

Press Statement delivered by the MEC for Education at the occasion of the unveiling the intervention plans for 2011 on 01 June 2011.

Colleagues

I take this time to appreciate your presence in this press conference.

Tribute to Mama Sisulu

Let me start this Conference by paying special homage to our fallen icon, champion of our struggle, a selfless cadre of the movement.

We indeed mourn her passing on while at the same time cherish that we lived to embrace her commitment to the liberation of our communities.

We once more convey our profound condolences to her Family, the African National Congress and the people of South Africa.

May her soul rest in peace!

Background

At the occasion of the announcement of the 2010 Grade 12 results, I indicated that the intervention programmes implemented in 2010 to improve learner performance needed to be intensified this year.

The Department equally developed the Schooling Transformation and Reform Strategy (STARS) that focuses on:

- Early Childhood Development
- Literacy and Numeracy Improvement
- Grade 12 Improvement
- Mathematics Science ,technology and language and
- Plan to deal with dysfunctional Schools

Today, I am presenting our programmes aimed at enhancing Grade 12 improvement for the 2011 school year and wish to urge our parents and learners in particular to take advantage of them.

48 278 full- time learners and **1 906** part-time candidates have already registered to write the 2011 November/ December Examinations.

The Department intends to assist learners with the provision of the intervention programmes designed as follows:

Dial-a - Tutor

This is one of the progressive initiatives by the Department to assist learners who may struggle to comprehend any subject content while studying at home by linking them with curriculum experts to assist them on the spot.

This programme commenced on **01 June 2011** and is accessible free of charge on both landline and cell phone connections.

About 15 000 learners accessed this programme within three months last year and those who used it found it to be enriching and were able to excel in their studies.

Of significance is that teachers can also use this programme when preparing their lessons. Parents assisting their children with homework can also use this support programme.

Learners, teachers and parents can access the Dial a Tutor Programme by calling the departmental toll free line **0800 203 116** from 18H00 to 20H00 Mondays to Thursdays.

It is imperative to note that when you call this number on a cell phone it becomes a missed call there after a return call from the number **(012) 345 9600** is received so that there is no cost incurred by the caller.

Winter Schools Classes

The winter school programme will commence on **04 to 15 July 2011** in **115 Centres**.

The winter school classes are compulsory for all schools that performed below **30%**.

Principals of these schools will be directed to attend the sessions and to keep the register of all participating learners.

Educators with proven record of outstanding performance have been appointed to teach in these winter school classes

Scholar Transport and Nutrition will be provided to deserving learners attending the winter school programme.

The Department has set aside **R 8 Million** to achieve this endeavour.

Radio Lessons

In collaboration with the SABC, Radio Pulpit and Mpumalanga Community Radio Stations, I am pleased to announce that the Radio lessons are continuing as follows:

Ligwalagwala FM : Mondays, 21H30 to 22H00

: Tuesday, Wednesdays and Fridays; 14H30 to 15H30

Ikwewezi FM: Mondays and Thursdays from 14H30 to 15H00

Mpumalanga Community Radio Stations every Wednesday from 14H00 to 15H00

Radio Pulpit: Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 14H00 to 15H00

Weekend Classes

The Department appreciates the initiative of schools that voluntarily started the Saturday classes and would ensure that this programme is intensified in August/September this year.

Trial Examination

All schools will be expected to write a provincial common trial examination from **12 to 30 September 2011** to ensure that learners are exposed to a fully fledged question paper similar to those that will be written at the end of the year.

This exposure to the trial examinations will help to test learners with regards to their comprehension and readiness of the curriculum covered, speed and give practical experience on how an examination paper is structured.

A draft time table has already been sent to schools to invite comments and suggestions.

Previous Examination Papers and Memoranda

The Department has posted all previous examination papers and memoranda on the Departmental website: www.mpumalanga.gov.za/education.

We urge schools to visit the website and make these exam papers and memos accessible to learners.

Study Guides

Intervention guides based on reports from external examiners and moderators have been dispatched to schools. This will enable teachers to tackle aspects identified as being problematic and challenging to learners.

Parental Support

I take this time to urge all parents to support their children and to give them adequate time and an enabling environment for them to attend school everyday and to study while at home.

I also plead with them to supervise and monitor the school attendance of their children as well as their school work. They are also advised to liaise with their respective schools to assess the performance of their children and to also assist in any intervention programme that may help the child.

Study Tips

It will be imperative for teachers to ensure that learners are adequately advised on study tips and encouraged to apply for both admission to institutions of higher learning as well as bursaries using their half yearly results.

I also urge learners to form study groups and fruitfully utilize every second and minute available to them to study and prepare for the exams. Our learners should know that every mark counts and for every hour of study there should be a few marks in the bag.

I want to appeal to parents to be watchful of their children and be supportive at all times. In cases where learners show signs of fatigue or stress related to their school work or studies, parents are urged to contact the Department at **(013) 766 5844/45** for assistance.

2010 Certificates

I take this time to indicate that the certificates for all deserving learners who passed Grade 12 examinations in 2010 have been issued to schools. Parents and learners are requested to collect them as soon as possible.

Any parent or learner who has an inquiry on any examination related matter should contact our examination helpline desk at **(013)766 0097/0003**.

Bursaries

The Department calls on all Grade 12 learners to get information on the National Student Financial AID Scheme, Fundza Lushaka Bursary Fund, the Mpumalanga Department of Education Bursary and the Mpumalanga Premier Bursary Fund and to apply on time.

Target for 2011

Last year we targeted to improve our Grade 12 results by 10% across the board and we managed to obtain 8.9%, a shortfall of 1.1 %.

In this year's Policy and Budget Speech, I made a commitment to improve the Grade 12 results by 10% so that we could be at 66% as a Province.

This would enable our schools to perform above 70 % by the year 2014.

We believe that the Intervention Programmes will assist us in improving learner performance and ultimately reaching the targets we have set for ourselves.

Conclusion

Over the years, we have been advocating for the collaboration of all education stakeholders to pull together towards educating the nation.

I want to reiterate this call and once more appeal for the co-operation of the people of Mpumalanga: Civil society, business, the media, NGO's, churches, community structures, labour federations, teachers organizations, learner formations, teachers, parents and learners to work hand in hand in advancing the course of educating our children.

Let's make education work for our Province.

Once more, I express the Department's gratitude to all of you for having set aside some of your tasks to attend this Press Conference.

Nginyabonga.