

**Speech to be Delivered at the Occasion of the Meeting with  
Curriculum Implementers to be Held on 05 February 2015 in  
Middelburg**

---

**Programme Director and Head of Department, Mrs Mahlasedi  
Mhlabane**

**Members of Senior Management**

**Departmental Officials**

**Curriculum Implementers**

**Sanibonani,**

Thank you very much for making it to this meeting.

We thought it will be important to gather in this fashion in a family set up to put our heads together to address the dilemma that this country and province is facing on issues relating to the performance of our learners in the GET phase.

I fully believe that when two or more people unite to address a particular matter chances are they may be victorious.

Our challenge is that our learners in Grades 3, 6 and 9 are not performing at the acceptable levels of achievement in both Literacy (Language) and Numeracy (Mathematics).

The results of the Annual National Assessment have revealed that something radical needs to be done to address this challenge in order to meet the objectives of the National Development Plan.

Our meeting here is thus informed by the call to look at possible interventions that must be put in place to find lasting solutions to this dilemma.

## **The Annual National Assessment**

The province had **663 296** learners from grade 1 to 6 and 9 and **1761** schools sitting for the Annual National Assessment in the province.

A substantial increase in the percentage of learners reaching acceptable achievement levels can be observed for Mathematics in Grades 3 and 6.

For **Grade 3** the target of 60% that was set in the Action Plan 2014 was achieved.

**Grade 6** there has been an increase in the percentage of learners reaching acceptable achievement levels, but the target has not yet been met.

**In Grade 9** results still fell far short of the target and this is a serious cause for concern.

My challenge is that since the province has established the Mathematics, Science and Technology Academy as a proactive measure to respond to the challenge and to boost learner performance in Mathematics and Sciences.

**The Diagnostic Report** revealed numerous challenges that learners experienced in certain Mathematics and Language topics.

**In Mathematics**, the diagnostic report reveals that learners are unfamiliar with mathematical terminology and properties and often use them incorrectly. Basic algebraic skills have not been mastered and learners do not know how to solve applications in Geometry and problems involving spatial manipulations.

It also reveals that the majority of learners in both Home Language and First Additional Language struggle to respond to questions that require the use of their own words. Therefore, summarising a text using own words, becomes extremely difficult.

It says that learners are also unable to interpret a sentence or give an opinion when required and generally lack the required editing skills when writing letters.

This is the predicament I am referring to that needs to be turned around by this cohort without delay.

Some quarters are indicating that these results of ineffective teaching methods.

This is beside the report at my disposal which indicates that the province has adequate teachers who are qualified and are receiving training year in year out through the provincial teacher development programmes.

This means that we have nothing to show for the 1% financial resource allocation and the training interventions made throughout the years.

The discussions that we embark on today should thus reflect on our goals and bring forth workable and implementable programmes to move forward our quest to improve the Annual National Assessment.

### **Improving Literacy in the ANA**

The NEEDU Grade 5 report of 2013 recommends that the average reader should be reading independently by the end of Grade 3, at a speed of around 70 Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM).

In the intermediate phase learners should read increasingly sophisticated

literature in different genres three or four times a week.

This requires that teachers pay attention to each learner, assessing reading throughout the year and giving particular attention to those experiencing difficulties.

The culture of reading should be inculcated and programmes to that effect need to mushroom and be supported even outside of the classroom.

There was a programme called drop all and read. I think it must be resuscitated.

What is also important is that we should not be left behind in the **promotion of African languages** as we embark on the crusade of teaching of literacy.

## **Strengthening District and Circuit Support**

The submission of quarterly reports has been our means to monitor progress on the interventions that were introduced to support the improvement of learner performance primarily in the Senior Phase.

The first progress reports revealed the need to support teachers and subject advisors on the development of quality projects, assignments, tests, examinations and investigations.

Let us reflect on those matters that are key on enabling teachers to deliver well on curricular matters at the classroom level with an ultimate effect on the improvement of ANA.

The Department of Basic Education is working on a way to determine key performance indicators for district directors, circuit managers and curriculum advisors which are aligned to learner performance particularly in ANA and the NSC.

The Department has adopted the **'1+4 Model' is based on and supports the concept of the Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)** which the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Motshekga, launched on 07 August 2014.

The added benefit of the '1+4 Model' works on the assumption that teachers need assistance with the entire curriculum and not just certain sections of the curriculum which they presumably have difficulties teaching.

It forms part of our extremely RADICAL approach and do the out of the normal in our determination to "SAVE OUR CHILDREN".

The Methodology breaks each week into two parts. One day solely dedicated to thoroughly preparing teachers for the content to be delivered in that particular week.

Teachers are presented with CONTENT broken-down into daily doses to be delivered in the other remaining four days of the week.

They are expected to meet at a nearby school one day per week.

This translates into a whopping 23 Days in a year dedicated to intensive training and discussions on mathematics content and methodology.

This RADICAL approach will expose teaches to 30 days of Training, Development and Support on a weekly basis.

This METHODOLOGY will turn teachers into learners, promoting the principle of a teacher as a lifelong learner. ONE day of Learning and FOUR days of Structured, Effective and Guided Teaching. On Day 1 (e.g. each Monday as illustrated below), on arrival at the venue, teachers are exposed to a pre-test to assess their level of content knowledge of the section of the curriculum to be delivered on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. At the end of the day they are exposed to a post-test to assess how well they have grasped the content they must take to the learners in their respective classes in their schools.

I was told that the province consulted all relevant role players for the implementation of this programme but I continue to hear on radio dissenting voices. I become very worried considering the view that this may be a solution to the challenges I have spelt above.

**The question therefore is, Is Mpumalanga ready to implement this model?**

I want to make a plea to every one not to hold back but to voice out ideas even those that are more familiarly hissed on the corridors. This meeting and the commissions are aimed at giving every one a voice so that your views could be heard. On that note, let the meeting move on.

**Ngiyabonga**