

Celebrate teachers on World Teacher's Day

5 October is World Teacher's Day, a day set aside to show appreciation to educators globally as well as to raise awareness and understanding on the work and value of teachers.



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Under this year's theme, "Empowering teachers, building sustainable societies", the Department of Basic Education recognises and appreciates the contribution of teachers in the greater development of South African society and its workforce.

The building of sustainable societies can only be achieved through the empowerment of teachers, as they are the very individuals that lay the critical foundation of a learner's life, educating, training and developing them to becoming well-grounded and valuable adults in later life. The department has seen the value and importance of honouring and empowering teachers and have taken great strides in doing so.

The progress that has been made in all international tests is attributable to the dedicated and hard-working teachers. The Department provides 80 out of 140 teacher Centres within ICT. These Centres provide teachers among others with a self-diagnostic tool to identify gaps in their competences to inform their development programmes. Subject committees and Professional Learning Communities galvanize teachers to make a meaningful contribution in improving the quality of education. Through the Presidential Remuneration Review Commission government remain committed to paying special attention in improving conditions of service for teachers.

From 2015 onward the recognition of teachers will be wider, holistic, and yearlong and includes areas that affect teachers as people and professionals. In August the Department of Basic Education launched the Teacher Appreciation and Support Programme (TASP). The programme hopes to achieve improved teachers' morale which will lead to greater commitment to the school's overall healthy environment.

It is also hoped that this Programme will help attract qualified teachers and to positively affect productivity and efficiency amongst the other objectives. In celebrating the teachers for their important role of shaping the minds and futures of South Africa's past, present and future generations, TASP will focus on celebrating teachers every day culminating in a seminar at the end of October, the month in which we celebrate World Teachers Day.

Focus on teacher development

Teacher development is one of the major focus areas in this current term of office. This will include various policy reviews including conditions of service, teacher recruitment, deployment, utilisation and development, including their general professional development.

Conceptualised and launched in 2000 by the Department, the National Teaching Awards acknowledge the extraordinary efforts made by the teachers, often in very difficult conditions to service our children particularly those in disadvantaged communities.

The objectives in hosting the National Teacher's Awards include:

- Focusing public attention on the positive aspects of Basic Education, thereby raising the public image of the teaching profession.
- Recognising and promoting excellence in teaching performance.
- Honouring dedicated, creative and effective teachers and schools.
- Encouraging best practice in schools.
- Affording South Africans the opportunity to publicly say "thank you" to all outstanding teams or individual teachers in schools.

In the words of revolutionary army officer, founder and first President of the Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk: "A good teacher is like a candle - it consumes itself to light the way for others"

In celebration of World Teacher's Day 2015, the Department of Basic Education salutes all teachers who continue to consume themselves, and immerse themselves in their profession in order to light the way for the future of this country.

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