & Central Karoo Education District**

#### **Motivation:**

Ms Mary Visagie's teaching career started in 1970 and is in her 44<sup>th</sup> year of teaching and is a living testimony of a South African who has dedicated her life to improving the lives of the marginalised and disadvantaged learners of our country.

As a teacher, one of her primary aims from the beginning of her career was to build the self-esteem of learners and to take them beyond their socio-economic environments that have devastating effects on the children of our country. Through participation in many community organisations Ms Visagie has actively and successfully dealt with the impact and effects of social challenges on the learners of the school and especially the broader community where the school is located. Her activism and relentless, almost ruthless, drives to tackle the social challenges of drug abuse, child molestation, HIV-AIDS prevalence, petty crimes etc. has led to the upliftment of the community of Conville and environs and has resulted in the binding of the community into a well-knit unit, with the school as its core.

With diligence and passion, Ms Visagie has religiously continued with the teaching of the values and norms of good citizenship and worked hard to ensure that it is installed in learners to make them aware of their role in society and to encourage them to become active and well balanced citizens. Learners have been taught to expect only the best from themselves despite the many negative socio-economic challenges that they face daily.

The number of community organisations she has served on throughout her teaching career to realise her dreams and aspirations is a testimony of her endless and unwavering commitment to really make a difference in the lives of children. She has served as Committee member involved with the writing of the new Child Sex Act.

As Subject Head and teacher of English First Additional Language she has taught learners to use English as a powerful tool of self-reliance, to assert themselves and as a way to build their self-esteem. She thrives in an environment with a diverse composition and plan lessons around uniqueness and commonalities and learners are encouraged to celebrate their diversity. Current policies in teaching are a tool to enhance teaching practices and activities in class are planned around diversity and transformation.

To learn, to lead and to teach is her passion. Educating children and to develop people's abilities is Ms Visagies' vision and mission. She is truly a woman for all seasons. This principled centred leader with a profound commitment to Ubuntu and an impeccable sense of justice and fairness is worthy of recipient of this Award.

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