

# **SPEAKING NOTES BY THE MEC FOR EDUCATION AT THE OCCASION OF THE CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS ON 09 OCTOBER 2010**

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## **Acknowledgements**

Fraternal Greetings to the Leadership of the Congress of South African Students

Appreciate the invitation extended to the Office of the MEC and to the African National Congress.

Appreciate the following:

- Active involvement of COSAS in matters aimed at improving Education Delivery in the Province
- Process aimed at ensuring that School Governing Structures perform their mandates
- That the Provincial Leadership of COSAS is able to engage the Department in a non-hostile manner.
- Special emphasis on the role COSAS played to ensure education stability in Bushbuckridge and in ensuring that the Preliminary Examinations progressed without fail.
- Overall, is the fact that the province has relative stability for effective teaching and learning to take place.

## **The state of education in the Country**

- Remind the Congress that there is only one system of education in this Country
- The current content of teaching is called the National Curriculum Statement
- The National Curriculum Statement is a fundamental shift from the fragmented Apartheid Order of teaching.
- It intends to produce active participants in the economic growth and development of the Country.
- This curriculum had to be tried and tested given that every curriculum is not stagnant.
- Every effort was put in place to ensure that it is adapted to suite the teaching realities of the country.
- The current version is designed such that it will be easy for teachers to teach it and this bold step by the minister must be welcomed.

## **Observations**

Currently, the education state of affairs is judged by the outcome of the Grade 12 results. This is an anomaly and there has to be a conscious effort to correct this.

If this is not done all resources will be channeled to the Grade 12 Class at the expense of the Foundation Phase

The Department has started to take particular interest in what is taking place in all grades.

It is in this context that assessment tests are now done for the Grades 3,6 and 9. This will improve our school performance in a sustainable manner.

## **Education Delivery in Mpumalanga**

The Province had its fair of challenges that include the following:

- School Infrastructural Challenges
- Shortage of Maths and Science educators
- Learner drop out rate
- Poor results especially in Bohlabela District
- Bloated organogram at Head Office
- Poor management of Grade 12 Examinations
- Capacity to manage finances and resources to list but a few.

### **Plans to address these:**

- All unsafe schools are going to be eradicated this year
- The issue of the shortage of teachers in scarce subjects to teach in rural schools is being attended and one of the ways to address it is through the payment of teacher incentives.
- COSAS must help in ensuring that all learners who are in school going age and in schools and learning.
- The Department has developed an intensive Schools Catch Up Programme to remedy underperformance of learners in the Province
- There is a special programme of all Members of the Executive Council to free Bohlabela Region from underperformance and instability
- The Department is implementing systems to manage the resources of Government including finances and there are already signs of improvement.
- The Department has already stated to implement a programme for re-establishing the Examination Unit

### **Expectation from COSAS**

- Help to send a message that education is a fundamental pillar for a better life
- Schools must be protected since they are the only centres for community development. Vandalism and theft of school property must be condemned and be reported to the law enforcement agencies
- Drug trafficking and lawlessness in our schools must be dealt with harshly
- Bullying of girls and boys should be totally eradicated from our schools

- The implementation of the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign should be accelerated
- Parents must be encouraged to be meaningfully involved in our school matters
- Disabled children must be identified and be compelled to attend school
- Respect for teachers must be rekindled as a matter of urgency by our communities
- Participation in school governing structures must be encouraged
- Participate in programmes aimed at improving learner performance

### **Message to the class of 2010**

The Department of Education extends its best wishes to all learners who will participate in the final examinations this year. It is our conviction that you will do well given the amount of effort that the Department and stakeholders have made to create an enabling environment for the enhancement of your performance.

A special message goes to the 55 842 full time Grade 12 learners who must conduct themselves in a befitting manner so that the Province can reclaim its good image. Continue to burn the midnight oil and study hard to achieve outstanding pass rates.

Government's intention is to see all of you achieve the highest pass levels so that in turn you participate actively in the growth and development of our Country and Province in particular.

The events which unfolded this year must add courage in your quest to excel in these examinations. We remain optimistic that you have what it takes to make the grade.

The Department takes this time to thank all those who took advantage of the programmes set aside to assist learners in their studies. These programmes included the Winter Schools, Radio Lessons, Newspaper Study Materials, Dial-a-Tutor Programme, Saturday Classes, Spring Classes and participation in Learning Centres.

We must not forget to extend our profound appreciation to all role players who played a pivotal role in ensuring that these programmes are a success. Let us continue to support the Class of 2010.

The Mpumalanga Department of Education will appreciate that the integrity and credibility, assessment procedures, processes and systems progress in a manner that we can all be proud of.

Once more, I take this time to wish you the best in your examinations.

**MRS REGINAH MHAULE  
MEC FOR EDUCATION**

