

# Western Cape gets Zenex high school education improvement project

Earlier this week, the Zenex Foundation and the Western Cape Dept of Education launched a high school project focused on improving maths, science and English at 10 disadvantaged schools in the metropole north and east education districts in the Western Cape.



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The Zenex Foundation will invest over R24 million in these two districts, from 2017 until 2021 to overcome the scarcity of South African skills in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields.

Western Cape MEC for Education, Debbie Schäfer, said, “As a government, we are working hard to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of all our learners and encourage more of our learners to take mathematics and science, which are gateway subjects for the economic development of our province. If we achieve this objective, we will improve the quality of the whole system, improving learner performance and retention in all grades and ultimately better outcomes in the National Senior Certificate.”

“We believe that this project has the potential to make a significant positive contribution to one of South Africa’s challenges – the lack of quality passes and low participation rates of disadvantaged black learners in the important subjects and careers requiring mathematics and science at university,” said Adv Thandi Orleyn, chairperson of the Zenex Foundation.

## Participating schools

The selected schools in the Metro East are:

- Iqhayiya Secondary School
- KwaMfundo High School
- Luhlaza High School
- Manyano High School
- Masiyile High school

In Metro North, they are:

- Bardale High School
- Manzomthombo High School
- Mfuleni Secondary School
- Ravensmead Secondary School
- Sinenjongo High School

## **Four levels of assistance**

The project will work at four levels in the 10 schools.

The first involves training and mentoring school managers; the second level provides subject content and pedagogical training and in-classroom support to mathematics, science and English teachers; the third level sees it working directly with learners to provide additional academic support. The learner support will be a blend of 'face-to-face teaching' methods with modern technology to ensure learners prepared for the skills required in the 21st century. The learners will also participate in academic learner camps and Mathematics and Science Clubs

The fourth level involves tertiary access support to learners through career assessments and guidance to guide learners in their study choices. Learners will receive assistance with university and bursary applications and life skills to bridge school and university study.

## **Partnerships deliver**

Partnerships are key to the Zenex Foundation's work and this project involved adopting partnerships at a number of levels, which are pivotal to its success. The Foundation is in partnership with three experienced education organisations to implement the project to deliver an integrated model of support in their respective areas of specialisation.

The University of Cape Town's Schools Development Unit (UCT-SDU) to support school leaders and teachers; The Siyavula Trust will deliver the supplementary learner support through a technology-assisted mathematics and science programme and Tsebo Education Network (TEN) will provide the tertiary access support. The Foundation has established close working relationships with the district, which provides guidance and support for the project and has played a leading role in securing buy-in from schools. The partnership with the district is critical to enhance chances of success and sustainability of the Project.

"We partner with the Western Cape Department of Education on a range of educational initiatives and this project has the potential to increase the number of Black learners who achieve quality results in mathematics and science and access to university," concludes Adv. Orleyn.

"We are pleased to partner with the Zenex Foundation in implementing this innovative programme. We are confident that

our schools and learners will benefit in this partnership,” concludes Schäfer.

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