

**SPEECH TO BE DELIVERED BY MS DD MASHEGO,
CHIEF DIRECTOR, SYSTEMS & PLANNING AT AN
ACADEMIC AWARDS FUNCTION ON 21 FEBRUARY
2004 AT EC MANGO COLLEGE - EHLANZENI
REGION**

Programme Directors

Mr. MJ Lushaba

Clr. JS Ngomane

- Educator's Union
- Learner formation
- Associations of School Governing Bodies

Principals of schools

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Comrades and Friends

I stand before you today, humbled by the invitation extended to me to attend this glittering occasion.

I really feel honoured to address you today because you and me have begun to realise that Education is not only pivotal to economic prosperity but it also plays a crucial role in enabling South Africa, our country to improve the quality of lives of our people so that they can contribute to a peaceful, productive and, democratic nation.

These sentiments are captured in the vision statement of the Department of Education.

Your presence here today bears testimony to your commitment, dedication and willingness to turn the tide around in order to achieve the goals we have set ourselves.

The call to action by the minister of Education in 1999 must be operationalised by a visionary leadership at all levels of the Department.

I want to believe that as we celebrate the outstanding performance of our schools and learners today, we will always be mindful that it is us who said that status quo must change for the better. And when that happens when we gather like this to celebrate, ululate, sing and dance for our achievement.

This does not only inspire us, but is set room for growth and more development. It makes us to nurture our ways of doing things and to fulfil our dreams. This makes us to begin to choose our destiny and to strive to make the next hour better than this one.

Yes, your presence in this hall is a clear public statement that we are all committed to;

- Eliminate illiteracy among adults and youth
- To develop schools into centres of community and cultural life
- End conditions of physical degradation in schools
- Develop the professional quality of the teaching force, and
- To deal with HIV/AIDS urgently and purposefully

To achieve the above objectives which we set ourselves, surely certain things must change urgently.

The basic functionality of the school leadership, management and communication must be revamped for the better.

The quality of teaching and teacher development, pupils achievement, safety and discipline at each school should be enhanced.

Governance, relationships and infrastructure must be improved urgently if we are to turn our situation around.

I have earlier said we are here to celebrate outstanding achievement of our schools and learners. This we do at the time when our people and the people of the world are engaged towards celebrating the decade of freedom of this country, which ends on the 27 April 2004.

Ehlanzeni Region in terms of the records at my disposal had:

In 1999 - 53%

In 2000 - 57%

In 2001 - 46%

In 2002 - 55%

In 2003 - 59% and this marks an improvement of 4% pass rate.

Please give yourself a big round of applause.

The results per sub-region

Region	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
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Hazyview	47%	56.6%	41.8%	55.9%	53.1%
Malelane	52.3%	52.1%	41.7%	49.7%	58.1%
Nelspruit	59.3%	62.3%	54.4%	59%	65.2%

Schools that obtained 30% and below in this region are 9.

Number of schools that performed below 20% pas rate in this region

2001	2002	2003
42	56	17

Surely these statistics are reasons for concern. This is a situation that can be turned around.

Let me therefore dedicate on behalf of the leadership of the province our profound appreciation to all role players who made it possible that we achieve these outstanding performance.

Our Educators wields a power to make everlasting influence/prints on the mind of a human being. They can “make” or “mar”.

Our Educators have the power to emancipate our people from mental slavery. They have the ability to free the potential of each citizen of this country.

All other profession do not have this power and if educators can use it appropriately, our situation can progressively turn around. Our Educators must take advantage of the skills development courses in order to improve their capacity.

Learners should by all means possible be seen as active participants in the teaching and learning environment. They must be made to learn by co-operating with their educators in the spirit of collaborative learning. They must share ideas on study techniques, form study teams and create conditions conducive for teaching and learning. And in this way we may forge a winning nation like Japanese after Hiroshima massacre and Germans after the Hilterian wars.

School management teams must take the centre stage and their rightful position in creating conducive conditions for teaching and learning to take place. Our SMT's must see themselves as change agents. They should know and implement their functions. They must consciously and in consultation implement school development programmes. They must analyse their situations and propose means for change and thereafter lead from the front.

Our parents have a mammoth task to ensure that their children receive the best education they deserve. They must demand that policies of government are implemented without sacrifice. Parents must visit schools, talk to teachers and support all school endeavours to improve the quality of education of this country.

They must adhere to the Call by the President of this country which is Letsema or Vuk 'zenzele to create environment healthy for teaching and learning to take place.

If our parents can pull together with all role players in schools, surely issues such as drugs and weapons trafficking, teenage pregnancy, poverty, truancy and so on can cease to exist.

Collaboratively, we can address issues of school safety, the quality of education, skill shortage, extra mural activities and infrastructure development.

Parents should not undermine the power they possess. In the spirit of Tirisano, the school environment can sustainably change for the better.

On the 06 February 2004, in his State of the Nation address the President of South Africa said, I quote

“As we enter our second decade of liberation, we must continue to build the sense of national unity, united action and the new patriotism that have manifested themselves in our people’s response to the calls – fa ranani, masakhane, letsema and vuk’zenzele, working together, in conditions of entrenched democracy, we must continue to produce the good news that has made our country a place of hope even for other people in the rest of the world.

We must be impatient with these in the public service who see themselves as pen-pushers and guardians of rubber stamps, thieves intent on self-enrichment, bureaucrats who think they have a right to ignore the vision of Batho Pele, who come to work as late as possible, work as little as possible and knock-off as early as possible”.

Unquote.

This is our vision, an attainable vision and together we must at all cost realise it.

This we can do side by side by being signatories to the people's contracts to fight illiteracy, ignorance, poverty, crime and all forms of social ills prevalent in our country.

Together we can forge a winning team and indeed a winning nation.

Thank you.