NATIONAL SCIENCE OLYMPIAD
In collaboration with industry partners, SAASTA funds and coordinates this countrywide science competition.

This intervention has the following main objectives:
- To identify and nurture talent towards SET careers;
- To encourage Grade 10-12 learners to study science at school and pursue careers in science fields; and
- To honour excellence in science.

SCIENCE CAMPS
This intervention is underpinned by the following key objectives:
- To encourage and support learners with potential to continue and excel in science and mathematics;
- To enhance creativity of learners with potential;
- To encourage learners with potential to pursue tertiary studies in SET fields; and
- To develop broad life skills for learners to cope in a demanding academic environment.

NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK
As the Department of Science and Technology’s Agency for driving the effort to increase the pool of learners today who will be the scientists of tomorrow, SAASTA implements numerous national initiatives, one of them being National Science Week.

This is an annual country-wide celebration of science, which is underpinned by the following objectives:
- To create awareness of the important role science plays in people’s daily lives;
- To encourage our youth to consider studying and improving their performance in mathematics and science; and
- To attract more of our youth into science, engineering and technology careers.
As the science communication business unit of the National Research Foundation (NRF), the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA) is making strides in initiating and promoting science popularisation programmes on an ongoing basis.

**SAASTA’s Mandate**

To advance public awareness, appreciation and engagement of science, engineering and technology (SET) in South Africa.

SAASTA has three key strategic areas that combine to form an integrated and seamless approach:

- Education;
- Science Awareness; and
- Science Communication

As a business unit of the NRF, SAASTA has established itself as a unifying force within the NRF, driving efforts to confront the lack of interfaces with science and technology that most people in our country still experience.

SAASTA is putting the world of science and technology in South African society’s hands.

Poor uptake of maths and science at secondary and tertiary levels is shrinking the pool of qualified scientists and researchers, in turn threatening the future of scientific development in South Africa. Through various support mechanisms and programmes, SAASTA intends to change this situation.

**The Education Unit Focus Areas**

The scope of the business unit is guided by the following three focus areas:

- School Science Support: This includes educator and learner programmes, science enrichment projects, and competitions;
- SET Careers: This includes learner programmes that expose learners to career opportunities in science, technology and engineering; and
- Science Resources: This includes curriculum-based support resources, enrichment materials, web-based materials, and online learning.

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**Key Objectives of the Education Unit**

**Enlarge the pool of diverse learners who can become future scientists;**

**Contribute to raising the quality of science, mathematics and technology education programmes;**

**Strengthen partnerships between higher education, industry and school districts; and**

**Enhance the understanding of everyday use of technology and new discoveries.**

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**Interventions**

**Primary Science Day**

In executing its science awareness mandate, SAASTA has initiated Primary Science Day - a designated day for the celebration of science aimed at primary schools. This intervention will go a long way towards kindling an interest in, and understanding of, maths and science among young learners.

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**THE EDUCATION UNIT**

**FOCUS AREAS**

The main objectives of this project are to:

- Demonstrate the importance of science in our every day lives;
- Illustrate that science can be fun;
- Develop creativity around science and technology in young learners; and
- Ignite interest in and promote positive attitudes in young learners towards science and technology.

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**ROLE MODELLING CAMPAIGN**

The main objectives of this intervention are to:

- Expose learners to career opportunities in mathematics, science, engineering and technology; and
- Give learners an opportunity to interact with appropriate role models in SET careers.

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**SET AWARENESS CAMPAIGN**

The main objectives of this intervention are to:

- Broaden educators’ and learners’ awareness/knowledge of SET careers;
- Increase the number of learners choosing science and mathematics as subjects in the FET (Further Education and Training) phase; and
- Ultimately increase the number of learners who opt for science and mathematics related tertiary study fields.