



Groutville High School Education Reframing Strategy and Plan

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Abbreviations

ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
BELA	Basic Education Laws Amendment)
CAPEX	Capital Expenditure
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement.
CASS	Continuous Assessment System / Continuous Assessment Scores Capturing System
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CSI	Corporate Social Investment
DBE	Department of Basic Education
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance
GFETQSF	General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework.
GHS	Groutville High School
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LES	Lodestone Edsupport
LO	Life Orientation
NEET	Not in Employment, Education, or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPPSET	National Plan for Post-School Education and Training System
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSNP	National School Nutrition Programme
OPEX	Operational Expenditure
OQSF	Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework
PPP	Public Private Partnership
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SASA	South African Schools Act
SASAMS	South African School Administration and Management System
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SGB	School Governing Body
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SPTT	Special Projects Task Team
TB	Tuberculosis,
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

1. Public Education: Context

Inadequate basic education in peri-urban South Africa is not just an “education problem” — it is the primary ‘manufacturer’ of inequality. It produces generation after generation of traumatised, unskilled, unhealthy citizens who cost the country billions in grants, prisons, and hospitals. It contributes almost nothing to ordinary people improving their circumstances, their community or socio-economic development.

With government spending 19% of its budget on education, celebrating 95% of children in school and celebrating an 87.3%, any political will to invest more is unlikely. On the other hand, South Africa’s official unemployment rate is 31%, matriculated youth at 62.4%, and an inequality index of 0,63, - all among the worst in the world. Something is clearly not working.

For a child, in many peri-urban South African schools in 2025, basic education is not education—it is supervised childcare in an unsafe, under-resourced environment, with an irrelevant curriculum that is poorly taught in an uncomfortable language. That guarantees functional illiteracy and economic exclusion. It is system that too often keeps children off the streets for 6 hours a day but equips all but a very few to escape the township or climb out of poverty.

For teachers, the narrative is *“I studied four years to become a professional, but every day I feel like a prison warden in a collapsing building while the government treats me like a disposable number.”*

Teachers often grow up in the same township where they now teach. They cannot afford to move, resign, or retrain. They are trapped in no-fee schools with 48–68 learners per period, double benches, no space to walk and constantly shouting to be heard over 60 voices. They are exposed to violence and threats while expected to be the counsellor, social worker, nurse, and parent— all with inadequate training. They are exposed constantly to TB (no ventilation) flu and ongoing COVID, meaning up to 40% of staff may be absent any given day. They must mark as many as 880 papers while having to following IQMS, SASAMS, EMIS, ATPs, and CASS files admin. Preparation is at night while attending to family and on weekends. School principals and the senior management team in addition to teaching obligations are expected to follow onerous government legislation and complex public legal requirements – also with inadequate training or support. Yet, despite the daily lived reality there are many hard-working dedicated educators and officials trapped in a system and trying to teach against all odds. They are not lazy or incompetent—they are survivors in a system that has abandoned them and the children.

South Africa’s reality is that until children can read with meaning by Grade 4, are numerically literate, and high schools offer all learners irrespective of learning ability appropriate academic and world of work pathways, these communities will remain South Africa’s biggest liability and greatest reservoir of untapped potential.

The only sure way forward for a school and a community to ensure they get the education they need is to stop waiting for the system to be fixed from the top. All public schools are legally empowered to take the initiative, within policy norms and standards, to turn their school into fee-paying, cash-generating, job-creating, community-owned education factories able to bypass every DBE bottleneck.

History shows that brave, bold, decisive, leadership, community action, and private sector collaboration can take control of a school as the community’s single biggest economic asset— because it is—and then rebuild it from the ground up in a way that no legislation, policy, budget cut, or union can stop. It will happen when school leadership and SGBs stop acting like a

government department and start acting like an entrepreneurial startup enterprise fighting desperately for its children's future. This means placing the well-being of the GHS community at the centre and mobilising engaging local and surrounding communities towards contribution, cooperation, and mutual common interest.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead.

2. Strategic Reflection

Groutville High School (GHS), to the credit of school leadership, management, teachers, and administration is well placed to reframe and rebuild its education offering. Unlike many no-fee schools and against all odds, GHS has succeeded to deliver and continuously improve mainstream academic results to a level far above national average. It is this relentless determination and commitment that inspires the confidence that the school is capable of so much more. With effective private sector collaboration, the school has the will and capacity to strategically transform in a way that will better service all learners and its community.

3. Strategy Context

Lodestone's Edsupport NPC is approved as iLembe Department of Education School Collaboration Partner. Lodestone is mandated and geared for, hands-on where needed, coordination where possible, support for the development and improvement of iLembe District public education.

Lodestone's Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Groutville High School enables, in a tax efficient way, private sector support for the process to reframe its educational offering to better serve the needs and aspirations of its learners and its community.

The school SGB approved Special Project Task Team (SPTT), with Lodestone support is developing the education reframing strategy and operational plan for consideration by the full SGB before taking it to the school parents, community, and DBE.

The strategy workshop held with the SPTT on 22 October 2025 affirmed context as the foundation of a strategy to better serve the needs and aspirations of all learners and the community. This would be achieved when:

1. Academically capable learners are better equipped and supported for admission and success at preferred tertiary institutions.
2. A three-stream diversified technical and vocational curriculum is introduced. One that is outcomes focused and better aligned with locational economic growth trends, entrepreneurial potential, and/or jobs being created.
3. Inclusive education and support are developed to be able to serve the needs of all learners including neuro-divergent learners and learners with barriers to learning.
4. School drop-out is significantly reduced by greater focus on diverse education pathways and support in all grades

4. Reframing Strategy

To respond effectively, Groutville High School should adopt a reframing strategy, aligned with Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), with the addition of practical technical and practical NQF accredited vocational curricula. The goal is to equip learners with academic, vocational, life, and 21st-century skills (e.g., critical thinking, digital literacy) for employment, entrepreneurship, or further studies. This requires breaking down barriers through curriculum reform, learner support, partnerships, and community engagement:

Strategy Pillar	Key Actions	Factors Addressed	Expected Outcomes
Curriculum Enhancement	Integrate Life Orientation (LO) with practical modules on financial literacy, career planning, emotional resilience. Options like learners and/or driving licence, digital capability, etc. Emphasize interventions to build on foundational literacy and mathematics. Adding NQF 1-4 vocational courses (e.g., trades, health) alongside CAPS;	Tackles skills mismatch, illiteracy, and lack of guidance; counters poverty by extending academic focus to include TVET options and post school employability for AI-resistant trades.	Learners graduate with multiple career paths. Matric and/or vocational certificates, improving employability (e.g., reducing NEET rates); better emotional readiness for adulthood.
Learner Support Systems	Establish on-site counselling, mentorship programs, and after-school clubs for life skills and community development (e.g., bible study, cooking, etc.). provide nutrition/hygiene support via NSNP expansions;	Addresses poverty, family instability, teen pregnancies, and mental health barriers. Builds resilience against socioeconomic pressures.	Lower dropout rates: 80%+ learners feel school is irrelevant or inadequate. Holistic development fostering independence.
Infrastructure and Resource Upgrades	Partner with DBE, Local Government, and private sector for improvements (e.g., safe transport, school security, digital labs etc., Repurpose and/or add infrastructure or spaces for vocational workshops;	Diversify career path and world of work capability and potential. Overcomes crumbling facilities, transport issues, and digital divides in rural/underserved areas.	Equitable access to quality education; enhanced safety and engagement, reducing absenteeism. School as the epicentre and pride of its community
Teacher and Leadership Development	Collaboration and formal CPD training and coaching of educators. Workshops on LO facilitation, inclusive teaching, and 21st-century skills. Scale up coaching and technical/operational	Counters capacity and capabilities of school leadership ill-equipped for rigours of legislative and operational obligations. Addresses inadequate education quality and teacher shortages. Empowers staff to guide transitions effectively.	Improved decision making, legislative awareness, and governance. Teaching efficacy; consistent support for learners' progress and post-school transition pathways.

	support for principals, SMT and SGB's		
Partnerships and Community Engagement	Formal private sector collaboration to coordinate and mobilise the skills and resources to support and improve school relevance and functionality Funding and in-kind CSI, private sector, DBE, and SETA, resources for infrastructure, equipment, and operational effectiveness and sustainability	Building relationships with Universities and TVET colleges, Harnessing NGOs to expand support network. Businesses for CSI support, apprenticeships/internships. Parents/Learners/SGBs with career expos and anti-poverty initiatives. Align with NPPSET for seamless post-school transitions.	Context relevant education that challenges the disparities, relevance, and effectiveness of public education and the low expectations of learners, teachers and parents for inadequate outcomes and results.

5. Operational Plan

The blueprint (Para 7) sets out medium term requirements for reframing and transforming Groutville High School. Phase one of the process will be SPTT and SGB approval for the reframing followed by buy-in from the parents and community.

5.1 Preparation and Approval

The following is the operational requirements needed to implement the reframing strategy.

Output	Res	Months												
		D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	H
1. Strategy & Plan Approval														
Submit to Special Projects Task Team, review, and amend.	LES													
Submit to full SGB, review, amend, and formally approve	SPTT													
Present to AGM of parent body	SPTT													
2. Develop and implement a robust parent communication system and process to:	LES/ SPTT													
Keep parents fully informed of the ambition and plans for the future of the school	SPTT													
Scale up communication to encourage parents to take greater accountability for learners' behaviour and performance	GHS													
Start building sentiment and momentum for school reframing	SPTT													
3. Mobilise the core team capable of undertaking credible research and planning for school reframing.	LES													

strikes, litigation or public campaigns that kill pilots.		
Legal exposure is real and unresolved in many models. Education is a constitutional right in South Africa. Models that shift control of essential functions (curriculum, admissions, teacher employment terms) to private actors invite legal challenges and political contestation — especially where access, equity, or discriminatory outcomes can be alleged.		The Service Level Agreements follow all aspects of the South African Schools Act and the control vested in the elected SGB. No school functions will be undertaken by the collaboration partner. Their role is confined to technical and operational support as and where needed.
It may confuse short-term outputs with long-term system change. Corporates and funders prefer measurable KPIs (test scores, device distribution, high achievers etc.,). Whereas foundational literacy and sustained pedagogy is slow, contextual, and relational.		Existing public education is output rather than outcome driven – i.e., a matric qualification, numbers and scores rather than school dropouts or the 90% of learners simply wanting a job or to start a business. Metrics will be added that are intermediately measurable with impact at unemployment reduction level.
Perverse selection and exclusion. Payments or selective remediations can incentivise schools and partners to recruit “low-hanging” learners or de-register hard-to-help students, skewing impact and harming the very children needing the most help.		There will always be organisations ‘cherry-picking’ high performing learners for PR purposes. For this collaboration a strategic focus is attention to mitigate cognitive and neuro-divergence and, scale up education pathways for TVET tertiary education or work-ready trade certification
Data-driven harms. Private platforms collect learner and teacher data. Without strict governance, that data can be commercialised, exposed, or used to create private market advantages (e.g., products targeted at the same schools), raising equity and privacy concerns.		No learner, parent or school employee data is collected or kept by the collaboration partner(s)
Hidden fiscal substitution. Policymakers may use private funding as an excuse to avoid increasing public budgets (the classic “crowding out” of public investment).		Success of the collaboration pilots is more likely to motivate increase in public sector budgeting when a) more schools look to replicate the successes, and b) public schools start rigorously implementing the DoE published norms and standards.
Procurement corruption and supplier dependence. South Africa’s public procurement system shows weaknesses; poor tender design invites fraud or capture. Once a single vendor supplies devices, content, or admin		Technical and operational support provided to the school is primarily by donation or <i>pro bono</i> . This reduces, if not ends, corruption. The technical support accessible to school leadership and management will enable schools to be more effective in their own procurement

services, switching costs create vendor lock-in and weakened bargaining power.		
Community legitimacy failure. Models that bypass SGBs/parents create local resistance. Even technically superior programs fail if communities see them as alien impositions.		SGB and community participation is the core to the collaboration model. Especially as the reframing of the school expands its offering to serve more diverse learning capabilities. The school also depend on active citizenship to protect it against criminality.
Policy drift across political cycles. Education reforms need political durability. A strategy that is politically linked to a minister, party or corporate brand can be undone by a change in leadership.		Dissatisfaction with quality and relevance of prevailing education is a political and election 'hot button'. A more relevant grounded approach could play into a better political response rather than undermine it.
Winners and Losers Exactly which learner groups will gain, and which might lose? (By quintile, language, rural/urban, disability status.)		There are no losers at the school where the new curriculum will help non-academic learners that may have dropped out by not coping or finding relevance of the current matric certificate. Other schools in the community catchment area may lose existing learners to a higher performing school or, be expected to accommodate learners when a school rigorously applies norms and standards
Continuation What is the handover plan to provincial authorities? What physical, digital, and human capacities must be transferred.		There is no change in structure of the school. Provincial authority will be expected to continue with statutory resources and follow gazetted norms and standards.
Sustainability If private funding dries up in 3–5 years, what is the realistic plan to sustain services?		The relevance of education will be the 'pipeline' of capable employees. When this improves the likelihood of continued private sector funding is assured. More importantly success will increase demand and grounds for the school to introduce payment of fees.
Nothing fails like success Public no-fee education is in crisis. Parents are clamouring for Sec39 exemption places at more successful fee-paying schools thereby undermining their financial sustainability		As the school outcomes improve so will demand for places. School management and leadership will need to be rigorous in applying norms and standards. The opportunity to expand and replicate this collaboration model also offers opportunity to other schools.

7. Strategic Planning Blueprint

Vision

Groutville High School is the beating heart of its community. It is the benchmark for education relevance with a curriculum that serves the needs of all learners. No one is left behind. Multi-stakeholder collaboration has brought together the collective gifts, knowledge, experience, and resources of a community inspired and united in common purpose. As a result, the school is revered, nurtured, and protected as the most valuable community asset.

Mission

Groutville High School will stop tolerating a system that gives up on our youth and their aspirations and will relentlessly innovate and collaborate to challenge the disparities of public education and acceptance of inadequate outcomes and results.

