SAALED NEWSLETTER

Issue: **06,** 2026

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Membership fees for 2026:

Subscription fees and Webinar rates for 2026.

School Annual Membership fee:

R2400.00 and entitles 6 teachers to join the webinars and seminar at the member rate thereafter non-member rates apply.

Individual Annual Membership fee:

R350.00 and entitles you to join all events at the member rate.

Webinar fees for members:
R230.00 per webinar

Webinar fees for non-members:
R320.00 per webinar

5% of all bookings will be donated to our Outreach School, Kings School Muldersdrift

Schools/individuals who are in need, please reach out to SAALED and we will do our best to accommodate you.

Please liaise with your school and make payment as soon as possible.

BANK DETAILS:

S A ASSOC FOR LEARNING

First National Bank

Account No: 62046846020

Branch code: 250655

Please ensure that your name/school's name appears on any deposit notification.

Dear SAALED Members and Friends,

Welcome

As I write this welcome for our July/August newsletter, I do so with a mix of gratitude, pride and excitement. This marks my final newsletter as Chairperson of SAALED. While I will be stepping down from the role of Chairperson, I am delighted to remain on the SAALED Board, continuing to support an association that has become such an important part of my professional journey, as both a teacher and Deputy Principal. I am often asked what sparked my passion for education. For me, the answer lies in my childhood.

I am inspired by my father who served as Head of Department at New Horizon School for the Blind in Pietermaritzburg, where he learnt to read Braille so that he could better support children. Later, he accepted a promotion as the live-in Deputy Principal at V.N. Naik School for the Deaf in Durban, where he easily mastered South African sign language. Those schools were more than just his workplace; they became part of our family's life.

As children, my sisters and I spent countless hours walking the corridors of the school, sharing meals with students in the dining hall, accompanying children on outings, and forming friendships with staff members who welcomed us as though we were family. Looking back, I realise that those experiences quietly shaped my understanding of inclusion, belonging and the extraordinary potential of every child.



Those early memories taught me that educational differences should never define a person's limits. Instead, they challenge us as humans to think differently, teach creatively and advocate courageously.

As I hand the reins to Shirley Gray, who has agreed to once again take on the role of Chairperson, I do so with complete confidence. Shirley's experience, dedication and passion for inclusive education showcase her commitment to what SAALED stands for, and I know the association will continue to flourish under her guidance.

Webinar: Early Years. Ready to Learn: Play, Purpose, and Progress

Play is so much more than fun- it is the foundation of meaningful learning in the early years. Join us for an engaging SAALED webinar as we explore how intentional, inquiry-based play nurtures curiosity, creativity, critical thinking and learner agency while supporting curriculum goals.

Packed with practical strategies and inspiring ideas, this session will help educators create purposeful learning experiences where play and progress go hand in hand.

Presented by: Michelle Hackmann, Academic Leader and Early Years Programme Coordinator from Crawford International Sandton Pre-Primary
Date: 17 September 2026

Time: 18:00

Come and discover how purposeful play can transform learning in your early years classroom.



To make booking for the Seminar, lease click on the link below:

CLICK HERE

Reflection on SAALED Annual Seminar 2026: Boundaries with Heart
(written by Lucinda Pinto - Principal Crawford International Sandton Pre-primary and SAALED Board Member)

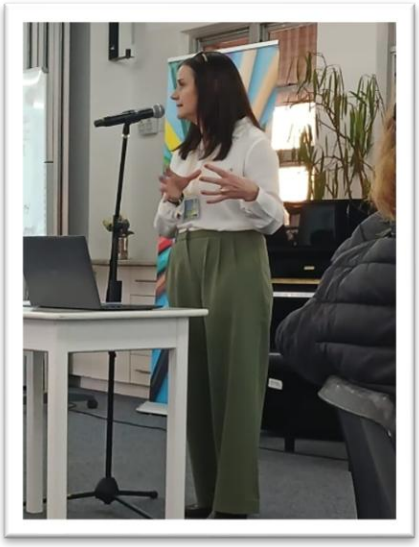
"When relationships come first, boundaries become acts of care rather than control." This sentiment beautifully captured the essence of the 2026 SAALED Annual Seminar, where South African educators gathered to explore how meaningful relationships and clear expectations work together to create learning environments in which both students and teachers can flourish.

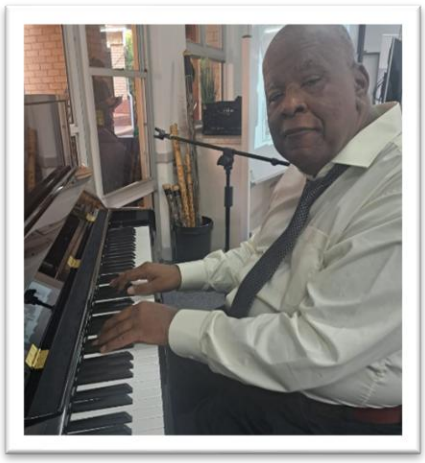
Held on 25 June 2026 at Dainfern College, Johannesburg, the annual seminar once again fulfilled SAALED's commitment to providing high-quality professional development that addresses relevant and contemporary topics for teachers and educational leaders across all contexts of South African education. The day offered delegates the opportunity to engage with leading voices in education, reflect on current practice and leave equipped with practical strategies to strengthen teaching and learning.

This year's theme, "Boundaries with Heart," invited educators to reconsider the role of boundaries, not as barriers, but as opportunities to build trust, belonging and meaningful relationships. Throughout the day, a common thread emerged: effective education is rooted in authentic human connection.
As Professor Jonathan Jansen so powerfully described it, this is a "pedagogy of love", an approach that recognises that care, respect, and high expectations are inseparable from meaningful learning.

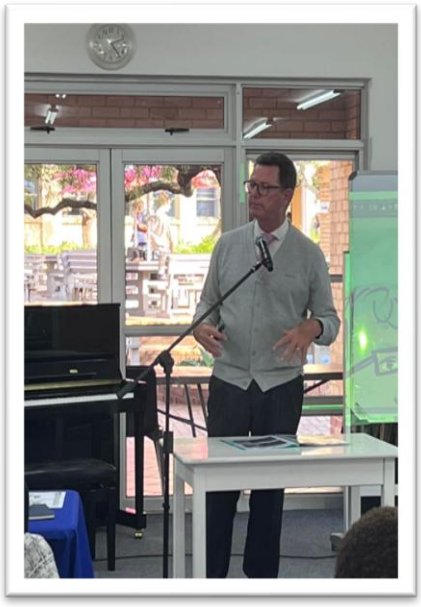
The seminar featured three acclaimed speakers, each bringing a unique perspective and a wealth of expertise:

Julia Dunn challenged educators to move from control to connection, encouraging schools to rethink traditional approaches to boundaries and behaviour management. Her presentation demonstrated how clear expectations, when grounded in strong relationships, create classrooms where students feel safe, respected, and ready to learn.





Professor Jonathan Jansen inspired delegates with a thought-provoking presentation on the empirical correlates of a pedagogy of love. He reminded educators that relationships are not an addition to education, they are at its very heart. His message encouraged teachers to lead with empathy, courage and purpose while maintaining the high standards that enable every learner to succeed.



Stuart West explored the power of affirmation, belonging and possibility, sharing practical insights into how schools can intentionally create cultures where every student feels valued, connected, and capable of achieving their potential.

Each presenter is highly respected within the education sector, offering evidence-informed perspectives alongside practical advice and solutions that educators could immediately apply within their own contexts.

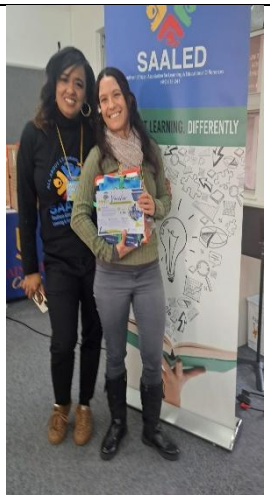
In addition to the inspiring programme, delegates had the opportunity to engage with a range of educational vendors showcasing the latest learning materials, resources, and innovative products to support teaching and learning. The exhibition provided valuable opportunities to explore new ideas, connect with suppliers and discover resources that enhance classroom practice.

The 2026 SAALED Annual Seminar once again demonstrated the value of bringing educators together to learn, reflect and grow. As schools continue to navigate an ever-changing educational landscape, the seminar served as a powerful reminder that when relationships are nurtured with care, boundaries become a foundation for belonging, growth and meaningful learning.

Some memory-making and networking moments...



SAALED Seminar Prize Winners

				
Sam Kaufman (right) from Cedarwood won the **Mind Moves** Institute voucher and books.	**Meaghan Voget** (right) from Bellavista School won a R700 Purple Mash voucher from **2SIMPLE**.	**Taryn Grobler** (left) from Dainfern High School won a sensory tool pack and acoustic consultation with **MAZE Education**.	**Mrs Nicky Jansen van Vuuren (right)** from Dainfern Senior Primary School won a R2000 voucher from **DEPICTA.**	**Lauren Nel** (right) from Dainfern College won the Hokki stool donated by **KCSA** – school furniture
				***We are so appreciative to all our vendors for the generous support and prizes. I am sure the recipients will make generous use of your goods and services!*** ***Thank you!***
The **LABELPAL** voucher was won by **Melissa Gonzalves** from Cedarwood School	**Natalie Aitchison** (right) from Dunvegan Primary School won a voucher and IT tools from **INDABAPRO**, a Learner and Academic Support Monitoring System.	When you want to carry your prize, even if it is a bit heavy… **Bianca Fleishman** from Crawford International Pre-Primary won the Epson Printer donated by **DocQtech.**	**Marc Abbot**, represented by **Kerryn Bowen** (right), from Steyn City School, won an R400 voucher from **PLAYING AND LEARNING**	

Webinar Reflection: Connected or Controlled? Tech, Teens, and Teaching Boundaries



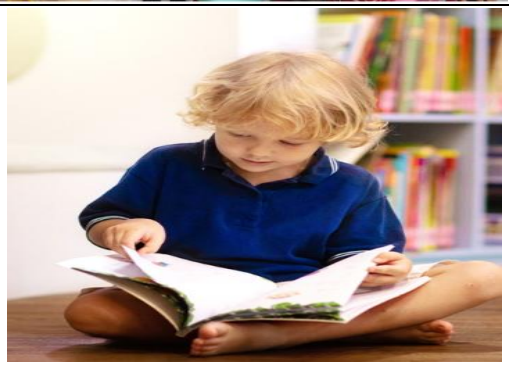
SAALED was delighted to welcome Kate Farina, Head of Strategy for Smartphone Free Childhood South Africa (SFC-SA), for a thought-provoking webinar exploring the impact of smartphones and social media on children and adolescents.

The session sparked meaningful discussions around the realities of growing up in an increasingly connected world and challenged participants to consider how schools, families, and communities can work together to foster healthier relationships with technology. Kate shared practical strategies for establishing appropriate boundaries while encouraging childhood experiences rooted in play, curiosity, face-to-face connection, and wellbeing.

The webinar was exceptionally well-received, with participants describing it as "A great session and time well spent." Many also appreciated the opportunity to hear how schools across our region are responding to the challenges of technology use, highlighting the value of learning from one another's experiences.

Thank you to Kate for sharing her expertise and to everyone who joined us for this timely and engaging conversation. Together, we continue to build informed, supportive communities that help young people navigate the digital world with confidence and balance.

Proposed SAALED Webinars and Seminar Events for 2026:

	**Webinar** **Early Years, Ready to Learn: Play, Purpose, and Progress** **17 September 2026**
	**Webinar** **Structured Literacy in the Foundation Phase classroom: applying the Science of Reading Some practical tips** **15 October 2026**

These events may be subject to change based on circumstances that may be unforeseen. This will be communicated in advance and closer to the time, as needed.

Farewell and Thank You, Dr Chaland van Zyl.



After a period of dedicated service as a Board member and then later as Co-opted Board Member, Dr Chaland van Zyl has made the decision to step down from the SAALED Board and conclude her role overseeing the SACE portfolio.

Chaland has been a valued member of our team, generously sharing her time, expertise, and passion for supporting SAALED's mission. Her thoughtful contributions and commitment have played an important role in strengthening our organisation and supporting our professional learning community.

While we are naturally saddened to see her leave the Board, we fully understand her decision as she balances the growing demands of family, work, and other professional commitments. We are grateful for the time, energy, and heart she has invested in SAALED and appreciate the positive impact she has made.

On behalf of the Board and our members, we extend our sincere thanks to Chaland for her service and wish her every success in the exciting opportunities that lie ahead. We know she will always remain a valued friend of SAALED, and we look forward to crossing paths again in the future.

Thank you, Chaland, for being part of the SAALED journey. We wish you and your family all the very

Closing Note and A Personal Thank You

As I bring my final edition of the newsletter as Chairperson of the SAALED board to a close, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to every member, presenter, sponsor and board member who has been part of this remarkable journey. It has been an honour to serve as Chairperson and to witness the growth of our organisation and the passion of those committed to supporting learning with educational differences.

As I step into a new chapter, I look forward to embracing new responsibilities in my professional role, making plans to continue with postgraduate studies, and, perhaps most importantly, creating more time to spend with my family. While my priorities may be shifting, my belief in SAALED's mission remains as strong as ever.

SAALED is in capable hands, with dedicated individuals who will continue to inspire, advocate and make a meaningful difference in the lives of learners and educators alike.

Thank you for your support and the opportunity to serve. As I continue as a board member, I look forward to watching our association continue to flourish.

With gratitude and heartfelt appreciation,
Joe Pillay
Chairperson, SAALED

joe.pillay@saaled.org.za

SACE APPROVED PROVIDER

ALL ABOUT LEARNING, DIFFERENTLY
SAALED
Southern African Association for Learning & Educational Differences
NPO 013-241

Reminder – Adding SAALED as a beneficiary- MySchool MyDifference Programme

