



GAUTENG PROVINCE

EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

To: All Media

Att: News Editors

For immediate release

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Media Statement of the Twinning Launch of Reiger Park and Sunward Park

The Gauteng MEC for Education, Mr Panyaza Lesufi will on Friday 9 June, officially launch the twinning of Reiger Park Secongary and Sunward Park High School. The Twinning Programme is part of the Gauteng Department of Education's wider strategic framework and its "Re-organisation of Schools" strategy.

The objectives of the Twinning Programme are to improve learner outcomes and foster social cohesion in nurturing holistic learner development by creating an environment for cultural exchange through sharing expertise and resources across suburban and township schools. The programme also ensures that learners are exposed to peers from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, improve equality of access to high-quality education, and strengthen the quality of education delivered compared to global best practice.

The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) is proud of the outcomes witnessed from the first phase of the twinning programme. Gauteng Department of Education is grateful for the support received from the four pairs of schools, which opted for Section 17GB status during the pilot phase. As we mark the launch of the twinning programme, our greatest respect goes to the following schools:

- Bovet Primary and Lyndhurst Primary Schools in Johannesburg East District
- Alexandra Secondary and Sandown High Schools, Johannesburg East District
- Cultura Secondary and Zithobeni Secondary Schools in Gauteng North District, Bronkhortspruit
- Reiger Park Secondary and Sunward Park High School, in Ekurhuleni South District.

These pairs of schools have demonstrated that through twinning, the resources can be shared between schools, learners and educators can participate in shared teaching and learning activities, including social cohesion the teaching expertise in the subject content and achieving improved learner performance.

The Department has also developed an implementation plan to support schools during and after twinning to ensure achievement of potential benefits, such as:

- Cultural exchange as learners integrate;
- Improved cultural awareness;
- Sharing of resources and resultant efficiency gains, and
- Embedding Social responsibility

As we twin schools towards improved education for all our learners in Gauteng, some of the misconceptions that arise include that twinning schools would have one bank account and share funds, thereby disadvantaging one school. The department would like to dispel that notion and confirm that the programme is all about modernization and moving away from the traditional education system delivery.

Opportunities

The Department also re-iterates that there are no 'dropping of standards' as one school does not benefit at the expense of the other. This perception is misdirected as it overlooks the potential of one school over another as well as the benefits that the Twinning Programme will have for both schools. The Programme has been structured in a manner that the potentially selected schools, known as the flagship schools, are equally prioritized in relation to the allocation of resources.

An additional benefit which afforded the twinned schools, solely by virtue of their involvement in the Programme, is the enhancement of School Governance through the provision of a coach, which is appointed to the section 17 Governing Body. This ensures that the Governing Body operates optimally and with a high level of knowledge and skill. This service is provided to the schools involved, by the Department at no additional cost.

Moreover, the benefits that the twinned schools enjoy on a social and cultural level should not be overlooked. Twinning provides the learners from the schools, and the teachers and parents with, an opportunity to interact and engage with people of different backgrounds, which is essential to the broader integration into South African Society.

Governance of Twinned Schools

The Programme offers opportunities to School Governing Bodies to re-think the opportunities for change embedded in the Twinning programme, as the future is now to increase private partnership investment to the benefit of our schools.

The regulations have been published, which ensure that the administrative aspects relating to management of finances is retained by each school.

Composition of the single Governing Body for the twinned schools has equal representation for each school, irrespective of the number of learners, and both Principals sit on the Governing Body.

The schools therefore, have equal representation on the single Governing Body, known as the Section 17 Governing Body in line with the provisions of the South African Schools Act.

The day-to-day operations of twinned schools do not change. Each school remains on its own separate campus, and retains its own Principal, Senior Management Teams and administration staff. The SGB appointed educators remain in place, and the fees of the respective schools do not change.

The main change is that the single governing body for both schools will share governance and expertise and may explore ways of sharing resources to the benefit of both schools and learners. This latter benefit however lies within the discretion of the Section 17 Governing Body.

Role of the Section 17 Governing Body

The Section 17 Governing Bodies stipulates that processes that are embarked upon must be within the ambit of legislation. As such, section 17 of the South African Schools Act (SASA) is regarded as the appropriate section in order to achieve the level of integration that could give effect to the objectives sought by the GDE.

Our research showed that the management and governance of a school, through its School Governing Body, largely determine the policies, values and other matters critical to the overall philosophy of the school, and it is through this structure that the objectives of Twinning can be met.

The Department assures stakeholders and the flagship schools, that consultation will be thorough and conducted in good faith, and the Department has faith that this venture will be successful, which will change the face of education..

Moreover, it is important to re-iterate that the Twinning Programme has been carefully structured to benefit all of the flagship schools, and the Department has prioritized the provision of resources, assistance and support to these schools. Ultimately, the Programme provides a potential benefit, as opposed to a burden, for the schools, its learners, parents, and the education system as a whole.

The Twinning Programme is one of the key strategic objectives of achieving of the Gauteng Province's Transformation Modernisation and Re-industrialisation. Education delivery is at the core of fostering the desired change and economic empowerment of learners, learning in the ICT enabled teaching and learning classes.

For more information, contact the Gauteng Department of Education's Acting Head of Communication Oupa Bodibe on 011 355 1530 or 072 645 4569.

Issued by the Gauteng Provincial Government

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