

## Engen applauds top matrics and moves to include STEM subjects in 2020

The top students for 2019 in the Engen Maths & Science School programme have been announced, while the 413-member matric class have received a shout out for attaining an impressive 96% pass rate of which 70% attained bachelor passes.

The Engen Maths & Science School (EMSS) programme The Saturday classes are held at nine locations spread across the Western Cape (Cape Town), Eastern Cape (Port Elizabeth, East London, Cala), Gauteng (Johannesburg), and KwaZulu-Natal (Fairvale High School, Ganges High School, Howard College, Mangosuthu University of Technology).

Recent statistics from the Department of Basic Education indicate that there was an 18% decline in the number of students who wrote mathematics in 2019 (270, 516 in 2018 to 222, 034 in 2019), as well as a drop in overall mathematics performance.

Engen's head of transformation and stakeholder engagement, Unathi Magida, says the EMSS programme focuses specifically on providing extra tuition in "gateway" subjects such as mathematics and science, which are considered critical in addressing the country's technical and engineering skills shortage as well as economic growth and development.

"The EMSS programme seeks to better the future of talented young people in difficult circumstances and to contribute to the pool of scarce skills in the country," comments Magida, adding that "Engen is extremely proud of all matriculants but especially the EMSS top achievers."

The top national achiever is Hillary Siphamandla Nxumalo from Orange Farm in Gauteng, who attended Leshata Secondary School and attended the EMSS programme at the Zakarriya Park Combined School. Hillary, who is planning to study chemical engineering at Wits University, achieved an impressive 94% for science, 96% for maths and 79% for English.

Second nationally is Andile Mkhungo, who attended the EMSS programme at Mangosuthu University of Technology. Andile scored an impressive 92% for science, 86% for maths and 81% for English. Andile is planning to study medicine at the *Nelson R. Mandela School of Medicine* in KwaZulu-Natal.

Third nationally is Makhoba Mhlengi from KwaZulu-Natal, who attended the EMSS programme at Howard College. Makhoba achieved 88% for science, 90% for maths and 73% for English.

"Starting off as Engen Saturday Schools over 30 years ago, EMSS is central to our efforts to contribute to the growth and transformation of the country," says Magida. "The programme has worked tirelessly to transform young lives and has, we believe, made a meaningful contribution to a more transformed and vibrant South African workforce."

Engen's Corporate Social Investment Manager, Adhila Hamdulay is delighted that Engen is giving many talented learners a springboard to pursue their dreams of working in maths and science related fields.

Comments Hamdulay: "In many cases, learners who go on to achieve excellent 'bachelor passes', with the necessary required university criteria, may also be eligible for the Engen bursary programme."

Magida says the company is incredibly proud of the EMSS learners who completed matric in 2019.

"Our ultimate reward is to help set them up to pursue stimulating careers that won't only benefit them personally, but also the broader macro economy of South Africa.

“We identify, support, reward, recruit, train and develop high-potential candidates for fulfilling careers in skills-challenged fields, in support of SA’s transformational agenda and Engen’s own business.”

The Engen Maths & Science Schools provide high-quality learning experiences, including teaching and educational materials, for learners from Grade 10 to 12. The schools are being converted to include STEM/STEAM subjects in 2020, to empower the learners and educators in preparation of the fourth industrial revolution (4IR).

“Engen is committed to building tomorrow’s leaders and if we want to ensure that the youth of tomorrow are prepared for a rapidly changing world, we need to ensure that they have the right mix of skills, for them to reach their full potential,” concludes Magida.