

SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE MEC FOR EDUCATION AT THE LEARNER'S SUMMIT

VENUE : AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
DATE : 17 MARCH 2009

Premier of the Province – Mr. TSP Makwetla

Head of Department – Mr. MR Tywakadi

Members of Senior Management

Leadership of different educators Unions

Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

I take this time to extend my profound appreciation for your presence in this important gathering.

I must say that I was encouraged by the Honorable Premier during our visits to schools on the first week of school re-opening this year that it may be prudent to convene such a gathering.

May be I must extend my special appreciation to the Honorable premier for continuing to make the education enterprise his business, not only in his capacity as the

Premier of the Province, but also as a dedicated and committed citizen of Mpumalanga, ke leboga go menagane!!

Subsequent to those school visits we assembled all principals within the province to provide them space to dialogue with us on issues they think can help to improve the provisioning of quality teaching and learning.

I must say that we were not disappointed, because the principals were frank and clear on what they think should be done to improve the delivery of quality education in the province. We also on the other hand, shared our views on that which must be done to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the system, amongst others, the following were identified:

- Leadership and Management of schools
- Collaboration and co-operation amongst schools to share best practices
- The central role they must play in guiding our learners in academic and social issues

Last week Tuesday, we convened a gathering of learner formations and it become vivid that we should have hosted these meetings a year ago. The communication gab between the department and leaner's structure at that level was not something to marvel. However they were able to share with us their frustrations and limitations and at the end we moved from the same wave length.

All the above was done to inculcate a culture of true ownership of the issues that confronts education today. Our wish is that the same must prevail in this summit.

Had it not been our trust and believe that the lasting solutions to challenges that confronts education today vest in you collective wisdom, we would not have called this summit.

Your patriotic responsibilities are more than before required to embrace the non-negotiable for the enhancement of teaching and learning. These means that educators will:

- Always being prepared for lessons;
- Practice punctuality all times;

- Maintain good communication between teachers and learners, teachers and parents and among teachers themselves;
- Maintaining discipline in the classroom; and
- Provide regular information to parents on their children's progress;

We will have done justice if we can objectively; frank and open take stock of the things that are a hindrance to the attainment of quality education and to make proposals to address those issues.

Of significant we too in the Department must as well own up to the challenges that confront our system and be frank about them. This will enable us to collectively put the required resources and effort to accelerate their resolve.

The saga on the grade 12 results is indeed regrettable and unfortunate. My view is that it could have been avoided. The Council of Education Ministers has receive a report on what caused the delay in releasing some results and we have since forwarded it to the Head of Departments Committee to action its recommendations.

In essence, we must agree that where there were systems failures we must rectify them urgently. Where there were human factors we must hold those personalities to account. Failure to do the above will unfortunately perpetuate the predicament.

There are other noble programmes which we must all be jealous about.

- The implementation of the NO Fee School Policy
- Scholar Transport Programme
- National School Nutrition Programme
- School Infrastructure development Programme
- Capacity building Programmes for Curriculum Implementation
- Schools sport and 2010 programmes
- The list is endless

Should these programmes fail, our endeavour to open the doors of education and culture and to change the lives of our people for the better would diminish. It is for this reason that we must guard against any thing that can be a hindrance in the attainment of what I have mentioned above.

What remains prudent is that the resolutions of this summit where possible should form the basis of the strategic plan of the department.

All this is done in the spirit of making education everybody's business and to get everybody to dialogue about the shape and the form that this enterprise must take.

The objectives of this summit are clear and they require us:

- To identify and propose plans to do away with factors that lead to mediocre performance of schools.
- To take stock of challenges brought about by the implementation of National Curriculum Statement.
- To comprehend educator challenges in the implementation of the Curriculum.
- To identify factors that lead to perpetual ineffective school administration, leadership and management.
- To propose strategies to enhance effective delivery of quality education in the classroom.
- To develop support Programmes to instill discipline, dedication and commitment of learners.

- To do a focused analysis of the Exams processes (i.e. systems and administration) to ensure efficiency in the administration of Exams.

Our understanding has always been that the provisioning of quality education is an essential condition for consolidating democracy and to achieve the pronouncement of the Freedom Charter.

The constitution of this country mandates us that we must help to improve the quality of life of all citizens and to free the potential of each person.

My view is that it is in meetings of this nature that we will be able to build a united and democratic South Africa that will be able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations by embracing quality learning and teaching.

Each one Teach one, should not be just a slogan. We must live it and that notion must always be in our blood stream.

We have invited the Honorable Premier to make an input in this summit; we are indeed privileged to have him with us.

Please make it your business that you behave in a manner that will help us achieve the objectives mentioned above. Please feel free to make your inputs inline with the protocols of managing such a gathering.

You are all welcomed to this summit!!