

**Speech by the MEC for Education, Mrs Reginah Mhaule at the occasion of the official hand over of Lamile Primary School on 18 March 2011**

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Programme Director, Mrs Nokuthula Mthethwa

Executive Mayor of Govan Mbeki Municipality represented by Cllr Nkambule

Head of Department, Mrs Mahlasedi Mhlabane

Deputy Director General, Mrs Lucy Moyane

Members of Senior Management

Representatives from IDT ( implementing agent)

Representatives from Sasol

Principal of Lamile Primary School, Mrs Nana Johanna Vilakazi

Chairperson of the School Governing Body, Mr Joseph Mtshweni

Principals from surrounding schools

Municipal Councillors

Circuit Managers

Community Development Workers

Representatives of National Association of School Governing Bodies

Representatives of the Council of Learners

Representatives of SADTU

Representatives of NEHAWU

Representatives of Independent Unions

Members of the none teaching staff

Retired Principals and Teachers

Educators

Parents

Learners

Sesifikile Youth Structure

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon

I proudly stand before you to witness yet another magnificent school infrastructure built, completed and to be given the opportunity to officiate in its handover process. This is public service delivery at its best.

I am excited that my comrade from the Municipality has joined to partake side by side with us on this official hand over occasion. A clear indication that all spheres of government work co-operatively with one another.

Thank you, very much Cllr Nkambule and the Govan Mbeki Municipality for gracing this event and for the good hospitality that we have received in this Municipality. We really appreciate it.

Today we are here to prove to communities that indeed Government does fulfil its promises, of being a caring government to communities and bringing government to the people.

I want to assure you that this event is not just for the benefit of Lamile school community but for the whole Province. To communities far and near this hand over occasion should bring hope that even their own needs will be taken care of in a sustainable service delivery trend.

As Mpumalanga Provincial Government, over the last few years, the rate of infrastructure delivery has been accelerated. On the 26th February 2011, I was handing over a very beautiful school in a deep rural area known as Magudu, near the Mozambique and Swaziland border in Enhlanzeni District.

Today, I am pleased to be in Bethal, at Emzinoni to officially hand over this magnificent, beautiful school which you deserve. In April 2011, as a department we will officially be handing over the Matafin Schools namely Cyril Clarke Secondary and John Mdluli Primary which are full service schools. These schools are part of the 2010 Soccer World Cup legacy in that small farming community.

The Mpumalanga Department of Education is also constructing a boarding school in Twyfel Hoek in Witbank Farm. This is an endeavour to ensure that children in farm communities or in poverty stricken communities also receive quality education. This is a promise we will deliver on.

This boarding school will mitigate challenges of scholar transport provision and will help in ensuring that our quest to instil human dignity to our learners is not compromised.

In addition, the Department is fixing **133** Mud Schools, **7** Unconventional Schools, **98** Conventional schools, **19** Grade R Centres, **6** Special Schools ,**37** Damaged Schools , **65** schools for Maintenance.

We are collaborating with the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport to ensure that these are attainable. The same applies here in Lamlile where we are collaborating with the Independent Development Trust (IDT). We really appreciate the commitment and technical expertise from the IDT. We thank you very much.

The challenge is that we need to inculcate a culture of ownership and people's pride in the infrastructure that is meant to benefit them.

School Governing Bodies, parents and learners must make it their responsibility and obligation to make sure that these schools remain safe and protected from any form of vandalism.

To you current learners you should make sure that the furniture is neat all the time and always good to be used by any other learner in future.

In this way government will be able to focus its attention to other communities that are equally waiting for such services.

It cannot be that it must be an MEC or government official who should fix three windows that are broken in each school. One door cannot take five years to be fixed when every year money for school maintenance is dispatched to schools.

We have recently launched the Rhandza Xikolo Xa Wena (Love your school) campaign to conscientise communities in this province to embrace their schools by volunteering to paint them, plant trees, vegetables and flower gardens and rehabilitate broken furniture.

Please take care of this school as if you are taking care of your own houses. Let this place be exceptionally clean all the time.

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.

We urge all our educators to heed to the call that says be in class on time. As a department we are determined to make sure that every learner has a textbook an educator and is in class when they should be. Quality teaching and learner can no longer be compromised.

Our learners must accept that the main reason for being at school is to learn and develop academically, socially and culturally; adhere to school rules and respect the legitimacy and authority of teachers.

Learners must participate in Learner Representative Councils (LRCs) and show respect to other learners and not to discriminate against others; avoid anti-social behaviour like theft, vandalism, assault, sexual harassment, alcohol and drug abuse as well as other activities that disrupt the learning process. Time is of essence, use it wisely

Parents must involve themselves actively in school governance structures; have regular discussions with children about general school matters; and cultivate a healthy, open and cooperative relationship with their children's teachers.

Parents, we urge you to create a home environment conducive to study and assist in the protection of educational resources such as textbooks, chairs, tables and others.

Once more, I want to express my joy that finally we have been able to gather and celebrate this achievement. This must equally auger well for other communities that at the end of the day government will deliver on its promises.

Our appeal is that the community of Emzinoni should ensure that teaching and learning programmes are given the utmost priority and take good care of this facility to allow generations and generations to the reap the benefits of this infrastructure development initiative.

I visited a school that is 43 years old and still looks like it will go on for the next 50 years.

I want to thank all of you who played a part in making this event a success.

We are heading for a long week end, culminating to the Human Rights Day on Monday 21 March. Please enjoy it and don't drink and drive.

Thank you.