



**Provincial Winner**

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

**Name:** Charissa Shay-Sithole  
**School:** Apex High School, Eerste River  
**District:** Metro East

**Charissa Shay-Sithole is a dynamic and visionary Mathematics teacher at Apex High School in Eerste River, a Quintile 1 no-fee school. Her commitment to excellence, innovation, and social justice in education exemplifies the highest standards of the teaching profession. She draws inspiration from her late mother, Suellen Shay, who was a lecturer, and Bell Hooks, an author and teacher feminist, and values resilience and courage.**

Mrs Shay-Sithole's teaching practice is a powerful blend of technology integration, pedagogical creativity, and learner-centred strategies. She leverages a range of digital tools including Reflective Learning, Mindspark, GeoGebra, and Siyavula to individualise learning, track progress, and deepen conceptual understanding. Her learners are celebrated daily and weekly for their Siyavula milestones—both in class and at assemblies—creating a culture of achievement and motivation.

A former Epoch and Optima Trust intern, Charissa's scholarly contributions are extensive. She is busy completing a PhD focusing on the experience of learner leaders and holds a Master's degree in the History of Education. Her research interests include the evolution of the South African Mathematics curriculum, and she is a research assistant contributing to a forthcoming book on the national education crisis in Mathematics.

Mrs Shay-Sithole believes in humanising Mathematics to combat Maths anxiety. She hosts innovative "mediation meetings" between learners, herself, and Mathematics as a conceptual "third person", often using humour to reframe learners' relationships with the subject. She gamifies learning using Siyavula leaderboards, Mathematics games and encourages healthy competition and collaboration.

Her professional leadership is demonstrated through her role as General Education Certificate (GEC) team leader, her participation in Siyavula teacher support communities, and her active involvement with the Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute, where she continues to upskill herself. She is the administrative lead for the SAICA camp, which offers tutoring and mentoring in Maths, Accounting, and Physical Sciences to learners from surrounding communities.

Beyond the classroom, Charissa is deeply invested in learner development. She facilitates WhatsApp-based Maths support, curates learning resources for struggling learners, and connects her students to Standard Bank's Moneywise Programme and the Johannesburg Stock Exchange Club. She also leads her school's Representative Council of Learners (RCL), teaching them about human rights, leadership, and multilingual education through immersive experiences like their visit to the University of the Western Cape.

As a mentor to young teachers, she co-founded the Wolfpack, a support group for first-year teachers, focusing on peer observation and collaborative growth. She also founded TeacherMeet and Teachers Can, two influential teacher networks promoting community, professional development, and resource sharing.

Charissa Shay-Sithole is not only a passionate teacher, but a content creator, researcher, mentor, and changemaker. Her work reflects a deep belief that Mathematics education can be transformative when it is inclusive, contextual, and community oriented. Her exceptional contributions make her a deserving recipient of this prestigious award.

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



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