



Provincial Winner

Excellence in Special Needs Teaching

Name: Chantelle Carstens

School: Paarl School, Brackenfell

District: Metro East

Ms Chantelle Carstens, acting Head of Department at Paarl School in Brackenfell in the Metro East District, is an exceptional teacher whose unwavering commitment to inclusive education makes her a worthy candidate for the NTA. Her philosophy of placing the learner at the heart of the learning process is evident in her innovative use of multi-sensory approaches and differentiated teaching strategies that ensure that no child is left behind.

In her classroom, inclusion is not just a principle, it is a practice. Chantelle creates an inclusive learning culture where tactile activities, visual aids, and assistive technologies form the backbone of teaching. She skilfully integrates adaptive devices such as eye-gaze technology, reading pens, hearing aids with FM systems, large print keyboards, mobile phones with reading apps, text-to-speech software, and even myo-electric prostheses to ensure accessibility and participation for all learners, regardless of their barriers to learning. She makes use of Augmentative and Alternative Communication strategies throughout her teaching to enable learners with communication barriers to express themselves and engage meaningfully in their learning journey.

Chantelle sets high yet realistic goals for her learners, believing in their ability to achieve beyond expectation. She embraces differentiation and individualised support as the foundation of her planning and interventions. Her learners are not only achieving academic success but are also developing life skills that empower them beyond the classroom.

Her commitment extends to working closely with parents and guardians through regular feedback,

individual planning, learner assessments, and formal parent meetings. She provides grief and bereavement support to families, recognising the emotional landscape many of her learners navigate. This reflects her holistic and compassionate approach to teaching.

As an enthusiast for continuing professional development, Chantelle completed the prestigious Keller course, actively participated in knowledge-sharing platforms, and presents at professional development sessions. She is also involved in outreach initiatives, ensuring that her expertise benefits the broader community of teachers and learners.

Her work is recognised through her collaboration with a Norwegian university, where cross-cultural exchange enhances her learners' global awareness. This partnership has led to outreach projects that support animal shelters and local community spaces, reinforcing her role as a community builder, cultural mediator, and global citizen.

Within the school, she wears many hats—leading cultural programmes, organising concerts and events, heading the prefect body, and planning career guidance and excursions that expose learners to real-world opportunities and inspire them to follow their dreams. Many of her former learners have gone on to graduate from university, a testament to her enduring impact and advocacy for their full potential.

In every aspect of her work, Ms Chantelle Carstens exemplifies excellence in special needs education, showing innovation, heart, and determination. She is not only a teacher, but also a change agent, a mentor, and a trailblazer in inclusive education.

Provincial National Teaching Awards (NTA) 2025



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