



Bizimali Secondary School
**WHOLE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT
CASE STUDY
2022**

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1. INTRODUCTION

Adopt-a-School Foundation (AAS) is a registered non-profit organisation with the vision of creating dynamic, transformed and accessible schooling environments that produce capable global citizens to meet the developmental needs of Southern Africa. In 20 years, AAS has grown both its reach and scope and continuously strives to make a meaningful impact. Through a holistic, inclusive model called Whole School Development (WSD), AAS aims to address the academic, infrastructural and social environment in rural and disadvantaged schools, ensuring that they are functional and conducive to teaching and learning. The model is aligned with the Department of Basic Education's (DBE) policies and frameworks and is relevant to the context of the schools in which AAS works.

In 2012, AAS partnered with the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) to implement WSD in 20 high schools around South Africa. In 2014, the IDC adopted a further ten primary schools, which served as feeder schools to their adopted high schools. Bizimali Secondary School in KwaZulu-Natal, the subject of this case study, is one of the IDC's adopted high schools.



2. THE ADOPT-A-SCHOOL FOUNDATION'S WHOLE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT MODEL

WSD is a holistic model that seeks to improve the teaching and learning conditions through addressing school leadership, school infrastructure, educator development and learner well-being.



For AAS, success lies in creating a long-term sustainable and governable school through the holistic implementation of WSD. The characteristics of a healthy school are:

1. To facilitate excellent school management processes with visionary leadership, which is measured by:

- Clearly defined working strategic plans that undergo regular review
- Teamwork amongst educators and parental involvement
- Clear display of instructional leadership and shared management

2. To provide adequate, well-maintained school infrastructure with appropriate resources utilised, which is measured by:

- Increase and growth in infrastructure development according to the school's work plan and goals
- School facilities that are functional, equipped with necessary teaching and learning resources and used for the intended purpose
- Active maintenance and security plans
- Use of facilities by the school community

3. To improve the levels of teaching expertise and achieve consistently high academic performance amongst learners, which is measured by:

- Trained educators, employing a range of new skills and techniques in the classroom
- Trained educators effectively utilising teaching and learning resources provided
- An increase in the uptake of gateway subjects
- An improvement in the learner pass rate

4. To facilitate a safe school environment that is attentive to the social well-being of learners and enables an involved school community, which is measured by:

- An improvement in learner attendance
- A decline in disciplinary problems
- A greater sense of school pride in learners

FEATURES OF A HEALTHY SCHOOL

The goal of WSD is to build functional schools for learners in Southern Africa. A functional school is measured by:



Well-developed, accountable and supportive leadership with an established and clear vision for the future of the school.



A safe, healthy and happy environment which promotes human dignity.



Clean and well-maintained surroundings and facilities with all necessary resources.



Improved learner performance with an excellent pass rate (80% - 100%).



Dedicated and empowered educators.



Good relationships and coordinated interventions with different stakeholders.



A dedicated, a committed and accountable school community which promotes the long-term sustainability of the school.

3. BIZIMALI SECONDARY SCHOOL PROFILE

Bizimali Secondary School is located in the rural area of Kranskop, in Nkandla, which lies on the western end of the King Cetshwayo District Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal. The surrounding community is impoverished, with very high levels of unemployment. Most residents rely on subsistence farming and government grants. Bizimali Secondary School has served as a beacon of hope for this community for many years, as it not only provides high quality education, but also promotes a strong sense of community. Learners from various parts of KwaZulu-Natal and neighbouring provinces seek enrolment at the school, because of its excellent academic reputation. Many alumni return to the community to work in the local schools and clinics and to establish entrepreneurial opportunities.

The school was established in 1983 by Chief Bizimali. It was registered with the DBE in the same year and initially catered for Grade 8 to 10. In 1996, Mr Ntuli, the current principal, joined the school and over the next few years, it grew to accommodate Grade 11 and 12 and transitioned to a fully operational Secondary School. Currently, the school caters for over 1850 learners each year from Grade 8 to Grade 12. Bizimali Secondary School has an active School Governing Body (SGB) and a School Management Team (SMT), that consists of the Principal, two Deputy Principals and five Heads of Department (HODs). This team is responsible for the daily running of the school. There are 67 existing educators and, in recent months, 12 assistant educators have been bought in to provide support to the educators to deal with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Mrs Ntuli, Deputy Principal



School Excellence Awards Ceremony



"The Foundation and Industrial Development Corporation has really helped the school with integrating ICT into curriculum delivery. Educators can now research and prepare for lessons online and use digital boards in class."

**- Mr Felix, Grade 11 Science Educator
and ICT DeskTop Technician**

The school also has 16 non-teaching staff including a security guard, administrator, five general assistants and nine kitchen staff who run the school's nutrition programme.

Since it was established, the school has had a long and sustained history of delivering quality education and producing excellent results. In 1998, it produced its first Matric cohort which achieved a 100% pass rate. One of the matriculants (who was also a top national performer), Mxoleleli Ntuli, obtained a bursary from the national Department of Health to study Medicine in Cuba.

Bizimali Secondary School has also faced many challenges. In its early days, it consisted solely of an undercover structure with no walls. In 1998 a local organisation, in Eshowe, helped the school to build 16 new classrooms. In 1999, the principal led a fundraising campaign, supported by the late President Nelson Mandela, to build a further two classrooms, that also serves as a hall.

As the school consistently produced excellent results, with learners receiving National and Provincial Awards, it began to gain recognition. Through media attention, the school attracted the support of a range of stakeholders including the IDC. In 2013, the IDC, through AAS, began working with Bizimali Secondary School and has continued to support the school for the past nine years. The investment from the IDC and the nature of this collaborative partnership has transformed this remarkable school.

4. WHOLE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE



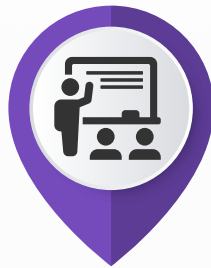
2012 - 2013

- Needs analysis
 - Strategic planning, leadership, governance and teambuilding programme
- Leadership training for Learner Representative Council
- Leadership and governance programme for SMT and SGB



2013 - 2014

- Renovation of 16 classrooms



2014 - 2015

- Accounting educator development and classroom support programme
- Science educator development and classroom support programme
- Mathematics educator development and classroom support programme
- Donation of dictionaries
- Conversion of pit-latrines to an ablution facility



2015 - 2016

- Borehole constructed
- Solar panels fitted



2016 - 2017

- Mathematics and Physical Science Grade 12 learner supplementary programme



2017 - 2018

- Mathematics, Physical Science and Accounting Grade 12 learner supplementary programme



2018 - 2019

- ICT programme - Year one
- Resourcing and placement of Information Technology Entrepreneur (ITE) at the school



2019 - 2020

- ICT programme - Year two
- Classroom furniture for 12 classrooms



2020 - 2021

- ITE stipend for ICT support programme



2021 - 2022

- Construction of a Dining and Nutrition Centre

5. WHOLE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT IMPACT

WSD has had a positive impact on the development of Bizimali Secondary School. It is a robust and holistic model that has offered Bizimali Secondary School leadership development, curriculum support, infrastructure development and has helped the school to address social welfare challenges. The school has supported and sustained these interventions, that have contributed to it becoming a healthy and safe environment.

The Strategic Planning, Leadership, Governance and Teambuilding programme was the first intervention AAS implemented at the school. This programme formed the foundation for leadership development at the school. The school's leadership and management team was taken on a weekend retreat for a strategic planning session that included teambuilding exercises, leadership training and strategy development. The session provided a platform for the team to deal with important issues and explore solutions to some of the many challenges facing the school. The SGB, SMT, educators and administrative clerks engaged in a process to develop a new vision, mission and strategy for their school. Through the new strategy, the school was able to create a development plan with clear action plans. Their feedback was that the programme was revitalising, and boosted staff morale.

"The school leadership development helped us. Our responsibilities were clearly defined, and time frames were clearly marked. Both the school improvement plans and academic plans were worked out by both the school governing body, the school management team as well as the teaching staff. This enabled us to integrate activities that resulted in the entire school's development."

- Thandiwe Mtjali, SGB Member

The teambuilding activities helped to unify the staff, instilling a sense of ownership, responsibility, and enthusiasm. The team reported that they felt inspired and empowered to serve their school and the community. Effective systems, targets and goals were introduced, as well as suggestions and methodologies to tackle some of the school's challenges.

Despite the progress made in the strategic planning process, the school still faced challenges with the school's physical infrastructure. Classrooms were overcrowded and had broken windows, no ceilings, and badly damaged floors. Because there was no paving the classrooms were filled with dust and dirt. There were insufficient ablution facilities and those that were working were pit-latrines and posed a health and safety risk.

AAS began addressing these infrastructure challenges step by step. The infrastructure development programme included fixing classroom ceilings, windows, flooring and installing new paving. The Foundation renovated 16 classrooms and furnished the 12 classrooms built by the DBE. This helped to alleviate overcrowding in the classrooms. A flushing ablution facility was also built.

Access to services, such as electricity and water, was also a challenge. In 2015 the Foundation installed solar panels, reducing the school's electricity bill, and built a new borehole giving the school access to clean water. In 2021, a Dining and Nutrition Centre (DNC) was built.

All this infrastructure work provided temporary employment opportunities for parents and community members. Wherever possible, service providers were sourced from the local community. This approach not only benefits the local economy, but it also strengthens the community's sense of ownership of the school.



“Over the years, we have been getting so much support from the IDC and other stakeholders. This school is far from where it started. The DNC will be the pride of the school. No other school in the community has such a structure. The DNC will also support the schools informal boarding school. It will help tackle the food preparation capacity as well as to allow us to follow proper hygiene measures for mass food production.”

- Beauty Z Ntuli, Deputy Principal



In addition to the multiple infrastructure upgrades, the Foundation has implemented curriculum development programmes in subjects such as mathematics, science and accounting. These programmes focused on classroom-based support and educator development that prioritised content knowledge, teaching methodologies and confidence of educator and learners. The programme helped to close gaps in curriculum delivery by building educator capacity. It included supplementary programmes that assisted educators with lesson preparation.



“When teaching a large group of learners, it is easy to move on to the next chapter of the textbook without realising that 60% of your class still needs more time on that chapter. The success indicators included the rise in mathematics performance from a poor 29% to 36% in that year. The impact was evident. It was the beginning of getting our mathematics performance where it had never reached before.”

- Mr Muziwakhe Luthuli, Mathematics educator

Learners received easy to understand videos, study guides and memory cards for both mathematics and science. Since AAS's interventions began, the overall matric performance has increased by 26.2%. from 68.9% in 2012 to 95.1% in 2021. The quality of performance has almost tripled with 68.7% of learners attaining university passes compared to 24% in 2012.

The school shared positive feedback on the WSD programme. Educators said that the biggest impact was that learners who underwent the classroom-based support programme training had a renewed interest in mathematics, and, as a result, were more responsive to the subject content. Learners shared that they thought the methodologies introduced were fun and helped them to get rid of any anxiety or negative feelings they previously had towards mathematics. Educators and learners shared that there was an improvement in their relationship and the way they engaged with each other. The school could see an improved commitment from both the educators and learners.

The curriculum delivery programme helped Bizimali educators and the SMT deal with the challenge of being such a large school, where an average grade has about four hundred learners, with each key subject averaging 100 learners per class. These large classroom numbers overwhelmed educators and made effectively delivering content a significant challenge. The curriculum delivery programme also provided educators with methodologies on how to restructure the classrooms based on each learner's ability and level of understanding.

Educators could identify and redirect their attention to learners that needed it and peer-to-peer groups were formed so that learners with a better understanding of the subject could assist other learners. Techniques and methodologies, such as these, were soon adopted in other subjects as well. This support helped to improve performance in mathematics, which was a very big concern for the school.

In 2018, AAS and the IDC implemented an ICT programme that included recruiting and training Desktop Support Technicians (DSTs) and Information Technology Entrepreneurs (ITEs). The ICT programme aimed to empower unemployed youth providing them with skills and work experience. A DST was appointed to support the school and received a stipend from the IDC. The DST was taken through the following training: A Cisco IT Essentials face-to-face workshop; a programme called Digital Confidence 1; End User Computing training; and introductory courses on web design, coding, robotics and cybersecurity. The DST also received Curriculum Integration training during educator sessions. The ICT programme provided the DST with employment, development training and work experience. The technician shared that the ICT programme was a great opportunity and enabled him to put his training into practice. The ICT programme also assisted the school with integrating ICT into curriculum delivery in subjects such as mathematics, science and English. The educators are able to conduct research and use laptops to support them with teaching. Digital boards are available in the school, making teaching more engaging and effective.



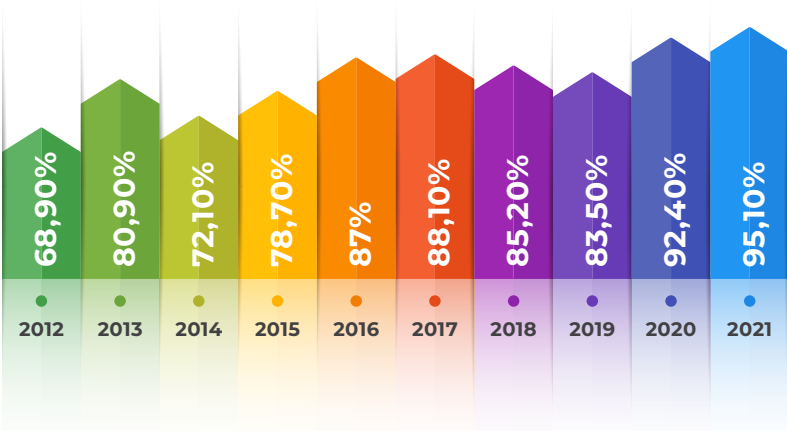
"The programme helped my teaching methodologies a lot. Science is a very interesting subject. But this can be a different experience for those who encounter it because of the way it is delivered. Through this training, we were able to increase our proficiency in the teaching methods and how we could make physical science more enjoyable to learners in the classroom. The successes achieved through this training included a steady increase in the entire school's Physical Science pass rate."

Mr Philani Dumakude, Physical Science educator

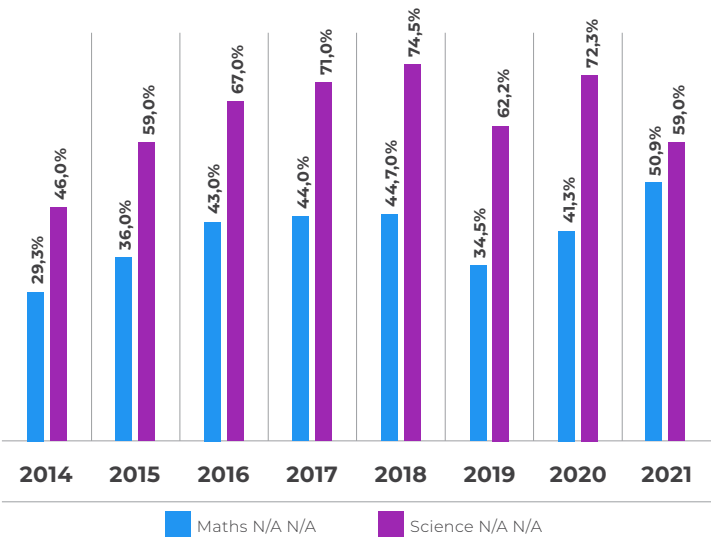
6. ACADEMIC RESULTS

Below are graphs indicating Bizimali Secondary School Grade 12 results from 2012 to 2021.

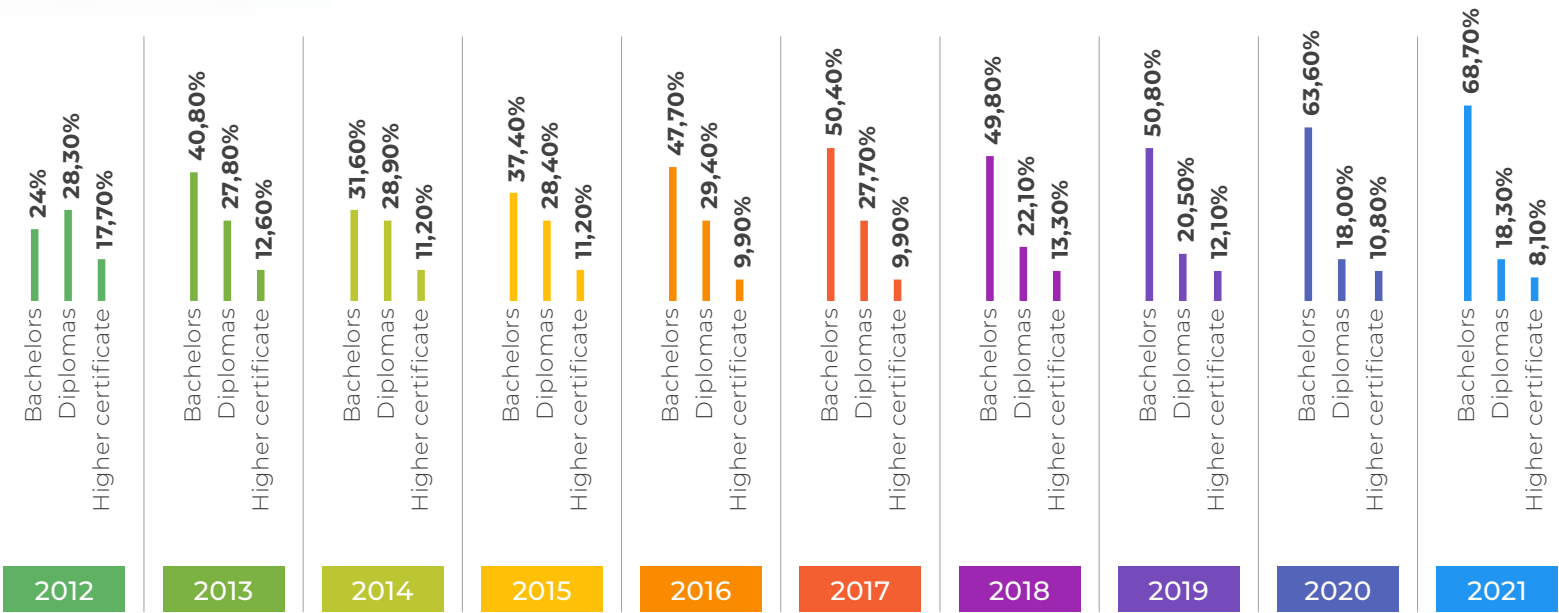
OVERALL MATRIC PERFORMANCE



MATHAMETICS AND SCIENCE MATRIC PERFORMANCE



QUALITY OF RESULTS



Since 2012, many Bizimali Secondary School learners have been recognised as top achievers provincially and nationally. In 2016, **Sivuyile Nkosi** was recognised as a top national achiever in a quintile one school. Sivuyile received a bursary from the IDC to study medicine at the University of Cape Town. In 2017, **Siphile Ntuli** was recognised as a top provincial achiever in physical science. Siphile went on to study Actuarial Science at Witwatersrand University. In 2019, **Siyabonga Cele** was recognised as a top national achiever in a quintile one school. Cele achieved eight distinctions and received a bursary from the IDC to study Actuarial Science at the University of the Witwatersrand University.

In 2021, **Mthokosizi Mlamuli Dlamini** and **Luyanda Mbojo**, were recognised for excellent performance. Mthokosizi achieved 3rd position in the King Cetshwayo District with seven distinctions, while Luyanda was ranked 5th with eight distinctions. Both learners have accepted to study medicine at Sefako Makgatho University.



"Weekends were utilised to catch up. As the country moved to level three, we added morning tutoring. Two hours before and after school. 06h00 – 15h00– 17h00 for all subjects. Saturdays and Sundays were reserved for key subjects."
- Mr Muziwakhe Luthuli, Mathematics educator

7. MANAGING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Bizimali Secondary School prides itself in meeting their ¹Annual Teaching Plans and this has become part of the school culture. The Annual Teaching Plans include a scheduled plan for each subject and outline topics to be taught on specific days. The plan also includes the skills and values that should be taught in the school year. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in prolonged school closures that stole an entire term from the academic year. The SMT and educators were concerned about the negative effects these school closures would have on the work covered by learners in the first term. In the early days of the pandemic, KwaZulu-Natal was a COVID-19 hotspot. The school had to convene and educators needed to find a way to share learning materials with learners. Some learners, especially those who live in the school vicinity, were not reachable due to the poor mobile coverage, and even those that were reachable did not have access to data to download content. Only a few learners were able to remotely access the learning material sent by the school. Educators were worried that the strategy of providing content via digital platforms was not working as learners were unfamiliar with the process and ill-equipped to manage remote learning.

When learners returned to school in August, the large classes, averaging 120 learners per class, were divided into smaller groups. This allowed for the school to segment the learners according to their readiness and the content they had managed to cover independently during the school closure. In order to adhere to the COVID-19 pandemic preventative protocols, the school had to implement strict rotational learning measures. Educators had to deliver the same lesson multiple

times throughout the day, which they found challenging.

In 2021, there was a COVID-19 outbreak at the school and the Department of Health transported a bus of learners to a quarantine environment. The school took this in its stride and, as soon as the isolation period passed, lessons continued.

During the multiple lockdowns, Bizimali Secondary School worked hard to maintain their positive culture and team spirit. To achieve this, the school awarded prizes to encourage good performance. All learners who returned to school were resilient and eager to learn, and educators were determined to make up for the lost teaching time. Extra classes were planned two hours before school started and revision classes would run up until 20h00 in the evening. Classes were extended to all seven days of the week to ensure the school achieved full curriculum coverage. While the school did not reach its 2020 matric performance target of 100%, it was proud of the preparation that went into the final examinations. Siyabonga Cele matriculated as a top national learner with eight distinctions. He was the number one performer from quintile one schools. The school achieved a 92.4% pass rate and 445 learners (63.6%) achieved a bachelors pass. In 2021, the school achieved a 95.1% pass rate and 443 learners (68.7%) achieved a bachelors pass.



¹ In order to mitigate the impact of COVID-9 on learning and teaching, the DBE adopted a multiyear curriculum recovery approach, through the implementation of Annual Teaching Plans.

8. CONCLUSION

Through WSD, AAS has helped Bizimali Secondary School overcome its challenges, upgrade and improve its facilities, empower its educators, produce capable and resilient matriculants, and successfully maintain its academic standard throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Located in one of the most rural and marginalised communities in KwaZulu-Natal, Bizimali has been a committed and inspiring partner for the Foundation and we are proud to showcase our partnership as a WSD Case Study. The partnership between the IDC, AAS and Bizimali Secondary School is an example of what can be achieved with a shared vision and a commitment to education.

Highlights

Since 2012, there has been a:

26,2%

Improvement in Matric performance

44,7%

Improvement in Bachelor performance

Most Innovative School

Bizimali Secondary School was recognised as the most innovative school in the Adopt-a-School Foundation's 2021 School Awards programme. It was recognised for introducing new ways of teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.



"Our school had bad and dilapidated structures. We had no ceilings, our windows are broken, our classroom floors were badly cracked and dug out because of the number of learners we service from year to year. We didn't have walkways and this used to cause classrooms to be filled with dust. Thanks to Adopt-a-School Foundation and IDC our school looks new."

– Ms Beauty Ntuli, Deputy Principal





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