

**Speech to be delivered by the MEC for Education at the occasion of
the Meeting with Religious Leaders on 23 January 2016**

Programme Director and Chairperson of the Moral Regeneration
Movement, **Rev. Micah Nthali**

Members of the Moral Regeneration Movement

Pastors

Church Leaders

Members of Senior Management

Representatives from the Media

Sanibonani,

I am very grateful to everyone present here today. Your presence means a great deal to the Department as you took time out of your busy schedules and honoured the call to meet with us and place yourselves in the position to intercede for the Province, the Department, Teachers, learners, parents and other stakeholders.

As **1 Chronicles 16:11** admonishes us to:

“Look to the Lord and His strength; seek his face always,”

your continuous support in attending these prayer meetings gives us hope and a sense of relief and assurance that we have a great team of pastors and church leaders rallying behind us in prayer and teachings, in the quest to improve the lives of the people of Mpumalanga.

This is one of the gatherings that I look forward to, because every year the religious fraternity is always quick to respond towards our requests of nation building. At our annual prayer meetings before our learners commence on their final examinations, all religious leaders ensure through prayer and teachings to their various congregations that our province is enveloped with blessings and protected from all negative distractions that may hinder the growth of the province. I truly thank you. Ngiyabonga.

I must say with emphasis that the Office of Religious Leadership, as we would call it, is held in high esteem by Government in general and the Mpumalanga Department of Education in particular.

We appreciate that you keep taking stock in matters of education. Your steadfast participation has evidently decreased concerns of moral decay in

our youth and the Department cannot even begin to express the appreciation we have for the support we receive from the Movement.

Your good office constantly reminds us of our responsibilities and the importance of serving the province in a loyal and patriotic manner.

Speak about the 2015 Results

Let me announce that the Class of 2015 has obtained a **78.6%** pass rate. We congratulate the **43 229** learners who passed and we also appreciate that out of the **54 980** candidates who sat for the examinations, it is for the first time that Mpumalanga Province passes records such a huge number of learners.

We also give praise to Ehlanzeni District for recording the highest pass rate, obtaining **82.39%** in 2015. A good story is that all the four Districts in the province are performing above **72%** and are above the National Average.

Of the **68** circuits within the province, Khulangwane Circuit from Ehlanzeni district is the overall best performing circuit after obtaining a **92.82%** pass rate in 2015. Hoërskool Nelspruit retained the number one position provincially for the 2015 academic year with a **100%** pass rate.

The school enrolled and passed all **251** learners. This is commendable and we wish that all our schools must see this as a positive example, something to emulate.

I am very proud of the Class of 2015, 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.

I plead with you to walk hand in hand with us, as we ensure that the Class of 2016 reaches an **80%** pass rate. Your importance in our sector will ensure that our learners are spiritually prepared in tackling 2016. I know that through your divine intervention all will be possible. Through your assistance and counseling, the learners will have their minds at peace as they soldier on, in order to improve the current state of results.

The Scripture of **Philippians 4: 6** says;

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God”.

This scripture gives me strength that as a Department we can achieve all things without any fear.

Conclusion

Our learners are faced with different challenges that seek for our attention. In some circumstances, learners are unable to express themselves as they are not aware of where to seek for help.

I therefore request that we become a safe haven for those that are in need by offering counselling and spiritual knowledge to the people of Mpumalanga. It would also be proper that we also open our places of worship to teaching and learning practices and preach the importance of education in our quest to nation building.

I therefore request all men and women of God to pray for these learners. I am convinced that each and everyone of you sitting here, represents an even greater number behind you. If you spread the word of goodwill in our communities towards our learners and schools, the message will be amplified and our nation will become stronger.

Let us stand together to intercede and build our province.

Ngiyabonga.