



PRINCIPALS ACADEMY TRUST

THE YEAR THAT EDUCATION CHANGED

IMPACT
REPORT
2020/2021

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REFLECTION

Ensuring impact

Reflecting on the impact we had this year, I like to think that we must take what we have learned, know what the core difficulties are and then know what we are going to do about them going forward. Even with the disruption and chaos resulting from the pandemic in schools, there are still some fundamentals which remain clear.

If all pupils in primary schools can achieve more than 50% in the Grade 3 and Grade 6 systemic tests, it will provide them with a good platform off of which to progress and do well in higher grades. In secondary schools, if schools could determine the actual level of understanding in these core subjects in order to understand what level of remedial teaching is required, it could make a real difference in the academic results. So what are we going to do about it?

PAT can partner with really competent non-profits in the field of Foundation Phase teaching to aid in the above. We have done this through the TIME programme, led by Wordworks, and through our own interventions creating stimulating resources in the form of videos, listening activities and songs to make classrooms fun and conducive to learning. Our Teacher Support Programme team has worked really hard at this and received much support from the teachers they are interacting with.

In high schools we have partnered to bring the remedial mathematics programme Reflective Learning into ten schools as a pilot study (read more on page 7).

The contact our coaches have with the 82 principals being coached this year, remains strong and the team provides much needed advice and emotional support during these trying times. There certainly appears to be a Springtime of positivity amongst our team at the moment that reflect that the contact and positive reinforcement is working.

Rick Haw - Trustee and Founder

Resilience at a new level

Education will never be the same. The South African education system had challenges before Covid-19 hit, but as the world, and our country, had to close down business and movement to try and curb the spread of the virus, new challenges soon made themselves known.

In essence, 2020 only had 46 normal school days out of an average of around 200. The estimate from education economist [Martin Gustafsson](#) is that children in the lower socioeconomic groups most likely lost 65% of their contact school days for 2020 and even though the Department of Basic Education trimmed the curriculum, a study has shown that 40% of surveyed principals [indicated](#) that even this was not completed by January 2021.

Principals are faced with the direct Covid-19 challenges (keeping themselves, staff and learners healthy and safe; sanitising and cleaning; reporting of suspected and confirmed cases; making sure learners socially distance; additional workload in terms of administration around pandemic requirements), as well as the indirect challenges (social unrest as the economic impact of the virus is being felt; academic backlog). They have proven incredibly resilient, clearing hurdle after hurdle, addressing issue after issue and we have been with them every step of the way. We thank you for being with us every step of the way as we continue on this journey.

Bruce Probyn - Trustee and Head Coach



PAT BY NUMBERS

82

Number of schools actively coached by PAT's team of 13 coaches.

293

The combined number of years of school leadership experience in the team of principal coaches.

2 096

The number of Reflective Learning (read more on p5) accounts opened in the ten PAT maths catch-up pilot schools.

4 823

Number of desktop charts distributed to Principals Academy Trust (PAT) schools to aid in Foundation Phase learning.

71 668

Number of learners currently registered at the schools being actively coached.

28

The number of schools where the PAT Teacher Support Programme is providing assistance.

45 000

The number of homes where the TIME packs (read more on p5) were distributed by Wordworks in Q1 2021 - an initiative where PAT partnered.

20

Number of schools sponsored directly through PAT to be part of the Wordworks TIME programme.

13

The number of PAT coached principals who have been promoted to circuit manager positions.

248

The number of principals (and deputy principals) that have received PAT mentoring since inception in 2012.

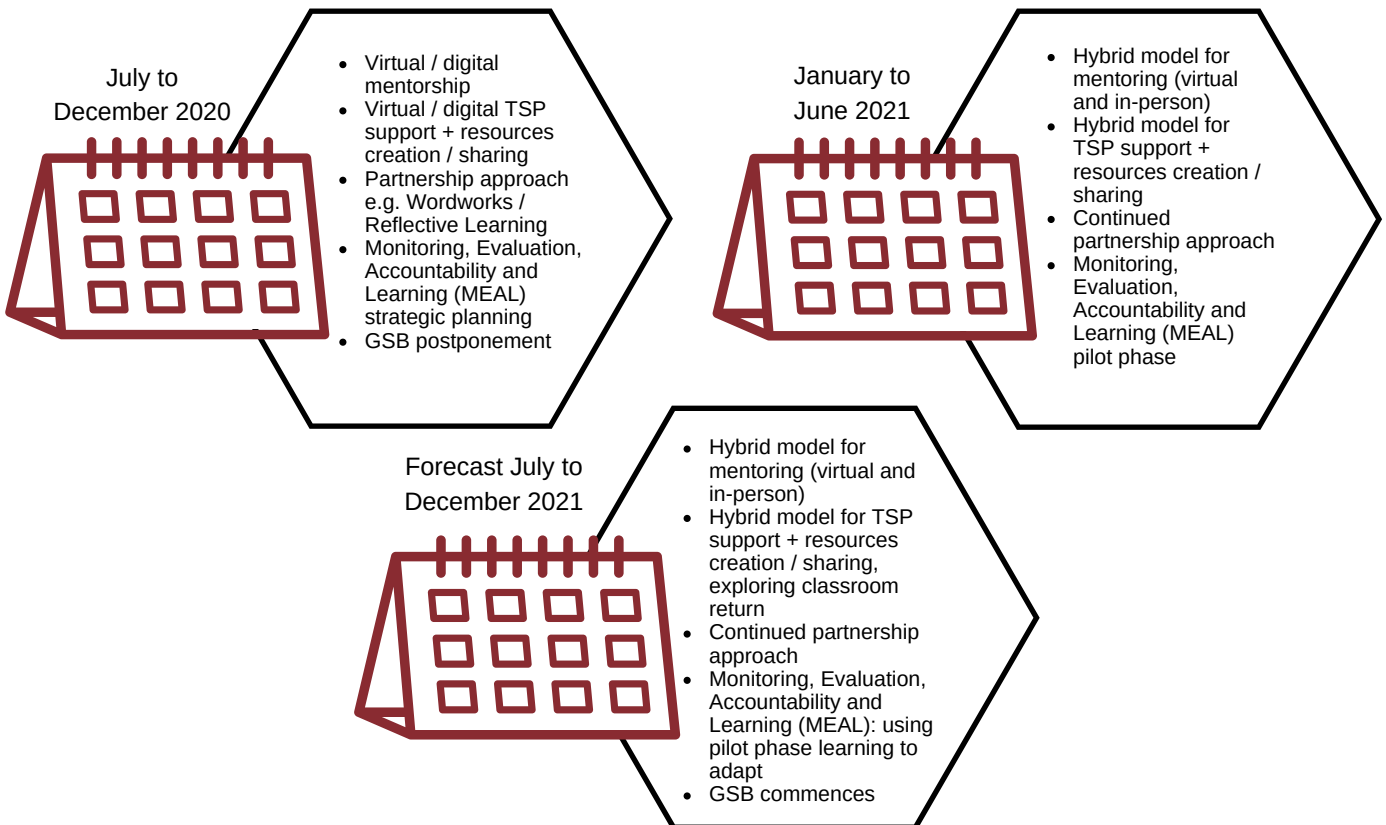
COVID-19 AND THE WORK OF PAT

Being agile

PAT seeks to turn public schools serving socio-economically disadvantaged communities into centres of excellence within their contexts by focusing on improving school leadership and teaching quality. This is done through mentoring of principals, the short course management development programme offered by UCT's Graduate School of Business, as well as through in-school support by our Teacher Support Programme (TSP). See our Theory of Change [here](#).

The pandemic placed an added demand for maximum flexibility in the nature and extent of engagement with our school partners which we met with agility as illustrated below.

Breakdown of support



Resources developed

In order to have relevant and bespoke tools available when mentoring or teacher support had to take place via digital channels, PAT used the past year to develop and record various resources. These are being shared with principals (as supporting material for mentoring sessions) and as additional resources to aid teachers to improve instruction and achieve targeted results. A selection of resources is available below, with the full list [here](#).

For the TSP specifically, PAT now has 24 readers each in Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa, as well as 30 listening activities and 15 songs. Writing, illustration etc. all done in-house by PAT TSP. The YouTube channel also has three Tips for Teachers videos and three videos with advice for principals. Since March 2021 the channel has recorded 1191 views.



PARTNERSHIPS FOR FOCUSED INTERVENTION

Through the course of 2020 and 2021, PAT actively sought and cemented partnership with other organisations in the education sphere to provide focused intervention to address the impact of inequality in education prior and post Covid-19. Some of these are briefly summarised here.

iBhodi Trust and Reflective Learning

In 2020 a unique online learning experience was initiated through a collaboration between PAT, Robert Paddock (CEO of Valenture Institute) and the iBhodi Trust, where a group of Grade 9 learners was selected at Beacon Hill Secondary School and exposed to an online learning curriculum via digital platforms. In one area specifically (with the Reflective Learning maths component), the pilot group achieved remarkable results.

The vast majority of learners caught up to the required grade level in the components of Numbers and Data Literacy, more than half in Fractions and just less than half in Measurement. The 2020 third term test showed an increase in the class average from 30% to 53%.

Subsequently the Maths intervention from this pilot in partnership with Reflective Learning, is being introduced at 10 additional PAT schools at Grade 8 level in 2021.

Together in My Education (TIME)

It became clear that any intervention to assist with schooling during the lockdown periods would need to encourage involvement from the parents/caregivers at home. The Wordworks TIME programme, a collaborative effort by various NGOs, including PAT, was borne from this need.

This home learning programme now offers daily activities to build Language, Maths and Life Skills for Grade R and Grade 1 children. The resources have been endorsed by the WCED, and are available in Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa.

In Term 1 of 2021, TIME packs were distributed to 45 000 homes and 232 schools and centres. Twenty of those are PAT schools, with the cost of the resources covered from our funds.

All teachers and parents of partner schools have been encouraged to download the Moya app (android phones only) as a means to get instructions regarding every week's activities. PAT's TSP team has held workshops at schools with parents to emphasise the importance of home-based support and talk through TIME.



PAT's Bonita Engelbrecht leading a TIME parents' workshop.



A learner using the TIME pack at home.



TIME packs being collected by parents.



TIME packs carefully prepared for pick-up.

Desktop Charts to aid learning

Following the success of a project in 2018 where PAT distributed numeracy and literacy aid desktop charts, we again supplied 4 823 of these MySchool desktops to 34 schools in Term 1 of 2021.

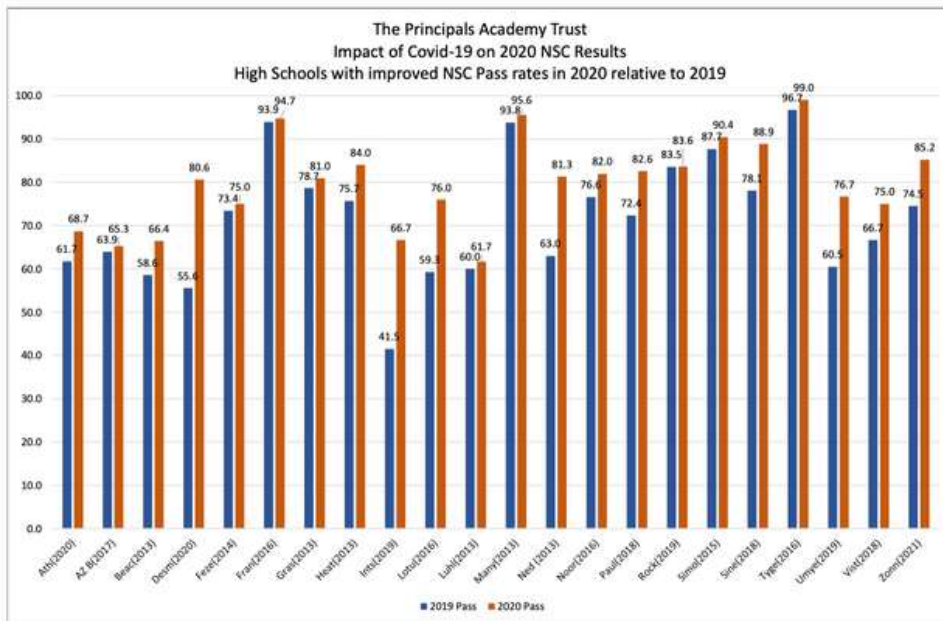
The purpose of these is to provide learners with instant visual access to the key foundational concepts of numeracy and literacy that they encounter each day. This will help them build the visual and auditory skills that form the foundation for the development of reading and writing.

Along with the distribution of the desktops, PAT also provides instructions on how best to use the resources and guidance to make sure they are protected against wear and tear.

COVID-19: WHAT THE DATA SHOWS

During 2020 no systemic tests were conducted at schools. As PAT uses these test results to compile our PATPI (the Principals Academy Trust Performance Index), the index could not be updated for the past year. However, using our database and available National Senior Certificate (NSC) results for Grade 12, we have compiled the below graphs to show how data could be used to identify systemic challenges which can then be addressed.

Some schools improved NSC results

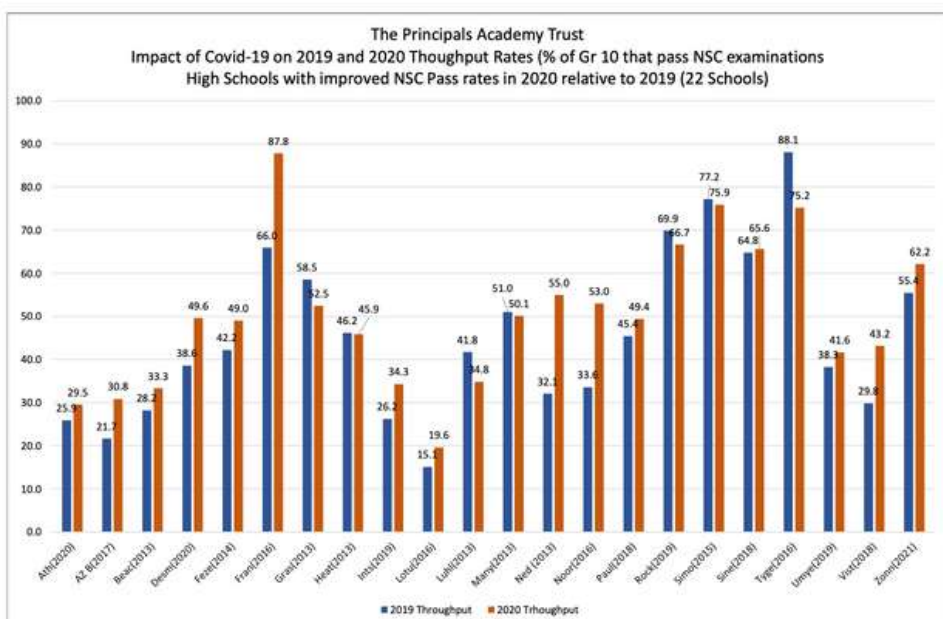


Of all the high schools for which PAT has results, only 22 managed to improve their NSC pass rate relative to the pass rate achieved in 2019. On the graph on the left the years in which the principal came onto the PAT programme is included in brackets at the bottom.

The purpose of this graph is not to indicate the impact that PAT had in one year on academic results, but rather to illustrate how one needs to delve into the data to understand the systemic structure underlying the results.

For example, the school coded "Intsh" in the graph improved its NSC pass rate from 41.5% to 66.7%. This has to be read, however, in conjunction with the second graph, which shows that only 34.3% of the Grade 10 pupils from 2018 progressed through to Grade 12 and achieved a pass.

Throughput rate from these schools



The throughput rate is a measure of the number of learners in Grade 10 who progressed to Grade 12 and passed the NSC exams. This graph shows the learners in Grade 10 in 2017 and 2018 who progressed to Grade 12 in 2019 and 2020 and went on to write and pass the NSC exam in the 22 schools listed in Graph 1.

Most of the learners who drop out of school do so in the period between Grades 10 to 12.

From the data we can see that the throughput rate improved in 15 out of the 22 schools for the two groups. However, it is still alarming to know that even in schools with a good NSC pass rate, e.g. school coded "Tyge" in this graph with a 99% pass rate in matric, the throughput rate is only 75.2%.

PAT is embarking on a process where data such as the above, for every school, is presented and discussed in mentoring sessions with the principal to empower school leadership to address systemic challenges within their schools.

Looking to the future

In 2020 PAT was selected to be the "model organisation" for the MPhil students in Programme Evaluation at UCT's School of Management Studies. A process followed where a Theory of Change was developed for PAT, with one student subsequently focusing his Masters dissertation on developing a tool for PAT to measure the impact that the coaching/mentoring process is having on the soft skills that the organisation works hard to engender in the coaching relationship.

The dynamic momentum that was created by this partnership led PAT to expand our monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) framework. A monitoring tool has been developed to gain insights from the themes and topics covered in the mentoring sessions by our coaches. This framework will be adapted as we learn during the implementation phase, which commenced in the second term of 2021.

Motivation and emotional support

As it became increasingly clear that one of our main priorities would have to be to motivate, inspire and emotionally support our principals and teachers, PAT started with a series of letters to achieve this objective.

In 2020 Coach Paul Cassar wrote 30 letters titled "Keeping in Touch in Tough Times" aimed at the principals and Jenny van Velden from our TSP team penned 14 letters titled "Teachers Supporting Teachers" with the teachers as audience. In 2021, the series has continued.

These letters can be found on our website (links accessible above) and if any funders would like to be added to the mailing list, please make contact with us to arrange this.

Feedback

In response to our motivational letters, our ongoing support and the resources and mentoring provided throughout the year, we include some feedback from our school partners below:



Thank you for your words of encouragement in these trying times we face, not only as a school community, but also as a country. The SMT and I had lengthy conversations as to the way forward and we will remain hopeful that we will survive those dreaded potholes. We will continue shining our lights brightly.



Thank you so much. I really value the coaching and the letter really speaks to me. I also try to do 100 things 1% better. Thank you once again for giving me more armour to wear on a Monday.



Thank you so much... It is very comforting and inspirational to know that the Principal's Academy really cares and are valuable sounding boards for Principals especially in these messy and murky times...



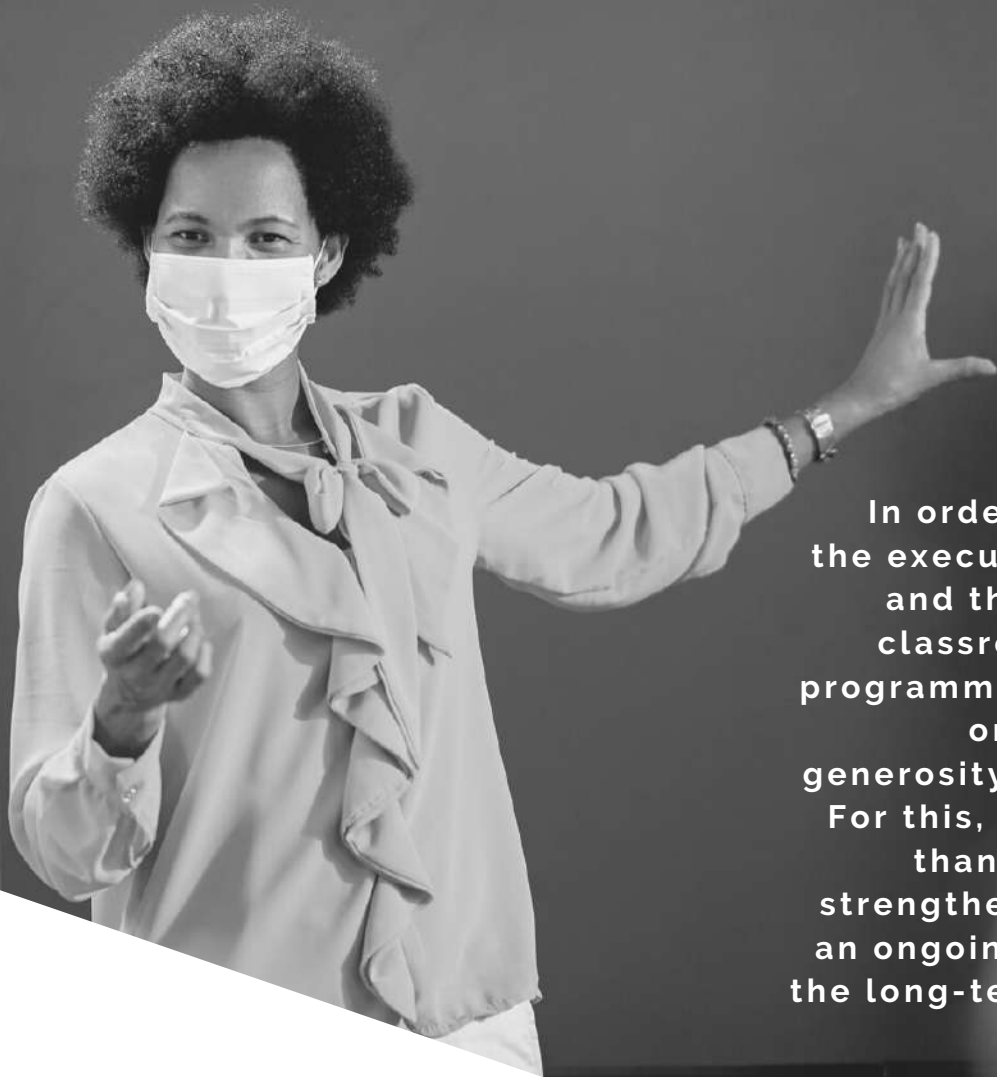
Thank you so much for this inspirational letter, especially at a time like this, when feeling overwhelmed is a daily occurrence.



Good day. Thanks so much for the email. I love the positive message and I am determined not to leave any teacher or student behind.



Many thanks for this, it gives one the strength to continue.



In order to support both the executive management and the teachers in the classrooms through our programmes, we rely solely on the support and generosity of our partners. For this, we are incredibly thankful. We strive to strengthen our network on an ongoing basis to ensure the long-term sustainability of our work.

Visit our website today to see how you can contribute or become part of our support network.

www.principalsacademy.ac.za

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