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PARTNERSHIP WITH UNIONS

Education trust to train teachers at weak schools

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The National Education Collaboration Trust (Nect) has teamed up with teacher unions to improve teaching at the basic education level, where quality is often lacking.

The partnership, started on Wednesday, will result in teacher trainers receiving help to improve subject knowledge.

The South African Democratic Teachers Union (Sadtu) was the first union to finalise its partnership with Nect.

The first phase of the partnership will be rolled out in Butterworth in the Eastern Cape and in Sekhukhune, in Limpopo, where matric results have been dismal in recent years.

Nect was formed in 2013 as part of efforts to facilitate collaboration among stakeholders to improve educational outcomes in line with the National Development Plan. Teacher training is a central tenet of Nect.

The collaboration with Sadtu will target 348 primary and secondary schools in Butterworth, and 437 primary and combined schools in Sekhukhune.

On Wednesday, Sadtu general secretary Mugwena Maluleke said the two districts were identified because of their weak matric results, which were a reflection of how a school was performing.

"I am confident we will see improvements because we have

seen that, wherever we have improved training, the [pupils'] results improve," he said.

The initiative will involve 700 teachers – 390 from Limpopo and the balance from the Eastern Cape. The total includes 160 primary school principals.

The project aims to advance the National Development Plan goals of getting 90% of pupils to master at least 50% of the curriculum by 2030 and of creating a better balance between unionism and professionalism, according to the Department of Basic Education.

"Through this initiative, it will be possible to increase the core of lead teachers so that teacher professionalisation becomes teacher-driven at local level, thereby reducing dependence on subject advisers, who are few in number," said Maluleke.

Sadtu will use its own criteria to identify lead teachers and principals. Once that process is finalised, Nect will step in to conduct first-level training and provide materials.

Nect CEO Godwin Khosa said the collaboration was a response to demand-driven interventions from teachers and education officials.

Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga said: "This programme will improve teachers' subject knowledge, as well as inculcate effective daily teaching routines critical for quality education."

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