



➤ Provincial Winner

Excellence in Special Needs Leadership

Name: Mr Taswald Andrews
School: Florida School of Skills, Ruyterwacht
District: Metro North Education District

Mr Andrews leads by example. He is a lifelong learner who motivates his staff, creating opportunities for learning to his teachers and a culture of learning at his school. He embodies the example as he continues to learn in order to serve. He made the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) mantra that of his staff and allowed his staff to follow suit.

Mr Andrews has demonstrated that he uses the Quality Management System and PERMIS processes to develop and upskill his staff. He indicated that his grounds personnel are all female; hence, they are expected to deliver on tasks that are traditionally seen as male-oriented. However, he ensured that they developed those skills to deliver on all their mandates, for example varnishing the skirtings in the school building.

He personally uses the school's vision to recognise the strengths of his staff. He then highlights that as a leader and shows the example of embracing professional development as a tool to further the vision of the school. He obtained an instructional leadership course at Stellenbosch University and upon the achievement translated that into practice at his school. This he does

by letting the staff take ownership of their own development. He contracts them into what they want to achieve and because they are buying into the concept of development as their own, he is able to demonstrate the success of allowing staff to further their own development because it's important for them.

His systems are responsive at the school. He was able to demonstrate that the school responds when needed. So, the recent taxi strikes were highlighted and although learners were not able to come to school, he communicated with all learners via WhatsApp's classrooms group. He generated a message to all and requested the class teachers to share the same message with everyone. Homework was made available on this platform. He has also instituted online courses for the learners which they are able to access anytime and anywhere. That then mitigated the COVID-19 pandemic effects as well as those of the recent taxi strikes.

He believes that all members of staff are equal and does not allow members to be excluded due to designation, so much so that staff development is for all members as he believes that all staff impacts the learners.



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The wellness of all staff was evident in his presentation. The wellness was extended to learners as well. To this end, he has a dedicated time when staff may enter his office to discuss matters of importance to them. The only time Mr Andrews is not available is when he has to be in a meeting, or during break time. Mr Andrews spends all his breaks amongst the learners as he believes that is when he is able to connect with them.

Mr Andrews head-hunted a teacher that he needed to assist the school to become much more proficient in technology. To this end, the Maths Curriculum Online programme was adapted to the needs of his school and is currently effectively utilised at the school. He ensured that the best teacher for the job was recruited; that ensured that he was able to create the best product for the learners of the Florida School of Skills. This is a testament to the fact that he would purposefully recruit personnel that can deliver on what the needs of the school are.

Mr Andrews was dressed in a dress code that showed his commitment to make everybody feel included at his school. He took the WCED's values and utilised some to make it the values of Florida School of Skills - thus he was able to demonstrate that Florida School of Skills live the Innovation, Caring, Accountability, Respect, and Excellence (ICARE) values out at the school. The learners and staff took ownership thereof with him as the captain. The values are weaved into the everyday programme of the school. Learners and staff are equally involved in the lived ICARE motto of Florida School of Skills.

He has a succession plan for his school. He included post level 1 staff on an extended School Management Team. He develops the younger teachers. This

creates the attitude of "taking ownership of the school" but also ensures that the younger teachers are able to develop and show acumen. He allows the staff to lead meetings and will co-facilitate only when needed.

He believes that a principal needs to advocate the brand of his/her school. He is enthusiastic about being the face of Florida School of Skills.

He incorporated inclusive education policies and his training in Instructional Leadership as a way of mentoring and coaching. He is a strong believer that a person's circumstances should not determine their destination. He stresses this to his learners and staff.

He places a high premium on shared responsibility. He has consistently demonstrated that he is a servant leader. To this end one example is worth noting: one of his learners was chosen to represent the school in an athletics meeting. The parents were not able to accompany her to the meeting. Mr Andrews took it upon himself to collect the learner, stayed with the learner for the duration of the athletics meeting and after the athletics meeting took the learner home. THAT IS AN EXAMPLE OF SERVING OTHERS.

Mr Andrews indicated that he started as a teacher at a special school, became a Learning Support Adviser, then a vice principal, acting principal and then a principal at an ordinary school. Throughout the time he was at the ordinary schools, he yearned to come back to special needs schooling, and when he took the position at Florida School of Skills it was a natural transition back to the space in education where he felt most at ease: Because Special Needs Education CHOSE him.

