

# Compulsory education for inmates

PRETORIA: Correctional Services Minister S'bu Ndebele has announced that as from 1 April 2013, it will be compulsory for inmates who do not have a qualification equivalent to Grade 9 to complete Adult Education and Training (ABET) level 1 to 4.



Speaking at the official opening of the new premises of Usethubeni Youth School Westville Correctional Centre in KwaZulu-Natal, Ndebele said: "We are working towards turning our prisons into learning centres, and we want offenders to read, study and work.

"We want to impact the hearts, heads and hands of offenders so that, upon their release, they are in possession of at least a certificate in one hand and a skill in the other," he said.

Ndebele said key to rehabilitation is empowering offenders to have skills to function effectively in society on their release but, equally important, is to ensure that offenders are actively involved in productive activity while they serve their sentences.

"We want to see offenders proudly contributing to their self-care. As government, we remain fully committed to our shared vision of a caring and just society enjoining us to afford even those who err against society the opportunity to correct and mend their ways under humane conditions.

"We must go all out to rehabilitate and create conditions for those seriously seeking opportunities for change in their lives to access them," Ndebele said.

Correctional Services has 19 textile workshops, 10 steel workshops, 10 wood workshops, six bakeries, one shoe factory, 21 farms and 94 vegetable gardens which provide development opportunities for offenders.

Usethubeni Youth School is a comprehensive combined school established in 1996.

The school offers courses in Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) Level 1 to 4, National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations, Technical Education including welding, carpentry, bricklaying and computer science as well as Sport and Recreation and Arts and Culture.

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According to Ndbele, 1 428 offenders have registered to write the Report 550 Examinations (previous Grade 12 curriculum) in May/June this year.

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