



education

DEPARTMENT: EDUCATION
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

Creating Safe and Caring Schools through the School Infrastructure Development Programme



Celebrating 20 Years of Development



Message by the MEC

As the country celebrates 20 years of freedom and democracy one can not help it but to reflect on the road travelled to improve the delivery of quality education to the citizens of the country and province in particular.

We note with great courage the significant strides made in the enhancement of school infrastructure. This has instilled a sense of pride and belonging for the majority of our learners and has restored an enabling environment for teaching and learning in the province.

In this quest the province completely eradicated mud schools which were inherited from the old order.

From 1994 to 2004, the department completed 1342 projects inter alia delivering 3,419 classrooms, 590 renovated schools, 237 special rooms, 183 admission blocks, 5,246 toilets, fencing at 67 schools, and water connections at 39 schools and electrical connections at 50 schools.

Form 2004 to 2014, the department delivered 5,793 classrooms, 6,441 toilets, water connections at 484 schools and electrical connections at 330 schools.

In 2010, Mpumalanga Province adopted a boarding school strategy in rural areas in order to close small, non viable farm schools to phase out multi-grade schools and improve on the quality of education.

Three of these boarding schools are already functional, two are at Gert Sibande District namely Ezakheni and Izimbali Boarding Schools, one at Ehlanzeni District called Shongwe Boarding School and the last one is still under construction at Nkangala District Municipality.

These boarding facilities play a major role in ensuring that children from farming areas, those who are orphaned and in particular those who live below the bread line are afforded a conducive environment to live in and to learn.

In so doing, government mitigates against dropout rates, child labour and abuse of children. Of significance is that these children just like all others in the other parts of the country enjoy quality education.

Equally encouraging is that new state of the art schools were constructed as well throughout the province.

In his State of the 2014 Province Address on 28 February 2014, the Honourable Premier DD Mabuza said;

“Honourable Speaker, the last five years has seen a cumulative R2.91 billion investment in education infrastructure as part of our efforts to improve the access to and quality of learning and teaching in the province.

Over the last five years:

- **We have built 25 new schools, 26 Grade R facilities and ensured that all mud and unsafe structures are eradicated;**
- **We have built three boarding schools in Nkomazi and Umkhonto municipalities. This week we handed over Izimbali Boarding School in Amsterdam;**
- **We have re-built a total of 19 storm damaged schools to ensure that learning is not interrupted in areas that have been affected by natural disasters.**

Honourable Speaker and Members, we are inspired by the fact that our investment in education is beginning to bear fruit. When the current Administration assumed office in 2009, we committed ourselves to turning around the Province's education system for the better.

This confirms the desire of the province to improve the conditions for teaching and learning.

The down side of this is that the heavy rains were not doing us any favours to the extent that a number of our schools got damaged year in year out. This challenged the department since it meant putting on hold some projects to remedy that development.

This year there were 76 storm damaged schools. Of these 40 had roofs blown out and were repaired in February to March 2014. The rest were listed in the provincial list. The province has set aside R69, 927 000 to improve storm damaged schools in 2014/15 financial year.

The storm damaged schools challenges necessitated the procurement of mobile classrooms, an arrangement which in turn proved to be very costly and unsustainable. To this effect every effort is made to ensure that the delivery of mobile classrooms becomes the last resort going forward.

Other challenges encountered in the process of improving school infrastructure relates to limited budget allocations, unpredictable migration patterns resulting in urban sprawl and the growth of informal settlements have had a net effect of under-utilisation of existing infrastructure in certain areas such as farming communities and overcrowding in other areas, inadequate water, sanitation and ablution supply in some schools and a lack of preventative maintenance to schools and facilities is a key cause contributing towards building decay and renders infrastructure susceptible to increased damage during storms and the normal course of activity.

Be that as it may, our view is that these challenges are not insurmountable, they require that we rally side by side at all fronts to make schools work for our communities. Everyone need to play his/her part to ensure that we remedy any challenges that may exist in this regard.



Rhandza Xi Kolo Xa Wena Campaign

The Department has launched the Rhandza Xi Kolo Xa Wena Campaign to encourage communities to volunteer their time, skills and resources and where possible to help in improving school environments during school holidays.

This endeavour ensures that when schools re-open from holidays, learners are taught on the very first day. The Rhandza Xikolo Xa Wena campaign also instigates a sense of ownership for the community towards their schools. It aims to discourage the notion that schools are solely for learners and the Department of Education.

When communities take care of school environments, parents of learners in these schools are also encouraged to be more involved in the academic progress of their children.

The campaign also minimizes instances of vandalism and stealing of school material as these acts rob the children of what is rightfully theirs.

We still send our clarion call in this regard because we are of the view that unless all of us contribute meaningfully towards the upkeep of our schools, our dreams of a better future will be deferred.



Maloma Primary School got a face-lift in January 2014



Boarding Schools

Ezakheni Boarding School



Ezakheni Combined Boarding School was established in 2012 to improve the delivery of education for learners who are residing on the farms, to phase out some of the multi-grade schools and to ensure that children who are orphans are taken care of.

This boarding school was established in keeping to the provincial corporative Rural Development Programme (CRDP) and is located in the Gert Sibande District Municipality, Mkhondo Local Municipality outside the village of Driefontein.

The overarching aim was to improve the quality of lives of the people living in rural areas and thus break the cycle of poverty through the provision of quality education to children.

This boarding school is a No-Fee School and full service school with the state as the in loco parentis. There are boarding facilities for all learners.

The school has 1009 learners from grades R to 12, 37 educators most of whom were from the schools which were closed to give rise to the boarding school, three administration staff, and 47 hostel staff and well constituted school governing body.

The construction of the school started in 2011 and became operational in January 2012. The project value of this school was R 189 million.

In 2012, the grade 12 class of this school obtained 75% and in 2013 it obtained 73.3%.

Izimbali Boarding School

Izimbali Combined Boarding School is one of the four boarding schools which were established following a pronouncement made by the Hon. Premier DD Mabuza to bring to fruition a programme to phase out multi-grade schools, unsafe schools to ensure that learners from rural communities including farms are able to access quality education they deserve.

This is in keeping with the Corporate Rural Development Strategy and it intends to ensure that vulnerable children such as orphans and child-headed families are given the required support and a new leaf of life through education.

The building of the Amsterdam Boarding School started towards the end of the 2012 academic year and it constitutes of:

24 Classrooms; a Science Laboratory; a Library; a Computer Centre; 40 Toilets; state of the art Administration Block; four sets of boys dormitories; Four sets of Girls dormitories; Fence; Water and Electricity.

This school will cater for learners from the following primary schools: Broadholm; Idalia; Nongena, Samlee, Thokomala, Westoe, Zandspruit, Rivebend and Lithole.



Shongwe Boarding School

Shongwe Boarding School is at Driekoppies in Nkomazi Local Municipality.

The school currently accommodates 580 learners from eight (08) farm schools which were closed and merged to form this boarding school. The merger of these eight schools is part of government's programmes designed to eradicate unsafe structures and multi-grading of schools.

Shongwe Boarding School started operating in 2012 with 14 Educators, 6 administration staff, 08 Kitchen staff, 1 driver and 1 school nurse. It starts from grade R – 08 and caters for both boarding and day scholars in the Khulangwane Circuit.

This school pride itself with an Admin block, two storerooms, a sick room, 18 Classrooms, 22 toilets, a computer centre, Science laboratory, a library, Maths centre, three hostels, a multipurpose hall and Laundry facilities.



Emakhazeni Boarding School

To alleviate the burden of learner drop out in the farming areas of Entokozweni, Rietfontein and Guluk Farm in Machadadorp the Mpumalanga Department of Education initiated a process to construct a state of the art boarding school.

The Emakhazeni Boarding School in the Nkangala District consists of 24 Classrooms including integrated walkways, an Administration Block, 35 Toilets, Computer Centre, Library Block, Science Laboratory, Guard House, Refuse Area, Kitchen, Dining Hall, Water, Sewer, Electrical Bulk infrastructure, Fencing, Paving, Parking Facilities, 3 Sports Facilities including Toilets and Change Rooms, Land Scarping, Ramps and Rails, Grade R and 8 Boys and Girls Sleeping Units and would help to improve the results of the Grade 12 pupils.

The state of the art boarding school will serve the 13 farms in the area in an effort to alleviate the challenges of multi grade classroom as well as the improvement of teaching and lesson delivery through the phasing in of educators who are specialising in their fields.

The school will offer a curriculum stream spread through out grade 1 to 12 that will break the cycle of perpetual production of farm labourers due to school drop out. The provisioning of lodging facilities and a nutritious three meals a day will also ensure that these learners get an education without the burden of walking or travelling long distances as well as learning on empty stomachs.



New Schools

Lefiso Primary School

The new structure was completed on the 26th October 2011 at a cost of R10 376 765, 69 and has eight (8) classrooms, an admin block, a computer centre, a library, a kitchen, 12 toilet facilities, ramps and rails, two sports grounds and two parking areas.



John Mduli Primary School

The new structure was completed on the 26th October 2011 at a cost of R10 376 765, 69 and has eight (8) classrooms, an admin block, a computer centre, a library, a kitchen, 12 toilet facilities, ramps and rails, two sports grounds and two parking areas.



Inqubeko Secondary School

Inqubeko Combined Boarding School is a complete and fully-fledged Secondary School with 28 classrooms, an admin block, science laboratory, computer centre with 25 laptop donated by Samsung and a library. It also boasts a huge multi purpose hall, soccer field and two netball courts.



Frank Maginyane Secondary School

The new complete structure comprises of 16 classrooms, 20 toilets, an administration, a computer centre, a science laboratory, a kitchen, a library, a school hall and 3 sports fields.



Kamhlushwa Primary School

Kamhlushwa Primary School was officially handed over in July 2011. The new school has a Grade R Centre, 16 classrooms, an admin block, 24 toilets, fencing, a kitchen, a library, computer centre, an assembly hall, ramps and rails, three sports grounds and a car park.



Upliftment Projects

Acorns to Oaks

The Mpumalanga Department of Education in collaboration with Vodacom and Buffelshoek Trust have embarked on another community upliftment project. The Acorns to Oaks project forms part of the Buffelshoek Trust upliftment programmes. This project was initiated by Dr Reuel Khoza and culminated to the signing of a memorandum of understanding in September 2010 through the Mpumalanga Education Development Trust for the construction of a world class secondary school for Science, Mathematics and Commerce around Acornhoek in the Bohlabela District.



The Acorn to Oaks Comprehensive School project valued at R36 million was set off to address the essential educational needs of the communities with high levels of unemployment. This project was constructed in phases which comprised the construction of 18 classrooms, an administration block, ablution blocks and pre-packaged sewerage treatment plan. In addition to that a multi-purpose hall, laboratory, library, computer centre, guard house and a refuse area as well as staff houses and a guard house were constructed.



The Mpumalanga Department of Education, Vodacom and Buffelshoek Trust is convinced that the Acorn to Oaks Comprehensive School project will yield good returns by preparing learners from the area with the impartation of knowledge and skills through its offering of science, mathematics and commerce subjects.

This will in the main also feed into the intent of the Mpumalanga Human Resource Development Strategy of addressing the shortage skills needed to grow the economy in the province and the Department is grateful to all its partners who make education their business.



Storm Damaged Schools

76 schools which translated to 541 classrooms were damaged by heavy rains during the 2013 school year and in many of these schools roofs were blown out.

This situation challenged the department since at the time rains were persistently making it difficult to do damage assessments as well as elementary cost implications.

The department moved swiftly to remedy the situation by replacing damaged trusses and roof covering over affected area; replacement of ceilings complete with insulation and painting, remedial works and restoration of electrical fittings and cabling in 40 schools. The remaining schools were prioritised to be fixed in the 2014/15 financial year budget since their required a more intensive approach.

This was done in a fast track mode through the Rapid Implementation Unit (RIU) in keeping with the spirit and mandate of ensuring that the teaching and learning environment is conducive.

The repairs of the indentified schools were completed on the second week of March 2014.



While the Department intends to utilise every classroom for its intended purpose the heavy rains and other destructive weather elements are not doing us any favours as schools continue to be casualties.

These damages are hitting hard on the purse of the department considering that the interim measures such as the provisioning of mobile classrooms is proving to be very expensive and unsustainable in terms of procurement and distribution.

The Department will do everything to repair damaged schools' infrastructure where possible and provide alternative schooling space where feasible. Because of the procurement and distribution costs as well as the temporal nature of the mobile classrooms, the provisioning of mobile classrooms is viewed as a last resort to mitigate the storm damaged schools challenge.

In that sense learners should not be denied the right to learn and as such there is absolutely no need to close the gates of a school when one block has been damaged by strong winds. We advocate for an open door policy and the department requests all stakeholders, especially School Governing Bodies to work with and support departmental officials at all times to remedy to expedite the repairs of schools.



Special Schools

Thanduxolo Special School

This one of the 18 special schools in the Mpumalanga Province, its new building consist of 10 classrooms, Four workshops, administration block, two garages and sport grounds. It caters for learners from Kwaguga, Mhluzi, Ogies–Phola, Klarinet and the surrounding mine villages within Emalahleni Municipality.

The construction was allocated R 39 million to ensure that those who come from disadvantaged communities equally benefit from the country's schooling system and the right to education as prescribed by the constitution of the country.

The MEC for Education, Mrs Reginah Mhaule and her counterpart MEC for Public Works Roads and Transport, Ms Dikeledi Mahlangu and the Executive Mayor of Emalahleni Municipality officially opened it on 18 March 2014.

Special Schools offer a curriculum that aims to empower its learners by developing their individual strengths and enables them to participate critically in the learning process, and not only focusing on their shortcomings.

It is important to note that while special schools provide critical educational services to learners who require intense levels of support, they also accommodate learners who require much less support and should ideally be in mainstream schools.

The skills offered include self-care, socialization, perceptual motor development , functional scholastic, physical education and sports, work skills, job preparations programmes such as woodwork, painting, renovations, needle work, mesh –wire making just to mention a few.

Learners are divided into the phases according to their age and abilities and it is for this reason that for the past years the Department continuously encourages parents with children with special needs to enroll them to schools so that they may interact with their peers and become part of a society and not be kept in isolation.



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