

**Speech to be delivered at the Sasol Awards to be held on 15 January
2016**

Programme Director

Nkangala District Director, Mr. JJ Mabena

Senior Managers present

Representatives from Sasol

Top Learners

Representatives from the Media

Sanibonani,

I am very grateful to be gathered with you in this fashion, and would like to take this opportunity to extend my profound appreciation of your setting aside some of your most important activities to attend to this event. Thank you very much.

It is also befitting that I also take this opportunity and welcome everyone to the New Year that we have just embarked on; I extend warmest regards and endless success for both your personal lives and success for your organizations.

Congratulate the Class of 2015

I am very proud of the Class of 2015, as it has achieved a **78.6%** pass rate, although this percentage resulted in a **0.4%** decline from the **79%** pass rate obtained in 2014, we still remain optimistic that the province is doing a great job in ensuring that our learners are prepared for their final examinations.

We wish to also congratulate all principals and their teams for doing us proud. The decline also propels us to work even smarter and harder and not to detour our spirits in all the endeavours in. In the year 2015, the province was able to ensure that **43 229** of the **54 980** full time learners who wrote the 2015 Grade 12 examination passed, and this translates to **7 614** more learners passing compared to 2014, this is an achievement we need to also celebrate and commend.

The great strides which the province keeps achieving cannot be possible, without the help of big business. The importance of all stakeholders coming together and building our province, and most importantly the nation as a whole is paramount. The Department takes the responsibility to ensure that all learners receive quality education at all times, but we also cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that education is a societal entity.

Appreciate the School Principal and teachers

I would like to extend my greatest appreciation to all educators in the Mpumalanga Province; the performance of your learners is living proof that the province has a great team which aims to generate learners who will contribute immensely in the development of the economy of the province.

I have witnessed a lot of teachers who always go an extra mile in ensuring that our learners are well equipped during their final examinations. These educators are not pushed towards excellence but they voluntarily strive for the best. We truly need to appreciate them, thank you very much for your efforts. The role that you play in guiding these young minds to the pathway of success is highly valued.

Address the Learners

My children, I am very proud of you, you have listened to every single advice that was given to you, in order to pass your examinations. It is however evident, through your results that you also went an extra mile in preparing for your examinations.

The level of attitude that you have shown in your Grade 12 studies is the same attitude that should propel you at university. The province is very proud of you, congratulations my children.

Gratitude towards Sasol

This award ceremony and the continuous contributions that Sasol continues to provide to the Mpumalanga Department of Education, has over the years proven that the organization has a great interest in local communities with regards to their educational and socio-economic development.

Your involvement has left a legacy of contributions towards improving the quality of education, by not only supporting our learners and schools during the school going years, but by also ensuring that learners are afforded a chance to further their education through the SASOL bursary scheme.

Allow me to further request that your organization also displays more visibility and a helping hand in the other three districts, namely, Ehlanzeni, Bohlabela and Nkangala District. This will allow more learners to have the opportunity to further their education, and also be exposed to other different career paths which they may follow.

I sincerely thank you for partnering with government towards the success of the education system and the smooth educational progress for our children and learners.

I think it is also befitting that I announce that discussions to integrate the district awards and the Sasol awards next year have been underway, and that next year marks the inauguration of the integrated award ceremony.

Conclusion

As I come to conclude, let me acknowledge that everyone must assist in ensuring that more learners not only take but pass Mathematics and Physical Science.

I have alluded before that our country took an informed decision with the dawn of democracy that the education of the African child will not be complete without Mathematics as part of the curriculum. This saw a steady improvement in the learners taking Mathematics as part of the curriculum package. We should continue to make learner to see the need to opt for these subject as it holds the key to most careers.

Let's make sure that every learner receives what is due to them for the learning process to start in earnest.

Ngiyabonga.