

## **TRUE FREEDOM PARTY – EDUCATION POLICY**

We believe that education plays a pivotal role in our country. Without knowledge we will perish as a country

### **Our policy is informed by the following realities.**

322 644 total number of South African children who are not in school despite being of school going age. Startling figures contained in the census 2011 data reveal that in Kwazulu Natal alone 106 830 children aged between 7 and 15 were not attending school. According to SASA children must be enrolled in school between these ages . They may leave school only once they have turned 16 or have completed Grade 9 . But the law is being flouted all over the country. KZN figure which represents 5.75% of children in that age group in the province is the highest followed by the remaining provinces.

NC 9087 children or 4.6% of that age group were not at school

NW 23 754 or 4.28% of that age group were not at school

WC 32 600 or 4.12% of that age group were not at school

EC – 45 621 or 3.68% of that age group were not at school

Gauteng – 50 705 or 3.41% of that age group were not at school

Free State – 13 614 or 3.68% of that age group were not at school

Mpumalanga – 21 494 or 3.03% of that age group were not at school

Limpopo – 18 939 or 1.85% of that age group were not at school

Research published by Wits education Policy in 2010 showed that many of the children who did not attend school had a disability, had no parents at home or came from child headed households. Other factors include dysfunctional families and disability as two of the biggest contributions to children dropping out of school in lower grades.

The world economic forum’s 2012/13 world competitiveness report released in January 2012 ranked South Africa 133<sup>rd</sup> out of 142 countries in terms of the quality of its educational system. The forum ranked South Africa second last in terms of Mathematics and Science education ahead of Yemen. These results are unacceptable in a country that committed R152.1 billion to basic education in the 2012/13 and R164 billion in the 2013/14 financial year, the largest allocation of the South African budget.

### **Second observation is based on the following realities**

Schools have carelessly adopted programs which stigmatize kids according to their level of learning causing slower children to be cruelly teased by classmates who have learned from this same system, that being the best and the brightest is more important than friendship. Whether this kind of labeling occurs, causing emotional trauma which can lead to long term scarring. Ultimately it prevents children from reaching their full potential.

We acknowledge the fact that children progress and learn at different rates and that one child will excel at one subject while other children excel at another. One child may be ready to read at four, another at seven and another at twelve. And yet our educational system continues to weed out the best and the brightest in the areas it judges are important – math, science English and Accounting. In spite of our knowledge about how young, vulnerable minds can be damaged by such tactics, our children are tested, branded and shunted through the system like robots which have exactly the same hard wiring plan. As a result the strongest are labeled above average and pushed to a higher level such as Talented and Gifted, the weak are labeled below average and are mostly abandoned, allowed to fall between the cracks of the system as it is often so colorfully expressed.

Too often education turns into a game of attrition designed along the bell curve. The quest for knowledge and self development is replaced by the race to earn a winning place on that curve, preferably among that top 10 percent of students who excel rather than among the bottom 10 percent who will fail. Based on a law of averages, this system divides the world between winners and losers, insiders and outsiders, those who are accepted and those who are rejected by the system.

The trouble is that the students who find themselves excluded by the grading system aren't like widgets being constructed on the assembly line in a factory. They aren't simply discarded or melted down to be used as raw material for a new batch. The excluded students continue to attend school at least many of them do. Emotionally however these students know that they have been excluded because the system has determined that they are inferior. They continue on their way feeling that they are stupid or below average. Their self esteem plummets and if they stay in school they tend to become behavioral problems, distracting other students and driving teachers half crazy. When individuals are treated in this way, the cost in terms of behavioral problems and wasted human talent rises exponentially. What the education system does to our children is nothing short of criminal – especially when we know there is an alternative. The alternative is what is called holistic education, which takes the child as a whole person and finds a way to teach every young person to the best of his or her abilities. Everyone has a gift, a talent which can be developed if given half a chance and if it is nurtured along not just to conform to a grading system, but up to the level where that person is able to make a contribution and gain self esteem through whatever means he or she is capable. Most of the

testing that places learners on the bell curve tests only the so called Three “Rs” Reading, Riting and Rithmetic . Unfortunately it sorely neglects other talents or gifts the child might have – such as music, athletics, drama, or sports.

Today in education there is talk of right and left brain learning. It is based on the research that seems to indicate that the two hemispheres of the brain ( right and left ) divide tasks between those which are linear like math , language and basic science , and those that are more intuitive like music , poetry , athletics and art. There is a growing effort to recognize that some students are stronger in right brain processes while traditional education has been based on the more linear processes.

It is well known fact that two heads are better than one , The Japanese know it and that is why Japanese students study in cooperative groups . They realize that while one student may be strong in math he or she may need help in another area. When two or more students cooperate, everyone benefits since each person not only learns but gains a sense of their self worth through helping others. This sense of cooperation, contribution and self fulfillment teaches far more than how to get a good grade – though the truth is that it does a very good job of doing that as well.

Our education is western based and tends to favor the John Wayne approach to learning, emphasizing the rugged individualistic, completely omnipotent, self contained and alone . This type of education manifests itself in a form of back stabbing , melodrama and gossip as well as management fighting labor , stockholders demanding bigger returns and people climbing over each other to get to the top – everybody acting as if the only thing that mattered was getting his own selfish needs satisfied . With all this internal strife, it is no wonder that we are falling behind in the global economic race.

The reason Japan has been so successful in business is because they have little internal competition. In Japanese culture, drama and upset are considered disgraceful. In contrast in Australia if you are not fighting internally, you are not considered a real businessperson and it is thought to be unmanly if labor and management cooperate. Fighting is part of the Australian business culture. Their economy is reflecting it and the people are paying for it. And it all begins with the schools.

Memorization and knowledge are not the same

Our education system encourages memorization of answers rather than knowing the subject. It puts a great deal of emphasis on rote learning or memorization. Indeed diplomas and advanced degrees are awarded on the basis of how good we are at memorizing. First and foremost our educational system should be successful in teaching the basic skills needed for survival, be it physical, emotional and or financial.

Three kinds of learning are identified

1. **Mental Learning** – involves memorized facts, storing certain chosen data in our brains
2. **Physical Learning** – hands on experience, involving all the senses, engaging most of the nervous system
3. **Emotional and Subconscious learning** – involving the learner through feelings of joy, fear, sorrow, love, compassion and exultation.

For learning to occur, all three kinds must be employed; one must not be emphasized to the exclusion of the others.

The unfortunate truth is that around age 8 educational system cuts out the physical and emotional learning and begins focusing almost exclusively on type one, that is, mental learning, primarily by overemphasizing facts and memorization. We believe that education should teach one how to think and not what to think.

1. We believe in quality education that teaches learners how to think and not what to think. Questions that requires a learner to fill in the missing words or True or false or to ask questions such as for example who invented a bicycle shall be avoided.
2. Learners shall work in groups; we shall apply the slogan which says Friendship first, competition later. We acknowledge that learners learn in different curves.
3. Learners shall be given a second chance to rewrite grade 12 by either going back to school full time or study at home and write in June or November of the following year
4. Our country is faced with the shortage of relevant skills; learners shall be encouraged to pursue certain skills that are relevant to the economic needs of the country, such as Engineering, Accounting, and Medicine etc.
5. Offer free education from crèche to University with an aim of closing the scourge of illiteracy and to create an employee job market.
6. Reduce the number of subjects in (Grade 10 to 12) to a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 5 so that learners can devote more time in Mathematics, Accounting and Physical Science.
7. Every learner from Grade 10 shall have a laptop and or a tablet
8. Build world class schools and schools shall be categorized based on different fields of study from Grade 11 and 12. Grade 11 shall be equivalent to first year at university and Grade 12 shall be equivalent to second year at university for easy adaptation at university level.
9. Children in rural areas shall not travel more than 2 km's on foot to and from school. School transport shall be available to ferry school children to and from school.
10. Learners shall not learn under unhealthy classroom conditions.

11. Encourage the use of games to teach
12. Each classroom shall consist of a minimum of 30 pupils and a maximum of 35 pupils. Learners shall sit in groups of 10 or 13 to facilitate team work.
13. Teach entrepreneurial skills at school level
14. Recruit foreign teachers especially from Singapore, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan to teach mathematics and Physical science with an aim of occupying number one spot in TIMSS.
15. Schools that specialize in Physical science shall have laboratories for practical experience.
16. Parents shall pay for their children's learning material.
17. All learners in Grades 1 to 6 are required to take 5 subjects ie Home language , English , Mathematics , Literacy , and Life Skills
18. Group Annual Assessments shall be implemented from Grade 1 to 8
19. Group Annual Assessments and Individual annual assessments shall be implemented from Grade 9 to 12

### **School Governing Bodies**

1. We believe that School governing bodies are non functional and ineffective . We regard them as a scapegoat of any ruling party to exonerate itself from its responsibilities
2. We find it odd for SGB's to determine school language policy , school fees , and Admission policy. We have seen children being turned away from schools due to the fact that the school does not teach in English , and school fees being deliberately increased to exclude children from poor family backgrounds as well as being refused admission on the grounds that parents of children do not reside or work within the school's zonal area.

### **Private Schools**

1. Private schools shall exist independently but governed by the state in the following areas:
2. Private schools shall obtain permission from government to increase its annual school fees. Private schools shall provide all its audited financial statements to justify their request to increase school fees.
3. No child shall be dismissed from school as a result of non-payment of school fees by parents.
4. A parent that is unable to pay his or her child's private school fee can transfer his or her child to a public school in the following academic year.
5. The principal shall not withhold a child's report as a result of non-payment of school fees.

6. The state shall not subsidize private schools.

### **Learner Pregnancy**

1. A girl child shall be encouraged not to get pregnant during her early years of schooling.
2. A girl child must set her priorities right, put education first and enjoy her youth without any obstacles.

### **Career Guidance**

1. Teachers shall be trained to assess the child's strengths, gifts, and or talents and offer career guidance based on a child's gift.

### **Teachers**

1. Teachers are the foundation of a child's development and shall be regarded in high esteem
2. Teacher working conditions and salaries shall be improved drastically
3. Training programs shall be put in place to ensure that they adapt to their professional standards
4. Learners who have performed well in grade 12 in mathematics, physical science, Accounting and Geography shall be recruited to enter the teaching profession to help close the gap in poor grade 12 pass rates.

### **Principals**

1. Principals play an important role as the managers of the school
2. They shall be exempted from teaching but will play an active role in identify educational gaps and come up with mechanisms to cement those gaps.
3. They shall attend district meetings , give feedback to teachers and other stakeholders and implement resolutions taken at district level
4. Their working conditions and salaries shall be improved.

### **Higher Education**

#### **Our policy is informed by the following realities.**

Former SA Reserve Bank Governor Mr Tito Mboweni (22 August 2011) wrote wrong skills = unemployment . He stated that wrong skills produced by schools and universities were the root of South Africa's unemployment problems as opposed to inflexibility in the labour market. He argued that there was a massive failure of the sectoral education and training authorities where

80% of trainees failed to complete their courses. The universities were not turning out the skills required by the economy, with the black quota numbers in the science and engineering fields being made up by black foreigners who left after their training.

He suggested that the universities be required to identify high schools to cherry – pick talent, develop mentoring programmes for potential science and engineering graduates and provide sizeable bursaries to encourage study of these fields instead of useless BA degrees with subjects that are not conducive to gaining jobs.

South Africa was not alone when it came to the mining and the manufacturing sector complaining about the lack of available talent to fill jobs. The US for example trained about 47% fewer engineering graduates than it did 20 years ago. The UK was focusing on doubling its artisan training from about 250 000 a year to half a million by 2020. South Africa trained just 200 engineers a year, which he described as a small amount.

Only 4% of matriculants had higher grade mathematics and 65% of them came from the historically white Model C's schools. There was a growing skills crisis locally as the average artisan was now between 53 and 56 years old.

- 1 With the population of approximately 52 million people we will build 5 universities, 5 Teacher training colleges, 5 FET institutions within 2 years in government.
- 2 We will train 60 000 engineers, 60 000 doctors, 60 000 Accountants, 40 000 sportsmen and women who will represent SA in a year.
- 3 Provide suitable accommodation for students in the post school system
- 4 Link theoretical learning with hands on learning through private sector , government institutions to pass practical experience to students
- 5 Retired lecturers will be recruited to assist in imparting essential skills at these institutions.
- 6 High standard will be set to inspire and motivate students to complete their degrees within the required time frame.
- 7 Adults who did not obtain a pass in grade 12 and who have a desire to study further will qualify to be registered at university on the basis of his or her age.