



The opportunities and challenges facing independent schools - South Africa 2017: a view from St Stithians College

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Introductory Overview

- Opportunities and challenges – hope and engagement
- Diversity and ecology
- Assessing purpose, intent and strategy in the education of citizens and the advance of the Constitution
- Opportunities and responsibilities to further public-private partnerships



Defining schools

- Defining the independent sector and the wide diversity within this.
- South African Schools Act (1996) legislated two categories of schools: public and independent.
- Public schools: state-controlled, funded (Quintiles 1-5), owned, managed through education departments



Public schools

- State-controlled and managed through education departments
- School governing bodies define strategy and provide operational oversight
- State-owned and funded
 - Quintiles 1-3: no fee
 - Quintiles 4-5: fees payable in addition to state funding
- State-owned schools on private land



Independent schools

- Comply with national laws and policies, education regulations, registration and accreditation
- Privately owned, governed by boards reflecting this ownership
- Independent of direct management by the education department



The terms 'private' and 'independent'

- 'Private' and 'independent' interchangeable, but with different emphasis
- Private: nature of ownership, Non-Profit Companies, Profit Companies
 - Non-Profit: school fee revenue, endowments, annual surplus reinvested in the NPC
 - Profit: school fees, shareholder investment, dividends payable to investors

Ownership – revenue - non-profit – for-profit



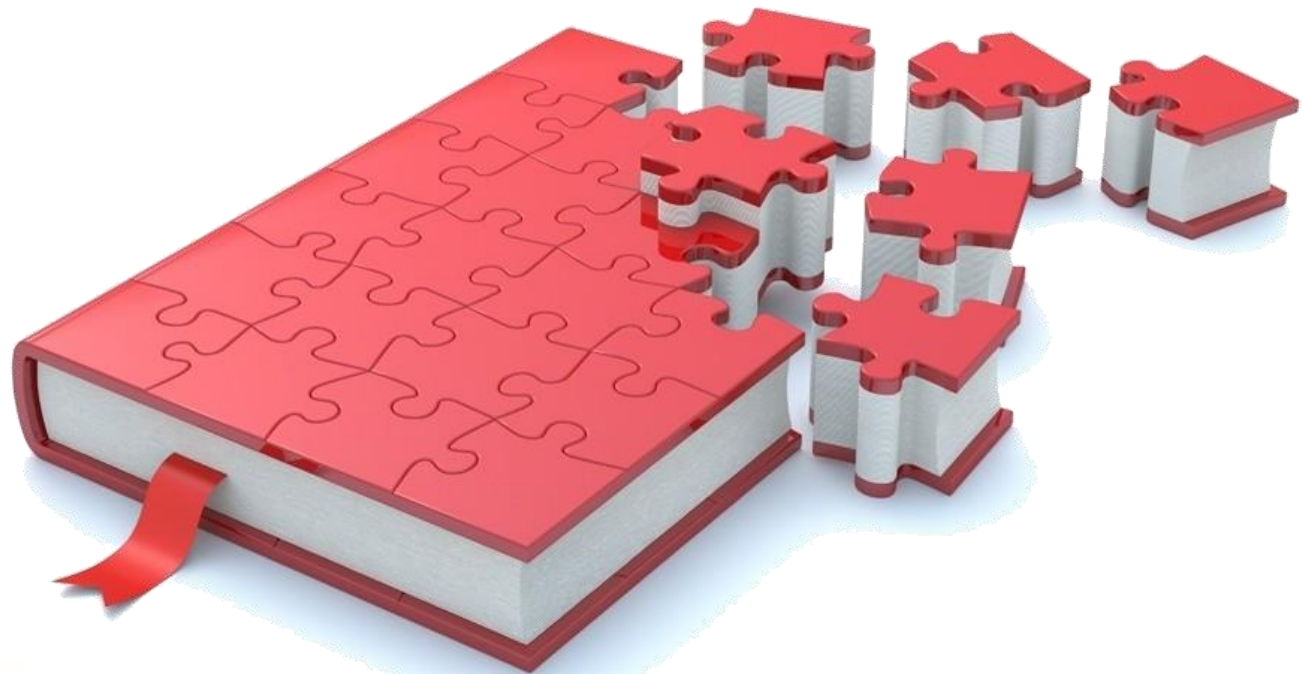
The terms 'private' and 'independent'

- Independent: choices, priorities, institutional character determined by the governing body and school management which is independent of the education department



The diversity of independent schools

- Spectrum from low-fee to high-fee
- Basic curriculum offering to holistic curriculum
- Educational enterprises requiring sustainable business models



The diversity of independent schools (cont.)

- Faith-based, secular
- Co-educational, single-sex
- Primary, Secondary, Pre-Primary to Matric
- Boarding, Day
- Specialised focus: special needs, Arts
- Curriculum – national (NSC, IEB NSC)
- Curriculum – international or methodology-specific (ie Montessori)
- Academic entrance tests, academically inclusive
- Among oldest in country, part of the current wave of new schools



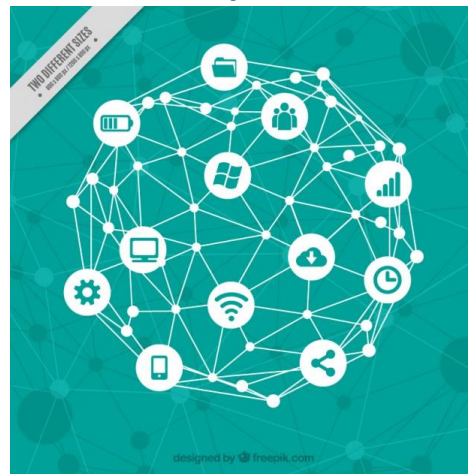
The diversity of independent schools (cont.)

- Historically 'white', 'black', reflecting apartheid pasts
- Differing paces of transformation as the racial demography changes



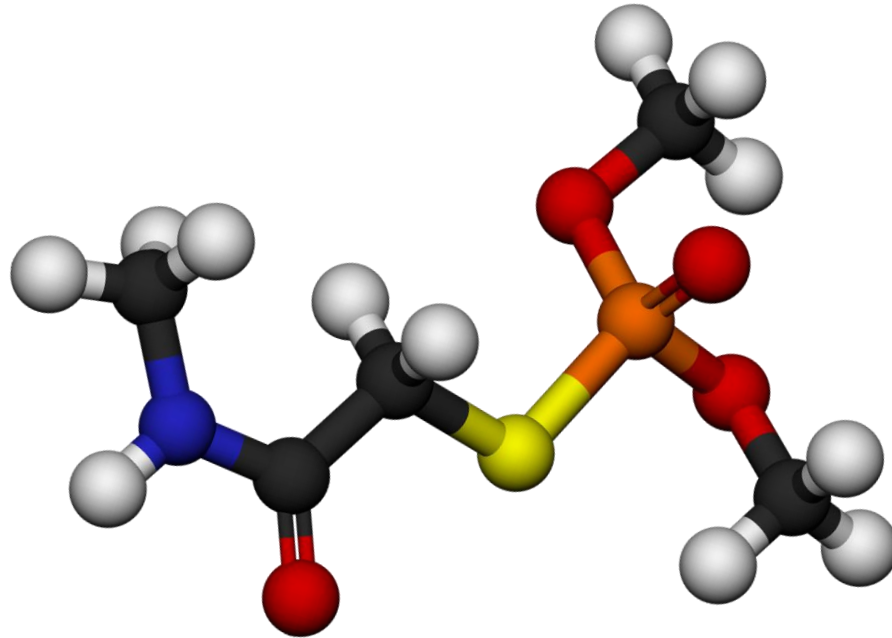
The value of a diverse educational ecology

- As in nature, a rich and diversified ecology of schooling is good for the country
- Adaptable and complex educational system to advance the economic, technical, social and cultural needs of a dynamic South Africa
- Global expansion of privately funded and managed schools, particularly in developing countries
- Limitations and constraints of public schooling



The value of a diverse educational ecology

- Dominant relations between independent schools, and between independent and public schools, should be inter-dependence rather than hostility.
- Basis for hope of a better future



Educating citizens & advancing the Constitution

A critical look at the purposes of independent schools, with specific reference to 'learning to live together' and 'learning to be', within the South African context:

Three core questions:

Question One

How clearly does a school understand its reason for existing, and how well is this expressed in a Statement of Intent and Purpose?



Educating citizens & advancing the Constitution (cont.)

Question Two

Does the Statement of Purpose and Intent contextualise the school in and of South Africa's (and Africa's) present and future?

Specifically, does how does the school seek to educate citizens and to advance the Constitution?



Educating citizens & advancing the Constitution (cont.)

Question Three

How far is there alignment between the Statement of Purpose and Intent, on the one hand, and the daily life of the school?

How are words on the page and expressed principles lived out in practice?

What responsibilities do the governing body and management of the school take to review, develop and ensure this alignment?



Educating citizens & advancing the Constitution (cont.)

Question One at St Stithians

Statement of Intent and Purpose (2015) and reviewed in 2017

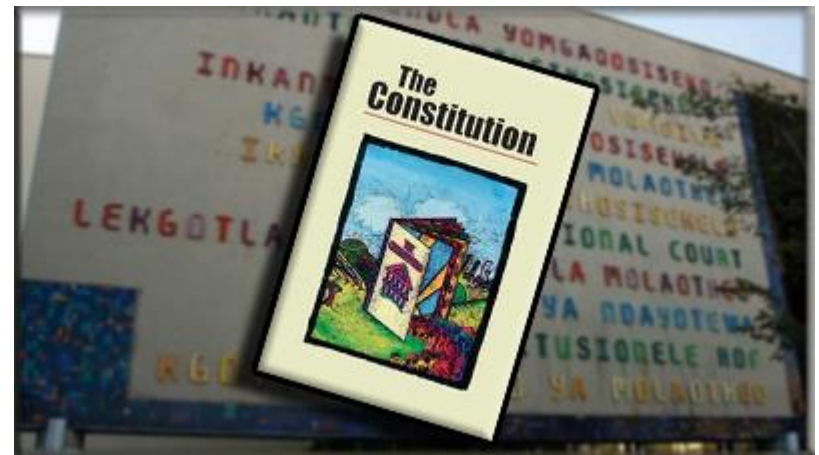


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Educating citizens & advancing the Constitution (cont.)

Questions Two and Three

- *Four pillars of education: know, do, live together, be.*
- *How explicit are independent schools in educating citizens for SA of today and tomorrow?*
- *The Constitution: foundational framework in defining the new society after apartheid*
- *How do daily practices at school align with purpose and strategy statements?*



Educating citizens & advancing the Constitution (cont.)

Questions Two and Three at St Stithians: *extracts from Statement of Purpose:*

“St Stithians College is a proudly South African school, embracing diversity and offering a distinctive educational experience.”

“...to contribute as African and global citizens.”

“Create a community of belonging among our students, staff, parents and alumni.”

“St Stithians College is committed to the positive transformation and development of South African society. We seek to embrace *ubuntu*, to be *One and All*.”



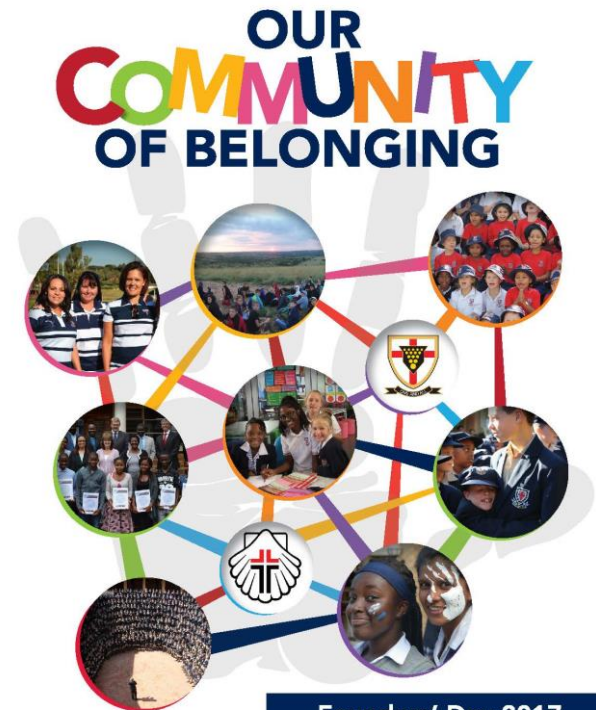
Educating citizens & advancing the Constitution (cont.)

Questions Two and Three at St Stithians:

Focus on 3 of the 6 themes of Strategy 2025:

1. Defining our School Character
2. Creating a Community Engagement Curriculum
3. Promoting Institutional Advancement and Sustainability through a Community of Belonging

Examples in practice



Founders' Day 2017

Educating citizens & advancing the Constitution (cont.)

Questions Two and Three at St Stithians:

Addressing race and racism head on

1. Particular responsibility for historically white schools, enrolling black students
2. Constructs of race and racism run deep
3. Developing a common understanding of race and racism – so that can be addressed head-on.



Educating citizens & advancing the Constitution (cont.)

Questions Two and Three at St Stithians: *addressing race and racism head on*

Race: a term which is used in society to describe individuals, or groups of individuals, who are physically categorised by the colour of their skin. Race is a social construct which draws on, and emphasises, these physical differences, particularly between a binary world view of 'white' and 'black'.



Educating citizens & advancing the Constitution (cont.)

Questions Two and Three at St Stithians: *addressing race racism head on*

Racism:

Categorising people with reference to skin colour in ways which are demeaning, derogatory or patronising.

Deeply historical, white agency and power, biases, stereotyping.

Continuing shadows of apartheid.



Educating citizens & advancing the Constitution (cont.)

Questions Two and Three at St Stithians: *addressing race and racism head on*

Racism:

The enduring legacy places a particular burden and responsibility of insight and accountability on white people who are in positions of authority and power, as administrators, teachers, or coaches. This is a burden and a responsibility, but also a good opportunity for listening, growth and self-reflection.



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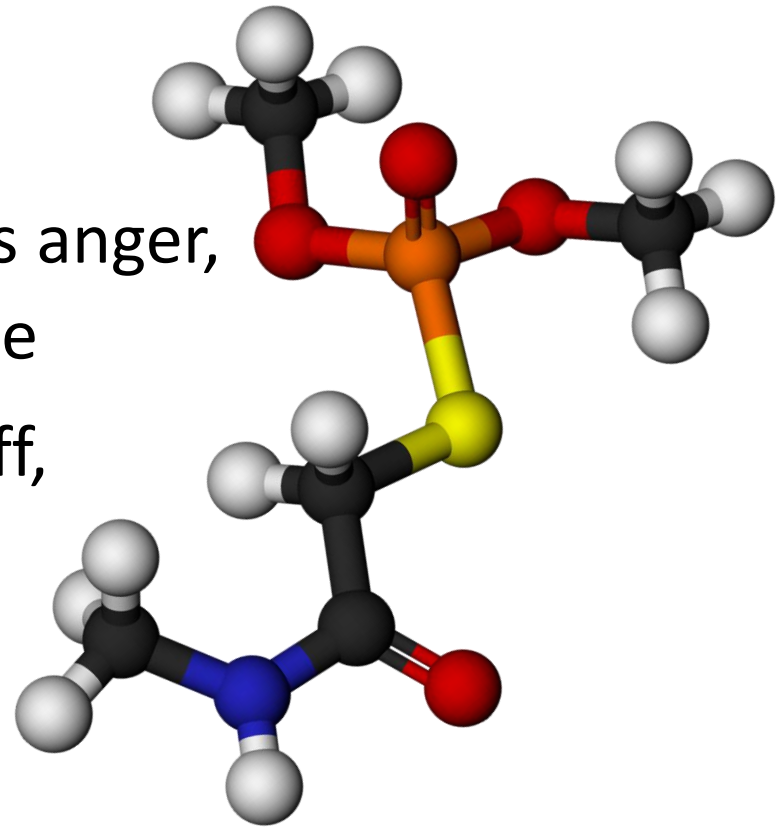
Educating citizens & advancing the Constitution (cont.)

Questions Two and Three at St Stithians: *addressing race and racism head on*

Race and Racism:

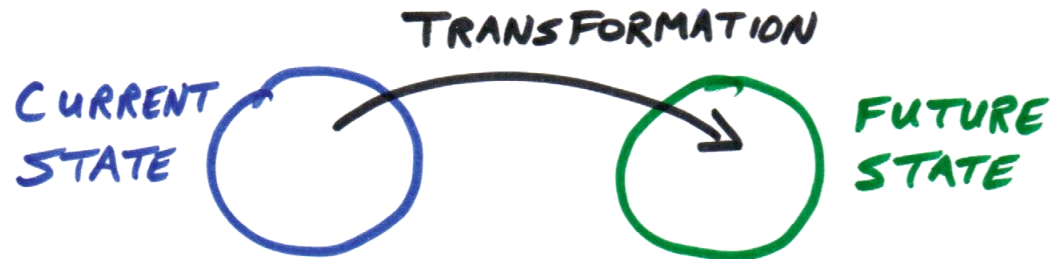
Schools as safe spaces to address anger, fear, anxiety, frustration and hope

Critical conversations among staff, students, parents, alumni



Educating citizens & advancing the Constitution (cont.)

Questions Two and Three at St Stithians: *addressing race and racism head on*



Transformation Statement 2009

Statement on Race and Racism, Transformation and Diversity 2017

Application of principles in practice – resources, programmes and projects



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Racism, sexism, homophobia

A future way: public private partnerships

- South African society is changing and so is the educational landscape



- Thinking skills and eLearning
- Gulf of social inequality and wide discrepancies in schooling quality



A future way: public private partnerships

- Well-resourced independent schools occupy frontiers of educational change and innovation
- GDE's Schools of Specialisation initiative
- Brokers to create and sustain public-private educational partnerships – schools, department, educational NGOs



A future way: public private partnerships

- Thandulwazi Maths & Science Academy
- Founded at St Stithians 2005
- Impacts 2 500 students and teachers from public schools annually through its programmes



Thandulwazi Trust
MATHS AND SCIENCE ACADEMY



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Our Landscape

Our Present

Our Future



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