

Management & Leadership

POLICY • LEADERSHIP • MANAGEMENT • GOVERNANCE
for South African Schools

In this Issue

Managing paper, UMALUSI and more

Most principals and people in management that I have met find staying on top of the mounds of paper that cross their desks each day one of their least favourite tasks. Unfortunately it's a job that comes with the territory for people in senior management positions and although a good secretary or PA can make the paper load less onerous, there remain lots of bits of paper which need to be read and handled each day. If this material is not dealt with expeditiously the paper quickly mounts up and before long the surface of your desk is hidden under piles of paper you become increasingly frustrated as things you need become lost in the clutter. If you are that kind of a person help is at hand in the form of the expert advice contained in the article "Managing paper". Read it and regain control of the monster that lurks in your in tray.

In this issue we also bring your further information on the 2008 NSC results, this time pretty much from the horse's mouth, as the article is based on a presentation and information provided by Prof John Volmink, the Chairman of UMALUSI. His presentation, with the title "Can Higher Education Trust the NSC Results" provides good insights into how UMALUSI goes about the process of moderating and standardising the NSC results and also reflects some of their thinking about the standard of the papers set in 2008 and the quality of the marking. His presentation also addressed some of the concerns that were raised about the quality of the Mathematics papers and it is useful to compare his responses as Chairperson of UMALUSI with the report of the Minister's Task team established specifically to answer questions raised by those so called experts and members of the general public who questioned the quality of the Mathematics papers.

Besides these topics this issue also includes the second part of Managing Editor, Alan Clarke's article "More teachers, better teaching", as well as the good news that this year has seen a significant increase in the number of students enrolling at universities to study teaching.

Our readers may be aware of the fact that Prof Jonathan Jansen, the Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee on the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU), was recently nominated as the next rector of the University of Orange Freestate. However, this only happened after he had presented the committee's findings and recommendations to the minister. A media statement released by the DoE on 29 January provided a brief list of its main recommendations. We should, however, not expect the minister to release further details of its findings or to act on these until after the elections, given the level of union opposition to the likely role and purpose of such a unit. We are, however, some further ideas about the thinking of the committee based on a document that it issued towards the end of last year which listed what were called the "emergent, preliminary findings". More about this on pages 6 and 7.

There is also plenty more in this second bumper 16 page edition which we trust you will enjoy, will find useful and informative, and will share with your colleagues, encouraging them we hope to join our growing list of subscribers.

SM&L

is published 10 times per year by Ednews. It is editorially and financially independent and it not affiliated to any organisation. It seeks to provide the leaders of South African schools with current and relevant information on issues of policy, leadership, management and governance.

Management

Managing Paper

Staying on top of the reams of paper that arrive on their desks each day is a problem for most principals. Here are some strategies to help you to deal with the problem and to maintain control over those that matter while disposing of those that don't.

One of the first challenges faced by most newly-appointed principals (and one which some principals never seem to learn to get completely under control) is the management of the constant stream of paper that arrives on their desks. There are the forms which need to be completed and the circulars which arrive from the Department, the notes from teachers, letters from parents and their own jotted notes and reminders about the myriad things that they need to do. On most days for many principals, the inbox seems fuller at the end of a normal day's work than it was at the start of the day; and despite the constant promises of 'paperless offices' made by the gurus of the ICT industry, we seem to generate more paper today than ever before.

Before you can get to grips with dealing with your messy desk or paper mountain, it is important that you have a clear system for dealing with paper and that it is one that your secretary or your school's administrative assistant and the staff that you work with most closely can understand. The other requirement is that you become sufficiently self-disciplined and habitual in your efforts, to make the system work.

TRAF System

In her excellent book, *The Organised Executive: New Ways to Manage Time, Paper and People*² Stephanie Winston recommends the classic TRAF system to sort and

manage incoming paper. The system involves 5 steps and is based on the assumption that you can do just one of four things to any piece of paper that you are required to process.

You can:

- **Toss it:** If it has no value for you now or in the future toss it straight into your waste paper basket for recycling (We hope all schools have policies and systems in place to recycle paper and all other recyclable materials)
- **Refer / Delegate it:** Pass it on to someone else to deal with. This would normally be your secretary, if you have one, or the member of staff with delegated responsibility for the matter referred to.
- **Act on it:** If the matter is one which you must deal with or act on, then deal with it either immediately or assign a time in your diary when you will act on it and deal with the matter then.
- **File it:** If the paper includes information which is important to you or which you may need later, or to act on at some time in the future, then file it for future reference. Before filing it, set the date when you will either act on it or when you will discard it. Mark this date on the document.



Five Steps

The five steps of the system are as follows:

Step 1: Sort all incoming papers using the TRAF system

Step 2: If you work with a secretary, go through all incoming post and paper with her. As you go through it, instruct her about the action she should take with each item, using the TRAF method. She can then make notes about how each item is to be handled and deal with the papers according to your instructions. Keep only those items which require further thought or action on your part because of their complexity.

[If you do not have the luxury of a secretary, the process is the same - except that you should sort the papers into one of four receptacles:

- Toss items go in the waste/recycling basket
- Refer/Delegate items go in a Referrals folder or tray.
- Act items go in your action folder or tray
- File items go in a for-filing folder or tray]

Step 3: Set aside an hour each day to go through your action folder. If you work on your own without a secretary, use some of this time to TRAF all incoming post and paper. When working through your action folder, always prioritise items in terms of their deadlines and/or importance. Don't spend a lot of time deciding which items are the most important. If you have many items, choose the most important three. Importance in this instance means either items which need to be done as a matter of urgency because they have deadlines which need to be met or items which need to be done because they are of importance to the effective running of the school.

It is absolutely essential that you set aside time to perform these functions and that you can do so without interruptions. Try to choose a time when things are usually quiet – either early before the start of the school day or in the late afternoon when most people have gone home.

Messy desk?

A poll on personal organisation undertaken by Coopers & Leybrand (Now Price Waterhouse Coopers) found that the average desk worker has 36 hours of work on their desk and wastes up to 3 hours each week looking for the papers and other stuff on their desks that they need to complete or continue with their work.

Based on an item on website www.ismckenzie.com

If a task requires more time than you have at your disposal, schedule a time in your programme at a later date but in time to meet any deadlines, when you will tackle and complete the task. Write this deferred date on these items and schedule the time in your diary when you will complete it. The item can then be filed for completion on that date.

Step 4: Keep track of the all deferred and referred items using your diary and a special date-based filing system or tickler box for storing the deferred items. Check this on a daily basis and place deferred items back in your action file when their action date comes due.

Step 5: At the end of each day, check your desk – and all work surfaces if you are the kind of person who is inclined to sort papers into piles across your office – to make sure that all papers have been properly sorted into one their 4 TRAF receptacles.

Check your performance

Winston suggests that you use the following “Paper game” to score yourself and to monitor your performance:

- Each piece of paper which is 'homeless' because you 'don't know what to do with it' or haven't put it in its proper receptacle - score +5
- Each item in your action box which should have already been completed but has not been i.e. its due date has passed - score +3
- Each item which should have been referred elsewhere but has not been - score +2
- Each item in the File box in excess of 20 - score +1
- Each item in the File box up to 20 items - score -1/2
- Each item in the deferred file for tomorrow or noted for further action tomorrow - score -1
- Each item appropriately placed in the Action box - score -1/2

You are doing well if when you start, your daily score for one week is less than 30. Your aim should be to have a total daily score for a week of less than 30.

A similar system is recommended by Maria Gracia¹ in an article published on the website www.ismckenzie.com

The 4 D's of effective paper management

Her system is based on what she calls the “4 D's of Effective Paper Management”:

Do it: Act on or complete the tasks as indicated by the information provided by the paper on the same day. Once the items are completed, the paper should be filed, referred to someone else or discarded.

Delay it: Use this when further action needs to be taken but cannot be taken on the same day or the task cannot be completed on that same day. File the paper in a 'Reminder' file with a date and time to indicate when it is due for completion. This date should also be recorded in your diary.

Delegate it: Pass the paper on to someone else for further action by that person. Forwarding the paper must happen on the same day to ensure that it does not continue to clutter your desk.

Dump it: Put it in the bin and do it immediately. Gracia suggests that the majority of paper that enters an office can be discarded immediately. This is the most important one of them all. It's probably safe to say that a huge percentage of the paper that enters your office can be immediately discarded.

Get more out of your day

The same website in an article by "Zemanta" makes the following 12 suggestions about how to get more out of your day:

- Plan your day
- Schedule breaks
- Deal with today
- Value each minute
- Keep moving: use your momentum
- Develop a routine
- Diet and exercise
- Look for effective shortcuts
- Use a timer
- Do the worst first
- Say no
- Begin the night before

References

1 Stephanie Winston, *The Organised Executive: New Ways to Manage Time, Paper, and People* (Warner Books, New York, 1985)

2 For more about Maria Gracia and her material on getting organised, see her website <http://www.getorganizednow.com/>

Paper story – an alternative approach to managing Departmental circulars?

There is a legendary story which goes the rounds in some education circles of a principal who had a drawer in his filing cabinet in which he placed all circulars from the Department that required him to provide them with information about his school or his staff - without ever doing what they required of him.

When asked to explain this policy, he replied that the majority of information that the Department required had little value and was probably never used by the Department for any purpose other than record keeping. If the information they required was really of value and there was a genuine need for it, they would be sure to contact him again directly - at which point he would co-operate and provide the information they needed, knowing that it had value and would be used.

Letter

11 March 2009

Dear Alan

I have been a principal for 23 years and support the SM&L Comment about "Getting the Right Things Done" by Fr Carl Markelz and Harold Maldonado.

Added to this should be the ability to make people "buy" in on your goals and to make them feel they have been part of whatever decision has been taken (an "inclusive" feeling). They should feel that their school is more than just a job. Communication, appreciation, approachability and a two way respect remains of utmost importance if one aims for high expectations.

I enjoy your publication, which is also of much value to my leadership team.

Many thanks.

Dennis Schenk
Headmaster
Gonubie Primary School

Thanks for the letter and the positive comments about SM&L, we appreciate your support. I would like to encourage our other readers to write and share their views with us. Sharing ideas and best practice is one of the best ways to grow and hone our management and leadership skills.

Ed.

Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign Stakeholder Pledges 'Code for Quality Education'.

As a Departmental Official, I promise to:

- ensure all schools receive the necessary resources in time for teaching to commence;
- ensure all schools have their full staff allocation, and that any vacancies are filled without delay;
- improve my own knowledge and skills base to be more effective;
- always be available to assist schools, principals and teachers;
- respond to requests or concerns of education stakeholders;
- visit all schools within the district on a regular basis;
- monitor teacher and student attendance, and ensure no child is out of school;
- assist all schools to improve their performance, ensuring regular tests are conducted, and results are reported to parents.

As a teacher, in line with the SACE Code of Professional Ethics, I promise to:

- teach, to advance the education and the development of learners as individuals;

- respect the dignity and rights of all persons without prejudice;
- develop loyalty and respect for the profession;
- be punctual, enthusiastic, well prepared for lessons, and of sober mind and body;
- improve my own knowledge and skills base to be more effective;
- maintain good communication between teachers and students, among teachers themselves; and between teachers and parents;
- provide regular information to parents on their children's progress;
- eliminate unprofessional behaviour such as teacher-pupil relationships, drunkenness, drug use, assault, sexual harassment and others;
- make myself available to provide extra-mural

These are the QLTC stakeholder pledges for Departmental Officials and Teachers. Tell us what you think - do you support them and will they make a difference?



Book Release

*ONS PLEK a place for us
The story of the Ons Plek Projects
Girls Shelter in Cape Town*

Ons Plek is a project working with street children in Cape Town.

Our book, a unique and easy-to-read approach to the subject of children living on the street, focuses on the daily realities of providing a full range of structured, therapeutic and developmental opportunities for the children. The experiences detailed will be invaluable for any professional working with children.

It's a book written to answer the many queries we get from businessmen, politicians, ratepayer associations, caring professionals, church ministers, students, scholars or housewives.

This book is for anyone interested in people, because it is written in the form of stories. It is not necessary to be a professional to enjoy it.

Order Form attached
If not attached
phone 021 465 4829
email: onsplek@new.co.za
www.onsplek.org.za

ORDER FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Code: _____

Tel. No. _____ Cell: _____

Quantity of books: _____ Amount enclosed: R _____

PRICE (Please tick appropriate box)

R114 incl VAT plus R30 ordinary mail

R114 incl VAT plus R50 speed mail

* Outside South Africa R100 plus R150 airmail

BANKING DETAILS

ONS PLEK PROJECTS

FNB Adderley Street Cape Town

Branch Code: 201409

Account No: 620-529-16908

Swift Code: FIRNZAJJ 461

Reference: Your surname plus initials

CONTACT DETAILS

P O Box 3506 Cape Town 8000

Tel: 021 465-4829

Fax: 021 461-0530

Please fax/post your Order Form plus bank deposit slip/electronic transfer printout

What is to become of the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit?

The minister has been given the final report containing the recommendations from the Ministerial Committee on the NEEDU. The question is what to do with it given the opposition to the proposed unit by unions.

In a media statement issued on 27 January, the Minister of Education announced that she had received the final report of the Ministerial Committee on a National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (Needu). The committee was chaired by Dr Jonathan Jansen and was charged with the task of developing mechanisms “through which the independent evaluation and development of schools (including teachers) can be undertaken”¹.

The DoE media statement on 12 September 2008 announced the appointment of Dr Jansen and provided the following additional information about the aims and purposes of the unit and the terms and reference of the committee. It is worth noting that the establishment of the committee was approved by Cabinet earlier in the year.

- The unit was to be established for “purposes of monitoring, evaluation and support” and was expected to serve as an ‘arms length’ authority external to the DoE but accountable to the Minister of Education.
- Committee members were Dr R Cassius Lubisi, Superintendent-General of the KwaZulu-Natal Education Department; Dr Jonathan Jansen, National Research Foundation; Ms Sue Müller, Senior Executive Officer at NAPTOA; Dr Peliwe Lolwana, formerly CEO of Umalusi; Ms Amanda Sanger, Education Department Manager at the District Six Museum; Ms Francine de Clercq, Wits School of Education; Professor Linda Darling-Hammond, Professor of Education, Stanford University; Dr Peter Matthews, Visiting Professor at the Institute of Education, University of London.
- The terms of reference of the committee were to:
 - Review all existing policies, mechanisms, structures, processes and tools within the South African Education system that evaluate and develop schools and teachers.
 - Review the international literature on similar school evaluation and development units in other countries.
 - Make recommendations on the structure, composition, location, functions, governance, name, cost and financing of a unit external to the Department of Education but accountable to the

Minister, which will have the overall task of school evaluation and development.

- Advise on the future relationship between the proposed unit and the current policies and mechanisms aimed at improvement of quality of learning and teaching and school (including teacher and learner) evaluation and development.

Late last year the committee made presentations of its preliminary findings to interested stakeholders in a series of meetings in different parts of the country. **SM&L** attended one of these meetings and was fascinated by the nature of the debate and the diversity of perspectives presented. The preliminary findings listed on a document dated 21 November 2008 are provided in a box on the next page.

Key Recommendations

The key recommendations of the committee, as given in the DoE’s media statement of 27 January 2009, are listed below:

- That appropriate legislation be prepared to establish a National Education Evaluation and Development Unit
- That the unit function as an independent statutory body
- That the unit’s scope include the entire schooling system, including independent schools, as well as the functionality of the district and provincial offices
- That the unit must provide the Minister of Education with authoritative, analytical and accurate accounts on the status of learning and teaching
- That the unit monitors teaching and learning outcomes, as well as the support provided to schools

The statement goes on to say that Minister Pandor will “consider the recommendations of the final report of the Committee, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, and will make an announcement in this regard in the near future”.

Continued on page 7

Emerging Preliminary Findings

November 2008

1 that there is broad recognition of the crisis in education and the limitations of existing evaluation instruments to, in themselves, remedy the situation.

2 that there is widespread consensus on the need for stronger accountability measures alongside developmental support to be introduced into the system.

3 that there is reluctance in some quarters to change existing initiatives not only because of disruption but also because recent measures (such as IQMS) have not yet had time to situation themselves in educational practice.

4 that there is considerable variation in the capacity of provinces and schools for the interpretation and implementation of existing evaluation and development measures.

5 that there is an unspoken complicity between school and district that compromises the monitoring of IQMS educator performance.

6 that the failure to separate curriculum advisory roles from curriculum monitoring roles limits the credibility of both.

7 that both authority and expertise at all levels (teacher, HOD, principal, school, district, province, national) remain important obstacles to effective implementation of monitoring and evaluation.

8 that deeper and more fundamental problems (e.g. curriculum organization, phase outcomes, school dysfunctionality) undermine sophisticated efforts to monitor and evaluate school and teacher performance.

9 that in practice the evaluation instruments do not monitor teacher and learning; they monitor policy implementation.

10 that the issue of complexity in existing evaluation instruments is still not resolved inside the crowded ecology of evaluation, appraisal and development policies, plans and processes.

11 that the system for evaluating teachers and schools is still considerably immature, with the incapacity for self-scrutiny among professionals.

12 that the existing system for evaluation and appraisal faces a growing credibility crisis because of the functional breakdown between school/teacher assessment and developmental follow-through actions to effectively address problems identified.

13 that the co-mingling of developmentally focused evaluation and remuneration-focused appraisal compromises the validity of measures of school or teacher performance.

14 that the absence of a comprehensive account of system performance compromises governmental capacity for effective intervention in the education system.

15 that there are no proven, effective measures at a system-wide level to secure accountability and to ensure that the range of developmental initiatives deliver gains at scale.

Continued from page 6

Interesting evidence of the government's support for the establishment of the unit was provided by Minister of Finance, Trevor Manuel, in his Budget speech. He made specific mention of the funds set aside in the budget for the establishment and funding of the unit. He also had some interesting things to say about the state of our public schooling system – things that will doubtless put him on a collision course with the teacher unions, particularly SADTU, an alliance partner in his government. Although his comments were not part of the text of his Budget speech, they were reported in the press and were therefore clearly off-the-cuff remarks.

In the report, "Manuel draws his line in the sand with legacy speech", published in the *Business Report*² of 15 February, Gavin Lewis writes: "He denounced the failure of the sector education and training authorities to address skills shortages, and announced the establishment of agencies to monitor the quality of service in public health and education. ('Teachers in class, on time, teaching.') This is a decade overdue, but welcome nonetheless, and a blunt warning to some core Cosatu affiliates."

Given the very significant funding provision for education in the national budget and the poor return on this investment that the education system provides in terms of the quality of its output, there is a clearly a need for an independent agency to monitor the performance of schools, districts and provincial education departments. Performance needs to be measured in terms of two key outcomes, one focused on quantity and the other on quality. The quantity outcome needs to measure the extent to which the system is able to retain all pupils who enter the system in Gr. R and Gr. 1 until at least the first formal exit point at Gr. 9 - and preferably to the end of Gr. 12. The quality outcome needs to provide a measure of the competence of pupils when they exit the system: the value of knowledge, skills and attitudes they have garnered as they have passed through the system and the extent to which they have been provided with the wherewithal to become self-sufficient and contributing citizens.

Continued on page 8

Continued from page 7

At present it appears that we are doing reasonably well in terms of the first quantum and poorly in terms of the second. Most evidence suggests that our failure in terms of the quality of outcome is a result of deficiencies in the teaching and learning process. Put in simple terms, we have too few well-managed schools and too few competent teachers. This is something most authorities will agree on and if all the unit does is to tell us what we already know – and its mandate suggests that this its prime function - it will serve very little purpose, other than perhaps to provide more specific data about which districts, which schools and which teachers are not performing. This is information that should already be feeding into the system from the IQMS and WSE processes. However, there is evidence that this process has become contaminated as teachers and principals collude to ensure that underperforming colleagues are not penalised for their incompetence or unprofessional conduct. Clearly the proposed model, whatever its shape or form, will either have to integrate with current systems of monitoring and evaluation or replace them, preferably with something better and less cumbersome. Any system that penalises underperforming teachers and principals, whether by limiting salary progression or promotion prospects, will be fiercely contested by the teacher unions; yet this is what is needed.

One other concern relates to the monitoring of support provided to schools. At present and for most schools, the level of monitoring and support is clearly inadequate – how else can you explain the fact that 51% of schools that entered candidates in the 2008 NSC examinations had pass rates of less than 60% or that less than 40% of Gr. 3 and Gr. 6 pupils in primary schools perform at the level in literacy and numeracy expected of them for their grade? In the end it is this that needs to be fixed – everyone knows the problem is there and more monitoring will not fix it. All it can do is provide more detail and specifics about what we already know.

What really needs fixing is the extent and quality of support that is provided to schools and teachers – support in terms of intensive and expert in-service training and support in terms of the provision of a sufficient supply of well-trained and qualified teachers to replace those who exit the system either through the normal natural attrition processes or through dismissal because they were incompetent or unwilling to do the required job as competent professionals. ■

Finance

Education in the 2009 Budget

Extracts from Finance Minister Trevor Manuel's 2009 Budget presentation to Parliament.

The following extracts from Finance Minister Trevor Manuel's presentation of the 2009 Budget to Parliament have been selected because they have relevance for education.

Education remains our single largest investment

“Government's contribution to public education remains our single largest investment, because we know that it is the key to reducing poverty and accelerating long-term economic growth. Education spending has grown by 14 per cent a year for the past three years and accounts for R140.4 billion in the spending plans of provinces and national government for 2008/09.”

“Libraries are central to community development”

“We received a tip from Mr Xolani Notshe of Port Elizabeth thanking us for allocating money to libraries. He says, ‘libraries are central in community development. Libraries will assist your successor to collect more taxes because we would be an educated and skilled nation’. I agree entirely.”

Key priorities

“Key priorities in education include extending the no-fee schools policy to 60 per cent of schools, from 40 per cent at present, expanding the school nutrition programme, reducing average class sizes in schools serving lower income communities, increasing expenditure on school buildings, strengthening teacher training programmes and recapitalising technical high schools over the next three years. An additional R700 million is allocated for higher education subsidies and to accommodate the anticipated growth in student enrolment from 783 900 last year to 836 800 in 2011. The National Student Financial Aid Scheme receives an additional R330 million. Funding is provided for a new National Education Evaluation Unit.”

New salary dispensation for teachers linked to school and teacher performance

“Many South Africans will agree, I am sure, with Mr. Paul King who writes, ‘Regarding the salaries of teachers, I personally feel that we do not reward them enough for what they do and what we expect from them in terms of the daily care and education of our children.’ Madam Speaker, a new salary dispensation for teachers was introduced last year, linked to school

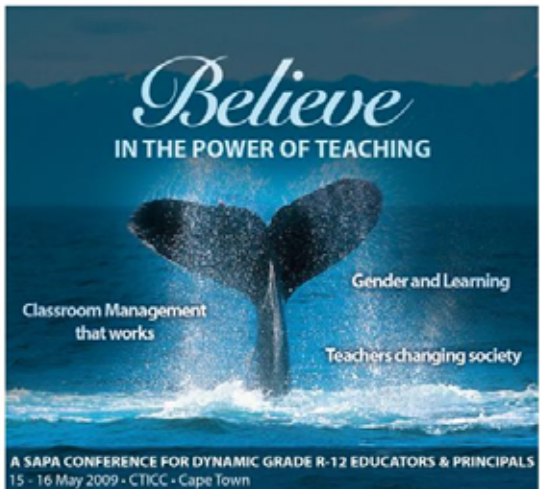


and teacher performance, hence the urgency of establishing this new Evaluation Unit.”

R4 billion is added to the school nutrition programme

“The largest adjustments to spending plans go to poverty reduction: R25 billion is added to the budgets of provinces, mainly for education and health care, and R13 billion for social assistance grants and their administration. R4 billion is added to the school nutrition programme and R2.5 billion goes to municipalities for basic services.”

Children are being properly educated

“Madam Speaker, the quantum of the rands and cents allocated to these programmes is not what provides relief. No, we can only be satisfied when we know that the quality of life of the poor is improving, that children are being properly educated, that learners have access to food in schools, that mothers visiting clinics get proper and dignified treatment, that the criminal justice system is putting those who rob and thief behind bars.” ■


SOUTH AFRICAN PINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION
The 2009 Teachers' Conference offers all teachers and principals an opportunity to rekindle their love for children, teaching and learning. Get inspired, invigorated and motivated by dynamic speakers. Engage with colleagues and enjoy a Conference for Teachers.


BELIEVE in the power of Teaching!
Cape Town International Convention Centre
15th and 16th May 2009
www.sapaonline.co.za
Info: 021 797 8010
Fax: 021 762 2697


CTICC 15-16 May 2009

Conference Keynote Speakers

Prof Jesús Amaya from Monterrey University, Mexico—Gender-based Teaching and Learning
Janine Shamos from South Africa—Teens, Teachers and Suicide
Maryann Harman 'Mar' from Tampa, Florida, USA— Music in All Learning Areas







Conference Fee Per Delegate

Early Bird Registration by 21 April 2009
SAPA Schools R1100
Non-SAPA Schools R1300

Snooze and Lose Registration by 8 May 2009
SAPA Schools R1300
Non-SAPA Schools R1700

Late Registration
SAPA Schools R1800
Non-SAPA Schools R2200

NSC Results

“Can Higher Education Trust the NSC Results?”

In a presentation with the above title, Prof. John Volmink, the Chairman of UMALUSI, provided some interesting insights into how UMALUSI views the 2008 NSC results

In an interesting presentation hosted by Abbott's College (Century City) on 19 February, Prof. John Volmink, the Chairman of UMALUSI, addressed the question, “Can Higher Education Trust the NSC Results?” The presentation was attended by representatives of higher education as well as principals of a number of public and independent high schools.

The presentation provided some interesting insights into how UMALUSI views the 2008 NSC results and also provided useful data, not usually available to schools. Those who attended were therefore able to get a better understanding about the processes involved in the moderating and standardising processes and the extent to which the results had or had not been manipulated. Prof. Volmink never attempted to address the question posed by the title of the presentation but rather left it to his audience to draw their own conclusions. What he did emphasise, however, is it will be possible to provide a definitive answer to the question only in a few years' time, when higher education and employers have had a chance to assess and evaluate the performance of those who passed – if indeed such an answer is possible.

The quality of the results

Like many other ‘expert’ commentators, Prof. Volmink expressed concern at the extent to which the general public use the matric results published in the media, particularly the pass rate, as their measure of the quality of our public education system. He also notes, as have other commentators, that this is partially a result of the decision of former Minister of Education Kader Asmal to use a 100% pass rate as a measure of success for schools as part of his drive to improve education. The result, as we mentioned in the previous issue of *SM&L*, was a steady increase in matric pass rates and of schools achieving a 100% pass rate during this period, coupled with a similar decline in the number of pupils writing matric. These changes are clearly illustrated in the graphs provided on the facing page and are a clear demonstration of how short-term thinking can produce short-term success but can lead to unintended negative consequences in the longer term.

Prof. Volmink cautioned that the following needed to be considered before making comparisons between the NSC results with SC results of previous years:

- The NSC is different from previous SC examinations in both its structure and its grading

- For SC examinations, aggregate score was a critical element of the grading process and in determining a pass or a fail but it plays no part in determining NSC grades or whether a candidate passes or fails.
- To pass the NSC, a candidate needs 40% in at least three subjects and 30% in three others.
- Unlike in previous years, there were no ‘repeaters’ (candidates who had failed the SC examination and who returned to school to re-write the examinations) in 2008
- “Condoned” passes are no longer part of the system.

He illustrated the relevance of some of these differences with some enlightening statistics:

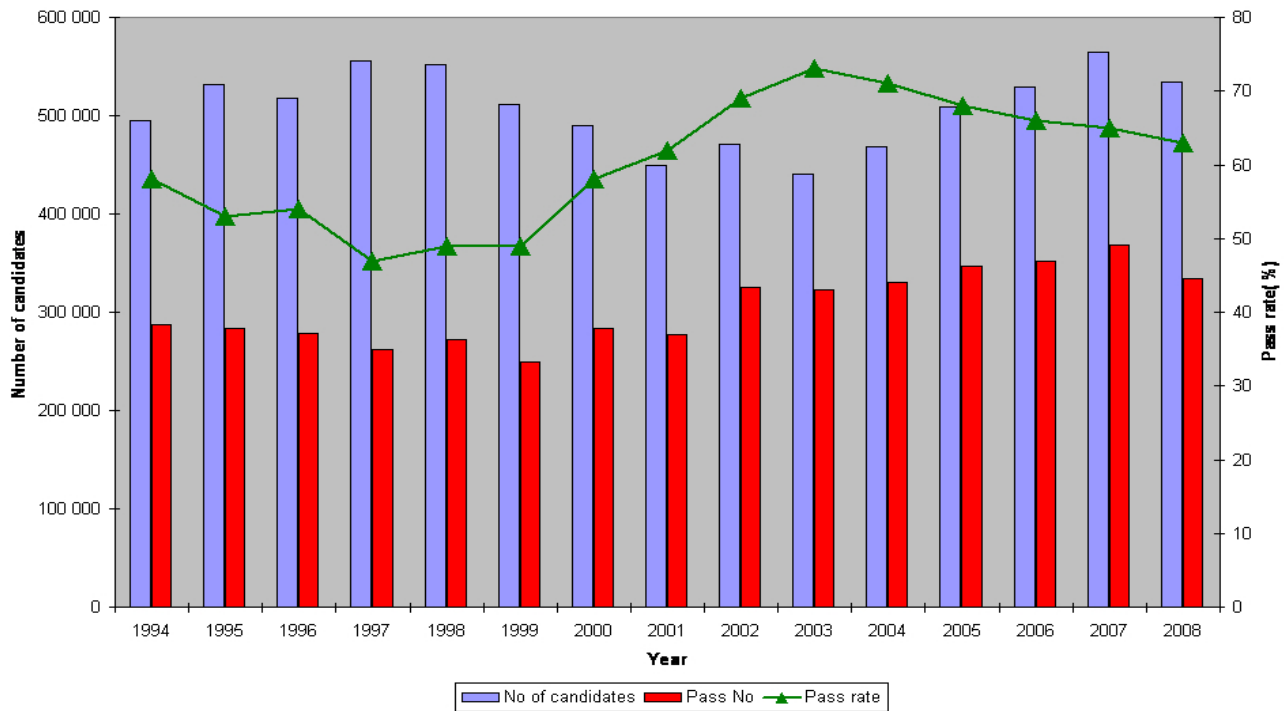
- nearly 140 000 of the NSC candidates did not pass because they narrowly missed the pass mark in one or two subjects (some of these marks may well have been condoned in the past)
- if half of the candidates who write NSC supplementary examinations this year pass, the overall pass rate will increase to approximately 70%.

Criteria for comparison

Prof. Volmink suggested that the following criteria could be used to make appropriate comparisons of the SC and NSC results:

- the number of candidates passing
- the quality of the results
- the trustworthiness of the standardisation process
- the reliability of the predictive quality of the examinations for performance at higher education level
- the standard of the curriculum

He used a graph similar to the second graph on the adjacent page to illustrate the changes in the number of candidates passing and the number achieving University Endorsement or its equivalent in the case of the NSC. What is interesting is the erratic nature of the change of endorsement rates over most of the period. More



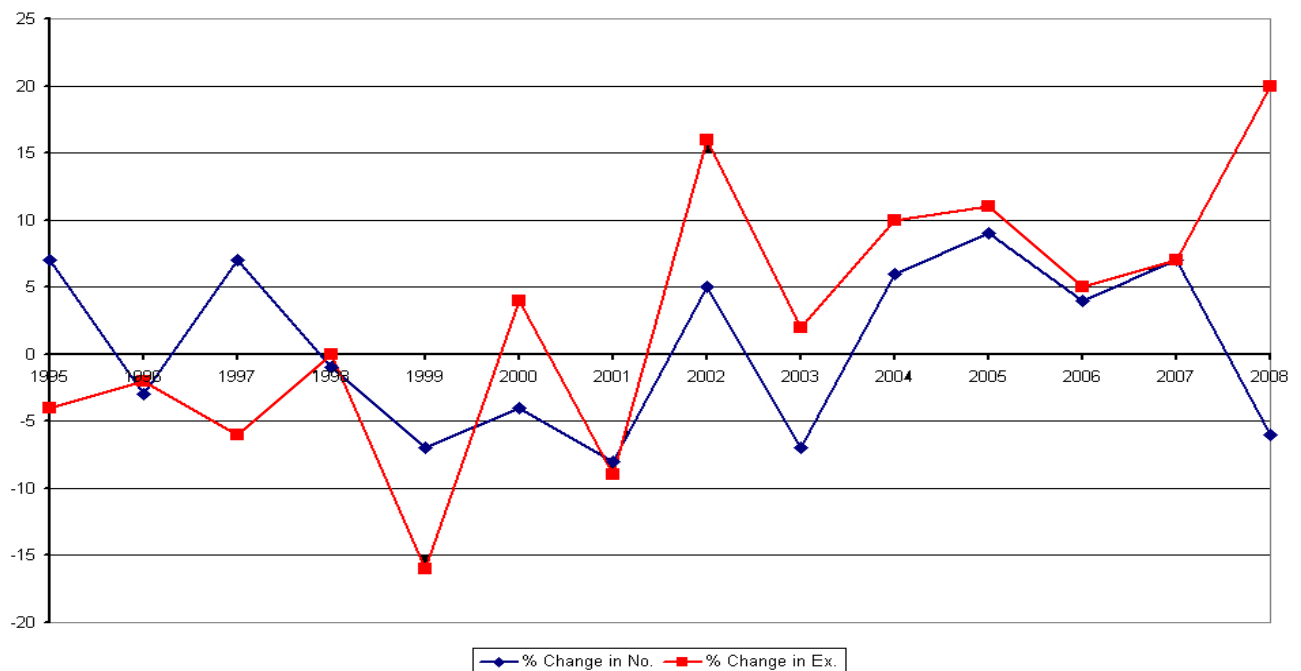
What the graphs illustrate

Top Graph

The top graph shows three important items of information: the number of candidates who wrote the examination each year, the number of candidates who passed the examination each year, and the percentage of candidates who passed (illustrated by the green line). What is noticeable is that in the years 1994 to 1998 there is an increase in the number of candidates who wrote but a decline in the percentage of candidates who passed. Between 1999 and 2003 the number of candidates writing declines while the percentage of candidates who pass increases. From 2004 to 2008 we revert to the first pattern with the number of candidates writing increasing and the percentage who pass decreasing. These patterns appear to be the unintended consequences of changing policy directives by the incumbent Ministers of Education for the periods in question.

Bottom graph

The bottom graph tracks the changes in the pass rate and University Endorsement rates (or its equivalent in 2008) for the period 1995 to 2008. The most noteworthy thing about this graph is the extent to which, in 2008, the % change in the endorsement rate (meeting the requirement for admission to a bachelors degree programme) is at odds with the % change in the pass rate. This relationship is also out of sync with the patterns of previous years.



startling, however, is the dramatic increase in the number of candidates who achieved the equivalent of a University Endorsement in the 2008 NSC examination. This clearly must be a concern to HE institutions and one must expect them to vet applicants for admission more closely as a consequence of this.

The trustworthiness of the standardisation of results

Since 1918, responsibility for the matriculation results has rested with 3 authorities: the Joint Matriculation Board (JMB from 1918 – 1992), the South African Certification Council (SAFCERT from 1993 – 2001) and UMALUSI from 2002 to the present. The one constant according to Prof. Volmink, has been the standardisation process used for the examinations. The use of this process is crucial in order to obtain equivalence of the standards of the results across years, subjects and examinations, and to provide a relatively constant product to the HE sector.

Of the 54 examination subjects set, the raw marks were accepted for 30 subjects, 16 subjects were moderated upwards and 7 moderated downwards. These changes were made within the 'normal' adjustment limits which guide the process. In the case of Physical Science, the upward adjustment was 'slightly larger' than these norms.

The standardisation process was informed by the following:

- in practical subjects raw marks were used
- historical averages using 5-year national and/or provincial marks, as well as combining HG and SG averages where applicable
- 'Hybrid norms' were created for new subjects based on pupil performance in similar subjects across provinces
- the findings of an UMALUSI year-long research project into the comparative evaluation of the old and new curricula and examinations of selected subjects. These included evidence that in most cases the NSC curriculum presents a greater cognitive challenge than the curriculum it replaced and that it presented a "modern, updated and more demanding version of previous subjects".

The predictive quality of the NSC results

Prof. Volmink noted that there has been a long-standing debate on whether school-leaving marks are good predictors of academic achievement in higher education. In the previous system, As and Bs were considered to be good predictors of success in HE while Cs, Ds and Es were much less reliable predictors of success. The predictive value of the results was also more reliable for white South Africans than for black South Africans. Prof. Volmink cautioned that at this early stage in the life of

the NSC it is simply not possible to make any meaningful comment about its predictive value.

Things that HE can take from the 2008 results

There are, however, some things that HE can take from the 2008 NSC results:

- the examinations were possibly more difficult for those candidates at the bottom than those at the top. i.e. it was difficult to pass but easy to do well
- additional information will be needed to discriminate between top-end candidates because the 2008 examination papers did not make sufficient provision for this
- a candidate with a "B" pass classification (access to a Bachelor's degree) was the equivalent of a candidate who obtained an endorsement pass in 2007
- NSC candidates bring "additional values, skills and attitudes" from those who were taught using the old SC curriculum.

The case of Mathematics

Mathematics results are consistently singled out by all and sundry for special scrutiny, mostly because Mathematics is seen as a gateway subject to higher education and to the 'best' jobs. In the past, 30% - 40% of secondary schools did not offer any Mathematics beyond Grade 9. In 2008, all pupils in all secondary

>>

News

Increase in enrolments of student teachers

An article (Wannabe teachers fill universities) by Prega Govender published in the Sunday Times of 1 March provides some hope that the decline in the number of students at universities applying to teach is a thing of the past. According to the report the six universities contacted (Universities of Pretoria, KwaZulu-Natal, Witwatersrand, Stellenbosch, Johannesburg and the Free State) all reported that the numbers of students enrolling for teaching degrees were up on previous years. Wits apparently turned down 532 first-year students who had applied for the BEd degree because of space constraints. Part of the reason for the increase in student numbers has been attributed to the DoE "aggressive teacher recruitment campaign" and its Funza Lushaka bursary scheme. All this is good news for our education system. It needs to continue into the future if we are going to produce anywhere near the number of teachers that this country needs.



schools studied Mathematics of some form. Of the 590 000 pupils who were candidates in either Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy in the 2008 NSC examinations, 63 038 passed Mathematics at the 50% mark or higher, compared to the 25 000 who passed Mathematics HG in 2007. In addition, there were 207 230 who passed Mathematical Literacy and a total of 16 557 who passed it at a level of 80% or above. The table shows how these numbers have changed over the past 13 years.

A detailed analysis was carried out to compare the cognitive demand of past Mathematics HG and SG papers with that of the 2008 NSC final papers. The cognitive demand of the examination papers and what was suggested in the Subject Assessment Guidelines was also compared. The evidence from this exercise highlights some of the concerns that have been expressed by

commentators about the standard of the papers. Based on this evidence, Prof. Volmink suggests that:

- the cognitive challenges of the 2008 papers were closer to the old SG level than to HG level
- there was a mismatch between suggested cognitive demands as provided for in the Subject Assessment Guidelines and the cognitive challenges of the exemplars and the final papers
- only about 46% of pupils met the minimum requirements for a pass in Mathematics

It is worth comparing these comments with the report of the expert panel which the Minister charged with the task of evaluating the standard of the NSC Mathematics papers. A copy of the part of their report that was released to the media is provided elsewhere on this page. ■

NSC Maths papers up to standard

In a media statement released on 9 February 2009, the DoE reported that the panel of maths experts called on by the Minister of Education to investigate the standard of the maths papers in the 2008 NSC examinations had found that the papers were up to standard.

The Minister had asked the panel to investigate the standard of the papers after a number of commentators, including a body calling itself “the association of concerned maths educators”, had expressed concern about the standard of the papers and the increase in the number of candidates taking maths in the NSC examinations. We commented on this in the most recent edition of *SM&L*.

According to the report, the panel found that “learners who scored 50% and more in 2008 would have passed Mathematics Higher Grade with a score of 40% or more in the past”. Arnout Brombacher, chair of the panel, is quoted as saying, “Matriculants who passed maths with 50% or more can confidently be compared to those who passed Maths on the Higher Grade in previous years”.

The panel found, however, that there was a lack of differentiation at the A and B symbol levels in the exam papers. A and B symbols are considered to be good predictors of success in engineering, architecture, and business science.

Panel members

Arnout Brombacher, Alison Kitto, Khangelani Mdakane, Lwazi Moshequane, Belinda Huntley, Gugu Moche and Jenny Campbell.

Insight The Global Financial Crisis

Understanding the consequences of the global financial crisis – Trevor Manuel’s explanation when presenting the 2009 budget

The consequences [of a global financial crisis] are felt everywhere. If the balance sheet of a bank shrinks, its capacity to lend is eroded. If its lending is curtailed, businesses and households have to reduce their spending. If demand falls in Birmingham, factories close in Beijing.

If production lines in China slow, demand for commodities from Africa dries up. The vegetable shop next to the mine closes, and the drivers of the delivery vehicles are asked to work short time, on half pay, and if the driver cannot pay his mortgage, the bank forecloses on his bond, and the bank writes down its balance sheet again...

When a global motor company cuts back on making cars, it cancels its orders for catalytic converters.

Madam Speaker, this firm making catalytic converters is not in Detroit or in Shanghai. It is here in the Eastern Cape. The mine producing the platinum that goes into that converter is near Rustenburg. The worker in the factory in Uitenhage and the mineworker in Rustenburg are now without work. And the woman who runs the little stall selling vegetables outside the mine is making less money each passing week.

And their families, all of them, face a future made more precarious by the vagaries of global finance.

More teachers, better teaching

This is the second of a two-part series by Managing Editor Alan Clarke in which he argues that the best and most effective remedy for our educational ills lies in a massive increase in the recruitment of teacher and in more and improved training of new and serving teachers

Part 2: Better teachers

The first part of this two-part series argued that it was important for this country to produce more teachers than may be required to meet the basic needs of the schooling system. In this second part, I would like stress that it is not just more teachers that are needed but we also better teachers.

2

Better Initial and In-service training of teachers

Although the need for better teachers is so obvious it may appear to be trite, it is nevertheless true and supported by a significant body of research identifying teaching quality as the most significant predictor of school success. One is also fully aware, in making this comment, that there are many, many outstanding teachers in this country and that these teachers are not found only in our prestigious middle-class public schools in the so-called leafy suburbs of our larger cities. There are, however, not nearly enough outstanding teachers and our schooling system is largely in its present dire straits because of this.

Improving teaching quality needs to be tackled at two levels: firstly, steps must be taken to ensure that initially teacher training provides prospective teachers with the knowledge and skills they need to do their job properly. Secondly, once teachers are in service, there needs to be in-school monitoring of beginner teachers and regular on-going professional development for all teachers throughout their careers in their subject discipline and in its pedagogy.

It is interesting to compare the extent to which this country's higher education institutions are accredited, ranked and funded with what happens in our teacher training institutions. For business schools and MBA programmes, there are further challenges as they compete for the prestige that comes from national and international rankings. Surely it is possible to apply the same kind of rules to our teacher training institutions? Extra funding and great publicity provided for those that are identified as being the foremost providers of quality teachers would certainly help promote the status of teaching in the county. Teachers certainly play as important a part in securing the long-term prosperity of the country as do the products of business schools.

There is also a need for teacher training institutions to work more closely with successfully-performing schools in preparing students for the rigours of the classroom. This is particularly important for those students whose professional qualification is a one-year Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE), as in the current system they spend far less time in the practice of teaching than do their peers enrolled in 3 or 4-year undergraduate courses. The PGCE students could be provided with a better grounding in the basics of good classroom practice by seconding them to one or more schools during the course of the year, using a learnership-type model. This would allow them to attend subject/ learning area and phase meetings, to observe the lessons of skilled and experienced teachers, to gain practical classroom experience under the watchful eye of subject heads and to gain a good understanding of the administrative and assessment tasks which form part of the daily work of a teacher. The theoretical component of the course could be provided by the training institutions in the afternoons and early evenings and/or during the school holidays. A newly-qualified teacher who enters the system having received training by means of this kind of a model would be far better equipped to perform his or her tasks than in the present system. A similar learnership model is used with success by some schools who fund students who then study through UNISA by distance learning but spend the school day observing lessons, helping with administrative tasks and assisting with school sport and other co-curricular activities.

The other area where more innovative approaches need to be adopted is in the provision of in-service training for practising teachers. This has been a contested area over the past few years, particularly in relation to courses offered by the DoE and PEDs as part of the roll-out of Curriculum 2005 and the Revised National Curriculum Statement. The DoE's decision to use the so-called "cascade" model to deliver their training worked a bit like the children's game 'Broken Telephone'- a game which involves a circle of children who take it in turns to whisper a message from child to child. The entertainment comes in discovering just how much the message has changed when it finally reaches the child who initiated the message. As the department found to its cost, by the time its cascaded message reached the teachers in the classroom, it was often so garbled that teachers found it unintelligible. This

produced resistance, anger and frustration, some of which is still prevalent today and continues to haunt discussion on the curriculum, often denigrated as the "OBE curriculum".

Although, more recently, there have been improvements in the quality of the in-service training that has been offered by the PEDs, it is still, we believe, too often delivered by the wrong people.

Minister Pandor, in one of her press briefings following the release of the 2008 NSC results, was reported to have lamented the disappearance of subject associations for the education scene. AMESA (the Association for Mathematics Educators of South Africa) seems to be the only subject-based national association still to exist in the country; but there was a time when others flourished. What these associations did was to bring together subject teachers at workshops and conferences, to discuss and share tips and ideas on the teaching of their subject. The fact that these associations represented a significant number of subject specialists and teachers organised on the basis of their subject speciality gave them a degree of credibility and status. As a result, they were regularly invited to comment and provide feedback both formally and informally on proposed curriculum changes and on the nature, format and quality of assessment models and national examinations. The funding for these associations came mostly from education-linked business and the teachers themselves, although there was also some support from public institutions like the CSIR. There is no reason why this should not happen again.

One industry that is already involved in providing teacher in-service training of a kind, albeit as a way of marketing their books and other education-related materials, is the publishing industry. For these courses to be effective in terms of delivering the kind of training that is needed, there has to be co-operation between the service provider, the DoE or PEDs and SACE, the statutory body for professional educators, which has overall responsibility for the implementation and management of programmes for the Continual Professional Training and Development (CPTD) of teachers. The DoE's 2006 policy document, *The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa*, which had as its subheading, "More Teachers; Better Teachers", emphasises the importance of CPTD and the need for a system of SACE-endorsed professional development (PD) activities. In terms of the document, teachers participating in these activities can earn PD points. PD activities will be classified into four types:

- School driven programmes
- Employer driven programmes
- Qualification driven programmes

- Other programmes offered by NGOs, teacher unions, community-based and faith-based organisations, or private companies.

Teachers who do not achieve a certain minimum number of points over two successive cycles of three years will be required to apply to SACE for re-registration, while those who earn the maximum allowable points in

Continued on page 16

The Sad State of SACE

In researching this article, the author visited the SACE website (<http://www.sace.org.za>) and was not impressed.

Under the heading "Professional Development", a number of professional development portfolio documents are available for download. Some of these documents carry dates indicating that they were developed in 2006, probably in response to the DoE's policy document, "The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa". The other documents consist of downloadable sample portfolio documents in .pdf and .doc format, which provide teachers with templates that they can use in preparing a professional development portfolio.

For post level 1 teachers, the four template documents are 66 pages in total, which makes one question whether the Professional Development portfolio is not going to become another bureaucratic burden for teachers and schools, in much the same way as assessment portfolios, IQMS and WSD documents have become. The problem is not the length of the documents themselves; it relates to the fact that the completion of these documents erodes teachers' time. There is ample evidence to show that the majority of teachers in this country are not spending sufficient time on lesson preparation and in active classroom teaching. It would be bizarrely counter-productive if policies implemented to improve the quality of teaching produced the opposite effect in practice!

The only item under the heading "News and Events" was a council resolution adopted on 27 July 2006.

The rest of the website is much the same. The latest annual report that is available on the website is for 2006 and the most recent newsletter is the newsletter of March 2006: not very impressive for a statutory body charged with the task of enhancing the status of the teaching profession and promoting the development of educators and their professional conduct - and with an annual budget (2008/2009) of R39,9m. Perhaps this explains why teaching in this country is in the state that it is in.

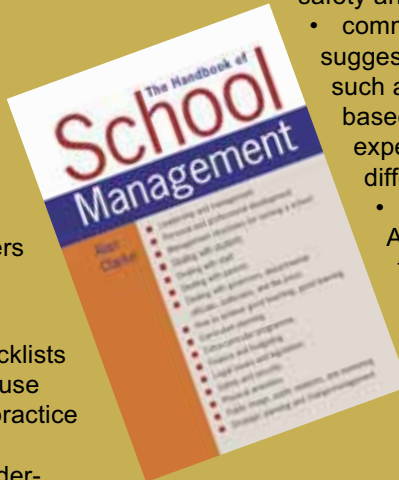
“If you are involved in the management of education in any way ... then this book is a vital tool that you will refer to again and again. Clarke gets an A+ for his book.” Brian Joss

The *essential reference*
for anyone involved in managing a
school ...

The Handbook of School Management
Clear, exceptionally practical, and
comprehensive, The Handbook of
School Management is the essential
reference book for anyone involved
in managing a school: principals,
deputies, senior management teams,
school governing bodies, education
department officials, and senior teachers
working towards promotion.

It contains

- 57 sample policies and useful checklists that schools can adapt for their own use
- examples from international best practice on areas such as financial controls, budgeting, ethics, turning around under-performing schools, dealing with disruptive students
- the results of international research into school management, staff professional development, financial management, discipline, criteria for professionalism, and change management, among others



- relevant South African case studies and examples on how to make a difference to poorly performing schools, textbook retention, and how to deal with issues of safety and security
 - commonsensical, practical advice and suggestions on how to handle problem areas, such as fee remissions and fee collection, based on the author's hard-earned personal experience as head of two schools in widely different socio-economic areas
 - concise explanations of the South African legislation affecting schools, and the differing roles of the principal and the governing body.
- A CD of the policies and other documents is also available.

Kate McCallum

Price: R275 (including VAT) ISBN 978-0-620-38168-0

Order through Macmillan South Africa (Pty) Ltd.
Telephone: (011) 731-3335 | Fax: (011) 731-3500
Address: Private Bag X19, Northlands, 2116
E-mail: customerservices@macmillan.co.za

Continued from page 15

a 3-year cycle will be given “symbolic but visible recognition”. Although a PD pointing system is not yet in place, it has the potential to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Unfortunately, if not properly managed, it could just as easily become a bureaucratic mess, a burden to good teachers and good schools and a welcome diversion for those who would rather attend courses and fill in forms than teach.

One example of a publisher that is working hard to support the system is Macmillan, which established a training division in 2007, called the Macmillan Teacher Campus. This offers a range of accredited and non-accredited short courses aimed at meeting the professional development needs of teachers, principals and departmental officials at district level. Courses of this kind are to be encouraged, particularly if use is made of facilitators who have classroom experience and have expertise in the field in which they are presenting. It is hoped that these kinds of initiatives will be encouraged and supported by the DoE and PEDs. There is also an urgent need for SACE to become more active in driving the process and putting in place the systems that are needed to ensure a simple and expeditious process of accrediting courses where standards are met. ■

Subscribe

To subscribe to *School Management & Leadership* send your contact details by post, fax or e-mail to:

The Managing Editor
School Management & Leadership
P.O. Box 2612
CLAREINCH
7740
or fax to: 086 689 5971
or e-mail to: subscribe@ednews.co.za
or telephone: 021 683 2899

Annual subscription is R330.00 for 10 copies published approximately monthly from February to November and subscribers will also be able to access the full features of our website at www.ednews.co.za.

Payment can be by cheque, made payable to Ednews, or by direct payment to ABSA, Claremont: branch code: 421 109, account number 919 043 4497.