

## **Speech to be delivered by the MEC for Education, Mrs. Reginah Mhaule at the Occasion of the Announcement of the 2013 Grade 12 Results**

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Programme Director and Head of Department, Mrs Mahlasedi Mhlabane  
Honourable Premier, Mr DD Mabuza  
Religious Leaders  
Honourable Speaker of the Provincial Legislature, Mr SW Lubisi  
Members of the Executive Council  
Members of the Portfolio Committee  
Political Structures  
Provincial Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders, Kgoši Mokoena  
Representatives of COSATU and Teacher Unions  
Executive Mayors  
Director General, Dr Nonhlanhla Mkhize and Heads of Departments  
Officials of Government at all levels  
Representatives of SAPS  
Members of the Examination Board under the leadership of Dr Henk Jooste  
Learner Formations  
Our 2013 Top Learners and their parents  
Previous Years' Top Learners  
Representatives from the National Youth Development Agency  
Representatives from our sponsors for this event  
Associations of School Governing Bodies  
Ms Mpumalanga 2013, Ntandoyenkosi Kunene  
Institutions of Higher Learning including Representatives of the University of  
Mpumalanga  
Circuit and School Patrons  
Members of the Provincial Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign  
Steering Committee  
Representatives from the Media  
Members of the community who are listening on different radio stations  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

## Sanibonani

Compliments of the New Season.

It gives me great pleasure to be in your good company and to be accorded the time and space to announce the 2013 grade 12 results.

As we do this, we reaffirm that we have indeed worked around the clock as promised at the occasion of the announcement of the 2009 results that we will spare no effort in collaborating with all our stakeholders in the delivery of educational outcomes that will yield positive impetus towards the growth and development of our society.

Programme Director, in 2010 I signed a delivery agreement promising the Honourable Premier that amongst other things the department will endeavour to improve the quality of teaching and learning, undertake regular assessments to track progress, improve early childhood development and ensure credible outcomes-focused planning and accountability systems.

These results are indeed a product of that agreement and depict a manifestation of progress made in taking that process forward.

When this administration took over in 2009 the matric pass rate was at **47.9%** and our examination management systems proved to be a centre of attraction for negative publicity.

On that front, the people of the province of the rising sun can today walk tall in appreciating the fact that whilst there is still room for improvement, we have collectively denounced mediocrity and helplessness by putting in place examination management systems that are currently a marvel for the whole country.

We do say without any fear of contradiction that the Mpumalanga management of examinations is currently beyond reproach and the management of the grade 12 examinations was for the past four consecutive years free from any incident.

We attribute this authentic and credible achievement to the patriotism and commitment of men and women who sacrificed all their time and efforts to

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ensure that this government's vision to make education the apex priority in societal development is accomplished.

It was therefore not surprising to us when Umalusi, the quality assuring body, declared on 30 December 2013 that the 2013 results are credible and ready to be released.

It remains prudent that we use this opportunity to appreciate all the people and institutions that supported the department in all its efforts to deliver quality education in keeping with the constitutional imperatives of the Republic. We really lack words to thank you enough.

The leadership and foresight of the Honourable Premier, Mr DD Mabuza, the support from Members of the Executive Council and the Provincial Legislature inspired us to soldier on, irrespective of the challenging circumstances. Their vision and support have indeed propelled us to dig deep into our energy pockets and rise above our own limitations.  
**Siyanibonga Kakhulu.**

The unprecedented response of the business sector towards the call of the State President to participate in the education delivery mandate catapulted our performance in more ways than one.

We remain convinced that through their collaborative support and involvement the future of this province looks bright. We thank the business community very much for supporting us through thick and thin.

Programme Director, what is also significant is the fact that 2014 marks 20 years of Democracy and Freedom for the citizens of the Republic of South Africa and its nation. This compels us to take stock of the long road travelled over these two decades.

You will recall that we started with 18 fragmented education departments whose resource provisioning and agenda was biased on the basis of colour, race and creed.

Today, we take pride of a single national system of education that is administered in nine provinces and resourced towards considerations of equity, redress, accessibility and affordability.

Access to education has improved through progressive initiatives such as the introduction of No-Fee Schools, the National School Nutrition Programme, Scholar Transport, the construction of new schools, and teacher development programmes.

These are some of the progressive initiatives that were only introduced and implemented when the current ruling party, the African National Congress took over the reigns of government in 1994 and whose intensification is embedded in the Polokwane resolutions.

These enabling factors may look insignificant to some; however they have played a major role in the drive to improve the delivery of quality education for the majority of the people in this country and our province in particular.

Programme Director, in 2009, this department declared that there should be no school that obtained results below 20%. At that time there were **66** schools falling within that category.

There was an improvement thereon in 2010 when that number was reduced to **19** schools.

In 2011, the department further declared that there should be no school that obtained results below 30% and at that time there were **31** schools within that category. That category was then reduced to **2** schools.

The department continued to raise the threshold as in 2012, we declared that there should be no school that would obtain results below 50% and there were **89** schools within that category. It is encouraging that out of the **89** schools **54** managed to adhere to our call with only **35** still languishing in this category.

Principals of the schools that are still trapped in this category must convince the department on why action must not be taken against them because it cannot be accepted for a school to fail half of its grade 12 learners. We think that the teacher unions will in this case support our call as our actions will be in the best interest of the children and the developmental goals of this province.

This year we have **29** no-fee schools performing below 50% as compared to **74** schools from the 2012 cohort.

Programme Director, the number of learners who wrote in 2013 is fifty thousand and fifty three (**50 053**) while thirty eight thousand eight hundred

and thirty six (**38 836**) passed and eleven thousand two hundred and seventeen (**11 217**) did not make it.

Ladies and gentlemen, the above statistics depict a **7,6%** improvement from the 2012 grade 12 pass rate. On that score, it gives me pleasure to announce that for the 2013 grade 12 academic calendar, Mpumalanga is on record as having achieved a **77.6%** pass rate, marking an improvement of **29.7%** since 2009.

It also means that we fell short of **2.4%** to meet the target of **80%** which we set in January 2013.

## **DISTRICTS**

Programme Director, we are encouraged by the steady improvements in the performance of all our four education districts in that each one of them achieved a **10%** improvement. All our districts performed above **70%**.

Of the four districts, Ehlanzeni has recorded the highest pass rate, obtaining **82.8%**. This district is followed by Nkangala District with **77.5%**. Gert Sibande District performed at **76.4%** obtaining third position among the four districts.

Bohlabela District has recorded a pass rate of **72%** an improvement of **43.8%** since 2009. This is indeed worth appreciating.

Of the **68** circuits within the province, Amsterdam Circuit from Gert Sibande District is, for the second year running, declared the best circuit after obtaining a **91.1%** pass rate.

Of the **539** schools there are **25** schools which obtained 100% pass rate an additional improvement of **7** schools to the **18** schools in 2012 and by **15** since 2009.

## **MUNICIPALITY**

Programme Director, of the **18** municipalities Nkomazi Municipality is the top municipality after having obtained **85.6%**.

## SCHOOLS

For the second consecutive year, the school that obtains number one provincially for the 2013 academic year is Hoërskool Nelspruit which obtained **100%** having enrolled and passed all **230** learners.

The school which obtained the most distinctions is, once more, for the second year in a row, Hoërskool Nelspruit with a total of **464** against the provincial total of **11 104** distinctions which is a contribution of **4.2%** distinctions to the province.

The most improved quintile one school is Mathukwane High School from Bohlabela District with a **100%** pass rate and an enrolment of **33** learners which is an improvement of **19.4%** from 2012.

## SUBJECTS

The performance in Mathematics did not disappoint either since **58.3%** passed Mathematics compared to **53.1%** that passed in 2012. Mathematics recorded **529** distinctions this time around compared to **389** obtained in 2012.

At the occasion of the release of the 2012 results I indicated that we will from 2013 establish the Club 50 and Club 100 for schools passing learners with 50% or more in Mathematics and Physical Science. I am happy to announce that our schools heed this call. Out of the **14** schools that qualified for Club 50 for Mathematics, Ligbron Academy of Technology in Ermelo, Gert Sibande District performed tops. It had **98** learners writing Mathematics and **95** passed the subject with a mark above 50%.

Hoërskool Nelspruit is the only school that qualified for the Club 100. The school had **128** learners writing Mathematics and **124** achieved results of more than 50%.

**65.5 %** passed Physical Sciences in 2013 as compared to **63.2%** that passed in 2012.

There were **434 out of 10 426** Physical Sciences candidates who passed with distinction in 2012 compared to **388** in 2013. This decline remains a concern to us.

Seven (7) Schools qualified for the Club 50 for Physical Science. In this category, Mpuluzi Secondary is tops by passing **85** out of the **111** learners writing with performances above 50%

Chilli Simon Thulani a learner at Kwandebele Science Combined School in Siyabuswa Circuit obtained **100%** in both Physical Sciences and Mathematics i.e. 300/300.

We also have Khoza Sibusiso Comfort, a learner from Sidlamafa Secondary School within Malelane Circuit who obtained 300 marks in both Physical Sciences and Life Sciences and 299 marks in Mathematics.

Our intention is to improve this trajectory by improving the intake and quality of pass rate in Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Technology following the establishment of a Maths, Science and Technology Academy which will be operational this year.

The number of learners who received distinctions has improved from **9187** in 2012 to **11 104** in 2013. Equally the number of learners who met the Bachelors requirements has improved from **9 495** obtained in 2012 to **12 954** obtained in 2013. This represents **33,4%** of candidates who passed.

This confirms that these results not only improved quantitatively but also qualitatively which is an improvement we intend to work hard towards sustaining.

Programme Director, the department will do all it can to support the deserving learners with bursaries especially those who applied on time who have also received acceptance letters from their universities of choice.

Learners who made it to the top ten at the provincial level who need support from the department will be supported accordingly.

Learners living with disabilities who meet the requirements for admission in any of the country's tertiary institutions will be given preference in getting assistance.

In view of the gradual increase in the quality of our results, we request the business community to once more step up its support towards deserving learners who wish to further their studies.

I am grateful of the commitment made so far by institutions such as the NYDA, PricewaterhouseCoopers, and Universities such as the University of Venda which showed willingness to provide financial support to these students.

I have directed my office to provide my direct contacts to anyone who intends to contribute funding to deserving students. I expect my phone to start ringing as I step down from this stage.

Learners who could not make it for the first time are urged to give it another shot while those who qualify for supplementary examinations are encouraged to register at their respective schools to write these exams in the designated centres in February 2014. Principals are directed to assist in this regard by registering and admitting those who need to repeat the grade.

I have requested the Head of Department to convene an urgent meeting with all secondary school principals to congratulate them on this outcome, discuss improvement support programmes for the 2014 school year and the kind of support that must be given to those that should write the supplementary examinations as well as those that must be given space to repeat the grade.

The department established a trauma counselling line to assist parents, learners and teachers who may require psychological support at this time. This line is accessible by dialling **071 729 4222** and we urge our communities to take advantage of this facility in order to address emotional related issues that have to do with these results.

Programme Director, teachers are and will remain the most important backbone for growth and development of any nation.

It is for this reason that we attribute the 2013 achievement to the good work of teachers and in this case I wish to reiterate the words of the Chairperson of Umalusi, Professor Sizwe Mabizela who on 30 December 2013 said:

Open Quote

*“The centrality of the teacher in the teaching and learning enterprise can never be overemphasised.*

*We must work with the teachers that we have, and not those we wish we had to improve the quality of teaching and learning.*



*Castigating, criticizing and condemning them will not take us anywhere. We must encourage them to improve their subject content knowledge and their content pedagogy.*

*We must support them so they can become enthusiastic, competent, capable and reflective practitioners.*

*That said, we must hasten to express our disquiet when some of them leave their classrooms unattended at nine or ten o'clock in the morning to do other things including attending union meetings at a time when they should be class teaching.*

*Such practices are inimical to good values and are detrimental to the stature and public estimation of the teaching profession.*

*There are many teachers who do an amazing job under very difficult and trying circumstances of limited resources, poor infrastructure and socio-economic deprivation. We salute them and commend them for their dedication to serve our nation.*

Close Quote

I had to read this statement because these are the sentiments we share as a province.

I wish therefore to request our communities to continue to support our teachers at all times, equally I request our teachers to reciprocate by doing what is constitutionally required of them.

For this reason, I have directed that as we award schools and learners who performed outstandingly today, we must equally do the same to teachers who have produced meaningful results in selected subjects.

Programme Director, whilst we are encouraged by this year's outcome we will never be satisfied until all learners who enter our system make the grade in a qualitative manner.

For this reason, we will continue to intensify the programmes which we implemented over the years since it is clear that they are adding impetus in taking us to the desired destination.

These improvement programmes include but are not limited to ensuring that teachers are in class on time teaching at least seven hours a day, the mobilization of our communities to rally side by side with teachers and schools, conducting compulsory winter and spring classes in all schools which obtained pass rates below 60%, conducting weekly radio lessons in collaboration with SABC and Community Radio Stations as well as commencing early with the Dial or Tweet the Tutor programme, utilize the curriculum website and build capacity towards e-learning.

Of paramount importance is that we need to continue to encourage and support schools to initiate and implement their own school improvement plans. This should ensure that schools do not only rely on outside support in order to improve teaching and learning practices.

I wish to take this time to indicate that any school that has obtained results below **60%** will be declared dysfunctional and will be expected to participate in the programme that will be designed by the department. At the same time, I wish to state that our percentage target for the class of 2014 is a **10%** improvement.

Programme Director, in keeping with the President's call that learners need to be in class learning, there were many institutions that supported that call and initiated programmes to achieve this. One initiative that stands out is that of the Kwagga Plaza in the Thembisile Hani Local Municipality which declared that children of school going age must not be seen loitering in that plaza during school hours.

They made it their duty to find out about any movement of a learner on their premises during school hours. It is our wish that this gesture could be replicated by more organizations since it adds impetus to the notion that education is indeed everybody's enterprise.

We have invited the management of the Kwagga Plaza so that we could acknowledge their patriotic contribution. I therefore request the Ehlanzeni District Executive Mayor Cllr Letta Shongwe and the Executive Mayor of Bushbuckridge Cllr Renious Khumalo to join me on stage to confer this award.

**Siyabonga Kakhulu**

At the occasion of the Adult Learner Week Awards Ceremony held in Gauteng in September 2013, Mrs Annah Msimango from Emalahleni local Municipality in Kwagauqa was declared the overall best adult learner in the country.

Mrs Msimango was illiterate until she was 59 years old when she enrolled for adult lessons; she is currently 60 years old and is doing level 2.

She is indeed the pride of our province and it was for that reason that we decided that she be appreciated at this event. Can you see that old age is just but a number?

Siyabonga Kakhulu Mama Wethu Yibambe Iqine Mbokodo.

Programme Director, at the occasion of the 2011 Policy and Budget Speech, I indicated that there is a blind learner who requested the department to support him to enroll and study towards achieving his grade 12.

Through the specialized computer soft ware and hard ware provided by the department, this learner wrote three subjects in 2012 and passed all of them. He proceeded with his studies the following year and has already completed grade 12 and has received provisional admission at the University of Limpopo. This learner will receive a full bursary from the department. I request Mr Sibusiso Judas Mudala to come on stage to receive his token of appreciation.

This is a practical indication that disability should not be a barrier to learning. I am very proud of this child.

Siyabonga- Rea leboga- Hakhensa

Thank you colleagues you may now descend the stage.

Programme Director, I wish to once more take this opportunity and express our utmost appreciation to all those who rallied side by side with the Mpumalanga Department of Education up to this point to ensure that education deliverables are rendered in an enabling environment.

I cannot cease to mention the leadership of the Honourable Premier and Members of the Executive Council, teacher unions, members of the QLTC Structures, Religious Society, NGOs, the corporate sector, Associations of School Governing Bodies, learner formations in particular the leadership of

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COSAS, members of the examination board, our officials led by the capable Head of Department, Mrs Mahlasedi Mhlabane, parents and the media in particular the SABC through their weekly radio lessons programme.

We remain indebted to your commitment and we indeed feel much honoured by your undivided support.

As I conclude, let me take this time and request the people of Mpumalanga to continue raising the flag of the province of the rising sun higher and higher.

Programme Director, the late Former State President and the founding father of our democracy, Dr Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela said in the last paragraph of the Long Walk to Freedom and I quote:

*“I have walked that road to freedom. I have tried not to falter; I have made missteps along the way.*

*But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb.*

*I have taken a moment here to rest to steal a view of a glorious vista that surrounds me to look back on the distance I have come.*

*But I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom comes responsibilities and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended”.*

On that note I wish to take this time and wish the people of Mpumalanga Province the best in 2014 and to use this opportunity to extend our best wishes to the African National Congress whose 102<sup>nd</sup> birthday is tomorrow.

**Ngiyabonga`**