

Speech by the MEC for Education, Mr. Bonakele Majuba at the occasion of the Announcement of the 2023 National Senior Certificate Examination Results on 19 January 2024 at the University of Mpumalanga

Programme Director and Head: Education, **Mrs. Lucy Moyane**

Premier, **Mrs. Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane**

Speaker of the Provincial Legislature, **Ms. Makhosazana Masilela**

Deputy Minister of Education, **Dr. Reginah Mhaule**

Chief Whip of the Ruling Party in Government, **Mr. Fidel Mlombo**

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Education and Sport,
Mr. Gillion Mashego

Ministers and Deputy Ministers

Members of the National Parliament

Former MECs of the Mpumalanga Department of Education

Provincial Secretary of the Ruling Party, **Mr. Muzi Chirwa**

Provincial Secretary of the Provincial SACP, **Mr. Lucky Mbuyane**

Provincial Secretary of COSATU, **Mr. David Mokoena**

Provincial Secretary of SANCO, **Mr. Linda Dhlamini**

Leadership of all other Political Parties

Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders and Khoisan Leaders, **Kgoshi Mokoena**

The Leadership of the University of Mpumalanga

Representative of the Moral Regeneration Movement

Provincial Director of Public Prosecutions, **Advocate Rebecca Nkebe Kanyane**

South African Police Services Provincial Commissioner, **Lt Gen Manamela**

Representative of the Public Service Commission **Ms. Salome Meso**

Representative of the QLTC

Leadership of all institutions that sponsored this event.

Leadership of the Special Investigate Unit and Human Rights Commission

Representatives from the Media

Leadership of Learner Formations

Leadership of Progressive Youth Alliance

Leadership of Education Sector Unions and Associations of School Governing Bodies

Parents
Teachers

Learners

Members of the Community who are streaming live on various Media Platforms

Ladies and Gentlemen

Sanibonani

Greetings to all of you and thank you very much for honoring this occasion with your presence.

We referred to the 2023 cohort of Grade 12 learners as, “***The Class of Dreams.***”

This was meant to acknowledge and appreciate their tenacity, resilience and the courage which was displayed by this class over their years of schooling.

Each time we interacted with grade 12 learners last year, we were more than encouraged and it became crystal clear that they were bound to succeed beyond our expectations.

Indeed, the **Class of Dreams** as we refer to them, rose to the occasion in more ways than one, and in a manner that is worth to be appreciated by all of us in the Place of the Rising Sun and beyond.

Programme Director, in 2019, when we took over the reins in education, the mandate was vividly clear that we needed to leverage the sector to produce world class learners who in turn will help to improve the socio-economic trajectory of our Province.

During that period, Mpumalanga province had registered an **80.3 %** pass rate in the grade 12 National Senior Certificate Examination Results.

We pledged to sustain and improve the performance to remain above the **80%** pass rate bracket.

COVID -19 emerged, destroyed all that we had worked to achieve and took us far backwards in all manner of manifestations.

Today, we are presenting the results fully confident of a promising future for the Province.

We are saying this based on the solid foundation and a formidable baseline from which to build on going forward.

Programme Director, the integrity and the credibility of the National Examination remains paramount.

In this regard, we are encouraged for the fact that since **2009**, the Department managed an incident free examination.

Since then, the Department had not experienced any leakage of question papers in our province.

Be that as it may, in **2022**, there were a number of learners who were involved in group copying, the Department acted swiftly and subjected those involved to due administrative processes and the law.

The number of such incidents had been drastically reduced this time around, however, we must henceforth ensure that there is not a single incident of copying or group copying.

We have embraced a zero tolerance approach to any form or tendency to compromise the golden rule of Examination integrity and credibility.

To this end, after due processes, the Department terminated the contractual obligations with the teacher who was alleged to have assisted learners in Bohlabela in 2022.

Programme Director, the current administration managed to record significant improvements aimed at improving learning and teaching practice in the Province.

The Department ushered in **Ubuhlebuzile e-learning programme** which saw the distribution of **63 000** tablets to grade 12 learners and **6 700** laptops to their teachers.

This week, on Tuesday, the Department initiated a pilot of a full scale implementation of Ubuhlebuzile e-learning programme by distributing tablets to all learners and laptops to all teachers of Driekoppies Secondary School from grade eight to twelve.

There are eight schools in the Province (two from each district) which are selected to be part of this pilot programme.

The pilot will help the Department to understand the modalities and intricacies of a full scale implementation because our desire is to achieve the goal of, **one learner, one tablet** and a laptop for every teacher in the near future and in our life time.

The Department further introduced **Coding and Robotics** and increased the number of **Technical High Schools**.

Stakeholders were mobilized to support the course of education delivery and we are very much pleased that our stakeholders do rally side by side with the Department.

The number of vacant posts within the Department had been reduced drastically and that process is in full swing – **Siyaqasha**.

The Department was able to expand its footprint of success, especially in the Curriculum Enrichment Programmes, such as the National ABC Motsepe South African School Choral Eisteddfod and the National Teaching Awards Ceremonies.

Indeed, **Programme Director**, the delivery and improvement of school infrastructure and the alleviation of overcrowding remains a daunting challenge.

Be that as it may, we are confident that by the end of the current financial year, there will be **no school in the Province** that solely utilizes pit latrines.

Our quest to eradicate pit latrines is on course and is about to yield the anticipated results and to restore the dignity of our children and teachers.

There are a number of additional classrooms and schools yet to be built to ensure that the learning and teaching environment remains conducive throughout the Province.

In this regard, we request to work side by side with all our communities and with school governing bodies in particular.

We wish to extend our profound appreciation to all our communities for embracing the Rhandza Xikolo Xa Wena Campaign.

It was indeed encouraging to witness the young and old, men and women participating in painting, cleaning, fixing broken furniture in our schools.

We wish to take this opportunity once more and congratulate the leadership and school community of Tfolinhlahlhla Primary School at Ehlanzeni District and Mahlathi Primary School in Bohlabela District for being declared the Cleanest Schools in the Province for the 2022 and 2023 respectively.

We wish to announce that **SASOL** has agreed to work with the Department to be the official sponsor for the Rhandza Xikolo Xa Wena Campaign.

I also think it is safe to announce that this year, the Principal, Chairperson of the SGB and two learners (boy and girl) of the **2024 Cleanest School in the Province**, will amongst other prizes win a **four-day trip to Rwanda** which is the Cleanest Country in Africa.

Our view is that cleanliness in schools improves learning and teaching, as well as the performance of everyone - learners, non-teaching staff and teachers.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS

Programme Director, it is an honour and privilege to present the 2023 National Senior Certificate Examination Results.

The Class of Dreams had registered **67 902** candidates and **65 534** wrote all the subjects on offer.

It gives me great pleasure to indicate that overall, the 2023 Grade 12 Class in Mpumalanga Province recorded a **77%** pass rate.

This pass rate constitutes a **0.2%** improvement from the **76.8%** pass rate obtained in **2022**.

Congratulations are in order.

What is more exciting is that **21 819** of these learners qualify to register for bachelor programmes.

These learners can be admitted to further their studies here at the University of Mpumalanga or in all other universities in the country. **This must be appreciated.**

In the same breath, **17 412** of these learners qualify to enroll for Diploma programmes.

This clearly confirms that we are presenting quality results in the true meaning of the word.

Programme Director, the Provincial Districts performance is as follows, in their alphabetical order:

Bohlabela District recorded a **69.1%** pass rate as compared to the **79.3%** obtained in 2022.

Ehlanzeni District recorded an **81.8%** pass rate which is an improvement compared to the **76.2%** obtained in 2022. This is an improvement of **5.6%** .

Gert Sibande District registered a **79.8%** pass rate compared to the **77.7%** pass rate obtained in 2022. This constitutes a **2.1%** improvement

Lastly, **Nkangala District** obtained **76.4%** which is a **1.9%** improvement from the **74.5%** obtained in 2022.

I therefore wish to congratulate all the District Directors and their teams for this performance.

In particular, we congratulate, the Acting Director of Ehlanzeni District, **Dr. Jabulani Ndlovu** and his team for being the overall best performing District in the Province in 2023.

Well done, **Siyabonga Kakhulu**.

LEARNER PERFORMANCE WITHIN MUNICIPALITIES

Programme Director, we also isolated these results per municipalities within the Province.

Out of the **17** Municipalities in the Province, **Steve Tshwete Local Municipality** obtained position one after passing **2 170** learners which constitute an **89.5%** pass rate.

We wish to congratulate the Executive Mayor, **Cllr Mhlonishwa Masilela** and the Community of **Steve Tshwete Local Municipality** for this achievement.

Well done.

CIRCUIT PERFORMANCE

Programme Director, the Department has **71** Education Circuits and out of these Circuits, **Steve Tshwete 2** is our overall best performing circuit in the Province after recording a **91.1%** pass rate.

Well done to the Circuit Manger, **Mr. Daniel Makuse**.

The best circuit in Bohlabela District is **Mashishing Circuit** with **82.4%** pass rate.

The best circuit at Ehlanzeni District is **White River Circuit** obtaining **90.3%**.

In Gert Sibande District, the best Circuit is **Lekwa East Circuit** with **88.7 %** pass rate and in Nkangala District, **Steve Tshwete 2**

Circuit is the best performing Circuit after registering a **91.1%** pass rate.

Programme Director, Nkomazi East Circuit registered a pass rate of **60.2% in 2022** and it has since improved its results by **17.4%**, making it the most improved circuit after it registered a **77.6%** pass rate this time around.

We congratulate **Mr. Themba Mabuza** and his team for this achievement.

It is worth noting that **55** out of **71** circuits performed above **70%** which is our acceptable threshold. We congratulate all Circuit Managers and their teams for the outstanding performance.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Programme Director, out of the **571** schools which administered the National Senior Certificate Examination, **24** were able to pass all learners who wrote the examination, thus **recording a 100% pass rate**.

153 of these schools performed between the **80% and 99%** pass rate bracket while **417 schools** performed above **70%**.

Programme Director, Hoërskool Nelspruit in Mbombela Circuit, at Ehlanzeni District had **250** learners, and 204 of them satisfied requirements for bachelors programmes while **24** qualified for diploma programmes.

This school registered a combined total of **188** distinctions in various subjects and all the **250** learners passed.

This makes the **Hoërskool Nelspruit** the overall best performing school in the Province in 2023. Congratulations are in order **Mr. Johan Hattingh** and your competent team for the job well done.

The most improved school is **Mahlatsi Secondary School** in Malalane Circuit at Ehlanzeni District.

Mahlatsi Secondary School registered an improvement of **25.8%** and obtained **88.9%** pass rate this time around. Congratulations to the Principal, **Ms. Fikile Nkosi** and her team.

We wish to take this opportunity to congratulate **all** our schools for this performance which is a clear indication that it is possible to defy all odds to achieve good results. **Siyabonga Kakhulu**

BARDING SCHOOLS

The performance of our boarding schools this time around is as follows:

- eMakhazeni Boarding School recorded a pass rate of **46.4%** compared to **55.9%** in 2022.
- eZakheni Boarding School recorded a pass rate of **74.5%** compared to **55.7%** in **2022**.
- Shongwe Boarding School registered a pass rate of **95.4%** compared to the **92.4%** obtained in 2022.

- Izimbali Boarding School which is also an MSTA Sub Hub registered a pass rate of **95.7%** against the **84.3** in **2022**
- Steve Tshwete Boarding School registered a **92.6%** pass rate against the **70.4%** it registered in **2022**.
- Thaba Chweu Boarding School registered grade 12 for the first time in 2023 and managed to obtain a **63.6%** pass rate.

We note with appreciation the general improved performance in these boarding schools except for eMakhazeni Boarding School.

We also extend our appreciation to all who played a pivotal role towards this achievement.

We still repeat our clarion call that all our boarding schools should be able to attain a **100%** pass rate considering the kind of support they receive from the Provincial Government.

PERFORMANCE OF NO-FEE SCHOOLS

Programme Director, there are **479** No-Fee Schools in the Province that sat for this National Senior Certificate Examination in 2023.

Out of this number, eight (**08**) schools obtained 100%, **220** schools obtained results that are above **80%** and **331** schools performed above **70%**.

We are encouraged by this outcome and we must continue to pay special attention and support all the No –Fee Paying Schools to ensure sustainable improvement.

Programme Director, our concern is that **148** schools which constitute **30.8%** of the No-Fee Schools performed below **70%**.

This led to 14 **175** learners from these schools not making the grade.

We therefore call on all our communities to provide the requisite support to these learners.

Our principals must lead from the front in this regard. No learner must be left behind.

SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

Honourable Premier, our interventions on freeing the potential of a girl child, is yielding the expected results already.

In this regard, the numbers of girl children who passed this examination exceeds those of boy learners.

Out of the **76.95%** who passed, comprises **43.5%** girls as compared to **33.45%** boys.

This confirms government's quest to fully empower the girl child and to redress the legacy of the past.

Programme Director, in our company we have the top ten learners in the Province as well as the top learners in different subjects.

There are five **(05)** learners who obtained **100%** in Mathematics and two **(02)** in Technical Mathematics, that is **300 out of 300**.

Equally, there is one **(01)** learner who the obtained **300 out of 300** in Physical Sciences.

This, to a greater extent is the affirmation of the strides made by the Province to encourage learners to choose Mathematics, Physical Science and Technology as their preferred subjects and to pass these subjects with flying colors.

The Department has improved the capacity for the OR Tambo Mathematics, Science and Technology Academy to enable it to improve the offering of in service training to teachers who are teaching these subjects.

The Academy has since secured accommodation at Witbank High School which will be able to host teachers who will attend training. This will ensure that programmes will be intense as they will run over a number of days at a time.

This year, the Department will again intensify its collaboration SASOL to promote these subjects and will host the 2024 Techno X to showcase the positive impact of these subjects.

Our focus going forward, will be to strengthen primary schooling as well as the Early Childhood Development in the Province.

In this regard, we will continue to support all our schools and learners while we intensify collaboration with private institutions, Community Based Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations.

This year, we will be working closely with a number of institutions and organisations to build a solid foundation for the growth of our system.

These includes forging a collaborative effort with **Thungela Operations** to improve learning and teaching in some of primary schools in Nkangala and Gert Sibande Districts.

The Thungela Education Support Initiative pays a particular focus on quality education and skills development dispensation in grades R to 04 in **45** sampled schools.

The launch of this Initiative will take place on **25 January 2024** at Steve Tshwete Local Municipality.

Programme Director, allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate all our learners who have passed the National Senior Certificate Examination.

Once more, I shall invoke section 7 sub-section N of the Provincial Ephraim Mogale Provincial Bursary Scheme provision to award bursaries to these outstanding learners and the top three learners from each of our No-Fee Boarding Schools to support them throughout their tertiary studies in any of the public Universities within our country.

The same bursary will be issued to any disabled learner and those with albinism within our Province.

In this regard, while we were embarking on motivation sessions, last year, I met a young vibrant learner from Chayaza Secondary School who is a wheelchair user. I promised him that in the event that he makes the mark, the Department will fully support him to further his studies. His name is **Heritage Makane** and it gives me pleasure to announce that he made it.

I therefore reiterate our commitment to support him as I request him to come to the stage to receive his Statement of Results.

Programme Director, in **2020**, I made a commitment to support **Ms. Athalia Mashele** who started schooling at the age of 20 because of her disability. She was supported to further her studies at Ehlanzeni TVET College, Acornhoek Campus and she will be completing her last module in June this year.

Athalia has graced this occasion and I request that we recognize her.

I also made the same commitment to support **Siphiwe Magagula** who is a wheelchair user from Standerton. I am delighted to indicate that Siphiwe is a student at the Gert Sibande TVET College, Evander Campus and will also complete his studies in June 2024. **Siphiwe** is in attendance to this event, I also request that we recognize him.

We also have in our midst, **Ms. Mitchell Shiba**, a young student with Albinism who is being supported by the Department to study at Ehlanzeni TVET College, Main Campus. She will complete her studies this year (2024) as well.

We congratulate them and wish them all the best in their studies.

This is a clear evidence that we do honour of promises at all times.

Programme Director, our support to our children remains unquestionable as such all learners who have been invited in this gathering will return home in a better position compared to their time of arrival this hall, this morning.

All of them are guaranteed a full bursary from the Provincial Government and most of them will see their bank accounts being loaded with a lot of money and they will have a lot of goodies to carry back home.

One of them will return back home with the keys of a brand new sponsored car. ***All of this shows that hard work pays.***

To this end, we wish to thank all our sponsors and everyone from our teachers, school management teams, school governing bodies, education sector unions, the business community and all communities that supported this Class of 2023 to this successful end.

Your support is not taken for granted. **Siyabonga Kakhulu.**

Programme Director, we are still committed to our call to ensure that the Department intensifies programmes to ensure that all learners find it easy to solve problems, think critically and work collaboratively and creatively.

We are intensifying programmes to assist learners to function in a digital and information-driven world; to apply digital skills and transfer these skills to solve everyday problems.

We reiterate the profound words echoed by the Minister of Basic Education, **Mrs. Angie Motshekga** last night when she said:

“Clearly, the system cannot survive without the direct involvement of all communities of trust, not only those who are part of the Sector, but everyone.

The Class of 2023 has clearly demonstrated that with all requisite support and intervention programmes, we can make it.

We must priorities our interventions on teaching and learning losses. Support and intervention programmes must be implemented across the system.”

Indeed, this road was not going to smooth sailing, if it were not for the support from everyone in our Province.

To this end, I wish to congratulate the **Class of 2023** and to extend best regards for 2024 and beyond.

***Rhandza Xikolo Xa Wena Campaign,
Leave No One Behind – Babize Bonke.***

Ngiyabonga.