



Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
EDUCATION

COMMUNICATION SERVICES AND CUSTOMER CARE

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Today we celebrate the graduation of 784 student teachers, who completed the Diploma in Grade R Teaching.

The Eastern Cape Department of Education in partnership with SANTS Private Higher Education Institution is directly addressing the quality of Early Childhood Development by ensuring that all in-service Grade R teachers are adequately qualified. Thus, effectively elevating the quality of teaching in Grade R classes, specifically in the vast rural parts of the Eastern Cape where the greatest need exists for quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes.

ECD has been recognised as critical for establishing the foundation of academic success, particularly for young children from disadvantage backgrounds associated with limited access to quality ECD programmes. The early years are crucial for the acquisition of concepts, skills and attitudes that lay the foundation for lifelong learning. These include the acquisition of language, perceptual-motor skills required for learning to read and write, basic numeracy concepts and skills, problem solving skills and keenness for learning.

Government has also begun to address the quality of teachers and Initial Teacher Education programmes by implementing the policy on The Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ) in 2011. This specific document explicitly stipulates that the minimum qualification for a qualified professional Grade R Teacher in South Africa is either a Diploma in Grade R Teaching or a Bachelor of Education in the Foundation Phase Teaching qualification.

The cohort of 1 070 students registered for the Grade R Teaching Diploma programme during the second semester of 2014 at 24 support venues across 20 districts of this province. These graduands comprises out of in-service practitioners and ECD district coordinators. The Eastern Cape Department of Education (EC DoE) provided bursaries for these students for the duration of their studies at SANTS Private Higher Education Institution.

The SANTS Diploma in Grade R Teaching programme has been approved and recognised by the Department of Higher Education and Training for employment in education, accredited by the Council on Higher Education, and is registered with the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA). Graduands will be qualified and recognised teachers who will be able to teach Grade R learners in formal schooling. Beyond the Diploma in Grade R Teaching,

Professor Jean Baxen, SANTS' Executive Academic Director, emphasize that teaching is not merely about knowing the content. Rather, it is about knowing how to take the content and reproduce it in a way that produces optimal learning outcomes for all children irrespective of race, class, gender, cultural heritage, and sexual orientation. Teachers have to balance living life to the fullest, while at the same time being role models



in schools, classes, and communities. Teachers also don't know everything and will continue to learn throughout their careers. Prof Baxen adds that South Africa needs resilient, flexible, adaptive, and passionate teachers who are prepared to navigate contextual realities to produce learning that offers children hope and possibility.

With this student cohort drawn from predominantly demographically marginalized communities in South Africa, the Eastern Cape Department of Education and SANTS addresses the skills, access, equity, and education quality and needs of the Eastern Cape.

Eastern Cape Education Superintendent General Mr. Themba Kojana looks forward to have these newly minted teachers join the ranks of the Department's fully qualified teachers. "The graduation of these ECD teachers is a new dawn for the province. This now lifts the level of our caregivers beyond being 'practitioners' to being fully qualified teachers with a fully recognized qualification

Should you have any additional questions please do not hesitate to get in contact.

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