

**Speech by the MEC for Education, Mr. Bonakele Majuba at  
the occasion of the Meeting with Principals of Bohlabela  
District on 06 February 2024**

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

Executive Mayor of Bushbuckridge Local Municipality, **Cllr Sylvia Nxumalo**

President of Contralesa, **Kgoshi Mokoena**

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

Members of Senior Management

Bohlabela District Director, **Ms. Lorraine Goba**

Members of the District Management Team

Circuit Managers

Principals

**Sanibonani**

**Thank you very much for honoring our invitation.**

We are gathered here today to address the challenging results of the 2023 Grade 12 National Senior Certificate Examinations in our district.

While three districts showcased commendable performance and Improvement, the results from **Bohlabela District** fell short of expectations, it declined by 10%.

My view is that we need to concede that what happened is already a thing of the past however we need to draw lessons from what happened and put remedial actions to ensure that next year this time we speak a story of true success.

This means that we must see the 2023 decline as providing opportunities for growth and collective action.

Instead of dwelling solely on the negatives, let us use this moment to ignite a shared passion, unity of purpose for sustainable improvement of results from grade **R to Grade 12 in this District.**

We have invited you to this meeting to urge you to put extra effort and identify areas for improvement, to develop a concrete action plans, and inspire each other to rise to the challenge and rise to the occasion to reclaim the glory of this District.

Remember that this year, our country will celebrate 30 years of a Democratic Dispensation.

This dispensation was founded on the values that are espoused in the Constitution whose Bill of Rights guarantees everyone the right to education.

Equally, we must be mindful that the Freedom we are enjoying today was brought about based on the Principles and Pronouncements of the Freedom Charter which declared that:

***“The doors of Learning and culture shall be open for all.”***

Indeed, the Freedom we enjoy today was bought with the sacrifice of many, and its scars are still felt by many and we must always be alive to that fact at all time in whatever we do or say.

This must be a reminder of the tasks at hand, as well as our responsibilities and obligations.

We have no choice but to deliver quality education, especially for the children of the working class and the poor, whose only hope for survival depends on what each and every one of us here, do on daily basis.

Based on this context, I hope you will agree with me that, underperformance at any level of our responsibilities is a betrayal of their aspirations and our collective struggle.

Therefore, we must agree here and now that we are going to rise to the occasion, united and committed.

We must educate our children, not out of pressure, but out of a deep understanding of the legacy we carry and the future we build.  
**This is the true path to freedom, for all**

## **ACKNOWLEDGING THE CHALLENGES**

It is not secret that the past few years had its fair share of challenges most of which are known by all of us present here.

These challenges include, COVID-19 pandemic disruptions, resource constraints, School Infrastructure Improvement and individual challenges faced by learners and educators, disruption of learning and teaching, break –in of schools, stealing of school property, harassment of teachers and learners, the list goes on and on.

Be that as it may, focusing solely on these external factors will not propel us forward and may not improve the results of children of Bohlabela District.

Instead, we must acknowledge and as we try to address them but **simultaneously** accelerate endeavors aimed at improving the district's performance.

## **IMPACT OF DECLINING RESULTS:**

Programme Director, while we wish to propel everyone to be forward looking.

The truth is, had it been that Bohlabela District maintained its previous results, the Province would have performed at **87% pass rate**.

The results of the country would have been far better and all of us will be walking tall in every corner of the country.

We must be aware that the statistics represent a learner who may not have achieved their full potential, some of which their parents' wishes have been completely shattered

This decline must be seen as translating to missed opportunities, dampened aspirations, and a wider negative impact on the Mpumalanga's Province future and success trajectory.

My view is that the collective understanding, this broader impact can serve, is a powerful motivator for positive change. ***A change that must start now, here.***

### **SHIFTING FROM BLAME GAME TO SOLUTIONS:**

We are fully aware that pointing fingers or assigning blame will serve no purpose. Instead, we must adopt **a solution-oriented approach** where each and everyone plays his or her part, **a business unusual approach.**

To achieve this, we must instill in us open communication, a willingness to share experiences, and a commitment to learning from one another.

Indeed, we must foster a safe space for constructive dialogue, identify root causes and develop effective interventions.

### **CELEBRATING STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS:**

We must also acknowledge that despite the recent decline, there are gains in certain areas which must be appreciated as these possesses an abundance of strengths and achievements.

**For instance**, in this District, in 2023, there are **10 683** learners who passed grade 12, **Seven** out of **14** Circuits performed at 70% and above, there are schools like Hoërskool Lydenburg, Mmasekobe Secondary, Bakutswe Secondary and Halemela Secondary which obtained **100% pass rate and subjects like Xitsonga** is performing at **97.4% pass rate.**

We also want to believe that we are fully aware of the situation in Marite and Manyeleti Circuits which might have contributed in the unexpected performance.

We were in Marite on the day of school re-opening together with the Deputy Minister of Basic Education and we have a clear understanding of the circumstances that are at play in that area.

This is a clear indication that it is not all gloom and doom, we must look at the information at our disposal and build from it.

We must confirm in our collective that Never, and Never again, shall it be that this District will be at the bottom ladder of school performance. Not in our life time.

Let us identify and celebrate the dedicated teachers and non-teaching staff, supportive communities, and learners who have overcome challenges and strived for excellence.

This will mean that we are building from a solid base and we are not starting from a zero base trajectory.

Our view is that recognizing these successes instills confidence, fosters a sense of collective pride, and serves as a springboard for further progress.

## **EMBRACING COLLABORATION AND SHARED GOALS:**

Remember, you are not in this alone, we are a cohesive unit, a district united by a common purpose: providing our learners with the best possible education.

Let us leverage the expertise, experiences and resources across all districts to create a collaborative support system.

Sharing best practices, offering peer coaching, and implementing district-wide initiatives can significantly contribute to collective improvement.

## **DEVELOPING A CONCRETE ACTION PLAN:**

Let us use this meeting to agree on a need of a clear and actionable plan for improvement.

The plans must address identified root causes, outline specific interventions, and assign clear responsibilities with measurable targets and timelines.

There must be regular monitoring and assessments to ensure progress and course correction when needed.

## **PROMOTING A CULTURE OF GROWTH AND INNOVATION:**

We need to foster a culture that embraces continuous learning, experimentation, and innovation.

Encourage teachers to explore new teaching methods, integrate technology effectively, and personalize learning experiences to cater to diverse needs.

Let us empower our learners to take ownership of their education, by instilling love for learning that extends beyond examinations.

## **BUILDING LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY:**

Let us also invest in ongoing professional development for teachers, fill all vacant post based on merit, address resource gaps creatively, and build strategic partnerships with local communities and stakeholders.

We must lay a strong foundation, we can ensure consistent progress and empower future generations to thrive.

## **IN CONCLUSION**

Remember, every journey begins with a single step.

Today, we take that first step towards a brighter future for Bohlabela District and our learners.

Let us move forward with renewed purpose, steadfast collaboration, and an resolute commitment to excellence.

Together, we can change the current narrative, improve the current status que and transform this challenge into an opportunity for remarkable growth and lasting impact.

It is in our hands; we can do it.

Go out there and be the change you want to see,

No One Must be left Behind

**#Babize Bonke**

**# Rhandza Xikolo Xa Wena Campaign.**

Thank you, Ngiyabonga.