

**Keynote Address for the Occasion of the Mbombela Mayoral  
Excellence Awards Ceremony on 29 January 2016**

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Programme director and Chief Whip Hon Mbuyane

His Excellency the Executive Mayor, Cllr SP Mathonsi

Honourable Speaker of Mbombela Municipality, Cllr J Siddell

Members of Senior Management

Circuit Managers

Members of School Governing Bodies

Our beloved Educators

Top learners

Parents

Representatives from the media

Ladies and Gentlemen

**Sanibonani,**

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I feel honored by the invitation extended to my office that I should be part of this glittering occasion and I wish to thank the Executive Mayor and His Team for conceptualizing the idea of acknowledging and rewarding excellence.

This is what we should continue to do in order to free ourselves from any form of mediocrity, laziness and hopelessness which are attributes that can only help to move us and our country backwards.

I therefore join his Excellency the Executive Mayor in paying our respect and appreciation to the class of 2016. They made us proud considering the myriad of issues that they had to deal with.

They have proven that their twelve years of schooling was worth it, thereby setting a good example to those that are remaining to follow on their footsteps.

Indeed it was fulfilling that for the first time in the history of these examinations the province managed to pass more than **43 000** learners something we need to commend.

What is more encouraging is that schools on their own are making positive strides to improve their learner outcomes and that our circuit managers have their hands on deck working around the clock to ensure that the provincial community remains proud on the way education is delivered on this part of our country.

Our districts are equally playing their part in an encouraging fashion, since they all are performing above the national average and above **72%**. This is a good story.

Let me congratulate Ehlanzeni District for being the overall best district and for obtaining **82.39%** which is an improvement from the **82.1%** obtained in 2014.

Equally, Mbombela Local Municipality has not disappointed because it is within the **80%** pass rate bracket something that we should commend and wish that it improves in 2016 and beyond.

*I hope Cllr Hamzer Ngwenya from Emakhazeni Local Municipality is aware that he should hold tight because Cllr Mathontsi is watching him very close and making means to be on the pedestal.*

On that score, I request that we congratulate Emakhazeni Local Municipality for surpassing all municipalities with a performance of **87.0%**.

Those of us who know how poor that municipality is will indeed appreciate the fact that government interventions are beginning to yield positive and intended outcomes.

Our teachers have played their part under trying circumstances, and it is only fair that we thank them from the bottom of our hearts. We acknowledge that if it were not for their hard work, we not going to be standing proud as we are doing this afternoon.

Siyababonga Kakhulu othisha bethu, and I wish that they should know how much the department, the leadership of the country appreciate their resourcefulness.

We will work hard to improve their conditions of service and ensure that they at all times feel valued and appreciated.

It is for this reason that I request everyone here to join us in making a clarion call to our teachers not to resign prematurely. The resignation of

teachers is giving us sleepless nights especially because some of them do so out of an unfounded rumor relating to the new tax dispensation.

The unfortunate part is that even though we tried and are trying to dispel the myth our teachers are just resigning in numbers something we all need to be concerned about.

I pledge here and now that our department is willing to work with our teachers, their unions and non- governmental organisation to work a programme that will look at their welfare including financial literacy.

We are happy that this month January saw a good start of the 2016 academic year and so far we are encouraged on the way everything has unfolded. There were no reports that were disturbing except that there are few areas that we still need to attend to urgently.

**For this municipality** we must work closely executive mayor, to look at a process to accelerate the provisioning of school sites, improve water and electricity provisioning in schools.

I am aware that some schools are struggling to cope with the rates they are being charged but we have made it clear that schools are not exonerated from paying services. This is an obligation on their part; however we can look at issues of feasibility.

I am aware that we tend to be accused of having not building a school in this part, but our response is that we have built two state of the art schools next to the Mbombela Stadium.

Maybe we need to position the two schools in a manner that the resident of Mbombela may find it appealing to take their children there; Our Circuit Manager and District Director needs to work on that project this year so that come January 2017 we all celebrate the resourcefulness of the two institutions.

Once more thank you very much programme director for affording us this precious moment and we thank you heartily for you quest to make the delivery of education everyone's business.

## **Conclusion**

As I conclude, it is important that we recognize that His Excellency, President Jacob Zuma, in his January 8<sup>th</sup> Statement took time to acknowledge the great improvements the nation is making on the education front.

*“South Africa is succeeding with providing quality education and we proud that our efforts are showing significant results. The 2015 Matric results of nearly 500 000 (five hundred thousand) successful matriculates is the highest number ever in our country's history. This culmination of years of hardworking in that the more students sat for the matric examinations than ever before”*

It is therefore important that we continue to work together, in our different capacities, and achieve even greater results in the future. Let us do all we can to ensure that the youth of Mpumalanga is afforded the quality education.

**I thank you.**