



Energy of launch carries NECT through busy first months

Leadership and management of the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) have been hard at work to sustain the momentum generated by the organisation's launch on 16 July at the Presidential Guest House in Pretoria. The Trust has been formally registered with the Master of the Northern Gauteng High Court and the first full meeting of the Board tackled a substantial agenda. In addition, work to deliver the programme envisaged in the Education Collaboration Framework is well underway in eight Cohort 1 districts.

Further details of this progress appear below in the first NECT Briefing, which provides a simple easy-to-read update on the work underway. The Briefing will become a regular feature of the Trust's communication with role-players in the sector.

Governance and institutional set up

The trustees of the NECT had their inaugural board meeting on 16 August and Sizwe Nxasana was confirmed as the chairperson, while JET Education Services will continue to serve as the secretariat. Godwin Khosa was designated as convenor of the secretariat. The trustees resolved to:

- Meet regularly until the end of the year, with the executive committee gathering between meetings of the full board, when necessary, to process priority issues.
- Establish an extended secretariat, comprising the NECT secretariat and Department of Basic Education (DBE) staff, in order to ensure integration of the NECT's programmes and activities with policies and programmes of the DBE.
- Finalise the NECT staff structure and work towards filling the posts.

Profiling priority education districts

There has been substantial progress in the process of profiling priority education districts as a first step towards developing intervention plans. Profiling has been completed in seven of the eight districts in the first cohort of districts earmarked for intervention. The eventual aim is to profile all districts in which the NECT intends to work. Profiling is an invaluable tool that determines the challenges, successes and needs of districts and individual schools.

- The Vhembe and Uthungulu profiling reports were recently completed and profiling commenced in Pinetown in the course of September.
- The Vhembe report was presented to the Vhembe stakeholders' forum in Makhado on 11 and 12 August.
- The profiling report identified a shortage of desks in Vhembe and, as part of the short term intervention agreed to by the DBE and the NECT, the DBE delivered 8 425 desks to 42 Vhembe schools by 2 September.

Stakeholders steer change in Vhembe

Stakeholders in the Vhembe district have committed themselves to making the idea of a partnership for better education into a reality. The Vhembe stakeholders' forum comprises education officials from national, provincial, district and circuit level and representatives of a range of structures, including school governing bodies and organisations in the religious, business, trade union, student, youth and traditional sectors.

At a meeting in August, they responded to the profiling report on the education district by agreeing on interventions to create the conditions necessary for building a better education system. Their intention is to set up a representative steering committee to oversee implementation of the district programme.

Traditional leaders requested the NECT's assistance in developing a charter to clarify the roles and responsibilities of traditional leaders in relation to schools in their areas. In September, the NECT published a call for proposals to identify a service provider to provide dedicated support in the Vhembe area. A similar process of profiling, engagement and creation of local structures will be followed in other districts and all eight districts in the first NECT cohort should be ready to implement a programme of change from January 2014.

Mobilising and disbursing funding

The funding model seeks to mobilise funding for education quality improvement from the corporate, public, trade union and civil society sectors. Various commitments have been secured in the short period since the launch and these will be announced in the near future. Proposals for funding grants have also been received and are being processed by a technical assessment committee to determine whether they are aligned with the themes and programmes of the NECT and the DBE.

National Education Council set to meet

The date for the first meeting of the National Education Council (NEC) has been set for 15 November 2013. The meeting will be chaired by the Council's co-chairs, Enver Surty, Deputy Minister of Basic Education and Prof Ihron Rensburg, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg. Inputs have been invited from members of the NEC on topics to be discussed at the November meeting.

Additional consultations are planned with key stakeholders in the near future and information on these forums will be made available once finalised.

Patrons:

Cyril Ramaphosa, Deputy Chairperson of the National Planning Commission; Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, founder of Umlambo Foundation and former Deputy President of South Africa; Bobby Godsell, Chairman of Business Leadership South Africa; and James Motlatsi, former President of the National Union of Mineworkers.

Trustees:

Sizwe Nxasana, CEO of FirstRand (Chairperson); Mark Lamberti, executive committee member of Business Leadership South Africa; Futhi Mtoba, senior partner at Deloitte; Angie Motshekga, Minister of Basic Education; Basil Manuel, President of the National Professional Teachers' Association of South Africa; Nkosana Dolopi, Deputy Secretary-General of the South African Democratic Teachers Union; Brian Figaji, former Vice-Chancellor of Peninsula Technikon.

Contact details: