

DBE claims WEF report not accurate

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) says the World Economic Forum (WEF) global report on Information Technology is not credible or accurate, which is unfortunate.

The Global Information Technology Report 2014

Rewards and Risks of Big Data



"This report falsely insinuates that South Africa's mathematics and science education is ranked as the worst in the world. The report is not a credible or accurate reflection of the state of education in South Africa," the department said in a statement.

In that regard, the department rejects the finding as it is based purely on the opinions or perceptions of selected executives.

According to the department, the WEF report does not base its research on any actual tests or assessments done by learners, they do not in any way interact with learners in the system or any credible education institutions to get their data.

"This perception index is based on interviews conducted with business sector executives and reflects nothing more than their personal perceptions.

"Credible international assessments into the state of Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST) education in South Africa have consistently shown an improvement in the performance of the country in this regard," the department said.

According to the department, the results of international, Trends in Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMSS) have indicated that sections of the education system are responding positively to the many interventions we have made.

Improving?

In respect of South Africa, the TIMSS' results of 2011 showed that schools at the lower end of the performance spectrum, mainly schools in less advantaged contexts, registered impressive improvements.

The 2011 TIMSS pointed to improvements in mathematics and science competencies of Grade 9 learners when compared to Grade 9 learners tested in 2002.

South Africa's improvement in mathematics of 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.

"Our improvement is comparable to that experienced by Brazil in the last decade, probably the fastest and most consistent improvement in any international testing system in recent years.

"Our own local assessments which include the National Senior Certificate (NSC) as well as Annual National Assessments (ANA) have also reflected significant progress in the area of MST," the department said.

Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga also set up a Ministerial Task Team to look into the MST strategy and its implementation.

The department is currently reviewing the organisational structure to strengthen the MST Strategy. This includes the possibility of establishing a fully functional MST Directorate as recommended by Task Team.

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