

Psychosocial support on hand for pupils

BUYEKEZWA MAKWABE

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CHILDREN with psychosocial difficulties in the Mount Frere region are now getting help.

This is thanks to a partnership between the Department of Basic Education and the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) which aim to ensure that 90% of pupils pass mathematics, science and languages with at least 50% by 2030.

NECT, which is mandated by Chapter 9 of the National Development Plan, said school going children in the Mount Frere district faced difficulties which included child headed households, lack of support structures, while some also struggle with their identification documents and birth certificates, making it difficult for them to access government's social and foster-care grants.

Launching a school-based support team (SBST) at the Ntsizwa Junior Secondary School in Mount Ayliff recently, psychosocial specialist of the NECT, Sparta Zantsi, told teachers and parents that the establishment of the support team in the school is a reflection that the Nect is committed to changing the learning environment.

The organisation has now begun screening, identifying, assessing and supporting schoolchildren to enhance their learning abilities to ensure effective delivery of education especially in rural communities. Zantsi said that with SBSTs, established in more than 15 schools in the district, having yielded positive results, and the rest of the schools also in line for a support team, the district would have a proper database of pupils with psychosocial challenges who are in need of intervention.

“Our aim is to enhance support for pupils and promote their well being so that they may compete equally with their peers. The social conditions also affect the performance of the child and it is important that this is taken care of so that performance can improve,” Zantsi said.

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