

**Keynote address to be delivered by the MEC for Education, Mrs. Reginah Mhaule
at the occasion of the announcement of the 2009 Grade 12 results
at Hoërskool Nelspruit on 07 January 2010**

Programme Director

Members of the Executive Council

Head of Department, Mrs. Mahlasedi Mhlabane

Members of Senior Management

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Education and Culture Sport and Recreation, Mrs. Nomsa Mtsweni

Learners and Parents

Dr Luis Swanepoel, Principal of the hosting school

Principals

Media

Departmental Officials

Union Representatives

Members of the Examination Board

Education Management Development Trust

Association of School Governing Bodies

Learner Formations

Political Structures

Ladies and Gentleman

I have all the courage to stand before you today because the results I am about to announce have been declared credible by Umalusi, a custodian for quality assurance on matters relating to the management and conduct of these examinations. In a statement issued by Professor .John Volminik yesterday said

“Umalusi’s Assessment Standards Committee, a committee of Umalusi Council, has made a detailed analysis of the data on an examination centre basis and found no evidence of systemic deviations that would suggest widespread compromise of the integrity of the examination process in Mpumalanga. Umalusi Council therefore approves the release of the results of Mpumalanga.

I therefore today release these results in the Province with pride in the knowledge that these results were scrutinized in detail and found to be authentic and credible.

These results are a reflection of what needs to be done to improve our ways of doing things. They call for more dedication, hard work and commitment from all education stakeholders.

The Department remains obliged to do everything possible to improve the provisioning of quality education in this province for the benefit of all as stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

In this regard, we committee to do every effort will be made to accelerate excellence in the delivery of quality education in Mpumalanga. We will continue to:

- ensure that all schools receive the necessary resources in time for teaching to commence without hassles;
- ensure that all schools have their full staff allocation, and that vacancies are filled without delay;
- improve our knowledge and skills base to be more effective;
- always be available to assist schools, principals and teachers;
- respond to requests and concerns of education stakeholders;
- visit all schools within the regions on a regular basis;
- monitor teacher and student attendance,
- ensure that no child is out of school missing out on the opportunity to learn and

- assist all schools to improve their performance, ensuring that regular tests are conducted and results are reported to parents.

Efforts by our stakeholders of creating an enabling environment for teaching and learning to reign supreme in our schools, are indeed highly appreciated and do not go unnoticed.

Working together, we must make it our collective responsibility to leverage our education system to respond to the needs of our society, business and economic growth and development.

The quest to accelerate excellence in education delivery remains our fundamental framework and has to be embraced by all who live in this province, thus making education a societal phenomenon.

I am aware that you are all anxious to get the details on how the class of 2009 performed.

A total of **60 000** candidates enrolled and only a total of ----- wrote the final examination.

Of the total number of candidates who sat for this examination:

- ----- passed.
- ----- Learners qualify to further their studies in any bachelors degree.
- -----Learners qualify to study any diploma course.
- -----qualify to enroll in any certificate course.

The numbers of distinctions are ----- this year with -----learners obtaining distinctions, broken down as follows:

Females : -----
Males : -----

The overall pass rate is standing at 47.9 percent compared to the **51,8** percent that was achieved last year.

This provides a 3.9% decline from the results obtained in 2008.

It is not my wish to make unscientific findings on what caused this unacceptable decline. However I can at a glance state that the unrest that took place in most communities may have had an impact in this regard. The public mood following the recession can be a factor but these are indeed not conclusive.

What must happen is an urgent analysis's of the results looking at the trends and details of performance per subject, region, circuit and school. Going forward I will convene an urgent meeting with stakeholders to present the analysis and together we will developed focused intervention programme.

There is some form of foundation which we will base our approach on, the Quality Learning and teaching document that was drafted and adopted by all stakeholders in education is but one vehicle towards

The number of distinctions obtained by the Province in key big enrolment subjects is something worth mentioning:

Subject	2008 Performance	2009 Performance
Accounting		
Mathematics		
Business studies		
Accounting		
Physical Science		
Geography		
Life Science		

One learner from a previously disadvantaged school got a total of 300 in Mathematics.

The Provincial performance in these key gateway subjects was equally heartening against national pass average:

Subject	2008% Province	National	2009% Province	National
Agricultural Science	47.22%	11%		
Mathematics	40.21%	17%		
Mathematical Literacy	65%	76%		
Accounting	48.14%	16%		
Physical Science	47.92%	20%		
Business Studies	97.19%	98%		
Geography	61.19%	56%		
History				
English				

It is the second time that the Department announces the results of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). There are trends that are beginning to emerge and they provide room for focused intervention.

For instance, we have noticed that -----

This calls on all of us to collectively denounce the lack of professionalism, mediocrity and helplessness within our system. We must embrace high levels of pro-activeness, responsiveness, time on tasks and true patriotic approach in the way we perform our responsibilities and duties.

We need to deal decisively with chronic under-performance in schools. If it takes removing a teacher, principal, circuit manager or any official who plays a major role in the under-performance, let us do that.

Since the phasing-in of the new curriculum, teachers have gone through a lot of training and development offered by the Department and through their own initiatives. By now, teachers should be familiar with the methodology, content and assessment related to the new curriculum. In addition, the Minister has stream-lined the implementation and reduced the workload in 2010 by cutting down on the number of projects per subject and portfolio requirements.

There is therefore no excuse for under-performance. No amount of resourcing can substitute time on tasks and good teaching.

I must say, Programme Director, that the delays in releasing the 2008 Grade 12 results were a serious setback for the Department.

As if that was not enough, the leakage of question papers before the commencement of the 2009 examinations affected us badly.

This happened after we thought that we had done everything in our power to protect the integrity of the examinations. That development took us backwards and heavily dented our endeavour to improve our corporate image.

What is disturbing is a situation where a learner can risk and compromise 12 years of hard work. The learners who were involved in this saga stand to be prohibited from writing our examinations for the next five years if found guilty.

It is even more disturbing when educators who may be dismissed from the system and struck off the roll by the South African Council of Educators are involved in such offences.

I must commend the South African Police Services for their co-operation and the swiftness in which they acted on this matter.

I want to assure the public that I will not rest until all those who were directly or indirectly involved in this development are brought to book. We will continue to spend sleepless nights to get to the bottom of this matter.

The unfortunate incident of the paper leakages required that Umalusi must do every investigation possible within their limit to verify if the leakages did not contaminate the credibility of the results.