



STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 6AM GMT (7AM BST) THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 22

Outstanding South African school named Top 3 finalist for new \$250,000 World's Best School Prizes

- **Pinelands North Primary School makes final 3 for World's Best School Prize for Overcoming Adversity**

An outstanding South African school has been named a Top 3 finalist for the new \$250,000 World's Best School Prizes, launched this year by T4 Education in collaboration with Templeton World Charity Foundation, Accenture and American Express.

Pinelands North Primary School in Cape Town, South Africa, which is one of the country's leading institutions for fostering inclusivity in education, is a Top 3 finalist for the World's Best School Prize for Overcoming Adversity.

The five World's Best School Prizes - for Community Collaboration, Environmental Action, Innovation, Overcoming Adversity, and Supporting Healthy Lives - celebrate schools everywhere for the pivotal role they play in developing the next generation of learners and for their enormous contribution to society's progress especially in the wake of COVID.

The Prizes were founded by T4 Education in collaboration with Templeton World Charity Foundation, Accenture, American Express, Yayasan Hasanah, the Lemann Foundation, D2L, Mellby Gård, and Universidad Camilo José Cela, to share the best practices of schools that are transforming the lives of their students and making a real difference to their communities.

Vikas Pota, Founder of T4 Education and the World's Best School Prizes, said:

"As the world looks to rebuild from the devastation of the COVID pandemic, far too many children will continue to be left behind unless we see urgent action on education. Leaders must learn from the knowledge and experience contained within our schools because those on the frontlines of education know better than anyone else the change we need to see."

"The World's Best School Prizes surface the expertise of inspirational schools from every corner of the globe. It's time for governments everywhere to listen to their voices."

"Congratulations to Pinelands North Primary School for being named a Top 3 finalist for the first ever World's Best School Prizes. Teachers everywhere will be inspired by the example of this outstanding South African school."

About the school:

Pinelands North Primary School in Cape Town, South Africa, is recognised as one of the country's leading institutions when it comes to fostering inclusivity in education. When its principal, Ann Morton, took up the role in 1997, South Africa was emerging from the shadow of Apartheid, and the student population of her school was still predominantly white. Today Pinelands is a beacon of diversity.

The ethos of Pinelands North centres on building relationships within the school's community and breaking down barriers. Creating an inclusive environment allows for a sense of belonging for families who don't fit a traditional and normative family structure.

All pupils, male or female, wear the same uniforms – shorts and t-shirts, which are designed to be less traditional and more comfortable. The school has brought in gender neutral bathrooms and everyone, including teachers, is addressed by their first name. From Grade 2, students are taught sign language. When the school accepted its first transgender pupil, it provided guidance for families about gender identities and trained staff through workshops on how to guide parents to adapt to the school's new policies.

This philosophy extends to animal welfare: students are encouraged to take care of animals and view them as part of the family. A programme was set up for pupils to volunteer to be "animal monitors" and help coach each other on how best to handle the animals under their care.

In the wake of the pandemic, Pinelands North's governing body quickly implemented a fund to assist families who were struggling financially, had all staff participate in bereavement and trauma training to better support pupils and parents during COVID and opened an online school for students who could no longer attend classes in person.

If Pinelands North were to win the World's Best School Prize for Overcoming Adversity it would use the funds to expand its online school and buy a property close to the school's premises so it can create a hybrid programme. This would allow an additional 100 students from across all communities to have a vibrant school experience, participating in sporting activities and other extra curriculums.

Next steps:

The Top 3 finalists for each of the five World's Best School Prizes will now be entered into a Public Advisory Vote. Members of the public have until October 2 to tell judges who they think should win each prize at worldsbestschool.org/

The Judging Academy, comprising distinguished leaders all across the globe including academics, educators, NGOs, social entrepreneurs, government, civil society, and the private sector, will be presented with the results of the public advisory vote and will assess the finalists based on rigorous [criteria](#).

The winners will be announced on October 19 2022 at [World Education Week](#). A prize of US\$250,000 will be shared equally among the winners of the five Prizes, with each receiving an award of US\$50,000.

All shortlisted schools across the five Prizes will share their best practices during events at World Education Week and through School Transformation Toolkits that showcase their “secret sauce” to innovative approaches and step-by-step instructions on how others can replicate their methods to help improve education everywhere.

ABOUT T4 EDUCATION:

We believe every child everywhere deserves a good education. We are building the world's largest community of teachers and schools to achieve this. Together. Our digital media platform provides opportunities for educators to network, collaborate, share good practices, and support each other's efforts to improve learning. We work to amplify teachers' voices because the world we want to see will only be built by listening to those at the heart of education.

<https://t4.education/>

<https://twitter.com/T4EduC>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/t4education/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/t4education/>

For more information, please contact Salman Shaheen: salman@t4.education