



Provincial Winner

Excellence in Secondary School Leadership

Name: Hendrik Smith
School: Hoërskool Langenhoven, Riversdale
District: Eden & Central Karoo

Mr Hendrik Smith, principal of Hoërskool Langenhoven in Riversdale, exemplifies the highest standards of professional integrity, innovation, and servant leadership in the South African education landscape.

With a credible academic background—including a Bachelor of Education, BEd Honours in Mathematics, and an Advanced Diploma in School Leadership and Management — Mr Smith brings both depth of knowledge and practical leadership wisdom to his role as principal.

Mr Smith was nominated by his school community in recognition of his visionary and people-centred leadership style. Under his astute stewardship, the school has not only advanced in terms of infrastructure and learner support but has consistently improved its academic performance, guided by the powerful motto, “At our school, you only win or learn.”

This mindset has instilled a resilient, growth-oriented academic culture, where failure is viewed not as defeat but as an opportunity to reflect, improve, and persevere. In this spirit, the school community lives out its core value: Faithfulness—to one another, to excellence, and to the purpose of education.

What distinguishes Mr Smith’s leadership is his ability to transform the culture of the school

through small, consistent acts of intentional leadership. He encourages a professional climate where the staffroom is a place for transparent information-sharing and acknowledgement while the principal’s office is a safe space for person-centred meaningful solution focused dialogue — open, honest, and human. This subtle yet profound distinction reflects Mr Smith’s deeply relational approach to leadership.

Using the metaphor of a choir conductor he has shifted the school from a culture of “me” to “we”. He is the metronome of the school, on beat with the staff, learners and parents. His open-door policy and calm, consistent presence inspires a sense of trust, safety, and unity.

Mr Smith’s leadership extends well beyond academics. Through effective stakeholder engagement and strategic vision, he turned a long-held dream into reality with the successful development of an AstroTurf hockey field. This project was not only a logistical achievement but a symbol of hope, dignity, and excellence for the entire community.

In selecting Mr Hendrik Smith as the provincial winner, he is recognised as a leader who inspires beyond the classroom, leads with heart, and builds with purpose. He is not just a principal—he is an orchestrator, a mentor, and a visionary who leads with authenticity, humility, and courage.

Provincial National Teaching Awards (NTA) 2025



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