



LIMPOPO

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DEPARTMENT OF
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AN EXCLUSIVE Q AND A WITH THE PROVINCE'S BEST SEPEDI TEACHER MR PITSI SAMUEL MOLOTO

By Mmathaba Sape & Conny Mabunda



Pitsi Samuel Moloto is a Sepedi home language teacher at Harry Oppenheimer Agricultural high school under Mogoshi circuit, in Capricorn North Education District. Moloto believes education is a diverse profession because it is not only limited to classroom activities, but also includes other activities such as sports. He is proud to have built lifetime relationships through education in his entire career.



How do you feel about being the best Sepedi teacher in the province?

I feel honoured to have been chosen as the best amongst other Sepedi Home Language teachers, however I don't believe that I am better than them. I achieved this because the knowledge I possess in the language comes from way back when I was still at Karabi Secondary school. I had an educator Mrs Mokwele who saw potential in me and would ask me to explain Sepedi novels to my fellow classmates thinking she was just being hard on me, only to realise after that she had seen something special in me. Today I am humbled by being invited to different schools to teach learners and also by university students who usually call to invite me whenever they need assistance with their assignments.

How do you motivate learners to do better in a classroom?

I bring former learners to the school to encourage and motivate grade 12 learners by telling them how they managed to matriculate well, where they are now and also share their achievements so that learners can get to see the importance of hard work and paying attention to educators when in class. I also motivate them by giving reward prizes to those who obtain 90% and above in their examinations.

How do you prepare lessons before going to class?

"I am aware that when a tree is old, you don't need to water it as often. It is like that with me. I started teaching in 1987 and am due for retirement in 2025. I still prepare myself for class, but I don't require much effort as everything is now at the back of my head. I am however required to write classroom preparation notes in my file for compliance since we are monitored and evaluated as teachers by head

of curriculum, said Moloto

How do you deal with learners who are struggling in class?

"Just like teeth, people are not the same nor equal", there are learners who struggle to grasp concepts and those that understand easily. As a Sepedi Home Language teacher, I always go an extra mile by making arrangements to teach learners who struggle and separate them so that there are no delays during class. My main focus is basics because some don't have a good foundation.

What advice can you give to new or aspiring teachers?

The advice I can give is for them to prioritise and protect their reputation before anything else, to dress accordingly because they chose a very diverse career that deals with a lot of different people and learners from different backgrounds.

They should always be open to learning new concepts and rules so that they don't have problems with adapting and finding innovative ways to teach and also be passionate about the subjects they teach and be compassionate towards their learners.

What challenges have you met when teaching in other schools?

I always had cordial reception from fellow educators, but I had a lot of challenges with some learners who are difficult to control. Some learners are misbehaving in class, some cannot write properly and while others don't bring textbooks to class. Substance abuse is also common in high schools, it contributes to disrespect because when learners are under the influence, they tend to underperform, become disrespectful and ultimately s adopts bad habits.

What is your plan after retirement?

I intend to rest for a month before I can resume my duties of continuing to assist grade 12 learners with Sepedi Home Language in preparation for their final examinations and I will also assist in different schools where my lessons will be required.

What is the overall performance that stood out during your teaching experience?

I have managed to keep my track record of producing 100% pass rate every year, but I am mostly proud of the 2005 academic year where only 4 learners got level 5. Which was the lowest, 42 got level 6 and 144 got level 7 out of my 196 learners.



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DID YOU KNOW?

02 APRIL

INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S BOOK DAY (ICBD)

INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S BOOK DAY (ICBD) IS A YEARLY EVENT SPONSORED BY THE INTERNATIONAL BOARD ON BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (IBBY).

IT IS CELEBRATED TO INSPIRE CHILDREN TO LOVE READING BOOKS.



EMPOWERING EDUCATION: THE ROLE OF THE LEGAL SERVICES UNIT IN LIMPOPO'S DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



The Directorate Legal Services is responsible for overseeing and managing legal matters to ensure the department operates within the bounds of the law. It provides comprehensive legal support, act on behalf of the department in litigation and advise on a range of legal issues that affect the operations of the department. The Director for Legal Services, Advocate Seima - Sebola M.E shares the insight of the role and responsibilities:

The Directorate Legal Services' role is to amongst others provide legal support to the Limpopo Department of Education by:

- Instituting and defending litigation on behalf of the department,
- Providing legal advice and opinion to the employees on work related matters, Drafting and vetting of contracts/ Memorandum of Understandings/Memorandum of Agreements,

- Ensuring department is legally compliant with the Constitution, legislation, policies and all applicable prescripts.
- Developing and or amending or proposing legislative amendments
- Determining liability etc.

Civil claims brought against the Department:

90% of civil claims brought against the department are because of the act or omission by the employees such as the employees and learners. The harm may be in the form of physical pain on someone or damage on someone's property/ State property.

The following are examples of common cases for which the department is being sued:

- Defamation of character by educators or by other learners caused by educators name shaming learners in front of the others etc.
- Corporal punishment/assault of a learner by educators which is caused by Educators unlawfully applying corporal punishment to learners despite the fact that corporal punishment has long been abolished.
- Assault of a learner by other learners which arise as result of learners being left unattended due to unavailability of Educators.
- Injury to learner cause by hazardous objects in and around the school environment which is based on the Educator's failure to exercise duty of care over the learners whilst they are in a school environment.
- Breach of employment contract based on for example failure to pay 37% in lieu of benefits, unlawful salary deductions, \ termination of employment etc.
- Damage to property arising from vehicle accidents and or damage to vehicles due to infrastructure collapse etc.

Labour Matters – Appointments

90% of the labour cases are brought against the Department by the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) whilst 10% is brought by the candidates who applied for appointments.

The causes of this litigation are amongst others:

- lack of consensus amongst the SGB members or alternatively between the HOD and the SGB
- undue influence by the Principal, Circuit Managers or District Managers.
- Non-compliance with the Promotion of Access to Justice Administration Act, Act 3 of 2000
- Different interpretation of Employment Equity Profile, Circular no. 106 of 2024.
- Appointment of Educators who do not meet requirements
- Creating legitimate expectation – Lengthy contract appointments

Recommendation on how to avoid litigation

Educators must exercise the duty of care on the learners when they are in the school environment.

The officials responsible must put reasonable measures in place to ensure that the learners do not get injured at school. Assault is a criminal offence and must be reported by the relevant officials to the South African Police Services.

The School Principal or the delegated authority must prepare a detailed report immediately after the incident and where necessary open a criminal case or submit the report to Legal Services upon request.

Non-compliance with Legislation and Departmental policies

