



THE PRINCIPALS ACADEMY

Nurturing Schools to Excellence

THE PRINCIPALS ACADEMY TRUST

Tel: 021 286 0009

Personal Trust House

Belmont Rd, Rondebosch

www.principalsacademy.ac.za

Trust Number: IT2943/2012

For more information about this event, contact:

Hannalie van der Merwe

funding@principalsacademy.ac.za

072 310 0805

<https://www.principalsacademy.ac.za/>

MEDIA RELEASE

Principals: The levers for change in South African education system

Equipping principals for 21st-Century Education

MAIN POINTS:

- **The first-ever Principals Academy Trust conference was attended by 128 principals equipped to be levers of change in their school systems.**
- **“Help the world move forward by developing curious kids.” - Mr Ralph Mupita, CEO of MTN Group (keynote speaker)**

BELLVILLE, WESTERN CAPE – On 4 March 2023, Principals Academy Trust (PAT) hosted its first-ever conference attended by 128 principals currently or previously in its coaching and mentoring programme. The theme of the conference was *Principals: Levers for change*. It was sponsored by Bluestar Financial Advisory Services, authorised by Sanlam, and took place at the CR Louw Auditorium, Sanlam Head Office, in Bellville.

PAT was founded in October 2012 in collaboration with the University of Cape Town’s Graduate School of Business. The founders, Rick Haw, Alan Clarke and Bruce Probyn, were keen to contribute to developing effective educational leadership and management in the public education system. Accordingly, they collaborated with UCT’s Graduate School of Business to develop an executive management development programme targeting education managers in the school system. Since the first intake of principals in 2013, 275 principals have completed the mentor and coaching programme.

THE PRINCIPALS ACADEMY TRUST

t: 021 286 0009 * e: joanne@principalsacademy.ac.za * www.principalsacademy.ac.za

The Principals Academy is a PBO (Registration NO. 930 041 885) and is a registered Trust IT2943 / 2012.

Trustees: Charles Richard Haw, Clive John Edwards, John Le Roux, Bruce Ernest Probyn, Prof Vuyokazi Sylvia Nomlomo

Patrons: Prof Brian Figaji, Prof Mary Metcalfe, Ralph Mupita

PAT strives to enable school leadership teams to create a positive culture that supports effective education and believes that principals are the lever for change in any school system. The conference aimed to provide these principals with information and networking opportunities and encourage them to be effective school leaders. The keynote speaker for the event, Mr Ralph Mupita, CEO of the MTN Group and patron of PAT, shared how quality education and teachers transformed his life and influenced his successful career. He also shared some leadership principles he urged principals to apply to create a supportive culture and a cohesive educational team in their schools. Lastly, he urged principals to foster traits like curiosity, creativity, critical thinking, and the ability to learn and unlearn if South Africans are to keep in step with a fast-changing future. He noted, *“Knowing the answer today is not as important as curiosity and critical thinking skills... Curiosity cannot be imitated by a computer.”*

Google Workspace Transformation Specialist Dr Esethu Stofile also focused on the future by addressing the 4th industrial revolution in education. He reflected on the progress of internet and communication technologies (ICT) in schools in the Western Cape, as well as ways to prepare teachers, students, and communities in South Africa to be relevant digital citizens and get the best out of these intelligent systems for South African schools.

Delegates next received practical steps to support their mental health while working in education systems. This session was led by Dr Adyan King, medical officer of psychiatry, who made a convincing case that *“self-care is not selfish”* but a necessity for principals, teachers, and students in the South African education system. He explained, *“You have to care for yourself to be able to take care of others.”*

The next session was themed *Letters to principals*. In April 2020, PAT had to find creative ways to continue with coaching sessions and support the principals that form part of its programme amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the ways this was done was through a weekly online newsletter written by Paul Cassar, a PAT coach. The response of principals was so positive and encouraging that Paul has continued writing the letters, and to date, 95 of these letters have been penned. Paul challenged principals to always be the *“clearest voice”* in their schools, and a panel of principals shared how they have applied the wisdom and support from these letters to their leadership roles. Like all the other sessions on the day, this session was followed by a panel discussion where the principals attending could reflect on the topic.

Wendy Horn, award-winning teacher, principal and Director of Metro North Education District, shared ideas on *Designing classrooms for the 21st century*. Wendy is a strong believer that *“learning happens everywhere”* and explained that some schools are moving away from *“managing a classroom”* towards *“facilitating learning experiences”*. She shared practical examples of school leadership teams who have successfully adjusted physical learning spaces and infrastructure to be more sustainable and flexible and address the needs of modern learners and school communities.

The Newly Qualified Teacher project is an initiative of the School of Education at UCT which aims to address the significant attrition rates amongst first-year teachers in the South African education system. Dr Kate Angier and Judith Sacks informed delegates of the experiences and numerous challenges novice teachers face and the resources and support their project offers them. For more information on the NQT project's support services and resources, visit their website <http://www.nqt.uct.ac.za>.

THE PRINCIPALS ACADEMY TRUST

t: 021 286 0009 * e: joanne@principalsacademy.ac.za * www.principalsacademy.ac.za

The Principals Academy is a PBO (Registration NO. 930 041 885) and is a registered Trust IT2943 / 2012.

Trustees: Charles Richard Haw, Clive John Edwards, John Le Roux, Bruce Ernest Probyn, Prof Vuyokazi Sylvia Nomlomo

Patrons: Prof Brian Figaji, Prof Mary Metcalfe, Ralph Mupita

The event was concluded by Batandwa Sonamzi, a Metro North Education District circuit manager, who participated in the PAT coaching programme whilst still the principal of Welwitschia Primary School in Delft. He spoke about its immeasurable positive effect on his career and thinking, *“PAT allowed me to become a proficient and effective leader and position my team and myself better... to think critically and plan better...PAT and UCT prepare principals to excel in their complex jobs”*.

About the Principals Academy Trust

The Principals Academy Trust, a Section 18(a) Trust established in October 2012, seeks to empower school leadership in public schools, serving socio-economically disadvantaged communities. PAT’s ultimate goal is to impact the overall teaching ecosystem and academic outcomes of the schools where we have a presence. Currently 90 schools in Athlone, Bellville, Blackheath, Bonteheuwel, Bothasig, Botrivier, Bredasdorp, Caledon, Cape Town, Claremont, Crawford, Delft, Driftsand, Eerste River, Elsies River, Franschoek, Gansbaai, Grabouw/Elgin, Gugulethu, Hout Bay, Kenilworth, Kenwyn, Khayelitsha, Koue Bokkeveld, Kraaifontein, Kuilsriver, Langa, Lavender Hill, Lower Crossroads, Macassar, Maitland, Manenberg, Mfuleni, Mitchell’s Plain, Muizenberg, Napier, Newlands, Paarl, Parow, Philippi, Plumstead, Prince Alfred’s Hamlet, Retreat, Seawinds, Steenberg, Stellenbosch, Sun Valley, Swellendam, Vrijzee, Westlake, Woodlands, Wynberg.

If you would like to schedule an interview with Keith Richardson, CEO of the Principals Academy Trust, or Bruce Probyn, Trustee, contact Hannalie van der Merwe at +27723100805 or funding@principalsacademy.ac.za.

Recordings of the conference sessions are available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4uo6chpbjxs>

THE PRINCIPALS ACADEMY TRUST

t: 021 286 0009 * e: joanne@principalsacademy.ac.za * www.principalsacademy.ac.za

The Principals Academy is a PBO (Registration NO. 930 041 885) and is a registered Trust IT2943 / 2012.

Trustees: Charles Richard Haw, Clive John Edwards, John Le Roux, Bruce Ernest Probyn, Prof Vuyokazi Sylvia Nomlomo

Patrons: Prof Brian Figaji, Prof Mary Metcalfe, Ralph Mupita