

2026 National Teaching Awards Ceremony

MEC Abraham Vosloo

Old CRC Building, Kimberley

25 August 2026

Programme Director,
Members of the Executive Council,
Executive Mayor of Sol Plaatje, Cllr Martha Bartlett,
Representatives of DBE, SAPA and Teacher Unions,
Senior Government Officials,
Our District Directors and Officials,
Our Valued Sponsors,
Stakeholders and Partners in Education,
School Principals and Educators,
Our Provincial Finalists and Award Recipients,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good day to you all.

Days like today make me incredibly proud to be the MEC for Education. When we pause to reflect on the journey of our education system over the past few years, we can see that we have much to celebrate.

We have made progress not only in learner outcomes, but in strengthening our education system as a whole. Our learner population has grown from approximately 306 000 learners in 2020 to 316 000 learners in 2026. At the same time, our teacher population has increased from approximately 9 600 teachers in 2022 to 9 900 in 2026.

And perhaps one of the clearest indicators of our collective progress is our National Senior Certificate results. Our matric pass rate has improved from 66% in 2020 to an impressive 87,79% in 2025.

These figures are not merely statistics. Behind every percentage is a learner who was given another opportunity. Behind every successful matriculant is a teacher who refused to give up. Behind every improvement in our education system are thousands of educators who arrive at school every morning determined to make a difference.

So, when we celebrate these achievements, we celebrate you.

Ladies and Gentlemen, these achievements tell us something important: our education system is on an upward trajectory. We are expanding access to education while simultaneously working to improve the quality of education.

We are creating opportunities for more learners, strengthening our teaching workforce and building a system that is increasingly capable of delivering better outcomes for our children.

But progress does not happen by itself. It happens because people believe that change is possible. It happens because teachers stand in classrooms every day and say, "I will not give up on this child."

That is the power of a teacher and today, we are celebrating that power.

The National Teaching Awards are now in their 26th year of recognising excellence in teaching. Over the years, these awards have become an important platform through which we acknowledge educators and education leaders who go beyond the call of duty.

We have taken this NTA recognition even further by introducing nine Provincial Categories, aligned to our priority areas. These categories allow us to recognise excellence in different aspects of our education system and to shine a light on the

incredible work taking place in our schools.

And what has been particularly encouraging is the remarkable growth in participation. In 2024, we had 96 participants. Today, we are celebrating a process that has attracted more than 700 nominations.

It tells us that our educators are embracing a culture of excellence. It tells us that teachers are willing to put their work forward, to share their innovations and to inspire others. Most importantly, it tells us that excellence is alive and well in the Northern Cape education system.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

These awards are about celebrating excellence in every corner of our Province. Whether you teach in a large urban school or a small rural school; whether you teach Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase, Senior Phase or FET; whether you are a classroom teacher, a school leader or an education specialist — your contribution matters.

Today, we say publicly “Thank you”.

Thank you for your perseverance.

Thank you for your commitment.

Thank you for your dedication.

Thank you for the hours spent preparing lessons after school.

Thank you for supporting learners who need more than what the curriculum requires.

Thank you for encouraging the child who has lost confidence.

Thank you for believing in learners when they sometimes struggle to believe in

themselves.

And thank you for continuing to serve our children even when the circumstances are difficult.

Your work inspires us as government to do more to uplift the teaching profession and empower educators across the Province.

That is also why the prizes being awarded today are not intended simply as personal rewards. They are investments in your classrooms, your schools and, ultimately, your learners.

I encourage every winner: use these resources wisely.

Let your prize become an even greater instrument of learning and teaching. Let it improve your classroom. Let it inspire your learners. Let it contribute to academic success.

Because the greatest reward is not what we receive today.

The greatest reward is seeing a learner succeed because we refused to give up on them.

Acknowledging Our Sponsors

Ladies and Gentlemen,

An occasion such as this would not be possible without partners who believe in the value of education and are willing to invest in our teachers.

I would therefore like to invite to the stage and recognise our valued sponsors and partners:

IDT, Dean Zimu Consulting, Sanlam, SAICA, Vodacom, Zibuza, Old Mutual and

MTN.

Your support demonstrates what is possible when government and the private sector work together.

IDT has contributed R100 000 in cash vouchers towards Positions 4 and 5, as well as Wi-Fi routers for Positions 2 and 3.

Dean Zimu Consulting has generously provided 10 laptops for our Position 2 winners.

Sanlam has contributed R12 000 towards the MEC e-Learning Trailblazer Award Position 1 winner.

SAICA has contributed R10 000 towards the Accounting Position 1 winner.

Vodacom has provided 15 smartphones for the DBE winners and nine Wi-Fi routers for the Provincial National Teaching Awards category winners.

Through the Microsoft subsidiary, Dr C.L. Foundation — Zibuza, we have received Canva training for the 15 DBE winners as well as 15 spa treatment vouchers for National Category winners.

MTN has contributed five tablets for STEM subjects.

And Old Mutual has contributed five 43-inch Smart TVs for Excellence in Grade R Teaching, FET Mathematics, FET Physical Science, the Kader Asmal Lifetime Award and the National Best Teacher category.

To all our sponsors, we say thank you.

Thank you for believing in our educators.

Thank you for investing in education.

And thank you for helping us create better teaching and learning environments.

We value this partnership immensely, and we trust that it will continue to grow stronger in the years ahead.

To Our Teachers

You are the reason we are gathered here today.

No speech, no statistic and no award can fully capture the true value of what you do.

A teacher's influence reaches far beyond the four walls of a classroom.

You influence families.

You influence communities.

You influence the future workforce.

You influence the character of our society.

A learner may forget the lesson you taught on a particular day. But they will remember the teacher who believed in them. They will remember the teacher who told them, "You can do this."

That is your legacy.

And therefore, to every teacher in the Northern Cape: never underestimate the importance of your work.

Even when the results are not immediately visible, you are planting seeds. Some of those seeds will grow tomorrow.

Some will grow years from now. But they will grow.

To Our Provincial Winners

To our Provincial winners being recognised today, I say:

Congratulations. You represent the very best of what our education system has to offer. But remember: with recognition comes responsibility.

You are now ambassadors for the Northern Cape.

Go to the National Teaching Awards in Johannesburg on 1 October 2026 with confidence. Go, knowing that an entire Province is behind you.

Represent us with pride. Represent our teachers with dignity.

And most importantly, represent the spirit of excellence that brought you here today.

Our team will support you every step of the way as you prepare for the National Awards.

I want you to remember that you are not going to Johannesburg alone. You are carrying the hopes, hard work and excellence of thousands of Northern Cape educators with you.

As we celebrate today, let us also look towards tomorrow. The progress we have made is significant, but our work is not finished.

There are still learners who need additional support. There are still classrooms that need resources.

There are still teachers who need empowerment and professional development. There are still communities whose children are waiting for us to unlock their potential.

And there are still new heights that our education system must reach. But I am confident about our future because I know who is standing at the heart of it.

Our teachers.

Teachers who care.

Teachers who innovate.

Teachers who persevere.

Teachers who serve.

Teachers who believe.

The Northern Cape Department of Education will continue to support the National Teaching Awards and initiatives that recognise excellence, celebrate achievement and publicly say thank you to the men and women who dedicate their lives to educating our children.

To all our teachers: we see you, we value you and we appreciate you.

I thank you.