

**REMARKS TO BE PRESENTED BY THE MEC FOR EDUCATION,
MRS. REGINAH MHAULE AT THE STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING
ON 02 JULY 2009**

I wish to extend my appreciation for the profound manner in which I was ushered in by management and staff in the department, including the regions.

I was overwhelmed by the level of enthusiasm, courage and frankness in the way things are in the department.

In the process, I had an opportunity to engage with educator unions and I must say that I was encouraged by their comprehension of issues that can take the department forward and those that are a hindrance

I must say that there is huge interest from the public, structures, organized labour and political formations to see the department going forward.

At the same time, some quarters are becoming impatient with what we will call levels of incompetencies in managing certain key programmes of the Department.

What is encouraging is that we know the bottle necks and all matters that are troubling the good image of the Department.

My view is that we know what should be done to free the Department from all identified limitations.

Re-commitment

In this regard, I don't think that I must over emphasize the issue of commitment and enhanced accountability. We need as a system to identify issues which are making it difficult for us to work as a unit and rectify them. In this process you will need to be brutally frank, honest and objective. You will always be required to play the ball not the man.

We must spend some time to free ourselves from whatever is causing divisions, duplication and dis-integrated way of doing things.

My view is that if this can be done with the intended purpose a lot can be achieved by the Department.

Team Work

I also observed with disbelief that there was no conscious endeavour by management to ensure you remain united that at all cost. I am not at liberty to list examples because your have a long list. I also know that you understand the implications of not adhering to this rule of team work.

What is troubling me is that those who bear the brunt of your lack of unity are the educators, learners ,parents, service providers and not yourselves.

In my view, thriving in a sea that lacks unity symbolizes selfishness, lack of patriotism and the absence of Ubuntu.

I say this because you know that if you can be united in a true sense of the word a lot can be achieved by the department.

As we meet today, my plea will be for us to denounce all that seeks to divide us, and embrace everything that can make us a formidable force to be reckoned with.

This must inculcate a culture of respect, trust, and implementation of Batho Pele Principles.

Accountability

We must try to be accountable in everything that we do. We must denounce a culture of not providing reliable feedback, of not reporting on the work that we do, of disappearing without account and that of continuous absence from work.

We must be experts in our areas of influence and we must understand that lack of creativity by one has far reaching implications on others to execute their tasks.

We must be all worried when a colleague does not play his or her part and must work tirelessly to address that. In the spirit of each one teach one, we must learn to learn from each other.

Gossiping must be a thing of the past and we must be frank with each other in a respectable fashion.

Those who used to play hide and seek should refrain from doing that because we need each other more than before.

Stakeholder Management

It is not accepted that every stakeholder that we do business with complain about one thing or another.

There must be majorities that speak good about our service delivery record. We must know in a clearly defined manner as to who are our stakeholders, what do they benefit from us, how we benefit from them and what matters are of mutual interest to us.

We must inculcate a culture of unrelenting endeavour until we have resolved matters that may negatively affect service providers and stakeholders.

We must develop clear service standards that we must all implement to ensure that we can be meticulous in the manner in which we deliver services. The principles of Batho Pele are key in this regard.

Communication

The way we communicate with the line function leaves much to be desired. Most people I spoke to are disgruntled by the manner in which we engage them.

Programmes from the same office(Head Office) are clashing, there is a lot of duplication and are not complementing each other.

Internal

I have learned that the media houses have more reports about the activities of the Department than we do. The question is why?

Does this mean that our staff have no means to engage us? Is our response rate only effective if matters are publicized by the media?

Is this a culture that we can sustain? If not, has it become a problem of Senior Management that there are such disturbing trends.

The extent to which we engage our staff cannot be over-emphasized. We must ensure that all staff are properly engaged so that they do not see the media as their only recourse.

Staff meetings must be coordinated, meetings with unions must be compulsory and all efforts must be made to ensure that staff grievances are addressed on time and amicably.

External

The same must be said with regard to the manner in which we manage communication with our external stakeholders.

A clear programme for enhancing stakeholder information dissemination must be in place and implemented. We cannot be found wanting in this regard.

It is this time that we must be more wary of anything that may impact negatively on our corporate image. We must go an extra mile to help clients, structures, organizations and all those who require efficient service from the department.

Core business

While we do all of the above we must forever remain mindful of our core business. Curriculum Implementation is core

business. It is an area where we need to excel, be more aggressive and meticulous.

We may fail on a number of things but we dare not fail on curriculum delivery. All of us must understand that while there are other areas of delivery, they should not impact negatively on curriculum delivery.

Our interaction and agenda must clearly reflect this. It must be impossible for a meeting to be held and concluded without curriculum delivery being on the agenda.

Educators are our enabling human resource to achieve this goal. We must make it our business to ensure that their morale and motivation remains high.

Same with our learners, we need to have in place, systems to ensure learners cognitive acquisition remains high. Learners must be supported to achieve maximum benefit the school tuition programme.

We must encourage our schools to be in a position to choose curriculum framework that can respond to economic needs of the province as they are articulated in the Provincial Growth and Development Programme (PGDS)

Next year, the whole world will be focusing on South Africa for the 2010 Soccer World Cup. How will our curriculum delivery help to ensure that we build the excitement or use soccer to improve teaching and learning?

Whole School Evaluation Reports must occupy a centre stage in our quest to improve conditions for teaching and learning.

Implications of EXCO

The Executive Council has taken key decisions on education for this financial year:

1. Involves integration of scholar transport to the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport,
2. Improving management infrastructure development in collaboration with the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport
3. Improving the management of our finances and
4. reconfiguration of the Head Office Organogram.

These are but few a matters that will require our immediate attention.

Public perception

We must as a collective, document issues that continue to put us in a bad light and at the same time put a practical programme to address them.

The following immediately come to mind:

- the management of public examination,
- scholar Transport,
- Auditors report,
- infrastructure development and so on.

We must be in a position to profile all that we excel in. I tried to list a few but I thought you will be best placed to fill me in. These must include the high impact programmes for the year 2010 to 2014.

Priorities for the next five years

What will encourage me is that we must spend more time and focus all our energies by clearly articulating the priorities for the next five years.

This must happen in a way that will ensure that everybody is left with a vivid comprehension of what the government, the ruling party and the department intends to achieve in the next five years.

The ANC Manifesto, as well as the January 8 Statement, have clearly explained the priorities. Because the people of this country gave the ANC an overwhelming mandate on the 22 April this year, it means they were satisfied with the priorities that are reflected in those documents. Ours now is to implement and nothing else.

We must also ensure that resources are properly channeled to achieve the goals we have set ourselves.

Vision and Mission

Because we are setting the tone for the next five years, we must also use this time to review our vision and mission, of course informed by our priorities.

I am aware that crafting a clear mission statement and vision statement, you can powerfully communicate your intentions and motivate your team or organization to realize an attractive and inspiring common future.

It is said that in creating a mission statement the following must be considered.

1. First identify your organization's "winning idea".

This is the idea or approach that will make your organization stand out from its competitors, and is the reason that customers will come to you and not your competitors.

2. Next identify the key measures of your success. Make sure you choose the most important measures (and not too many of them!)
3. Combine your winning idea and success measures into a tangible and measurable goal.
4. Refine the words until you have a concise and precise statement of your mission, which expresses your ideas, measures and desired result.

Once you've created your mission statement, move on to create your vision statement:

1. First identify your organization's mission. Then uncover the real, human value in that mission.
2. Next, identify what you, your customers and other stakeholders will value most about how your organization will achieve this mission. Distil these into the values that your organization has or should have.
3. Combine your mission and values, and polish the words until you have a vision statement inspiring enough to energize and motivate people inside and outside your organization.

I want to conclude by extending words of wisdom from Marko Saravanja

He says:

“Your ability to learn faster than your competitors will be your advantage.

But knowledge without action is worthless.

Your ability to translate your learning into action and master the forces of change will be your competitive advantage. But action and knowledge without ethics is dangerous.

Your ability to base your actions on foundations of strong values, ethics and morals will be your ultimate competitive advantage.

Liberate yourself and embrace learning as a life long process.” close quote.

I take this time to officially declare the 2009 strategic planning session officially opened.

Thank You