



## SCHOOL CLIMATE

School climate refers to the character and quality of social interactions which take place in schools and to the intangible elements of the school environment. School climate involves multiple dimensions (such as bullying, violence, leadership, belonging) within schools, and involves learners and teachers, as well as parents. The learning environment and learner achievement scores can be significantly impacted by school climate, resulting in this being a key area of concern within education. In this issue of the TIMSS SA newsletter, we focus on school climate within South Africa.

### Bullying in South African Primary Schools



Bullying is occurring at alarming rates in South African schools. Using Grade 5 Numeracy data from the 2015 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), we provide an overview of the nature and extent of [bullying in primary schools](#).

### School Climate and Academic Success: Reflections from TIMSS 2015

Using data from the 2015 TIMSS, Lolita Winnaar, examines five [school climate indicators](#) in relation to academic achievement amongst Grade 9 South African learners: emphasis on academic success, challenges facing teachers, bullying, school discipline problems, and safe and orderly schools.

### School Climate and the Bullying of Teachers in South African Schools

Taking a different perspective of bullying, [Prof Corene de Wet](#) from the University of the Free State and her colleague, Dr Lynette Jacobs undertook a study exploring the [bullying of teachers](#) by learners. In this piece, Prof de Wet examines this phenomenon in South African schools and highlights the negative consequences of such behaviour.

### I Feel Like I Belong at My School



Learners' sense of belonging at school is an important aspect related to school climate. Using data from the 2015 TIMSS, we explore [sense of school belonging](#) and the impact on achievement among Grade 5 primary school learners.

## School leadership

While sharing the challenges of South Africa's unequal and broken education system, some schools are beating the odds. [The Good Ones](#), tracks the tenacious efforts of three of these public schools to change the trajectory of their students' futures. Their lessons illuminate how schools can empower students, transform their futures and enable them to find their place in the outside world.

- *Molly Blank*

## School Climate Instrument: A Pilot Study in Pretoria and Environs

There is a growing body of literature on school climate. Furthermore, a number of theses and dissertations related to various dimensions of school climate in South Africa have been written, including:

[School climate instrument: A pilot study in Pretoria and environs](#) - Vanessa Scherman

[Bullying in secondary schools: Teachers' perspectives and experiences](#) - Martha Margaretha Kruger

[Teachers' perceptions of teacher-pupil interaction in high schools in Johannesburg](#) - Michelle Christine Motara

[The role of the principal as instructional leader in improving learner achievement in South African primary schools](#) - Sekolo Hendrick Maponya

## National School Safety Framework

In 2015, a [National School Safety Framework](#) (NSSF) was introduced by the Department of Basic Education. The NSSF is a comprehensive document that provides guidance for schools on a common approach to achieving safe and healthy school environments. The framework incorporates resources and measures for the prevention and management of bullying and violence in schools, including a manual and implementation tools.

## Call for Papers on Bullying SAJE

The South African Journal of Education issued a call for papers related to the nature and extent of bullying in a developing country context, the closing date for which was the 31 August 2017. The [special issue](#) will be released in April 2018.

## What's Happening in Education Research?

The [Early Grade Reading Study](#) assessed the cost-effectiveness of three intervention models which aimed to improve reading outcomes in learner's home language of Setswana in the North West province. The research project started in 2015, and the results were released last month.

In 2013, the fourth round of the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium on Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) study was conducted. This study collects background information on learners' school and home environments, and tests both learners and teachers in numeracy and literacy. South Africa has participated in SACMEQ II, III and IV, the [results](#) of which were released in August.

## Interested in using TIMSS data for research?

If you are interested in working with us on publications based on the TIMSS data, please [contact us](#).

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