



## **South African Extraordinary Schools Coalition (SAESC)**

### **A Purpose of the School Peer Review**

**The purpose of the unfolding Peer Review process is to improve student learning by:**

- Collaborating and supporting participating schools.
- Sharing and developing best practices in all areas of the school.
- Identifying areas for growth and improvement.
- Providing a framework to support the school's internal development and growth.

#### **CONTEXT:**

We acknowledge that our country, South Africa, is in a dramatic education crisis. There is evidence of dysfunctional classrooms, schools, districts and regions that continue to damage the aspirations of our children. We often fail to believe in the abilities of all of our children and in our own ability in schools to teach all of our children.

#### **INTENTION:**

The members of the South African Extraordinary Schools Coalition recognize it is time to plan and implement necessary innovative educational change to deal with on-going educational dysfunction. We will do whatever it takes to create dramatic positive change in our school families and communities. We commit to increasing access to quality education. We place each student at the centre of the learning and teaching processes. All of our children can and will reach their full potential regardless of their background. We commit to work together to prove that real transformation in education is possible.

### **B Domains Reviewed**

**Domain 1 – Leadership and Management**

**Domain 2 – Teaching and Learning**

**Domain 3 – Culture and Climate**

**Domain 4 – School and Community**

## **Domain 1: Leadership and Management**

### **1.1 Whole School Leadership and Management**

- 1.1.1 The school leader has a documented strategic vision and plan for the development of the school.
- 1.1.2 The strategic plan is dynamic – it is regularly consulted and adjusted to address changing priorities.
- 1.1.3 The school leader monitors and revises systems, and allocates resources so that students' changing needs are addressed.
- 1.1.4 The school leader clearly articulates, models and facilitates the commitment to the school's values for the entire school community.
- 1.1.5 The school leader ensures staff are appropriately qualified.
- 1.1.6 The school leader implements a policy of identifying, developing and training future teachers and education leaders.
- 1.1.7 The school leader is able to identify and address professional development priorities.
- 1.1.8 The school leader provides teachers with systematic processes for collecting, managing, and analysing data.
- 1.1.9 The school leader uses data to determine strengths and limitations from the school's performance results and sets challenging goals.
- 1.1.10 The school leader guides leaders at grade level and within subject frameworks in the use of data to determine areas of school improvement and further student achievement.
- 1.1.11 Student data is reviewed on a regular basis and communicated to the school community.
- 1.1.12 The school leader is proactive in communicating potential crises/interruptions and the management and mediation thereof.
- 1.1.13 The school leader ensures that parents are involved in the education of their children through good communication, regular academic progress reporting, and shared high expectations.

### **1.2 Operational Leadership and Management**

- 1.2.1 The school leader requires full staff participation in ensuring a culture of high expectations for all students.
- 1.2.2 The School Board/SGB/alternative governance structure understands their role in the evaluation of the school leader and succession planning.
- 1.2.3 The school works to create effective systems and programmes to track secondary/tertiary entry, the length of study and the career paths for all alumni.
- 1.2.4 The school leader identifies staff and student talent and promotes leadership capacity.
- 1.2.5 Academic and Support staff receive appropriate induction in school values and practices.
- 1.2.6 The school leader meets with staff regularly, individually and in staff meetings, for personal growth and development, to help them understand school direction, in order to contribute to the overall improvement of the school.
- 1.2.7 The school leader is open minded and models commitment to constant learning.

- 1.2.8 The school leader delegates tasks and shares decision making with responsible staff, students and parents.
- 1.2.9 The school leader practices self-reflection and invites *difficult conversations* to improve the school.
- 1.2.10 The school leader submits timely and comprehensive progress and financial reports for review by relevant governance structures.
- 1.2.11 The school has an approved annual budget and a sustainable financial plan.
- 1.2.12 The school conducts an independent financial audit on an annual basis and shows appropriate responses.

### **1.3 Instructional Leadership and Management**

- 1.3.1 Professional development for the academic staff provides on-going support, feedback, and coaching aligned to specific needs and priorities.
- 1.3.2 The school leader ensures that teachers participate actively in professional development appropriate to their individual and the school needs.
- 1.3.3 The school leader ensures regular grade and subject team meetings are held to improve teaching and learning.
- 1.3.4 Staff receive effective feedback on the quality of their instruction, planning, and use of student performance data to improve learning.
- 1.3.5 The school leader models for staff effective use of data, and the evaluation of student work to make instructional decisions.
- 1.3.6 Criteria for staff appointment are defined and aligned with the school's mission and vision.
- 1.3.7 Staff performance management is evident and on-going.

## **Domain 2: Teaching and Learning**

### **2.1 Teaching Practice**

- 2.1.1 Teaching in the class is explicitly aligned to the school's values and curriculum.
- 2.1.2 All school strategies, goals and benchmarks are clearly focused on raising student achievement.
- 2.1.3 Teachers use a creative range of teaching strategies to maximise student engagement and academic rigour (lesson agenda/plans displayed, "do now", checks for understanding, "exit tickets" etc.)
- 2.1.4 Teachers invite and participate in peer observation, get feedback, and are critically self-reflective.
- 2.1.5 Teachers take responsibility for students' performance.
- 2.1.6 High expectations are held for all students; there are no excuses.
- 2.1.7 The pace of the lesson accommodates all students.
- 2.1.8 Teachers utilise strategies to address the language needs of students.
- 2.1.9 Teaching is based on scaffolded skills development and facilitates high-order thinking.
- 2.1.10 Teaching is authenticated through evidence of students' academic work that is of a high and challenging standard.
- 2.1.11 There is evidence of differentiated teaching and learning which addresses a broad range of opportunities and individual learning needs.
- 2.1.12 The classroom space and resources are well organised to maximise learning.
- 2.1.13 Teachers display updated and marked student work to model high expectations.
- 2.1.14 Teachers model high expectations for student achievement, engagement and behaviour.

### **2.2 Student Interaction**

- 2.2.1 The school programmes promote student well-being, success and participation in learning (e.g. health, wellness, emotional, social, psychological, etc.).
- 2.2.2 Teachers engage in open, honest and difficult conversations with students and invite student feedback.
- 2.2.3 Teachers use technology and resources effectively to support teaching and learning.
- 2.2.4 Students are allowed to argue, analyse and justify their arguments / position.
- 2.2.5 Teachers facilitate student self-reflection so that students take ownership of their learning.

### **2.3 Lesson Plans**

- 2.3.1 There is evidence of a detailed lesson plan for every period.
- 2.3.2 Lesson planning reflects the priorities of the school.
- 2.3.3 Teachers use strategies to outline lesson objectives, the agenda/structure of the lesson and homework.
- 2.3.4 Teachers use effective intervention strategies and programmes to address underperforming students.
- 2.3.5 Teaching incorporates alignment across the grades and development across the subject areas (interdisciplinary approach)

## **2.4 Assessment**

- 2.4.1 Teachers keep accurate records of student assessment data, and review performance at regular intervals to inform planning and teaching.
- 2.4.2 Teachers provide feedback to students in a timely and defined manner.
- 2.4.3 School results across each Grade compare favourably to those of previous years.
- 2.4.4 Teachers use data to inform grouping of students where appropriate to promote learning.
- 2.4.5 Teachers use rubrics to scaffold skills.

## **Domain 3: Culture and Climate**

### **3.1 Site**

- 3.1.1 Classrooms display relevant learning materials and updated student work to enhance learning and celebrate student development.
- 3.1.2 The school facilities and grounds are clean and well-maintained.
- 3.1.3 Systems and structures are in place to ensure the safety and security of students and staff.
- 3.1.4 Structures are in place to repair and maintain infrastructure, where and when possible.

### **3.2 Student**

- 3.2.1 There is evidence of this being an African school to ensure students feel a sense of belonging along with a conscious commitment by staff to promote and embrace this identity.
- 3.2.2 Students are committed to the mission, values, and vision of the school.
- 3.2.3 The school is committed to ensuring that there is a climate that is free from gender discrimination.
- 3.2.4 The school aims to serve students from poor socio-economic conditions.
- 3.2.5 The school culture and climate contributes to the creation of high expectations which results in the development of a clear individual identity.
- 3.2.6 The school provides an appropriately broad range of learning activities that enable students to develop fully. This includes physical, emotional, social and spiritual development e.g. sport and cultural activities.
- 3.2.7 The school programmes and systems promote student well-being and self-regulation (e.g. nutrition, health, wellness, emotional, social, psychological, etc.)
- 3.2.8 The school has HIV/AIDS education programmes and support systems that contribute to good decision making and promote healthy living.
- 3.2.9 The school has teenage pregnancy awareness programmes and support systems that contribute to good decision making.
- 3.2.10 Students are collaborative and independent.
- 3.2.11 Students show initiative and contribute to service-related activities among the wider school community.

### **3.3 Staff**

- 3.3.1 All staff are committed to the mission, values, and vision of the school.
- 3.3.2 The school places high importance on professional development in order to improve teaching, learning and school performance.
- 3.3.3 Interactions between and among students and staff reflect the values of the school.
- 3.3.4 All staff focus on the well-being of students by enabling positive decision making that enhances their everyday lives.
- 3.3.5 The classroom is well-organised to promote student self-regulation to optimise learning.
- 3.3.6 All staff model core values with and for students.

### **3.4 Community**

- 3.4.1 The school actively and effectively involves families to support their children's education and the school programmes.
- 3.4.2 The school provides good communication to families on a regular basis in a variety of ways (e.g. written, verbal, website, reporting, meetings, events and celebrations)
- 3.4.3 The information given to families about their child's progress is accessible and relevant.
- 3.4.4 The relationship with the extended school community partners is visibly active and valued, and shared resources are used responsibly to support student and community development.

### **3.5 General**

- 3.5.1 The school culture reflects mutual respect, sharing and collaboration.
- 3.5.2 The customs and celebrations of the school are practiced to develop understanding, insight, a sense of history and acceptance of diversity.
- 3.5.3 Schools have visitor protocols which reflect school values and make visitors welcome.
- 3.5.4 Appropriate managing of funding and support relationships is evident.
- 3.5.5 Core values are fully integrated into the life of the school.
- 3.5.6 Parents are committed to the mission, values, and vision of the school.

## **Domain 4: School and Community**

### **4.1 Stakeholders**

- 4.1.1 The school has a system to communicate regularly with parents regarding the values and ethos of the school, academic performance of their children, and events at the school, e.g. notification of meetings, elections, notable achievements of students, programmes that students are involved in etc.
- 4.1.2 The school has a system to communicate regularly with funders regarding spending of funds and academic progress of students.
- 4.1.3 The school has regular meetings with organisations, including NGOs involved in the school, to ensure alignment with the vision and ethos of the school.
- 4.1.4 Where required, the Education Department is informed of relevant issues pertaining to the school; all relevant documents are submitted.
- 4.1.5 The school is in contact with community organisations that enhance the holistic development of children, in order to form partnerships for the benefit of the students, e.g. sports clubs, cultural clubs
- 4.1.6 Representatives of the school meet regularly with the Governing authority of the school.

### **4.2 Social Development**

- 4.2.1 The students are actively involved in community-service activities and other social development programmes.
- 4.2.2 The school works collaboratively with neighbouring schools in terms of sharing and developing resources, sharing practices and the professional development of teachers.