

Speech to be delivered by the MEC for Education, Mrs Reginah Mhaule at the occasion of the meeting with Ehlanzeni District Principals on 14 March 2016

Programme Director and Head of Department, Mrs MOC Mhlabane

Members of Senior Management

Circuit Managers

Principals

Representatives from the Media

Sanibonani

Thank you very much for honouring our invitation. We wanted to have this meeting on Friday, 19 February, but we had to cancel it because the circumstances were not favourable at that time.

We have taken a decision that there must be constant contact and engagement between ourselves so that we are able to address issues on time and to accelerate all our processes.

It is our wish that we can frequently discuss issues freely and openly to ensure accountability and to improve efficiencies.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank you for ensuring that the first term progresses without serious challenges.

I am aware that there were challenges relating to the management of scholar transport, especially within the surroundings of Mbombela Local Municipality.

On our side we tried to ensure that there is no repeat of that dilemma following our engagements with the implementing Department.

We also wish to thank the Hon Premier who took it upon himself to ensure a solution on this matter.

What we need to do is to put recovery plans in place so that we recover the lost time.

The community service delivery protests continue to affect teaching and learning processes in some parts of the province, besides our call that these activities should not affect schools.

We still should be in a position to understand the impact of such activities and through consultations with parents put remedial programmes.

We must not rest until we can achieve a situation where these activities will not deprive our children their fundamental right to education.

Our commitment stands that we must work around the clock to ensure that:

- Our learners in grades 3,6,and 9 perform at above 50% in Mathematics and Languages
- We ensure that each learner has stationery, textbooks for each subject, a desk and a teacher in every classroom for every subject.
- We improve the intake and performance in Mathematics, Physical Science and Technology
- We capacitate School Management Teams as well as teachers including members of the School Governing Bodies and their committees.
- We effectively implement the National School Nutrition Programme and the No FEE School Policy for quintal 1 to 3 schools.

We will ensure that this is done while at the same time we request schools to reciprocate by ensuring that:

- Teachers are at school teaching for the duration of the teaching process and at all times motivated
- Learners attend their classes, respect teachers and do their assignments without fail

- Parents support the school governing bodies and teachers and are involved in the affairs of the schools and teaching of their learners.
- There is adherence to the policy framework throughout the teaching process.
- We reduce the rate of learner dropout and other social ills such as teenage pregnancy and drug trafficking in our schools.
- We must try to free our children from anything that may rob them of their future- e.g. uncontrolled anger
- We must work with our sister departments such as Social Development, Health and Home Affairs to ensure that the welfare of our learners is taken care off.
- We must improve issues relating to the identification of learners that require special attention and the referral processes.
- Let's ensure that our schools are clean and are free from any hazard.

In his State of the Province Address the Honourable Premier said:

- As a Province, we continue to put our children first – from the ***earliest days of their childhood development***, through to their preparation for our workforce. It is a long term investment that we believe will yield positive dividends for all in future.
- In 2015/16 we ensured that ***77 779 learners*** were able to access ***Grade R*** in both public and community centres, and that 57 726 pre-grade R learners were supported in community centres.
- Whilst the progress towards completion of the ***ECD Institute*** has been slower than anticipated, we have nonetheless trained a total of ***1 102 ECD practitioners*** at various qualification levels. These numbers will be increased by an additional ***1 800 practitioners*** to be trained in the coming financial year. We will also complete all the renovations to ensure that the ECD Institute operates at maximum capacity, including the deployment of required staff.
- The ***ECD Sector*** is making tangible progress, and based on this progress, we are now in a position to ensure that we build on our successes by developing a ***standardised model for ECD*** that contributes to the ***eradication of backlogs***, as well as ***improved planning and resourcing*** for future programmes and projects.

- Over the 2016/17 financial year, we have undertaken to **construct an additional 7 ECD facilities** in areas of most need including Standerton, Siyabuswa, Tweefontein, Ermelo, Ogies, Mbuzini, and Manzini in Jerusalem. More importantly, we will continue to ensure that **existing sites** are adequately staffed and serviced.
- The performance of our **Grade 3, 6 and 9 pupils** could **not be comprehensively assessed** as only a few schools wrote the Annual National Assessment (ANA) – but we are informed that **numeracy, literacy and mathematics rates** have not yet reached the desired levels.
- Our **Maths Science & Technology Academy** provided training for **1 380 teachers** in 2015/16 and the work of renovating and refurbishing the **Academy Hub** is nearing completion. In 2016/17 we will train an additional **1000 maths and science teachers** and **broadcast lessons to all 100 MSTA linked schools** – we are truly bringing our children’s classrooms into the 21st century.
- We must ensure that our learners have access to the computers, laboratories, interactive electronic white boards to bring their education experience straight into the 21st century.
- We should acknowledge that in 2015/16 the province **increased enrolment** in both **Mathematics (42 858) and Physical Science (31 373)** in line with proposed targets.
- Our **matric pass rate** has stabilised at **78.6%** and we look forward to increasing that to approximately **88%** in 2016/17.
- In 2015/16 so far, we have provided **8 Grade R Facilities, one special school** and **29 computer centres and laboratories**.
- We have also commenced with the provision of basic services, water, electricity and sanitation facilities at **107** of our most needy schools.
- Going forward we have set ourselves a target to ensure that **ALL** of our schools meet **minimum sanitation standards** by December 2016.

- We have allocated R200 million towards the **eradication of unsafe structures** in Bushbuckridge Local Municipality. Our investment will target **six schools** in the 2016/17 financial year.
- In 2016/17, we plan to scale up our contributions in this regard by making available R200 million to **increase access to post school funding** for critical and scarce skills that are vital for our **key economic sectors**.
- These funds will also be directed at operationalising training and skills development learning exchange initiatives with our partners in China, Italy and Russia.

This is our injunction, mandate for 2016/17 financial year and I wish that everyone should read the speech and identify his/her areas of contribution and help us to fulfil this mandate.

I requested your circuit managers to lead the deliberations by informing us on how the first quarter has progressed and to indicate if we are achieving our set goals. Principals will thereafter confirm if indeed what is presented is authentic.

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