

# YO SCHOOL

M A G A Z I N E

**MID-YEAR EXAMS:**  
**WHEN STRESS STARTS**  
**FEELING LIKE TOO MUCH**



**WHY MATHEMATICS**  
**MATTERS MORE**  
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TURNING SOUTH AFRICA'S  
MATHEMATICS CRISIS INTO  
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**SMART MONEY HABITS:**

SAVINGS TIPS FOR  
LEARNERS AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE

**SUCCESS LOVES SPEED –**  
**DELAYS KILL DREAMS !**



**INFORMING MINDS.**  
**INSPIRING FUTURES.**  
**BUILDING AFRICA.**



Yo School  
Magazine



Yo School  
Magazine



### **Editor's Note:**

In South Africa, the month of **MAY** every year, is recognized as **Africa Month** and is linked directly to supporting and strengthening African countries and communities. The African Union (AU) this year dedicated Africa Day towards accelerating the implementation of the Africa Continental Free Trade Areas. It also promotes programmes supporting the International Decade of Indigenous Languages as declared by UNESCO, to highlight the significance of promoting the use of Indigenous African languages.

*Yo School Magazine* has a vision to promote and bring dialogue to schools about issues that affect young people. *Yo School Magazine* is on a mission to develop and encourage learners to celebrate the good, applaud excellence, welcome growth, strive to be better individuals, want more knowledge, discourage bad and counter-productive behaviour and learners that want to be great SOUTH AFRICANS.

*Yo School Magazine* is a platform that learners in all schools can make use of to write their stories.

### ***Words of Wisdom for the Matric Class of 2026:***

**Term 3**, have fun a bit, it's your Matric Dance, but pass your preliminary examinations, all the marks count,

**Term 4**, Write your examinations and pass! Do away with peer pressure; choose the learners you want to associate with, peer pressure will not get the work done!!!

*Yo School Magazine* wishes the Matric Class of 2026 all the best with the Mid-Term examinations, **DO GOOD! Enjoy the read, give us feedback on our latest issue, I am Mzukona Mantshontsho, Call or WhatsApp: +27 73 855 0700, email: [mzukona@nyakaza.org.za](mailto:mzukona@nyakaza.org.za)**

# 11th Annual Vita Basadi Awards – Call for Nominations



## 11th ANNUAL VITA BASADI

# Awards

2026

### — CALL FOR NOMINATIONS —

With Women's Month just around the corner, the Gauteng Legislature proudly opens nominations for the 11th Vita Basadi Awards!

**Do you know a woman in your community who is making a real difference?**

A woman who gives her time selflessly, uplifts others, and supports those in need — without expecting anything in return? Now is your chance to recognise her.

Nominate a deserving woman by submitting her name, along with a 300 word motivation outlining the incredible work she does and why she deserves to be honoured.

Nominations are open to women of all ages, backgrounds, cultures, faiths, sexual orientations, and abilities, including women with disabilities.

Nominations for multiple categories are allowed; however, motivations must be specific to each category's criteria.

**Closing Date: Tuesday, 30 June 2026**

Don't miss out! **New Award Categories for 2026:**

- **Innovative Educator Award** – recognising a science teacher who brings the subject to life in an inspiring and innovative way; and
- **Community Builder Award** – celebrating an educator who has made a meaningful impact on the academic growth and development of learners.

For the Young Dignitary Award, nominations are open to a girl child in either primary or secondary school. All nominations must be validated by the school to avoid misrepresentation.

The Guardian Award is open to women working as security guards, police and military officers, law enforcement officials, firefighters, lifeguards, and emergency service personnel.





Winners will be honoured at the prestigious Vita Basadi Awards Ceremony, hosted by Gauteng Legislature Speaker Hon. Morakane Mosupye, this August.

To nominate: visit [www.gpl.gov.za](http://www.gpl.gov.za) | Gauteng Legislature Facebook page | Contact Zanele on 063 501 5505 or Email [ZMTsweni@gpl.gov.za](mailto:ZMTsweni@gpl.gov.za)

*Celebrate the women who inspire us – nominate today!*



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TO NOMINATE

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[www.gpl.gov.za](http://www.gpl.gov.za)

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A woman who gives her time selflessly, uplifts others, and supports those in need — without expecting anything in return?

Now is your chance to recognise her. **Nominate a deserving woman by submitting her name, along with a 300-word motivation outlining the incredible work she does and why she deserves to be honoured.**

**Nominations are open to women of all ages, backgrounds, cultures, faiths, sexual orientations, and abilities, including women with disabilities.**

**Nominations for multiple categories are allowed; however, motivations must be specific to each category's criteria.**

Nominators are also welcomed to upload any additional documentation to enhance their motivations on platforms such as Google Drive/iCloud/OneDrive/DropBox/etc and paste a link into the form.

**Closing date: Tuesday, 30 June 2026**

**Don't miss out! New Award Categories for 2026:**

**Innovative Educator Award – recognising a science teacher who brings the subject to life in an inspiring and innovative way; and this category celebrates outstanding female educators who leverage creative, non-traditional, and groundbreaking methods to advance academic growth, community development, and learner engagement.**

**For the Young Dignitary Award, nominations are open to a girl child in either primary or secondary school. This category is strictly open to a girl child in either primary or secondary school (up to 15 years old). It honours school-going learners who act as positive role models, excel in extracurricular activities, and support their peers through tutoring or peer-to-peer counselling. All nominations require official school validation to prevent misrepresentation.**

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Winners will be honoured at the prestigious Vita Basadi Awards Ceremony, hosted by Gauteng Legislature Speaker Hon. Morakane Mosupye, this August 2026.

***To nominate: Contact Ms. Zanele Mtsweni on 0635015505 / Email [zmtsweni@gpl.gov.za](mailto:zmtsweni@gpl.gov.za)***

## Mid-Year Exams: When Stress Starts Feeling Like Too Much



By Roshni Parboo-Seetha

June's mid-year exams are here, and for many learners, this can feel like one of the most overwhelming times of the school year.

At *SADAG*, we hear it all the time:

*"I've studied but I still don't feel ready."*

*"What if I fail?"*

*"Everyone else seems to be coping except me."*

*"I'm so tired, but I can't stop studying."*

If this sounds familiar, you're not alone.

A little stress before exams is normal; it can even help motivate you. But when that stress turns into panic, sleepless nights, shutting down emotionally, or feeling like you just can't cope anymore, that's when we need to pay attention. For many learners, exam stress isn't just about the tests. It's about pressure from family, fear of disappointing teachers, comparing yourself to friends, worrying about your future, and trying to carry all of that while still just being a young person figuring life out. That's a lot.

## **What Exam Stress Can Actually Look Like**

Stress doesn't always look like crying over textbooks.

Sometimes it looks like:

Staring at your books for hours and not taking anything in

Feeling sick before an exam

Snapping at people for no reason

Wanting to sleep all day...or not being able to sleep at all

Procrastinating because starting feels overwhelming

Feeling numb or emotionally checked out

Thinking *"What's the point? I'm going to fail anyway."*

And sometimes, for some learners, the pressure can feel much heavier than "just stress."

## **What Can Help?**

### **1. Stop trying to study everything at once**

Your brain is not a machine. Break your work into smaller, manageable chunks. One chapter. One section. One task at a time.

### **2. Sleep is not being lazy**

We know the temptation to stay up until 2am "just to finish one more chapter." But sleep helps your brain process, store information, and cope emotionally.

### **3. Move your body**

Even a short walk, stretching, dancing in your room, or stepping outside for fresh air can help reduce Anxiety and reset your brain.

### **4. Talk to someone**

You do not have to carry this alone. A parent, teacher, school counsellor, friend, sibling, or trusted adult can help.

## **For Parents and Caregivers: What Learners Need From You**

Sometimes what learners need most isn't another reminder to study?

They need:

reassurance

patience

Encouragement

someone to notice when they're struggling

Instead of asking *"Did you study?"* every day, try asking:

**"How are you coping?"**

**"What feels hardest right now?"**

**"How can I support you?"**

That conversation can change everything

### **When Stress Becomes Something More Serious**

If a learner is withdrawing, crying often, not sleeping, having panic attacks, talking about hopelessness, or saying things like:

*"I can't do this anymore."*

*"Everyone would be better off without me."*

Please take it seriously.

This is not "attention-seeking."

This is not "just exam stress."

This is a call for support.

### **Our Message to Learners**

Your marks matter. But **you matter more.**

One exam does not define your worth, your intelligence, or your future.

Be kind to yourself. Ask for help early. Support your friends. Check in on each other.

And if things feel too heavy, please reach out.

### **SADAG Support:**

Suicide Crisis Line: **0800 567 567**

[www.sadag.org](http://www.sadag.org)

**It's okay to not Be Okay. Asking for help is a sign of strength.**

# Why Mathematics Matters More Than You Think: Turning South Africa's Mathematics Crisis into Opportunity



By Dr. Pakeezah Rajab

South Africa's mathematics crisis is real and urgent. Our Grade 5 and 9 learners consistently rank in the bottom five countries internationally on the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and this is despite the fact that most other countries test Grade 4 and 8 learners.

Too many learners are avoiding pure mathematics in favour of mathematical literacy, and in doing so, are quietly closing doors to careers in science, technology, engineering, economics, and medicine before they have even fully opened.

## The Real Challenges: It's Not Just About Being "A Maths Person"

Perhaps the biggest misconception about mathematics is that success depends almost entirely on intelligence, or how smart you are when it comes to maths and sums. In reality, yes, ability matters, but it is only one piece of a much larger puzzle. Equally important are how learners' study, how they feel about mathematics, and the environments in which they learn.

Mathematics anxiety is one of the most underestimated barriers in South African classrooms. Many learners experience genuine fear and dread at the prospect of a mathematics test, not because they lack ability, but because nobody has ever helped them manage that fear.

When anxiety goes unaddressed, even capable learners underperform, disengage, and switch to mathematical literacy because it feels safer.

Attitudes matter too. Learners who believe mathematics is useful, who find meaning in it, and who feel a sense of belonging in the mathematics classroom are significantly more likely to persist through difficulty. When the subject feels irrelevant or hostile, disengagement follows, regardless of ability. The shortage of qualified mathematics teachers compounds everything. A learner who never experiences an inspiring, confident, well-prepared mathematics teacher may never discover what they are truly capable of.

## What Learners Can Do?

Your mindset and your study habits matter more than you think:

- Do not avoid mathematics because it is difficult. If you reflect on your maths history, often where you once struggled is exactly where you've had the opportunity to grow the most.
- Develop a study routine. Mathematics requires consistent practice, not last-minute cramming. Little and often is far more effective.
- Seek help early. If you do not understand something, ask your teacher, a peer, or look for resources online. Falling behind in mathematics is easy to prevent but hard to recover from.
- Know that intelligence is not fixed for life. Research consistently shows that with the right effort and strategies; mathematical ability can be developed. You are not "a maths person."

## What Teachers Can Do?

Teachers are a powerful lever for change in this crisis. The research is clear: how you teach matters as much as what you teach. A few evidence-based shifts can make an enormous difference:

- Create a low-threat classroom. Mistakes should be celebrated as learning opportunities, not sources of shame. Reducing the fear of failure is one of the most effective ways to improve engagement and performance.
- Build on strengths. Know your learners. Some are deep processors who need time to think; others are more impulsive and competitive. Adjust your teaching to accommodate different learning styles.
- Make mathematics meaningful. Connect it to real-world problems, careers, and everyday life. Relevance builds motivation.
- Explicitly teach study skills. Many learners simply do not know how to study mathematics effectively. Teaching them to plan, self-monitor, and seek help is as important as teaching content.

## What Parents and School Governing Bodies Can Do?

Parents often do not realise how much their attitudes toward mathematics shape their children's beliefs. If you regularly say "I was never good at maths either," you are inadvertently giving your child permission to disengage. **Instead:**

- Talk positively about mathematics and its value for future opportunities.
- Encourage persistence. When your child struggles, resist the temptation to immediately suggest they switch to mathematical literacy. Struggle is part of learning.
- Advocate at the school level. SGBs should push for consistent, qualified mathematics teachers and resist frequent teacher changes that disrupt continuity.
- Support enrichment activities such as maths clubs, competitions, and tutoring programmes, which can dramatically change a learner's relationship with the subject.

## What the Department of Basic Education Can Do?

Systemic change requires systemic action. The DBE cannot leave this crisis to individual schools and teachers alone. They need to:

- Prioritise the training and retention of qualified mathematics teachers. This means better salaries, meaningful mentorship, and subject-specific professional development, not just generic workshops for generic teachers.
- Reconsider the ease of switching to mathematical literacy. The decision should be deliberate, guided, and based on evidence of what is best for the learner and their future career paths and potential.
- Incorporate psychological support into schools. Mathematics anxiety is a real, diagnosable phenomenon. School counsellors and teachers need training to identify and support anxious learners.
- Invest in South African-specific research. International studies are valuable, but what works in Finland or Singapore does not always translate to Alexandra or Soweto. We need more evidence that speaks to our context.
- Build national pride around mathematics. Campaigns that celebrate mathematical achievement, spotlight role models, and connect the subject to national development can shift culture over time.

## The Bottom Line

Improving South Africa's mathematics outcomes is not about finding the "naturally gifted" learners or simply teaching content more efficiently. It is about recognising that mathematical success is shaped by multiple factors in our ecosystem, many of which we have the power to change.

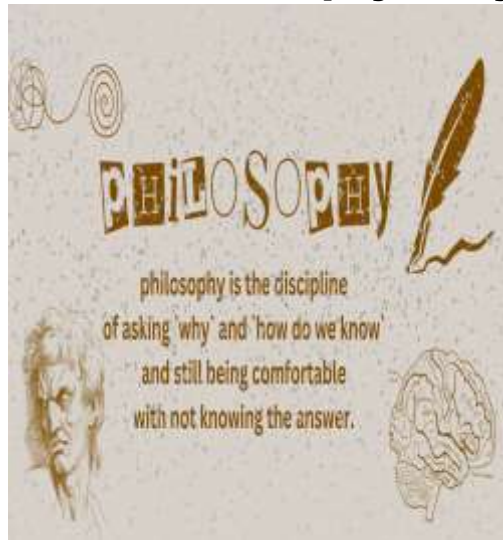
Intelligence matters, but how you study, how you feel about the subject, what you believe about your own ability, and the support you receive all contribute significantly to the outcome.

Every learner has the potential to succeed in mathematics. The question is not whether they can, but whether we are collectively giving them the tools, support, and belief they need.

With the right approach, at every level of the system, we can transform this crisis into an opportunity. South Africa's future depends on it.

**Dr. Pakeezah Rajab is a Research Psychologist, whose doctoral research at the University of Pretoria focused on identifying the psychological factors that improve mathematics achievement in Grade 9 learners in Gauteng.**

## What is Philosophy in my perspective?



By Lesego Digaoto – Grade 11

When people hear the word philosophy, they often think of ancient thinkers, complex theories, and difficult books. But from my perspective, philosophy is much simpler and much closer to everyday life than that. It is asking big questions and using logic to think them through, no lab experiments, just reasoning.

To me, philosophy is the habit of asking why. It starts with curiosity: questioning the world around us, our choices, and even our own beliefs. It is not about having all the answers, the art lies in the questions, the eagerness to seek for what is known as the truth even though we know that chances are we might not even find it.

In school environments where we focus so much on results and right answers, philosophy offers something different. It reminds us that not every important question has a single correct response.

Instead, it encourages discussion, reflection, and open-minded thinking. Whether we are deciding what is fair, what is true, or what really matters, philosophy quietly guides the way we think. What makes philosophy especially meaningful to me is how practical it is. It is not limited to textbooks or classrooms; it shows up in everyday decisions. The way we treat others, how we respond to challenges, and how we define success are all influenced by how we think. In this sense, philosophy becomes a tool for living, not just learning.

Philosophy also plays a role in self-discovery. By questioning the world, we begin to understand ourselves better, our values, our beliefs, and the kind of people we want to become. It challenges us to grow, to consider our assumptions, and to see things from a different perspective.

As a learner, I see philosophy as something powerful yet often overlooked. It teaches us not just what to think, but how to think.

And in a fast-changing world, that may be one of the most important skills we can develop. In the end philosophy is not just about understanding life, it is about learning how to live it with intention, awareness, and purpose.

Keep it in mind that philosophy is the discipline of asking `why` and `how do we know` and still being comfortable with not knowing the answer.

## **Fight at Local High School Disrupted by Pepper Spray Incident**



By Sonia Kakaza – Grade 11

A fight between two students broke out during break time at Sgodiphola Secondary School causing panic across the school grounds.

The argument between the Grade 10 and Grade 9 learners quickly drew a large crowd of students. In the middle of the commotion, someone anonymously in the crowd spray peppered the crowd which quickly spread through the crowd.

Many learners began coughing and rubbing their eyes due to the spray. One female learner fainted after inhaling the chemical and was helped by staff. Others were taken to a safe open area to get fresh air.

One Educator Mbhele stepped in and managed to stop the fight. School Staff then called for medical assistance and cleared the area.

There is an ongoing investigation into how the pepper spray got onto school premises and who used it.

Management reminded learners that bringing harmful substances to the school is against the rules and can put everyone at risk. Classes resumed later after the area was ventilated and students were checked by staff.

## **Strong leadership, growing opportunities, and a shared commitment to excellence – Sgodiphola Secondary School**



By Samantha Ngwenya – Grade 11

The future of a school is not built by chance – it is built by vision, discipline, and the determination of those who refuse to settle for less. At Sgodiphola Secondary School (SSS), a spirit of progress is steadily shaping everyday school life. What makes this transformation remarkable is the commitment shown by the Executive Representative Council of Learners (RCL) members, who have taken an active role in promoting discipline, order, and responsibility throughout the school.

Through regular patrols and their visible presence on the school grounds, they help ensure a culture of respect and order is maintained. Their leadership has become an important force in creating an environment where learners can focus, grow and succeed.

Beyond maintain order, SSS is also making meaningful strides in sport. Sport is no longer treated as a mere extracurricular activity, but as an essential part of the school's development.

With the guidance of the Executive RCL and the support of school leadership, sporting activities are being taken more seriously and are receiving the attention they deserve. This renewed commitment is already creating enthusiasm among learners and strengthening school spirit.

One of the most inspiring achievements of the Executive RCL is their ability to help secure sponsorships for the school. Their efforts demonstrate leadership that goes beyond words. By seeking opportunities and support from outside the school, they are helping to create better conditions and broader opportunities for every learner.

These positive developments are made possible through the collective efforts of the Executive RCL, the Principal, the administrative staff and the School Governing Body. Together, they are laying a foundation for upcoming changes that promise to uplift SSS even further.

SSS is becoming more than just a place for learning; it is becoming a place of purpose, ambition, and progress. With strong leadership, growing opportunities, and a shared commitment to excellence, the school is moving confidently toward a brighter future

## **Savings Tips for Learners and Young People**



By John Skosana,

*Things to Teach Your Kids about Money*

### **Start Small, Start Now**

Saving isn't about how much you earn — it's about how early you begin. Even if you only save R20 a week, the habit matters more than the amount. Time and consistency are your biggest allies because of compound growth — when your savings earn interest, and then that interest starts earning interest too.

### **Pay Yourself First**

Before you spend on data, clothes, or entertainment, set aside a small portion for yourself — your future self. Whether it's 5% or 10% of any money you receive (allowance, bursary refund, part-time job income), put it into a savings account first. Treat it like a non-negotiable "expense."

### **Set Clear Goals**

Money without a goal disappears fast. Write down what you're saving for — maybe a laptop, your driver's license, or your first business venture. Knowing why you're saving keeps you motivated and helps you make smarter spending choices.

### **Differentiate Needs from Wants**

One of the hardest lessons is learning to say no — not to others, but to yourself. Needs are things you must have (food, transport, study materials). Wants are things you like to have (designer shoes, takeaways). When you prioritise needs, you free up money to save for your goals.

### **Use the Right Tools**

Open a low-fee savings or youth account with your bank or a mobile app. Some apps even let you open "goal pockets" where you can name your savings targets (like "New Phone" or "Emergency Fund"). Compare interest rates and fees — they matter!

### **Avoid the Debt Trap**

Credit can seem tempting, but it often locks you into paying more later. Before borrowing, ask: "Will this make me money or cost me money?" Borrowing to buy a phone or sneakers costs you money. Borrowing to start a small side hustle could make you money — but still, borrow carefully.

### **Make Saving a Team Sport**

Join or form a youth savings club. Saving as a group keeps you accountable, builds discipline, and can even

lead to bigger opportunities like joint investments or business start-ups.

### **Learn About Money Early**

Financial literacy is a skill — just like maths or coding. Follow financial content creators, attend youth entrepreneurship workshops, and read simple personal finance books. The more you understand money, the better you'll use it.

### **Reward Yourself the Smart Way**

When you hit a savings milestone, celebrate — but wisely. Instead of blowing your savings, reward yourself with something small or reinvest in something useful (like an online course or business idea).

### **Think Long-Term**

Your 20s are for building, not flexing. Start with saving and then move to investing as your income grows. Remember: financial freedom isn't about having everything — it's about having options.

### **Final Word**

Saving is not a punishment — it's an act of empowerment. Every rand you save today is a small seed planted for your future independence. Whether you're still in school, at varsity, or starting out in your first job, you already have what it takes to build a secure financial future: discipline, patience, and purpose.

*John Skosana is Chartered Accountant (SA) Managing Director, JMS Professional Services (Pty) Ltd.*

## **DO NOT fear FAILURE!**



By Hiten Keshave

At some point in your life, you may have experienced that shivering moment when...”I have this idea, BUT I don’t know if it will work” or “I want to do this, but I am not good enough because of my past fallouts”...Let me tell you this: Failure is the beginning to your success! In the journey of an entrepreneur, things are unlikely to always be smooth sailing i.e. an entrepreneur’s life is about having fun and always learning! Instead of looking at our past failures as defeats, rather absorb them as “learning curves” and “experience” obtained to be successful in the future.

As we drive a vehicle, and end up at an unexpected dead-end, our instinct is to make a U-turn and find the next road to our destination. This very principle applies in entrepreneurship – every dead end means a new pathway to future success. Yes, at times it may be painful, but consider the fact you have learnt what bumps and potholes you’ve fallen in on that road, so that on the next road, these will not be repeated. Essentially, you have prepared yourself to do better in your next journey!

So why let the fear of failure demoralise you from achieving your dreams and goals? There are many examples of successful people who have failed in their journeys, two of the most popular being Warren Buffet and Richard Branson – the former rejected by Harvard University and the latter falling out in High School. Now imagine, had these two not pursued their dreams and grinded at it, would they be where they are today?

### **SO HOW DO WE OVERCOME THIS FEAR OF FAILURE IN ORDER TO PURSUE OUR DREAMS AND GOALS?**

Firstly, accept that failure is a part of life. No success happens overnight without hurdles and stumbling blocks. It’s these very hurdles and stumbling blocks that give us the experience of not repeating mistakes for future success. Had it not been for my attempt to start a business, I would not have been able to successfully sell 2 of my 3 businesses I started.

Secondly, failing in business is not the equivalent to who you are as a human being (assuming things are done with a clear conscious). I once personally experienced this, where I attempted starting a business, could not get it going and needed to go back into the workplace... to be told by recruitment agencies that I am “behind” in experience to my colleagues. My response – what I have learnt, none of my colleagues have, so don’t judge apples with pears! Had it not been for my perseverance, I would not have been appointed CFO for a multinational at the raw age of 29.

Finally, failures are there because bigger opportunities lie ahead for us. So, do you want to miss those opportunities because you failed previously? I would not think so... Things happen for a reason in life! Do not internalize failures and let it cripple you from achieving your goals and dreams!

## Why universities reject you and what comes next?



By Simphiwe Bangani

Every year, when matric results are announced in January, South Africans erupt in celebration. Families ululate, neighbors cheer and thousands of learners feel that spark of hope that says, “This is it. My life starts now.” □ Bags are packed, course lists are checked and some begin planning for the campus life they have always imagined.

But for many, the excitement quickly slips into uncertainty. One moment they are full of dreams, the next they are stuck waiting for a call that never comes, an email that never arrives, or provisional offers that are declined as their final results do not measure up to the competition.

Twenty-year-old Yonwabani Madikane is one of those learners.

Today, while many of his former classmates are in lecture halls, Yonwabani spends his days doing house chores, looking after his siblings and guarding cattle.

“Like others, I wanted to go to university and start building my future, hoping to inspire someone out there,” he says.

Yonwabani did receive an offer from the University of Fort Hare, but it was not for a course he chose himself.

“My cousin applied for me and I got an offer to study Chartered Accountancy. Sadly, accounting is not a field I want to explore, and I do not want to find myself failing at university,” he explains.

Public universities are projected to offer about 235 000 first-year spaces. That is roughly three places for every ten students who wrote matric in 2025.

Higher Education Minister Buti Manamela highlighted a national shortfall in available places at universities and colleges. The public system (universities, TVET and Community Education and Training Colleges) can take about 525 000 of the 850 000 candidates who wrote matric in 2025. In simple terms: even if every learner achieved a Bachelor’s pass, only around six out of every ten would find a seat.

In the Eastern Cape, South Africa’s poorest province by poverty headcount, 103 975 learners wrote matric in 2024. Only 45 662 earned a Bachelor’s pass that could get them into university.

With the odds stacked like this, many learners hedge their bets and apply to as many universities and colleges as they can, often hundreds of kilometers from home. That means leaving behind family, friends, teachers and community support, and relying almost entirely on the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) to get by. NSFAS will only fund about 800 000 qualifying students in 2026.

## **Why universities say no?**

According to Nelson Mandela University's access and enrolment manager, Johanna Messiah, the Gqeberha (formerly Port Elizabeth) based institution had already received more than 200 000 applications for first-year intake by May. The university only has space for about 8 000 first- years.

Messiah explains that Mandela University, like the University of Johannesburg and others, uses a provisional acceptance system. Students who meet the minimum requirements when they apply receive a conditional offer. Once final matric results are out in January, applicants are ranked from the top to the worst performers. Only the top performers are admitted, depending on space in each programme.

“With the new system, there is no guarantee that a learner will be accepted, even if they applied early,” she says. Getting the minimum Admission Points Score (APS) for university may get you conditionally accepted, but it is no guarantee that you will get a place come January. To get in, you have to rise above the crowd during your matric exams. A Bachelor's Pass only is not enough.

“In terms of capacity, we would need a very big university that could accept every eligible student, but we cannot take more than we can handle,” she says. Her point underscores the need for new institutions and greater investment in higher education. However, public higher education budgets are not growing and universities are increasingly dependent on students whose main funding source is NSFAS.

## **School principal sees another angle**

Mxolisi Mavenge, acting principal of Sukude Senior Secondary School in rural Ntabankulu, Eastern Cape, guided his school to a 93.9 percent matric pass rate in 2024. He believes that a lack of proper career guidance is a major reason many post-matriculants struggle to find their feet.

“Some learners choose careers they do not qualify for. Others do not have the skills needed to find work. Limited access to finance, technology and network coverage makes applying difficult. Many also suffer from a lack of motivation and inspiration, unrealistic expectations and isolating themselves instead of reaching out to people already doing what they want to do,” he says.

## **Finding the missing pieces**

Mavenge believes that better career guidance would help learners choose programmes wisely. “The Department of Basic Education should strengthen partnerships between high schools and higher education institutions, and provide counselling so learners can tackle upcoming challenges,” he says.

Research published in the African Journal of Career Development found that learners who received career guidance from Grade 9 felt it made a real difference. That alone shows how important early guidance is.

Messiah's message to current matriculates is simple: do not look down on TVET colleges. “The country needs technical students. Going to a TVET college does not mean you are not intellectually gifted,” she says. Mavenge encourages learners to set realistic goals, seek help when applying for higher education and stay focused even when things do not go according to plan. Yonwabani has his own message for his peers: “Work hard and never stop dreaming, no matter how tough it gets.”

Former president Nelson Mandela once said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world. If South Africa can sharpen that weapon and open more doors, today's youth might still change the world, even if their dreams are on hold for now.

*Article provided courtesy of the Khulani! Youth Journalism project*

## Why we need Physical Education in our Schools?



By Nkcubeko Mkhwebula – Grade 11

Physical Education (PE) is often seen as just a break from “real” schoolwork—a time to run around, plays games, and relax.

But that idea misses something important. PE actually plays a huge role in helping students grow, not just physically, but mentally and socially too.

Think about how much time students spend sitting in classrooms every day. PE gives them a chance to move, stretch, and actually use their bodies.

That movement isn’t just fun—it’s necessary. Regular physical activity helps keep the body healthy, improves fitness, and reduces the risk of problems like obesity. In a world where screens take up so much of our time, having a space at school dedicated to movement is more important than ever.

But PE isn’t only about the body—it helps the mind too. When students are active, they often feel less stressed and more relaxed. A good run, a game of soccer, or even a simple workout can clear the mind in a way that sitting at a desk can’t.

After PE, many students find it easier to concentrate and feel more ready to learn. It’s like hitting a reset button during a busy school day.

Another thing that makes PE so valuable is how it brings people together. Whether it’s team sports or group activities, students learn how to work with others, communicate, and support their teammates.

They also learn how to deal with winning and losing, which isn’t always easy. These moments help build character, teaching lessons about respect, patience, and resilience that stay with them long after school. PE can also help students discover what they enjoy. Not everyone loves the same sport, and that’s okay. Some might enjoy running, others dancing, and some might just like staying active in their own way.

The important thing is that PE gives them a chance to try different things and maybe find something they’ll continue doing for the rest of their lives.

It’s easy to think that subjects like math or science matter more, especially when exams come around.

But the truth is, students learn better when they feel good—both physically and mentally. PE supports that balance. It helps students become healthier, happier, and more confident, which ultimately makes them better learners too. In the end, PE isn’t just a “fun period” or a break from work. It’s a key part of education that helps shape well-rounded individuals. Schools shouldn’t treat it as optional—they should see it as essential.

# Mfundo Vilakazi between the roar of Amakhosi and the World Cup Dream!



By Sandile Ndweni – Grade 11

The gates of Kaizer Chiefs village often echo with the expectations of millions, but currently, they are centred on one 20 year old midfielder. Mfundo Vilakazi, the Soweto born talent rose through the Kaizer Chiefs Academy, is negotiating a challenging month of his professional career to date.

## ‘The Impact Player’

Despite being hailed as a ‘generational talent’, Vilakazi’s recent Betway Premiership League (BPL) statistics reveal a player primarily utilized as a late game spark. In his last seven outings, he has only averaged 20 minutes per game, often introduced when the tactical battle is already decided.

Coach Nasreddine Nabi has been vocal about this conservative approach. “Mfundo is still developing physically and tactically”, Nabi explained. “We need to protect him from the high pressure of the BPL until he has the consistency for 90 minute game”. However, the player’s efficiency in limited time is hard to ignore. This season, Vilakazi has contributed 9 points for Kaizer Chiefs FC, scoring crucial winners against Marumo Gallants FC and Sekhukhune United FC.

## Mentality and Social Media Storms

The pressures of fame at a young age recently boiled over on social media. After facing criticism for ‘show boating’ in a loss against Yanga, Vilakazi took the drastic step of deleting his social media apps. “I deleted my Instagram account because people were telling me I don’t deserve to play for Kaizer Chiefs FC. His defiant stance claiming that the same critics will ‘sing his praises’ when he scores – highlights a growing maturity and a focus on the pitch rather than the digital noise.

## The Road to the World Cup in June 2026

While his club role remains a point of contention, Vilakazi’s international trajectory is undeniable. Following a ‘Man of the Match’ performance for Amajita (National Under 20’s) squad in Chile, he is now widely expected to be part of Head Coach Hugo Broos’s squad for the 2026 FIFA World Cup. With Bafana Bafana taking part in the World Cup in June and set to be based in Pachuca, his inclusion of ‘Obrigado’ would mark the arrival of a new era for South African football.

## Future at Naturena

Kaizer Chiefs have sought to end any transfer speculation by ‘locking in the future’; reports indicate Vilakazi’s contract has been extended to June 2028, with some sources even suggesting a long-term commitment until 2031.