

**Keynote Address to be delivered by the MEC for Education, Mrs
Reginah Mhaule at the occasion of the graduation ceremony at
Mnotweni Arena on 07 October 2014**

Programme Director, and DDG for Curriculum, Mrs Lucy Moyane

Head of Department, Mrs Mahlasedi Mhlabane

Members of Senior Management

Representative from Price Water House Coopers

Graduates

Representatives from the media

Ladies and gentlemen

Sanibonani

We have gathered in this fashion today after the backdrop of the World Teachers Day Celebrations, a day that the whole world pays tribute to the sacrifice and contributions of teachers.

The 5th of October reminds us of the significant roles that teachers play in the quest to move the whole world forward.

From our side we look at it in three fold:

- To make a clarion call to all our intelligent learners to take teaching as their career of choice.
- To persuade teachers who have long been in the system to desist from taking untimely retirement or resignations by committing to work with them to improve the conditions of service.

- Lastly, to make a commitment that the Department will do anything and everything to build the capacity of all its teachers working side by side with teacher unions and other relevant institutions.

Today's occasion therefore attest to this commitment as it showcases ----- who are amongst the pool of thousand teachers who are capacitated in different fields of study.

We have always indicated that a school is as good as its principal, and as such, the department remains obliged to ensure that the calibre of principals it appoints are beyond reproach and that they are trained on an ongoing basis so that they are able to stand the challenges of the day.

It was for this reason therefore that the Principals Development Programme was conceptualised to benefit principals from quintile one to three schools.

This was deliberately done since we know that these schools require competent and skilled principals and Scholl Management Teams to realize such an ideal.

The programme focused on the following measurable objectives underpins this broad aim:

- To rapidly upgrade the management skills of principals in selected schools in the province through a highly applied methodology.
- To strengthen the working relations between the three critical layers in the functioning of schools (Circuit Managers, Principals and SMT members).
- To improve the support and coaching skills of Circuit Managers and other Mpumalanga Department of Education officials and
- To develop sustainable Learning Communities

This was done in a programme that consists of six core modules structured and implemented as per provincial needs and priorities:

- Direction and Planning
- School Governance
- Curriculum Management
- Resource Acquisition and Management
- Financial Management and
- People Management

The Department took a conscious decision to commence with this programme at Bohlabela District in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality, because this district is still behind the rest of the provincial district in terms of performance of grade 12 learners notwithstanding that it is amongst the most improving district in the country.

We are therefore optimistic that the programme will go a long way in sustaining this trajectory of improvement at the same time, it will ensure that Bohlabela District surpass the three other district in the province by improving the number of learners who pass with a University qualification and Maths and Physical Science.

That will indeed add impetus in our quest to improve the lives of our people and to free them from poverty, unemployment and joblessness.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the leadership of Price Water House Coopers for the contribution they have made towards the success of this programme. You came to the party at the time when we needed you most, and you did not disappoint since you ran from the front and provided true and patriotic leadership.

The programme was not going to be a success if those it intended to benefit were not receptive. I therefore thank each and everyone who participated in this programme and I can tell without any fear of

contradiction that today you are better off than you were before participating in this programme.

Now the ball is in your court, you need to implement all the things you have gained from this programme in a way that a man on the street will stop and attest that indeed things are changing for the better.

Our communities must appreciate that their future will be better because schools are working towards their growth and development.

Let me take this opportunity and congratulate all our graduates and wish you the best in all your future endeavours.

We are proud that beside all that you needed to do throughout the year, you prioritised this programme as well hence this celebration.

I am looking forward to see your schools on top of all lists of performance be it on the results of the Annual National Assessment, Grade 12 results or in sporting activities.

I thank you.