

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS TO BE DELIVERED BY THE MEC FOR EDUCATION,
MRS. REGINAH MHAULE AT THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURATION OF
FATHER SMANGALISO MKHATSHWA AS A PATRON FOR
DRIEKOPPIES COMBINED SCHOOL
ON 13 MARCH 2010.**

Programme Director
Our Honourable Guest, Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa
Cllr MJ Mavuso
Chairperson of the School Governing Body, Dr Mafika Lubisi
Members of Senior Management
Ehlanzeni Regional Director: Mr MJ Lushaba
Principal: Mr AV Ngwenya
Circuit Managers
Members of the School Governing Bodies
Representatives of Council of Learners
Representatives from Teacher Unions
Educators
Learners
Members from the media
Matsamo Traditional Dancers

Ngibonga kakhulu ukuthola lelithuba lokuthi ngibe yingxenywe yalombungazo omuhle kangaka wokuhlonipha nokugcoba ngokwendlela ubaba uSimangaliso Mkhathshwa ukuthi abe ngomunye ophakamisa iflag lakulendawo e Driekoppies, kulesifunda saseHlanzeni.

Sizizwa sibusiseke kakhulu ukuthi uBabawethu esimthandayo kangaka akubone kungekona ukukukhathaza ukuthi ube yilunga elizokwenza okusemandleni ukuthi izinga lokufunda nokufundisa kulesisigodi lithuthuke. Siyazithoba kakhulu ngalesisenzo.

Angikusho ukuthi angimangalanga mangithola isimemo ngoba ngazi kahle, futhi kusemandweni walelilizwe ukuthi ubaba uMkhathshwa wanikela impilo yakhe yonke ekwenzeni ukuthi izimpilo zabantu bakulelilizwe zibe ngcono.

Ubaba uMkhatshwa ungomunye walabo abangazange bakuthokozele ubusha babo ngoba babelwa nokuhlukumezwa kwabantu obekwenziwa yilombuso wobandlululo.

Father Mkhatshwa's credentials will forever be endeared in our minds and hearts since he devoted most of his life to the emancipation of men and women of this country. We are humbled and inspired that besides all his engagements to build this nation, reconcile and make South Africa a better country to live in; he still finds it befitting to avail his resourcefulness to the community of Driekoppies Combined School.

Father Mkhatshwa, you remain our shining star because you make us feel proud to be South Africans and to be blessed as we are associated with men of your calibre.

You have always embraced an abundance of motivation and the spirit of love and goodwill in your quest for the improvement of the well-being of others. Your selflessness, benevolence, generosity and compassion go a long way and we will forever be proud that there lived a son of the soil who became a shoulder to lean on at a time of need.

You are a colossal giant who enables all of us to have a clear vision of what the future has in store for all South Africans, only if we work together for the common good of others.

Let me remind the House that, Father Mkhatshwa is not new to the education field; he has played and continues to play a pivotal role in improving conditions for teaching and learning.

Our education system is currently bedeviled with unacceptable outcomes regardless of the resources that Government invests.

This phenomenon is a thorn in the flesh not only for Government but for the people of the province in particular and the country in general.

It is in this context, that we welcome gurus and patriots of your caliber to help us find sustainable solutions to this unfortunate development.

Our province has the potential and the ability to succeed; it does not belong to the bottom lab of performance.

Your presence is a clear indication that we must collectively denounce underperformance, mediocrity and lawlessness in our institutions.

Sisonke kuzofuneka, sisingathe amahlelo ahlose ukuthuthukisa imfundo yethu ngokukhulu ukuzikhandla nokuzimisela okungakaze kubonwe.

Imfundo yethu izothuthuka uma sibambhene sikhuluma ngezwi elilodwa ukuthi izikole zethu kufanele zibe yizizinda zokuthuthukisa imiphakathi yethu.

Yingakho kufanele sikhathazeke uma kubakhona abantu abakwenza kuba wumkhuba ukuthikameza amathuba okufunda nokufundisa.

Ngiyacela emiphakathini yonkana ukuthi ifake izandla uma kuba nemikhankaso ezindaweni ehlala kuzo ehlose ukunceda ukuthuthukiswa kwemfundo nezinsiza.

Leyo mikhankaso mayinga thikamezi izikole. Uma bezodingeka othisha kulemikhankaso, sicela ngokukhulu okuzithoba ukuthi yenzeke umasekhuphume izikole noma ngempela sonto.

We are saying this because a loss of a minute, hour or a day in the delivery of education is too much to bear for our quest to improve learner performance.

We must all work harder than before to inculcate a culture of vigilance and over protectiveness about education. We must be able to speak with one voice that we will do every thing in our power and ability to fight against anything that is disruptive to teaching and learning.

Late coming by educators and learners, absenteeism, bunking of classes, truancy and lawlessness in our schools are things that belong to the archives. These are the evils that we must all condemn with the strongest possible terms.

Father Mkhathshwa, we are grateful that Driekoppies Combined School was able to bestow you with the honour of being their patron. I must say that I lack profound words to express my joy and appreciation of this inauguration.

You have been a father to all the South African loving people and a source of hope to all who envy democracy, human rights and patriotism.

We will not disappoint you, but will avail ourselves to ensure that together we send practical messages to the people of this province that the time to dedicate our efforts, time and energy for the improvement of education in this province is now and it requires all of us.

Thank you very much for accepting our invitation to be the shining light of this school.

We thank you because I know that side by side with other patriots, we can turn the tide around.

I am overwhelmed by your humbleness and sense of duty and we promise that we will reciprocate the gesture.

I know that had it not been the visionary leadership of Driekoppies Combined School this development will not have taken place. I am proud in that beside the problems that we face, there are still men and women like you who are committed to the education course.

I wish you the best of luck in whatever you do at this school and in the communities that you serve.

Ngibonga kakhulu ukuthi nihloniphe ubaba wethu esimthanda kangaka, ningadinwa nangomuso.

Thank you.