

# Let's help raise Masiphumelele High to its former glory

Lutz van Dijk

MASI High was once the pride of the Masiphumelele community of Cape Town – 40 000 residents and the whole valley. The matric pass rate was 84%, among the top schools in the Western Cape.

Due to the protests in Masi since September 2015 and gang-related crime at the school itself, which left one 17-year-old pupil dead in 2016, the pass rate has dropped to 48% in 2016, the second-lowest in the province.

During the violence in 2016, even the principal, Nelson Mafrika, was attacked and had to leave the school.

It is mainly thanks to Metro South

education circuit manager Thandi Jafta and a number of concerned parents and teachers that after a careful preparation on Tuesday, a meeting could be held at the school which was attended by more than 800 parents, the complete School Governing Body (SGB) and some community leaders.

At this meeting, Jafta spoke passionately about how a new future for the almost 1 200 pupils can be created – and how much the support of all parties is needed.

She said: “Now Masi High is downgraded by the department to an ‘underperforming school’. Can we change this? We must change it! Let us not rest until Masi High is back from 48 to 84%”

It means, in fact, a turnaround campaign to change the matric pass rate from 48% to 84% – and to regain quality education to ensure a better future for all at Masiphumelele.

Not only the SGB, but also several individual parents voiced their support for all efforts in this direction.

Jafta committed herself to monitoring the progress in the coming months. And the best surprise of the day: she brought back Principal Mafrika, who received lengthy applause from all present. This warm welcome was echoed the next morning by all pupils, who cheered him for minutes.

Some efforts, will call for a certain code of conduct and discipline.

Other will require extra funding – for example, for extra lessons for those matric candidates who failed but will receive a chance to rewrite if they only failed two subjects.

Also, some repairs on the premises need to be undertaken urgently before winter.

More than 12 years ago, I had the privilege of being one of those parents and pupils in Masi who worked with the Department of Education to finally realise the dream of a high school for Masiphumelele.

This time, I would like to encourage all neighbours of Masi and citizens of Cape Town who are concerned about education to support these efforts

to make Masi High a “top achieving school” again.

It is for the future of the children, but at the end it is for the future of all who live in this city – and want to do so in mutual respect and peace.

Please donate to the Masiphumelele bank account (which will be monitored by Ms Jafta): First National Bank, Account Name: Masiphumelele High School, Beneficiary information: Campaign 48 to 84, Account No: 6202 7249631, Branch Code: 202309 (Fish Hoek).

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● *Dr Van Dijk is co-founding director of the Hokisa Children's Home in Masiphumelele*