

First Limpopo Education DialogueSA hosted



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Deputy Minister of Education, Enver Surty and Chief Executive of NECT, Godwin Khosa at the first Limpopo Education DialogueSA on Monday.

The first Education DialogueSA outside Gau-teng was held in Limpopo on Monday when Deputy Minister of Basic Education, Enver Surty facilitated the event hosted by the Limpopo Department of Education (LDE). Education DialogueSA is a partnership between the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) that was launched in 2013 between business, labour and civil society to support the National Development Plan (NDP), with special focus on the Education Sector Plan (ESP). Present at the dialogue was MEC for Education, Thembisile Nwedamutswu and senior managers from LDE, the Chief Executive of NECT, Godwin Khosa, representatives from independent schools, private business partners, educators' union representatives and members of civil society involved with education.

Surty, who also serves as the Co-Chairperson of Education DialogueSA said the talks aim to bring the key stakeholders for effective education in the country together to share ideas on taking education to new levels of competence. He added that several key issues have been identified to address the current shortfalls within the education sector, from Early Childhood Development (ECD) to tertiary education.

Surty urged all stakeholders involved with education to attend further Education DialogueSA sessions that will be held throughout South Africa to come up with long-standing solutions to collectively address the current problems facing education in the country. "We have had frank and robust discussions with all nine MECs to date and are serious about moving forward to deliver quality education to all South Africans," he said.

One of the key issues on Monday's agenda was taking educator professionalism and school ethos a step further. Education DialogueSA is geared towards making schools and teachers more effective. Professionalism of teaching, supporting the capacity of the state to deliver, effective leadership, resourcing of schools, community and parent involvement, promoting community and parent involvement are six themes for action that have been identified at the inaugural meeting in Johannesburg.

Addressing delegates on Monday, NECT Chief Executive Godwin Khosa said parent involvement in their children's education is essential in modern society. He also highlighted the disparities in resources allocated to schools, especially those in the poorer areas. Khosa said the NECT already has a number of interventions in place at struggling schools in the Vhembe and Waterberg districts of Limpopo. The province has the highest number of schools in the country that are collaborating with the NECT. Four schools in the Vhembe district have been successfully renovated using unemployed youth trained in construction and the aim is to renovate a further 50 schools by the end of the year, according to Khosa.

The NECT programme in Limpopo focuses on dysfunctional schools in the province with a three-year turn around strategy being implemented at these schools. "The Fresh Start School programme is in place. Fresh Start aims to completely revamp 350 schools over a period of three years. Lead agencies have been contracted in priority provinces such as Limpopo, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, and have been implementing an inception phase, which will provide for a careful three-year implementation planning and initiate support activities in the Fresh Start Schools," Khosa explained.