



➤ Provincial Winner

Excellence in Primary School Teaching

Name: Mr Dillion Henwood
School: Elnor Primary School, Elsie's River
District: Metro North Education District

Mr Dillon Henwood is a young, pioneering and dedicated Intermediate and Senior Phase teacher at Elnor Primary School. His school is situated in the poverty-stricken area of Elsie's River in the Cape Flats region. Mr Henwood delves into the world of each learner and goes beyond the call of duty to ensure that quality education ensues.

He maintains that constructive learning is shaped by a variety of psychological, social, and contextual aspects which need to be duly considered when teaching. His chief focus has been to improve learners' access to curricular content by addressing mitigating and contextual factors that impinge on academic progress. Mr Henwood has poured himself into starting a feeding programme and food garden at school that serves approximately 400 meals per day to vulnerable learners and community members. This is aligned with the school's regular feeding scheme programme. His *Dignity Programme* also provides toiletries, sanitary ware, stationery and clothing to underprivileged learners and families on an ongoing basis.

Mr Henwood has built an extensive network of professional partnerships with a range of non-governmental organisations and social development agencies which he utilises optimally for the benefit of the learners and broader community.

To ensure that every learner's academic needs are met, Mr Henwood has implemented a straddling approach to teaching and learning. Learners are grouped according to their levels, irrespective of their grade level, and are supported with work related to their ability level while completing grade requirements. This way of teaching is made possible by regular collaboration and a positive relationship with teachers from all grades and phases. This is a unique method where, through differentiated teaching, each learner's needs can be met.

Furthermore, Mr Henwood developed a *Quarterly Learner Achievement Document* (QLAD), a monitoring tool that enables learners to set academic targets and monitor and measure their own performance and progress, quarterly. By analysing results, it enables him to identify learning barriers to render the necessary support. Mr Henwood strengthens his learners' ability with English, which is their second or third language, in most cases, by hosting 40-minute reading sessions, after school, daily.

Learner self-esteem is enhanced by the Power of Yet, which has a growth mindset approach to learning. Journaling of daily thoughts is used as a powerful tool to support learners to communicate their thoughts and feelings in a safe, private manner. He responds to his learners'



Western Cape
Government

FOR YOU

Education

journaling, daily, which makes them feel safe and cared for. Mr Henwood is the School-based Support Team coordinator and has elicited the support of the Learning Support educator and external stakeholders to upskill and enhance his knowledge to assist both his colleagues and learners.

Parents and learners are involved in their daily learning and assessments. Learners are encouraged to journal their thoughts on their progress and engage in self-reflection. Answer keys are provided to assist parents when supporting preparation for assessments and the completion of homework. Mr Henwood further uplifts parents and the community by offering parent workshops and skills training to parents and the community every term.

Mr Henwood shows a keen interest in his learners' extra and co-curricular achievements. He is often on the side-line encouraging, cheering and offering support. He arranges school tours aligned to the CAPS content which he also aligns to the varied interests of the learners. Excursions to sport stadiums and universities speak of his desire to develop holistic and well-rounded learners. Truancy and absenteeism are addressed by him visiting learner homes before school, as early as 06:00, and collecting learners who have absented themselves from school.

He incorporates the Fourth Industrial Revolution focused approach to teaching and learning, exposing his learners to using technology, even when the school funds were not available. He purchased his own data projector and laptop which he uses to prepare his learners to become global

citizens. Mr Henwood initiated a Science Technology Engineering and Maths club with his class, as his school does not offer it, yet. He has also partnered with Stellenbosch University's Engineering faculty to expose his learners to career opportunities beyond primary and high school.

Mr Henwood started a school newspaper and equipped his learners not only to write articles but to take photographs at school and community events. Community social issues of substance abuse and gangsterism are addressed by exposing learners to positive role models and offering mentoring sessions to learners. Rehabilitated community members are invited to school to encourage positive habits and behaviour. Visits to juvenile facilities are part of school excursions as a preventative approach to gangsterism.

It is further noteworthy that Mr Henwood's positive influence and values-driven education goes beyond the classroom. Learners are regularly engaged with community, beach and field clean up campaigns and clean and neat environments are encouraged and rewarded. He partnered with the Department of Agriculture to create a vegetable garden on the school grounds. The community has access to the vegetable garden as there is no fence around the school perimeter. This initiative also created a cleaner, waste free area as the community no longer dumps waste on the field.

In conclusion, Mr Henwood epitomises teaching learners to dream beyond their circumstances. He sets the example and shows a genuine, sincere love for both the learners and the community he serves.