

**Speech to be Made the Honorable MEC for Education, Mr.
Bonakele Majuba at the Occasion of the Cleanest School in
the Province Award on 22 September 2023 at the Floreat
Riverside Lodge**

Programme Director and Head: Education, Mrs. Lucy Moyane

Old Mutual Area Manager, Mrs. SM Mkhonto

FEDSAS Chairperson, Mr. Ferreira

District Directors

Members of Senior Management

District Management Teams

Circuit Managers

Principals

Teachers and

Learners

Sanibonani,

The educational journey is a common way travelled by all yet experienced uniquely and differently by any learner, teacher and school. It is a journey that is worth enjoyment while at the same time the planned and anticipated teaching and learning experience should safely unfold.

It is an obligation and a duty of government and school communities, especially parents to ensure that the environment under which teaching and learning has to take place is secure, habitable, clean and conducive for quality teaching and learning to take place.

As a department, we are convinced that cleaning should not be relegated only to sweepers and cleaners, but that we should inculcate a culture of not littering in our schools so that our communities, townships, towns, villages and houses could be clean.

Benjamin Disraeli is known for having said that; **“Cleanliness and order are not matters of instinct; they are matters of education, and like most great things, you must cultivate a taste for them.**

In our quest to ensure that schools are clean, safe and welcoming for teaching and learning to take place, we have sought partnerships with communities and the business world to provide the necessary incentives for schools to strive to ensure that their school environment is taken care of.

It is for that reason that we have partnered with Old Mutual to sponsor the Cleanest School Award which is a finale of the Rhandza Xikolo Xa Wena Campaign which was undertaken during the month of July also known as the Mandela Month in honour of the late founding father of our democracy, former President Nelson Mandela as well as the month of August.

Our objective in this regard is not just to achieve the best school with regards to the cleanest surroundings only. We are of the belief that the cleanest school environment is a precursor to good learner performance, teacher and learner discipline, respect for one another, order, dedication to school work, good work ethics, time management, good class attendance, good management and governance which are essential virtues of a self-governing school.

As a Department, we make a clarion call to members of the public to explore various ways to participate and contribute towards the success of the Rhandza Xikolo Xa Wena Campaign which as you may recall is a build up to the Cleanest School Award.

In support of the campaign, we thus requested school communities to:

Clean their schools which includes sweeping the floors, mopping the floors, cleaning the bathrooms, and taking out the trash.

Protect their schools from vandalism. This means reporting any vandalism that they see to the school principal or a teacher.

Support teaching and learning practices. This includes volunteering in the classroom, mentoring students, or donating school supplies.

Fix broken school property. This includes repairing broken windows, fixing leaky faucets, or painting the walls.

Plant flower, vegetable gardens, and trees. This helps to beautify the school grounds and create a more peaceful environment.

Report any criminal activity that takes place in school. This includes theft, drug use, or violence.

Return school property back to schools. This includes textbooks, laptops, tablets and other equipment.

We urge our communities to participate in the Rhandza Xikolo Xa Wena Campaign and make it a daily occurrence.

Together, we can make our schools a better place for our children.

The Rhandza Xikolo Xa Wena Campaign is a build up to the Cleanest School Competition and is the campaign that brought all of us here, at the Kruger National Park.

This competition is sponsored by Old Mutual and starts from the Circuit level up to Districts. Schools were provided the 18 August as deadline for application submission to circuits.

In turn, circuits had to submit their cleanest schools' list to their respective districts on 30 August 2023. For the Districts the deadline was set at 22 September for their representation at the provincial level. The winner of the Cleanest School in the Province Award gets R100 000, 00 prize money.

Programme Director, let me acknowledge the inaugural winners of the Cleanest School in the Province Award, Tfolinhlanhla primary school from Shabalala, White Hazy circuit, who took home the R100 000.00 last year.

Conclusion

I want to express my sincere gratefulness to the school for being pioneers in these awards.

Let me also reassure all the other schools that have entered and participated in this competition but have not reached this stage that they are indeed champions.

The main goal is that they have played their part in educating their learners about the importance of conservation, sustainability, cleanliness and climate change.

It is our belief that we can sustain this campaign outside of the school environment and extend it to the rest of the nation and especially in our places of residences.

Our greatest inspiration in the continent should be the example of Rwanda's Umuganda, a community cleanup campaign held on the last Saturday of every month. It's one reason that Rwanda is renowned in the world for its cleanliness.

This is not a volunteer project. Police monitor the streets and can stop Rwandans who aren't participating and make them clean up on the spot. Rwandans who don't participate in the cleanup can be fined 5,000 francs, nearly \$6 which is an equivalent of R113, 27 which is not a small sum when the average income is about \$150 about R2 831,68 a month.

We could easily emulate the Rwandan experience in this regard and show the love of our schools and country by cleaning our environment and desisting from littering and dumping everywhere.

Once more allow me to express our gratefulness to Old Mutual as our sponsor for these Awards and to everyone who have made the competition a success.

Let us reciprocate our gratefulness by using this campaign to change our schools and make them a better place for everyone.

Programme Director, let me close by borrowing the words of Benjamin Thomson who once said, "So great is the effect of cleanliness upon man, that it extends even to his moral character. Virtue never dwelt long with filth; nor do I believe there ever was a person scrupulously: attentive to cleanliness, who was a consummate villain."

Ngiyabonga.