

Focus on foundation phase education yielding results

Deputy Minister of Education Enver Surty says government's focus on education at the foundation phase is showing results.



Deputy Education Minister Enver Surty says government interventions will improve SA's education levels. Image: [Education](#)

"We are already seeing a steady improvement in performance with a positive output from those learners who've already been through the new Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements," said the Surty.

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement is a policy document, which will replace the current Subject and Learning Area Statements, Learning Programme Guidelines and Subject Assessment Guidelines for all the subjects from Grades R to 12.

Speaking at the UNESCO Post-General Conference in Pretoria, the Surty said the government had placed education high on the list of national priorities and had resolved to improve education from the formative years to matric.

He said the results of international studies such as the Trends in Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMSS) have corroborated the department's observations that sections of the education system are responding positively to the many interventions that have been made.

The latest TIMSS' results for 2011 showed that schools at the lower end of the performance spectrum, mainly schools in less fortunate areas, registered impressive improvements.

Improvements in science and maths

"In respect of our country, 2011 TIMSS pointed to improvements in mathematics and science competencies of Grade 9 learners when compared with Grade 9 learners tested in 2002.

"South Africa's improvement in mathematics by 67 TIMSS' points between 2002 and 2011, or 7 points per year on average, is among the steepest seen by any TIMSS participant. Only Ghana has seen a steeper improvement over this period," claimed Surty.

He said the improvements were comparable to that experienced by Brazil in the last decade, probably the fastest and most consistent improver in any international testing system in recent years.

However, as part of the UNESCO community, South Africa was concerned about those children of primary school age who were not in school.

"The plight of the many young people who leave school without an adequate level of literacy and numeracy for productive and active participation in their societies, the persistent gender gap and plight of people living with disabilities needs to be addressed urgently," he said.

He said South Africa had pledged its support to efforts such as Education for All and the Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) that are directed at addressing these gaps.

"We are convinced that co-ordinating the synergies between MDG 2, Education For All and the Global Education First Initiative will strengthen the movement for achieving quality education for all after 2015," he said.

The UNESCO General Conference takes place every two years and is attended by member states and associate members, together with observers for non-member-states, intergovernmental organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

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