



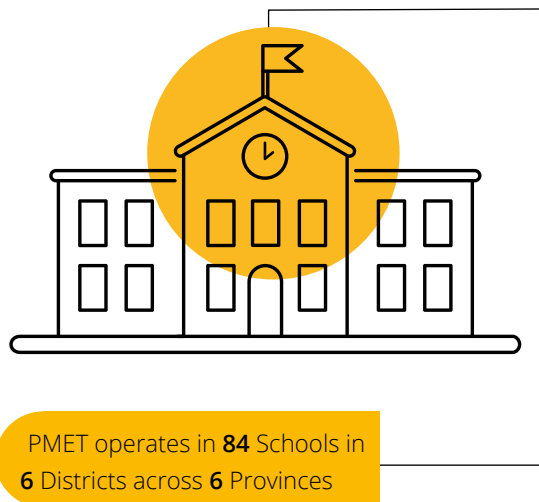
Progress Report of School Support and Development

February–November 2021

Introduction

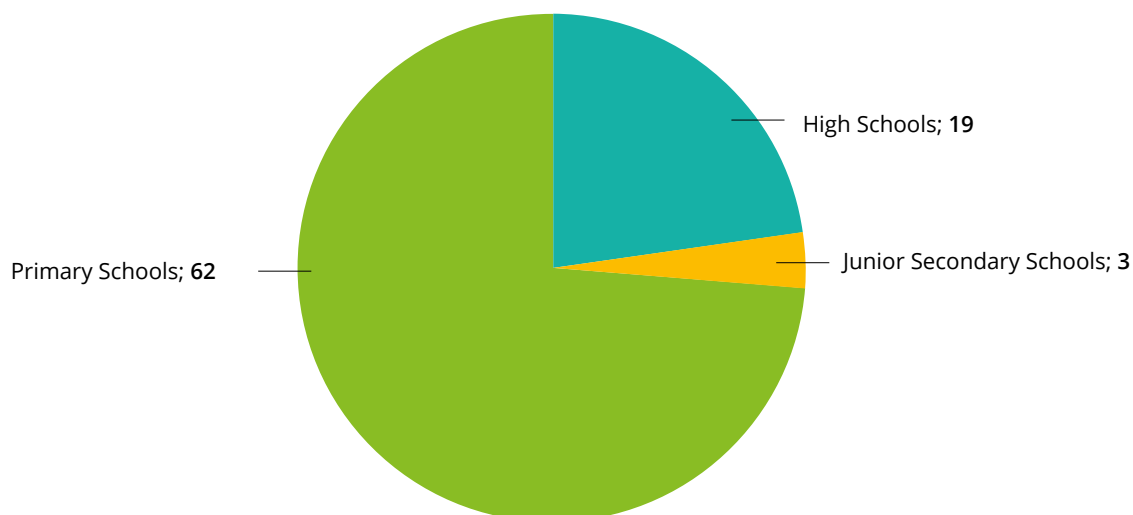
This report provides an overview of progress as a consequence of support provided to 84 schools based in six districts across six provinces. A summary of the support provided to the schools is presented and the impact of the partnership is outlined by mapping the progress that has been achieved across the 84 schools during the period under review.

PMET acknowledges the support of the District Directors and officials in each of the districts whom PMET reports on a quarterly basis. This formal engagement, as well as various informal interactions, provide a solid basis for opportunities towards larger scale implementation of learnings beyond the PMET partner schools. This drive for sustainability is a primary goal in 2022, the last year of implementation in this second round of programme implementation (2019-2022).



The findings herein have been generated through a rigorous data collection process that included unstructured interviews, focus groups, observation and document analysis. Quantitative and qualitative data was captured on a weekly basis by facilitators who are in the field visiting schools. The quantitative data was captured and analysed using excel, while qualitative data was captured in a monitoring and evaluation tool and subjected to content analysis to allow for district level findings to be converted to findings across 84 schools.

Categories of partnering schools

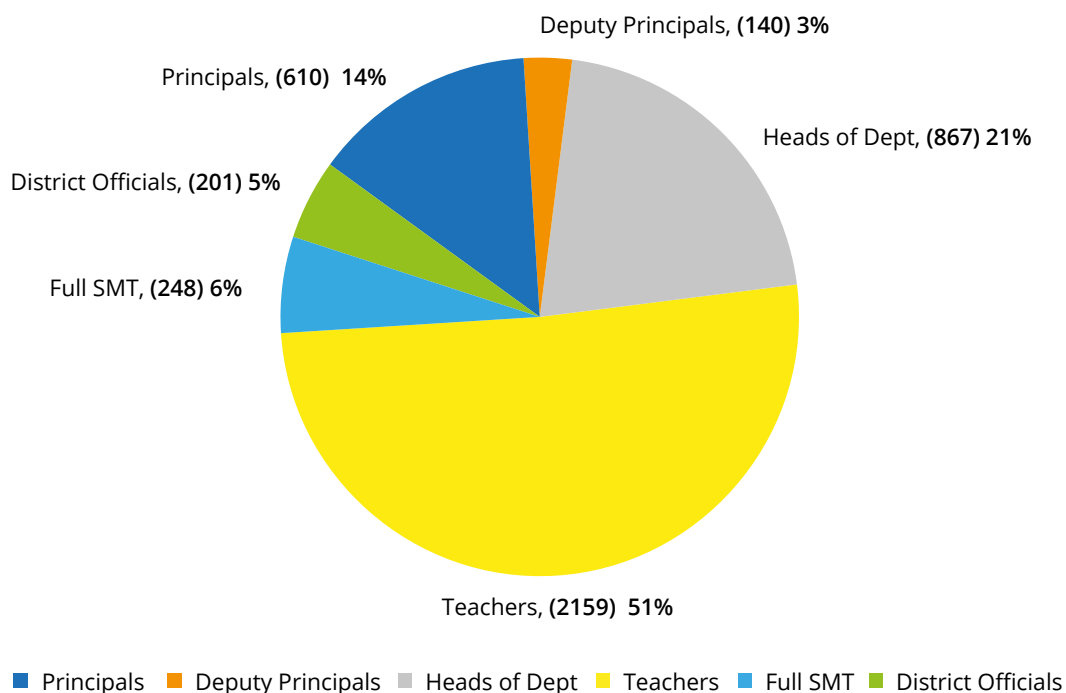


Support Provided In 2021

The PMET team provided on-site and remote support to principals, deputy principals, departmental heads and teachers. The form of support provided was determined by the specific needs of each school, which were monitored rigorously from one contact session to the next. The participatory action research approach adopted ensured that all educators' needs were acknowledged since facilitators reflect deeply on developments within the school on an ongoing basis, and design interventions accordingly.

471 school visits were conducted across 84 schools from February to November 2021. This implies an average of approximately 6 visits to each school over a 10 month period. Given that PMET does not visit schools during school holidays and over assessment periods, this essentially equates to a one day visit once every 5-8 weeks. However, the emphasis is not necessarily on how often the school is visited, but on the quality and depth of support that is provided on the occasion of the visit.

Support Interventions across participants



“Contacts” refer to interactions with individuals, small groups and the whole staff. This was recorded based on records of attendance at meetings and workshops. The pie graph illustrates the number of contact sessions that were held with various participants from February to November in 2021.

When reflecting on contacts, it is evident that teachers were prioritised as participants in support interventions. This is expected given that teachers are generally in the majority on the staff establishment at schools. Another reason is that concerted effort was invested in working with teachers to get teaching and learning back on track after the huge setback experienced in 2020 as a consequence of Covid-19. Given PMET’s mandate of supporting schools towards providing quality education, it is crucial that teachers remain the primary participant in support and development initiatives.

This focus on curriculum delivery and functional curriculum management is reiterated by the fact that teachers and heads of department together account for more than 72% of the total support interventions over the 10 month period.

610 sessions were held with principals who are regarded as central to the delivery of quality teaching and learning in the school. Principals required ongoing intensive support as leaders and managers. They were expected to navigate the impact of Covid-19 on various aspects of schooling within and beyond the classroom. PMET's mandate to enhance leadership and management as a key element of organisation development therefore remained fundamental. The graphic below illustrates how support was grounded in the understanding that effective curriculum management ensures quality curriculum delivery, leading to improved learner performance.

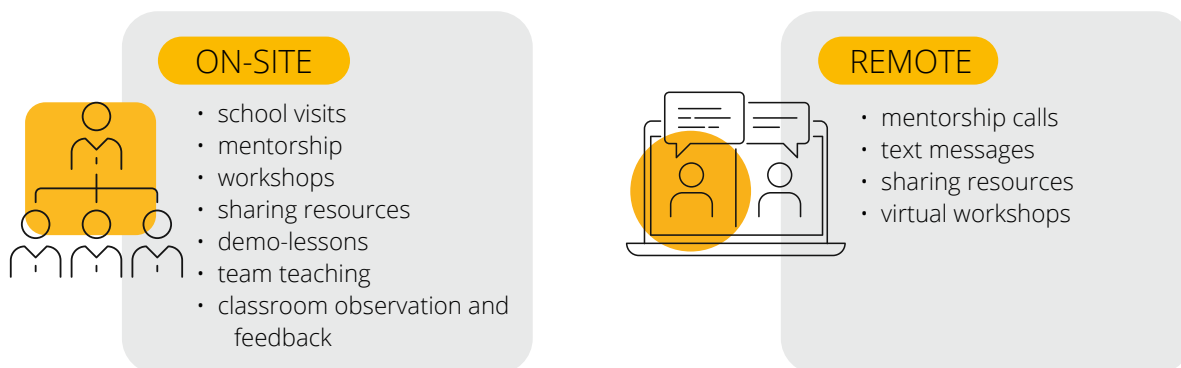


Curriculum Management drives learner performance

Support to principals, SMTs, deputy principals and heads of departments thus focused on curriculum management. Curriculum delivery was driven through support interventions involving teachers who are at the chalk-face in schools and classrooms. The programme of support in 2021 focused on content coverage in order to catch up on all that was lost in 2020. Although teachers required intensive support with both content and pedagogy, the latter was prioritised, with a focus on enhancing the teaching and learning process and practices.

The pie graph (page 3) illustrates that contact with the full SMT and district officials has been few. It has been difficult to work with the full SMT in most schools, primarily as a result of lack of availability given teaching demands as a consequence of rotational time tables. The contact with district officials, which focuses on sharing and liaising, remained minimal in 2021, as supporting district offices is not a primary focus of PMET's work.

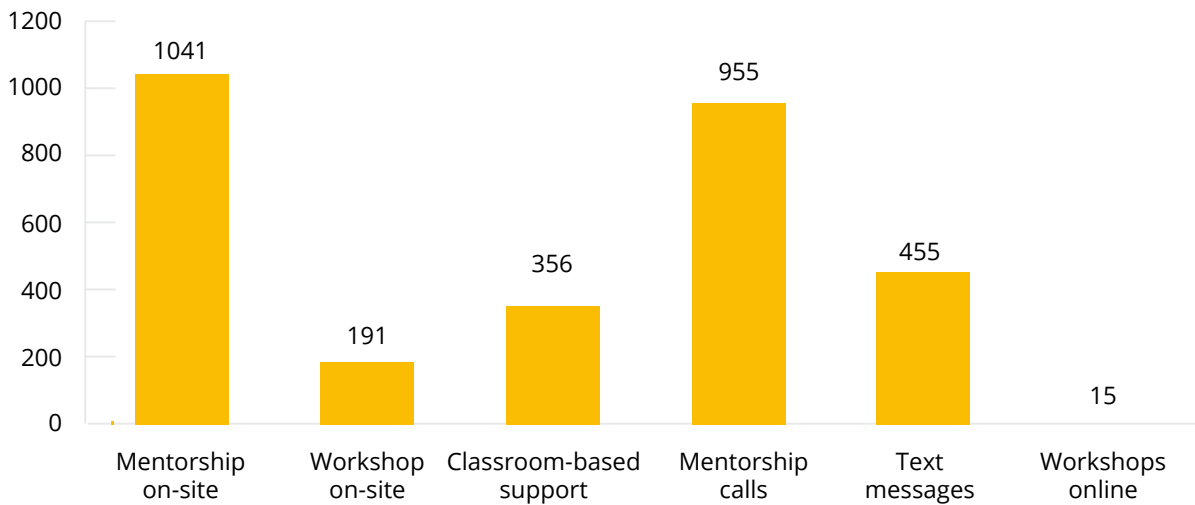
All support interventions were geared towards knowledge and skills development, facilitating implementation of what has been shared over the last three years, and enhancing accountability to self, the school community and the district office. Support interventions varied and were determined by whether onsite or remote support had to be provided given the impact of Covid-19 on school closures and infection rates in areas. The table below represents the various forms of support that PMET provided.



Forms of support provided

The graph below outlines the various forms of support that were provided to schools across the six districts.

Number of Support Sessions



Workshops remained a necessary intervention during 2021 since this is how fundamental knowledge and skills are first introduced to selected groups or the whole staff in the school. 191 workshops were conducted, focusing on lesson preparation, reading-centred method, curriculum differentiation and mathematics content. Mathematics content workshops targeted topics in the CAPS curriculum that learners are struggling to understand. Virtual workshops were less popular because face-to-face sessions were possible given the relaxation of Covid-19 regulations. It is important to note that although workshops were necessary as a knowledge initiation space, the follow-up support in the form of mentorship was essential.

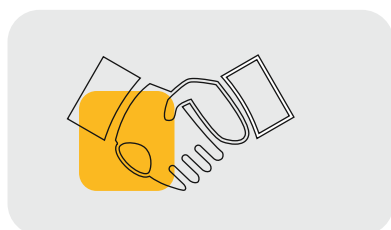
The findings of the research conducted during this period illustrate that on-site mentorship sessions for teachers and SMTs were conducted more often than any other form of support (1041 Sessions). These sessions focused on the professional development of individuals and small groups. When added to the mentorship calls, whether face-to-face or as a “tele consult”, almost 2000 guided, critical, courageous conversations took place between PMET facilitators and various role players in the school.

Implementation of practices encouraged by PMET was monitored through classroom-based support where a total of 356 follow-up sessions were recorded. These follow-up sessions included demonstration lessons, team teaching and classroom observations. The latter incorporates a pre-discussion and the provision of constructive and supportive feedback, employing a reflective approach with teachers who volunteer to participate. This aspect of PMET support is regarded as crucial because the classroom is regarded as the “implementation space”, where learner-centred teaching, the reading-centred-method, effective use of LTSMs, quality assessment and lesson preparation is expected - this is where the impact of PMET support is monitored and measured. Although it is a challenging terrain to navigate, once sufficient trust is established it is easy for facilitators to step into classrooms, to observe teachers in action, and to provide feedback and direct support to ensure that quality teaching and learning is taking place.

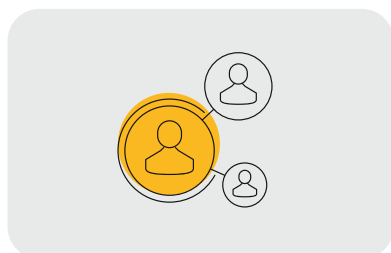
Mentorship calls (955) and text messages (455) were employed when school visits were impeded as a consequence of Covid-19 infections at the school or in the school community. These support options also allowed for a quick “check-in” with principals and teachers in between on-site visits.

It is clear that workshops, mentorship and classroom-based support encompassed the kernel of practice of PMET facilitators. The support focused on areas that were determined by the developmental needs that emerged within the school. Although the baseline study conducted in 2019 provided clear direction as regards support needs, the rigorous monitoring and evaluation process embedded in participatory action research ensured that participants’ emerging needs were acknowledged and that support remained relevant and appropriate.

The content focus of the support provided is outlined below. Whether in workshops, mentorship sessions or in the classroom, specific content areas were concentrated on. These were determined by the needs that emerged in the baseline study which was conducted in 2019 and subsequent emerging needs as the schools were shaped and shifted by contextual shifts. What has remained consistent over the last three years are the broad categories where support has been required, namely, community factors, attitudes and relationships, teaching, learning and assessment, and leadership and management. These four categories have been found to function interdependently to impact on the school and a system with its mandate to provide quality education.



| Focus of Support provided | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Community Factors | |
| ✓ | Assistance to parents to support learning from home |
| ✓ | Involvement of sister Departments in learner support (e.g. Dept of Social Development) |



| Attitudes & Relationships | |
|---------------------------|---|
| ✓ | Psycho-social support |
| ✓ | Emotional well-being |
| ✓ | Positive teacher relationships |
| ✓ | Navigating the reality and impact of Covid-19 |



| Teaching, Learning & Assessment | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ✓ | Lesson preparation |
| ✓ | Reading-centred method |
| ✓ | Learner-centred teaching |
| ✓ | Effective use of LTSMs |
| ✓ | Assessment |
| ✓ | Classroom management |
| ✓ | Maths content knowledge |
| ✓ | Curriculum differentiation |
| ✓ | Content coverage |



Leadership & Management

| | |
|---|--|
| ✓ | Communication within the school |
| ✓ | Leadership styles |
| ✓ | Curriculum management |
| ✓ | Policy review |
| ✓ | Mediating roles & responsibilities (PAM) |
| ✓ | Induction of new SMT members |
| ✓ | Moderation of assessment tasks |

Although teaching, learning and assessment and leadership and management remained priority focus areas, Covid-19 influenced participants' acknowledgement of the importance of the personal, and how emotional and social matters influence the professional and organisational domains as well. Educators and learners alike were more open to sharing and investing in themselves and their relationships with others. PMET facilitators played a crucial role in putting these aspects on the agenda for SMTs and teachers to address with compassion and commitment.

Progress at the end of 2021

The sections that follow outline the trends in the perceived progress that has been made by the schools that have been supported by PMET since 2019. Emphasis is placed on the key focus areas of the partnership with PMET, namely community factors, attitudes and relationships, teaching, learning and assessment and leadership and management. Progress is reported only where most or all schools have indicated improvement in an area.

Community Factors

Parent & Community Involvement

- Parents co-operate in the implementation of rotational time tables
- Meeting attendance by parents has improved
- Some parents are employed to assist with security, cleaning and the nutrition programme
- SGBs have been elected and have received training

Learner Support

- Nutrition programme is running well
- Social grants have been processed where needed

Infrastructure

- Security has been installed (gates, fencing, CCTV, alarm system, etc.)

The issues mentioned below did not emerge as significant findings in the analysis process, and so may be regarded as 'outliers'. They are however worthy of noting in this report.

WhatsApp was employed in most schools in only one of the six districts to ensure *communication with parents*. Parents also played an important role in resolving challenges related to learner transport by engaging with drivers to ensure rotational time tables were accommodated, Covid-19 protocols were adhered to in vehicles, and late-coming was reduced. Three districts reported *partnerships with SAPS*, which assisted in dealing with matters that impacted on the provision of quality teaching and learning. Given the context of poverty in rural schools, organising support within schools and communities remains complex; however, two districts reported that *uniforms and food parcels* were sourced with support from local businesses, and grade 7 learners donated uniforms to those still in attendance at the school. Three districts reported improvements in *ablution facilities and wifi* access for staff members and lastly, although security was noted to have improved in most schools, two districts reported a lack of effective security measures in schools.

Attitudes & Relationships

Emotional Well-being

- Anxiety around Covid-19 has settled
- SMTs are acknowledging the importance of EWB
- Vulnerable learners are being identified to receive support

Relationships

- SMTs and teachers are engaging more positively
- Improved professional relations and teamwork is evident
- Teacher-learner relationships are good

Teaching & Learning Environment

- Positive culture of teaching and learning is apparent
- School and classroom spaces generally feel safe

Attendance

- Learner attendance has improved
- Late-coming has decreased

The progress outlined above is commendable, however it is worth mentioning that although huge gains are not as yet evident, the following aspects are shifting slowly within schools.

PMET has been promoting a "check-in" culture in schools which encourages openness and ease with *sharing on a personal and social level*. This contributes towards personal emotional well-being, relationship building, and the development of a caring school culture. Although this is a small intervention that can reap significant benefits, most schools are implementing this practice with caution. The stigma related to mental illness and the reluctance to expose one's vulnerability in many societies is a crucial contributing factor. Although reports indicate significant improvements in professional relationships, as mentioned above, *communication and information flow* remains a top challenge and priority in many schools.

Teaching, Learning & Assessment

Planning and Preparation

- Lesson plans are available
- Lesson preparation is evident

Teaching Methodology

- LTSMs are varied and creative
- Teachers are developing more learner-centred classrooms
- Teachers are attempting more practical, hands-on approaches in the teaching of Mathematics

Assessment

- Assessment plans for the year exist
- Various forms of assessment are employed (tests, projects, orals, assignments, etc.)

Learner Diversity

- Learners have been identified for specialised support
- Support interventions for learners experiencing barriers to learning are monitored

English Across the Curriculum

- Teachers prioritise English as LOLT
- Reading is prioritised in the school

Curriculum Coverage

- CAPS and ATPs are followed

The progress clarified above in this category, teaching, learning and assessment is a significant achievement, given that this is the core purpose of schooling. Smaller successes are elucidated below, even though they did not emerge as significant in the data analysis process.

Some effort is being invested in *catch-up programmes* to assist with education recovery, with three districts progressing well. It is concerning that this is not being prioritised across all schools. Three districts report that many teachers have a deeper understanding of the importance of *reading in English*. There is a more concerted effort to implement a reading-centred approach in their teaching in order to facilitate the use of English across the curriculum. With only months remaining before the closure of the partnership, this aspect of support will receive priority attention. *Curriculum differentiation* is being implemented in classrooms in two districts in an effort to address learner diversity. Heightened effort will be invested in this area in 2022, with a strong focus on accommodating all cognitive levels in teaching, learning and assessment activities.

Leadership & Management

Roles & Responsibilities

- SMTs understand and implement roles and responsibilities as per Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM)

Curriculum Management

- Lesson preparation is monitored
- Content coverage is tracked
- Pre- and post-moderation of assessment tasks is evident
- LTSMs are procured, delivered and distributed to learners

Planning

- School Improvement Plans (SIP) are revised
- Departmental (subjects/grades) management plans are in place
- Year plans have been established

Management of Staff

- Staff meetings are held and minutes are recorded
- Teacher portfolios are available

Administration

- Teaching and other duties are allocated to all staff
- Policies are all on file
- Files, minutes, communication books, registers and time tables are all organised

Covid-19

- Protocols are established and observed

The following issues were found to be less frequently apparent in reports from schools and districts, but are nevertheless important findings to note.

Three districts report that schools are focusing on the *implementation of Quality Management System (QMS)* as per DBE policy expectations. Others are following suit, but require considerable support in this regard. Apart from one district, schools generally have *no staff development programmes* in place. This raises many questions about how one can expect improvements in the quality of education provision if personal and professional development is not regarded as a priority in schools. Many schools are admittedly taking strides with curriculum management, however *classroom support visits* are not currently within the SMT repertoire in most schools. PMET is providing mentorship support, adopting an experiential learning approach to address this challenge.

Conclusion

Having acknowledged significant progress in a number of areas across most schools in all six districts, there is a strong realisation that 2022 is a year of dedicated, intensified support provision with the aim of consolidation towards achieving sustainability.

As illustrated below, mentorship and classroom-based support will be prioritised in 2022, with workshops being conducted only where specific needs emerge. As regards areas of support, emotional well-being will remain a key focus and foundation for all development and support interventions. SMTs will be targeted to receive support to fulfil their leadership and management responsibilities, and all educators will be mentored to improve practices that will enhance teaching, learning and assessment within the classroom.

2022

Focus of Support provided

Leadership and Management

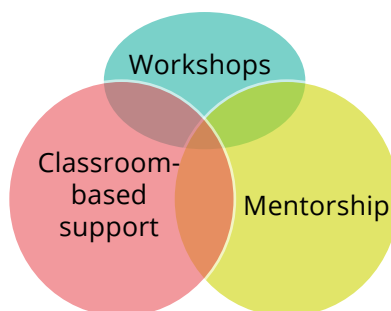
| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| ✓ | Policy Implementation |
| ✓ | Curriculum Management |
| ✓ | Team Building |
| ✓ | Year Plans |
| ✓ | Roles and Responsibilities |
| ✓ | QMS |
| ✓ | Induction of new SMT |

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| ✓ | Reading-centred |
| ✓ | Learner-centred (75%–25%) |
| ✓ | Practical, hand-on approaches |
| ✓ | Lesson Planning and Preparation |
| ✓ | Maths content and pedagogy |
| ✓ | Curriculum Differentiation |
| ✓ | Blooms Taxonomy – use of CAPS |
| ✓ | EAC/LOLT |
| ✓ | Gr. 12 motivation |
| ✓ | Effective use of LTSMs |

EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Nature of support



PMET support in 2022

Given that 2022 is the final year of support provision to the selected 84 schools, emphasis will be placed on supporting teachers and SMT members to implement learnings gained over the last three years. An evidence-based approach will continue to be adopted thereby reaffirming PMET's commitment to action research. Monitoring and evaluation will continue with rigour in order to track the impact of the partnership which began in 2019. Just as PMET remains accountable as a support provider, role players in the school will be held accountable for the provision of quality education to learners who deserve nothing less.



MARANG EDUCATION TRUST

In Partnership with Pearson

It is through the provision of support to schools in low income communities that Marang Education Trust endeavours to help teachers and learners to access opportunities to learn in spaces where quality education is provided.

The Marang Education Trust, in partnership with Pearson is focused on best practice as an approach to improving the quality of teaching, learning and school management in South Africa.

Our purpose is to contribute to the education community through direct provisioning of professional development and support and bursaries for public benefit in partnership with the Department of Basic Education (DBE).

The Trust is a SACE Accredited research and professional development and support organisation which is part of Pearson South Africa's corporate social impact initiative.

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