

South African Extraordinary Schools Coalition
Highlights of Meeting of main community
Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls, Henley-on-Klip,
Johannesburg
17 March 2015

Setting the scene

The meeting included 90 teachers, leaders and partner organisation representatives from a total of 21 schools and organisations across 5 provinces.

John Gilmour set the scene by reminding everyone that the Coalition principles ensure that we work hard to build relationships and let go of competition. The Coalition is a Community of Practice, run by BRIDGE that meets quarterly to share experiences, knowledge, tools and resources to help each other to achieve excellence in our schools.

Getting to know the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls

The principal of the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls (OWLAG), Melvin King, provided a brief history and overview of the school. [Click on this link](#) to watch a short video clip.

Members observed the school in action as they were lead by OWLAG students on a walking tour of the school.



Key reflections by members on OWLAG:

Just because you come from a disadvantaged background does not mean you have to have disadvantaged attitudes. The confidence of the OWLAG girls shows that the school has raised the bar until there is no bar.

There is visible learner participation and collaboration in lessons.

There is evidence of the use of project based learning and self-directedness by the girls.

The environment reflects subject relevant learning material.

There is good use of ICT integration evident by the use of Google search to enhance the lesson.

The girls are knowledgeable about wellness and fitness.

Sharing Instructional best practice- ICT integration in the classroom



SAESC teachers shared ideas for integrating technology in the classroom to enhance the lesson.

Item:	Detail:	Link:
Vodacom's learning portal:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online CAPS aligned content for Grades 8-12• Register for free• No data required• Positive reflections from students	www.vodacom.co.za/e-school
Top Dog:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online IEB content• Written by IEB teachers	http://www.mytopdog.co.za/site/index
Using Apps in the classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Devolve me- used to explain evolution in a creative way <p>Click on the link for a number of other free education apps.</p>	http://www.teachthought.com/apps-2/the-55-best-best-free-education-apps-for-ipad/

Google Drive/ Forms



Google Drive/ Forms can be used for the following:

- Students can use Google forms for work to be edited and marked by the teacher instantly;
- Free and easy to use;
- Can use Google sheets for mark sheets;
- Editing of school timetables- helps with version control;
- Can be used for surveys/questionnaires;
- Can be used on a Smart Phone;
- Saves storage costs rather than using expensive servers;
- Safety & security options; and
- Teachers can collaborate via Google Docs when setting and moderating tests/exams.

- Access Google Drive: <http://www.google.co.za/drive/>
- Glenn Bunker Presentation: <http://bit.ly/GoogleDrivePres>
- Glenn Bunker Tips for Google Drive: <http://bit.ly/GoogleDriveTips>

Members committed to applying these techniques in their schools and will report back on the outcomes at the next SAESC meeting.

Discussion on July Summit at Lebone II (Aspiring Teachers Summit, Leadership Workshop & SAESC national meeting)

Date:	Item:	Venue:
12-15 July 2015	Global Teachers Institute Aspiring Teachers Summit	Lebone II - Royal College of the Bafokeng
14 July 2015	Leadership Workshop	Lebone II - Royal College of the Bafokeng
14 – 16 July 2015	SAESC National Meeting	Lebone II - Royal College of the Bafokeng



[Click on this link](#) to watch a short video clip of Nigel Richard of the Global Teachers Institute providing an overview of the July Summit at Lebone II.

Click [here](#) to access the registration form for the Aspiring Teachers Summit.

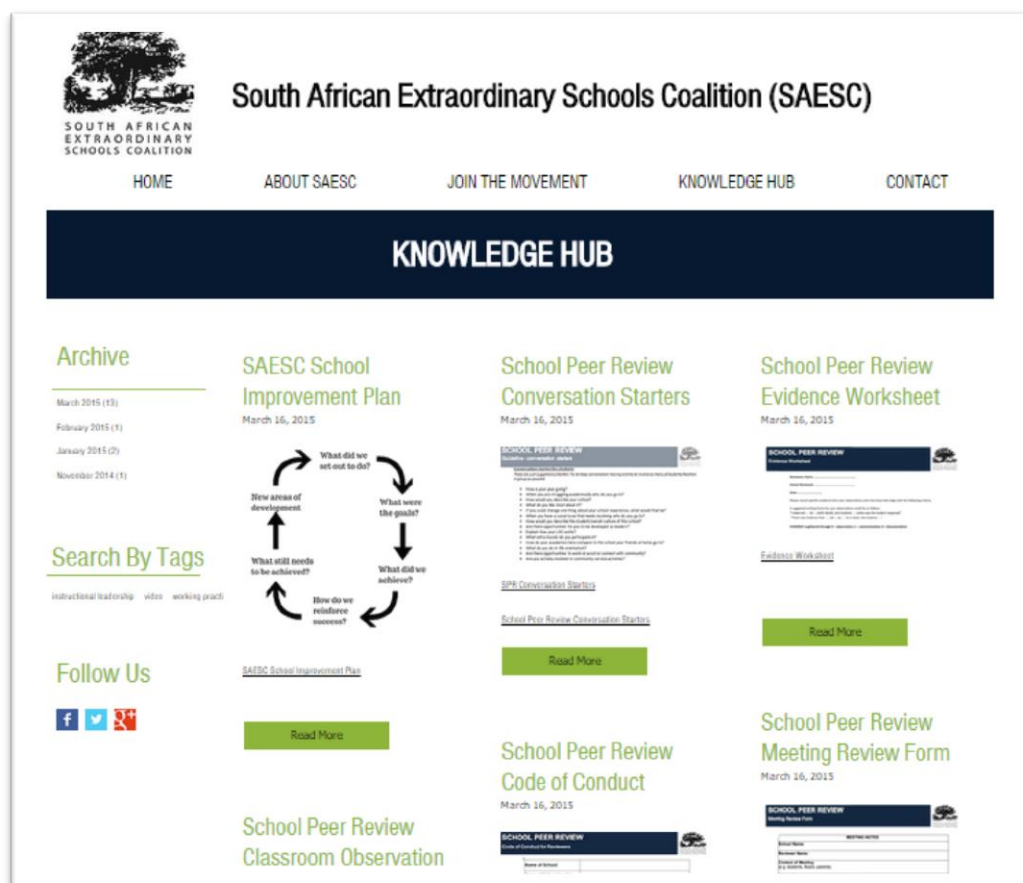
What would you like to give or receive outside of SAESC meetings?

Members briefly reflected on the above question, as follows:

- To hear more about best practice via an online platform that is easily accessible for teachers and leaders;
- Collaboration platform between experienced and inexperienced teachers. This may include a Forum for mentoring and building cross-school relationships;
- Give and receive new ways of working with bi-lingual students;
- Explore opportunities for schools to offer residencies for teachers to spend a few weeks in Coalition schools;
- A forum for subject specific discussions between schools;
- Regionalise collaboration between main Coalition meetings;
- To facilitate leadership learning walks whereby leaders walk with each other and gain insight into each other's practice; and
- Intern exchanges between Coalition schools.

SAESC Website & Knowledge hub

BRIDGE has created a new and improved [Coalition website](#) and [knowledge hub](#). Members can access the website to find out about upcoming SAESC events, access membership forms, read up on the SAESC and download Coalition videos, pictures, meeting highlights and tools/resources.



Preparing Science Teachers for Diverse Communities

Zonke Mpotulo and John Gilmour of LEAP Science and Maths School shared the principles and ideas for teaching science from research done at Stanford University by Bryan A. Brown. This methodology can be applied to the teaching of other subjects. To view the full presentation, click [here](#).



The basis of the BIG IDEA

- Teaching is a People Business ; Students do the work of learning; Teachers create learning situations
- Wrong answers are necessary, learning is process, Mistakes create sparks in the synapses
- Content is best learned when situated in students lives – context must be real
- Learning Science can be as difficult as learning a new language; Science is a language on its own



Unequivocal Research Conclusion

- When Science concepts are taught in Everyday Language in contexts in which children can relate, children's learning is more effective and concepts are more likely to be understood.
- Science Language should be added to the process after the concept has been taught and understood in Everyday Language.

School Peer Review & School Improvement Plan

The SAESC has developed its own **School Peer Review (SPR)** and **School Improvement Plan (SIP)**. Peer reviews enable school leaders and their staff to **observe** each other's schools in action. These are a good mechanism for schools to establish a process of **self-reflection** and continuous learning as well as to participate in and **support** each other's school **improvement** initiatives in a **non-judgemental** and **collaborative** way. The School Improvement Plan is a tool developed by the Coalition to help schools formulate objectives for improvement and ways of monitoring these.



[Link to](#) Hassiena Marriott describing the School Peer Review process

[Link to](#) School Peer Review documents

[Link to](#) School Improvement Plan document

The school principal and HoDs from Masibambane College reflected positively on their experiences of the implementation of the School Peer Review at their school, and how they used the feedback and School Improvement Plan to affect positive change. Here are a few **tips for how to implement the SIP following the SPR:**

- ✓ The feedback from the SPR in terms of the identified big rocks and areas for improvement can drive improvement.
- ✓ It is important to note that the SPR process is a non-judgemental process.
- ✓ Use the rocks identified in the SPR as a foundation to begin the process of planning for improvement.
- ✓ While the feedback is not a surprise, it helps having the statements on paper to plan for a way forward.
- ✓ Create teams to work on the SIP tool collaboratively. The teams should meet regularly and on an ongoing basis to monitor and evaluate the agreed upon actions.
- ✓ Divide the rocks and areas for improvement by phase (where necessary).
- ✓ Ensure buy in, trust and peer support of the entire staff by bringing the whole team on board and allowing them to lead the process.
- ✓ Act quickly- engage with the SPR report as soon as the report is sent to the school.
- ✓ It helps to take the SPR report to the Board for them to play a strategic role and provide input and assistance. For example, the Masibambane SPR report highlighted the need for a sustainable funding model, which has since been created by the board as a result of the SPR recommendation.

Rethinking leadership in Education

Marguerite Callaway of the Callaway Leadership Institute presented on Transformational Leadership for the 21st Century: Growing leaders from inside out.

To view the full presentation click [here](#).

In summary, 21st century leadership is based on 'what works' today. **People excel when:**



Their work has personal meaning

They understand how their work fits into a greater whole

Leadership is fair, straightforward and honest

They are encouraged to come forward with constructive ideas

They are given a chance to grow

Good performance is recognised & rewarded

Some key quotes:

"The School Peer Review and School Improvement Plan has positively changed our school"

"Fear prevents learning from happening. We are constantly afraid of doing things that we should. The Coalition helps us to let go of the fear by working together"

"We can change the social fabric of our country. The Lebone II Summit is one way of doing this and we should therefore all feel encouraged to participate in the Summit"

"The Coalition provides a sense of community and it is great to know that the Coalition is growing"

"I feel inspired and refreshed due to the passion in the room. I will take the learnings back to my community"

"The Coalition emphasises that the success of one is the success of all. Our country is sick with comparisons rather than creating parallel work"

A few more photos from the meeting

