

**Speech by the MEC for Education, Mr. Bonakele Majuba at  
the Occasion of the Meeting with Boarding Schools on  
Thursday, 15 February 2024 at the OR Tambo MST Academy  
in Emalahleni.**

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Programme Director,

Leadership of the Association of SGBs

Chairpersons of the School Governing Bodies

District Directors

Members of Senior Management

Members of District Management Teams

Circuit Managers

Principals of Boarding Schools

Members of the Boarding Schools Management Teams

Leadership of the Representative Council of Learners

**Sanibonani,**

Thank you very much for honouring our invitation to this meeting as well as for hosting us.

We have come here to revisit the reasons why boarding schools were conceptualised and the value they were designed to add to the education sector as well as the development of the province and nation in general.

Over the past years we have been making a call that ordinarily all boarding schools are expected to register a **100%** pass rate considering that learners and teachers are residents of the same boarding school **24/7**.

Following the 2023 National Senior Certificate results, the performance of our boarding schools stands 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 MSTTA 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, as such we congratulate everyone who played a pivotal role in this regard.

We reiterate our call that all our no-fee boarding schools should attain a **100%** pass rate as norm.

Our greatest concern is that seemingly the **100%** pass rate is not achieved and it is with a heavy heart that Emakhazeni Boarding School is experiencing a protracted decline of learner performance in this regard.

It is for this reason that, we saw it befitting that we have to come together in this manner to engage with the leadership of all boarding schools, the school governing bodies as well the schools' management teams so as to collectively turn the situation around for the better, qualitatively and in a sustainable manner towards the 100% target.

Our take is that we are all alive to the fact that this boarding school, like all others, was established exclusively to bridge the educational gap for vulnerable learners from under privileged farm areas.

This means that their success is not just an academic metric but a social imperative that we dare not fail nor compromise and thus the lack of performance is letting these poor kids, their parents and the communities down.

The deliberate intention of establishing boarding schools in the province is to break the cycle of poverty and to guarantee the delivery of quality education for these learners most of whom,

would have dropped out of school to go to work in the farms if not for this boarding school intervention.

It is therefore very troubling to us when these learners do not achieve their full potential and the desired target which is counterproductive and thus perpetuates the very challenges we strive to overcome.

Such a development fully indicates that we are not achieving government's quest which is espoused in Chapter two of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa mandating us to guarantee the right to education for everyone.

It therefore remains crucial that all of us in this room, must understand the impact of our actions as well as the harm they inflict in the lives of the innocent souls at our disposal.

Such a failure to teach and improve learner outcomes leaves an indelible legacy in the story of life of the community of Emakhazeni, the Department and the province, a negative development which history will judge harshly.

We are fully aware that finger-pointing and the blame game will not assist us nor solve the problem, however, we need to be frank to the fact that there is a great disservice by this school which needs to be rooted out completely and urgently.

We must consequently and collectively engage in honest self-reflection and collaborative action to make our boarding schools a beacon of hope that everyone in every corner of our Province should admire.

Programme Director, it should be noted that the boarding schools are funded hugely and that the Department should get a return of its investment in the form of learner outcomes.

In the **2020/21** budget allocation the combined total for all the boarding schools was **R112, 400,000 (One Hundred and Twelve Million and Four Hundred Thousand Rands)**, in **2021/22** it was **R120,290.000 (One Hundred and Twenty Million Two Hundred and Ninety Thousand Rands)** while in the **2022/23** financial year it was **R138.899.000 (One Hundred and Thirty-Eight Million and Eight Hundred and Eighty-Nine)**.

**When broken down per boarding school the budget allocation is as follows:**

- **Emakhazeni** was allocated **R20, 077,000 (Twenty Million and Seventy-Seven Thousand Rands)** for the **2020/21** financial year.

**R18.814.000 (Eighteen Million Eight Hundred and Fourteen Thousand Rands)** in the **2021/22** financial year.

**R21.073.000 (Twenty-One Million and Seventy-Three Thousand Rands)**

- **Ezakheni was allocated R22,687,000 (Twenty-Two Million Six Hundred and Eighty-Seven Thousand Rands) in the 2020/21 financial year.**

**R20.097.000 (Twenty Million and Ninety-Seven Thousand Rands) in the 2021/22 financial year.**

**R25.150.000 (Twenty-Five Million One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Rands) in the 2022/23 financial year.**

- **Izimbali was allocated R23,121,000 (Twenty-Three Million One Hundred and Twenty-One Thousands Rands) in the 2020/21 financial year.**

**R20.097.000 (Twenty Million and Ninety-Seven Thousand) in the 2021/22 financial year.**

**R25.150.000 (Twenty-Five Million One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Rands) in the 2022/23 financial year.**

- **Shongwe was allocated R17,821,000 (Seventeen Million Eight Hundred and Twenty-One Rands) in the 2021/22.**

**R17.821.000 (Seventeen Million Eight Hundred and Twenty-One Thousand Rands)** in the **2022/23** financial year.

- **Steve Tshwete** was allocated **R17,457,000 (Seventeen Million Four Hundred and Fifty-Seven Thousand Rands)** in the **2020/21** financial year.

**R19.177.000 (Nineteen Million One Hundred and Seventy-Seven Thousand Rands)** in the **2021/22** financial year.

For the **2022/23** financial year the allocation was **R23.266.000 (Twenty-Three Million Two Hundred and Sixty-Six Thousand Rands)**

- **Thaba Chweu** was allocated **R11.237.000 (Eleven Million Two Hundred and Thirty-Seven Rands)** in the **2020/21** financial year.

**R18.729.000 (Eighteen Million Seven Hundred and Twenty-Nine Thousands Rands)** in the **2021/22** financial year.

For the **2022/23** financial year, the allocation for **Thaba Chweu** was **R22.982.000 (Twenty-Two Million Nine Hundred and Eighty-Two Thousand Rands)**.

I have deliberately gone to town about the costs of running a boarding school and we should note that in addition to that we have to add the cost of salaries for the support staff and the teaching personnel.

One is left to wonder, whether the results are worthy of this investment as the results of Emakhazeni leaves much to be desired.

There are ordinary public schools that are capable of getting 100% pass rate even though all the learners are day scholars and they do not receive any investment near the boarding schools.

It is thus our duty as a collective to look into the future, plan and execute a road map to excellence and learner performance.

The great Chinese Leader of old, Confucius once said, “**A man who has committed a mistake and does not correct it is committing another mistake**”. We don’t want to be counted amongst those who faulted and didn’t even consider any subsequent remedial action.

It is therefore our fear that if **drastic and decisive action** is not implemented urgently, this year’s results may further worsen.

What I struggle to comprehend is that the learners and teachers at this boarding school are staying together and unlike in other well performing mainstream schools you have more opportunities to



teach, provide guidance and do remedial work to improve individual performance of learners.

I therefore, wish to be guided about the circumstances which are causing the protracted and seemingly worsening trajectory of underperformance at this boarding school and about the cause of action that must be undertaken to improve the situation. This meeting is not desired to be a mere talk show but a call to action for the sake of our people and this community in particular.

We dare not fail.

Programme Director, please allow me to pause here, and allow an open, frank and productive discussion.

**Ngiyabonga.**