

Angie: school bullying impacts on maths, science results

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BULLYING in schools has been found to have yet another negative impact – on children's performance in mathematics.

"One area of concern that was identified is the high level of bullying prevalent in our schools," said Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga during the release of the Trends in International Math-

ematics and Science Study (TIMSS) by the HSRC in Pretoria yesterday.

"While South Africa continued to perform at the lower end of the rank order, it's score improved from TIMSS 2011 to TIMSS 2015 by 20 points for mathematics and 26 points for science. This means from 2003 to 2015, South Africa improved by 87 points for mathematics and 90 points for science," the HSRC said.

Motshekga used the opportunity to express concern about bullying,

which she said had an impact on both victim and perpetrator, and could be linked to scholastic performance.

The report stated that pupils who were victims of bullying did worse in maths than those who weren't.

"Following these results, the department has developed an anti-bullying campaign within the safety in education programme," said Motshekga. This campaign incorporates a number of elements,

including teacher training guidelines for schools on how to deal with bullying.

Speaking of the study outcome, she said: "Let us acknowledge that South Africa's scores in mathematics and science are low but improving.

"The study shows that the country has made the biggest improvement of any education system in the world (in TIMSS) since we have been participating in the study."

It was also revealed that while

there had been improvements in lower grades, the senior phase had not delivered the expected progress.

Aside from the gap between poor and good-performing schools shrinking, she said there was a concerted effort to close the gap in performance between public no-fee schools and fee-paying schools in favour of improvements in poorer schools.

"Educational levels of parents have considerably improved between 2003 and 2015," she added.



Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga has expressed concern about the impact of bullying at schools. PICTURE: OUPA MOKOENA