

Speech delivered by MEC, Mrs Reginah Mhaule at the occasion of awards ceremony held at Suikerland Secondary School on the 10th March 2011

Programme Directors: Mr. A Hove & Mrs SF Mokoena
Executive Mayor of Nkomazi Municipality: Cllr MJ Mavuso
Circuit Patron: Mr. Johan Sibiya
SGB Chairperson: Mr. RKA Hutchinson
MD TSB-Malelane: Mr. John Du Plessis
School Patron: Mr. SM Somo
Principal of the School: Mr. PAS Nair
Regional Director: Mr. MJ Lushaba
Circuit Manager: Mrs XM Ntuli
Departmental Officials present
Representative Council of Learners
Parents
Educators
Dear Learners
Ladies and Gentlemen

I greet you all.

I feel privileged and it is indeed a humbling experience to be with you here celebrating outstanding achievements. The geographic location as well as the socio economic background of the public that this school serves makes this school so special in the hearts and minds of our people.

Suikerland School is a beacon of light that shines for the communities of Malelane and the surrounding areas. The service that you provide is highly appreciated and we want to tell you to keep on keeping on, don't look back the sky is the limit for you.

In his State of the Nation Address, President Zuma said, “The focus in basic education this year is Triple T: Teachers, Textbooks and Time. We reiterate our call that teachers must be at school, in class, on time, teaching for at least seven hours a day.”

I don't want to preach to the converted as I know that the Triple T is applicable in Suikerland. However, this is a call that we must make as education is top of the priority of government and we have to ensure that we don't fail our learners and let our people down by lowering quality standards and permitting mediocrity.

In 2007 and 2008, you obtained a 100% pass rate and in the other years from 2006 onwards you have not gone below 97%. This is an outstanding achievement and it should be appreciated although we would have loved you to obtain a 100%. I am really convinced that Suikerland is up to the 100% challenge and this is our expectation for the 2011 grade 12 class.

On this note, I want to thank the teaching and non teaching staff of Suikerland, parents and learners for working together and making a success of the education experience in this school.

I also want to reassure you that as government, we made an undertaking and a commitment to deliver on quality education. This can be better translated as a commitment to support schools with regards to educational programmes and in the facilitation of effective teaching and learning.

The National Department of Basic Education, (DBE) has put aside a conditional grant of about R6, 5 million for all Dinaledi schools for a period of three years starting this year in 2011. Suikerland is one of those schools that stand to benefit.

This is to assist these schools to address challenges hampering the delivery of quality teaching and learning of Maths & Science i.e.

- Up to 7 Textbooks for each learner in Grades 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 learners as is required to address shortages
- Mobile Science laboratories to 300 Dinaledi schools without labs and science kits to 500 Dinaledi Schools
- Mathematics kits for 500 Dinaledi schools
- 300 ICT laboratories in Dinaledi schools without ICT Labs
- Televisions that can receive education TV Broadcasts and solutions installed in 500 Dinaledi schools
- 50 computers in each of the 500 schools
- Mathematics, Physical Science and English FAL teaching and learning software at 500 Dinaledi Schools
- 2000 teachers trained on content knowledge in mathematics , physical science and English FAL
- Distribution to 500 Dinaledi schools of a diagnostic tool to assess, measure and address learning and teaching deficiencies in mathematics, physical science and English FAL
- Capacity development of principals in 90 Dinaledi schools achieving below 60% pass rate in the NSC examinations
- Grade 8, 9 and 10 learners in 500 Dinaledi schools trained and supported to participate in mathematics and science Olympiads

To remain a Dinaledi School you will have to work hard and meet the minimum requirements as other schools may be considered for inclusion if the current schools do not meet performance standards.

I have received complaints from school principals that some of the schools that were declared no fee schools have been erroneously reclassified fee paying schools, I am aware that Suikerland has also been re-classified as a fee paying school, the matter is being attend to and by the first of April 2011 it shall have been corrected. So that all learners can have access to quality education.

The Mpumalanga Department of Education has signed an agreement with our FET colleges and MRTT to collect all broken school chairs and tables, rehabilitate them (the furniture) and distribute to needy schools. Let us all support these initiatives and ensure that our learners benefit.

In conclusion, Program Directors, I want to say to the class of 2010, you are all PLATINUMS in my heart. To those of you who are going to walk away with awards after this august event, I wish to commend you and encourage you to carry on doing the good work and put Mpumalanga on the map.

And to those of you who have left the Province to pursue your tertiary educational qualifications, as a Department we wish you well. Let me also hasten to say we are proud of you. A word of wisdom would be for you not to lose sight but focus on your studies to graduate on time and cum laude. By virtue of being part of this function and your proven track record, we are very assured that you can reach your goals at tertiary level and make Mpumalanga even more proud.

The Department is also in the process of encouraging learners to take up teaching as a career of choice. Bursaries are available to finance these studies

nation wide as the Fundza Lushaka Scheme is available in every university campus.

To the class of 2011 do not drop the bar of excellence because by so doing you will not only be disappointing your parents but your fellow learners who have put your school on the list of achievers, your teachers, your Circuit, the Region, the Province and the country as a whole.

Once again I urge all parents, to support the class of 2011, SGB members to come up with programmes that will support and help the school to achieve its school development plan, the business community and all stakeholders to play your supportive role. This will make our maxim of “Together Teaching the Nation”, a reality.

I thank you.