



**Provincial Winner**

## **Excellence in teaching Mathematics (GET)**

**Name:** Mariska Niemand  
**School:** Altena Primary School, Strand  
**District:** Metro East

**Mariska Niemand is a dynamic and innovative Mathematics teacher at Altena Primary School in the Strand and has an ongoing need to uplift student confidence and achievement in Mathematics at a school, “Die Bos”, that faces significant challenges, including resource limitations, socio-economic hardships among learners. Against this backdrop, Mariska’s passion for teaching and unwavering commitment stand out as a beacon of hope and inspiration within the school community.**

As the Mathematics subject head, Mariska not only leads curriculum delivery but also mentors fellow teachers, fostering a culture of continuous professional growth and collaboration. She confidently employs the Concrete-Pictorial-Abstract (CPA) model in her classrooms, effectively bridging the gap between hands-on learning and theoretical underpinning. Her innovative use of props—most notably her beloved “Captain Capacity” hat—brings math concepts to life, making her print-rich classroom a stimulating and welcoming environment where learners genuinely enjoy engaging with Mathematics.

Mariska’s approach expertly balances the concrete with the abstract, ensuring that learners can grasp complex concepts while building both competence and confidence. She motivates her students through participation in AMESA Mathematics competitions, Grow Smart initiatives, and daily mental math challenges, such as the “Daily 10”,

cultivating a spirited enthusiasm for numeracy that extends beyond the classroom. Her advocacy for learner confidence is deeply embedded in her teaching philosophy, recognising its crucial role in students’ academic success and lifelong learning.

A lifelong learner herself, Mariska continuously seeks to enhance her skills by pursuing professional development opportunities, including attaining an Honours degree in Learning Support. This dedication reflects her heartfelt desire to support diverse learner needs better and to create an inclusive classroom environment where every child can thrive.

Leadership through collaboration is central to Mariska’s ethos. She initiated the impactful Wellness Wednesdays for teachers, prioritising staff wellbeing to ensure they can perform at their best. As a committed *BOT* teacher, she leads meetings and offers invaluable peer support, strengthening the professional learning community at Altena Primary School. Her resourcefulness shines through her creative use of everyday materials, such as bottle tops, to develop learning aids that make Mathematics accessible and exciting.

Mariska is actively involved in community projects, extending her passion for Mathematics beyond the school by tutoring learners who require additional support. Her dedication helps bridge learning gaps and strengthens ties between the school and the wider community.

**Provincial National Teaching Awards (NTA) 2025**



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A Golden Key member and an active participant in Professional Learning Community (PLC) workshops, Mariska embodies the spirit of shared growth and excellence. Her teaching mantra — “Passion and Purpose” — underlines every endeavour she undertakes, continually inspiring learners and colleagues alike.

Mariska Niemand is a transformative teacher at Altena Primary School, championing excellence in Mathematics despite challenges. Through her dedication, innovation, and collaborative leadership, she inspires learners to reach their full potential and become confident global ambassadors of learning.

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