



Faculty of Education  
Fakulteit Opvoedkunde  
Lefapha la Thuto

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Thungela and the University of Pretoria sign MoA to strengthen psycho-social support in Mpumalanga schools**

Thungela has signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with University of Pretoria's (UP) Educational Psychology Department. As part of this collaboration, the Department of Educational Psychology at the university will deploy master's students to various schools to offer essential psychosocial support to both educators and learners in the foundation and intermediate phases.

Thungela launched the education initiative in 2024, a five-year program that aims to improve the quality of education for Grade R to Grade Four learners in 45, no-fee schools in Nkangala and Gert Sibande districts, and aims to improve school readiness, literacy and numeracy outcomes for learners.

Mpumi Sithole, Executive head of corporate affairs at Thungela said, "We recognise that educational performance is not only shaped by access to resources but also through the psychological and emotional well-being of both learners and educators. Working with the University of Pretoria, we are equipping schools with the professional support needed to respond to the complex realities facing learners and educators.

"This MoA is an important step in Thungela's journey to strengthen the impact of the Thungela Education Initiative, and we are proud to contribute to a model that will provide the much-needed psychosocial support to the learners and teachers, while empowering the master's students at the same time."

The mutually beneficial partnership will offer the master's students hands-on experience as they conduct learner assessments and identifying the necessary remedial actions and interventions, under the supervision of the district educational psychologists. This will help reduce the workload of the district's educational psychologists, while the master's student gain valuable practical work experience to help them complete the practical components of their academic training.

Through this agreement the University of Pretoria is supporting the implementation of the Department of Basic Education's screening, identification, assessment and support (SIAS) policy. Professor Mampane from the University of Pretoria, said, "This community engagement partnership with Thungela exemplifies a strategic alliance that amplifies our capacity to make a meaningful difference beyond academic boundaries. By bridging the gap between theory and practice, this collaboration not only empowers our students with invaluable real-world experience but also addresses critical community needs, particularly in Mpumalanga."

"It further fosters a ripple effect of positive change, enhancing emotional resilience, academic achievement, and life skills among young learners. This model underscores the transformative potential of synergy among academia, government, and the private sector. Together, we are laying a robust foundation for sustainable development and social upliftment, reinforcing South Africa's path toward a more equitable and prosperous future," said Professor Mampane.

Thungela will fund and manage the program, overseeing its implementation with a dedicated project structure. To uphold governance and accountability, a management committee has been set-up. The committee will ensure consistent engagement with stakeholders across various levels of the Mpumalanga Department of Education, emphasizing ethical principles throughout the partnership.

Thungela's purpose, which is to responsibly create value together for a shared future is the cornerstone of this partnership, as we continue investing in building resilient communities through meaningful and impactful interventions.

**ENDS**

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**Editor's note:**

Thungela, which means 'to ignite' in isiZulu, is a global pure-play producer and exporter of high-quality, low-cost thermal coal, with operations in South Africa and Australia. Our quality coal reserves and marketable production, positions us as a key player in the global energy market as we deliver coal through world-class ports, powering nations.

The Group owns interests in and produces its thermal coal from six mining operations located in the Mpumalanga province of South Africa, which consist of both underground and opencast mines, namely Goedehoop, Greenside, Isibonelo, Khwezela, Zibulo and Mafube.

Thungela acquired 100% of the Ensham Coal Mine in Queensland, Australia, reinforcing its strategic geographic diversification objective.

The establishment of Thungela Marketing International in Dubai underscores the company's commitment to capturing the full margin on our products and engagement with the international commodities market as a global coal producer.

In other parts of the value chain, Thungela holds a 50% interest in Phola Coal Processing Plant, and a 23.56% direct interest in Richard's Bay Coal Terminal. The terminal is one of the world's leading coal export terminals, with an advanced 24-hour operation and a design capacity of 91Mtpa.

Thungela is committed to operating in a responsible way to ignite value for a shared future. We want to ensure that our mining activities positively impact our employees, shareholders and the communities where we operate.