

**Speech by the MEC for Education, Mr. Bonakele Majuba for  
the occasion of the Provincial Prayer Session on Tuesday, 17  
October 2023.**

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Programme Director, **Archbishop, SM Nkosi**

MMC for Social Services, **Cllr GG Zulu**

**Inkhosi CM Dlamini**

**Apostle X Liphoka**

All Pastors Present

Faith Based Religious Leaders

Representatives from the Organized Labour

Representatives of the Associations of School Governing Bodies

Members of Senior Management

Representatives from the District

Circuit Managers

Teachers

Learners

**Sanibonani**

We took a deliberate decision to congregate in this prayer session to request for divine intervention and to appease the Spirit of God to be with us and to open up blessings for our learners and a smooth examination process to unfold.

We also appreciate your much needed support in the form of prayer, supplication and motivation for the Class of 2023 as they prepare for their final examinations.

With less than **13 days** left, we saw it befitting that, as education stakeholders, we all could come together to create conditions that are conducive for the writing of the 2023 final National Senior Certificate Examination.

Indeed, the Department of Education has pulled all stops to ensure that the examinations progress without any glitches and moreover, we know that there is power in prayer.

We share a view that says; **It takes a village to raise a child.**

Based on this accession, the expectation was that all communities from all the corners of our beautiful Province, Mpumalanga would be excited and wish to do anything and everything possible to ensure that their children are supported to pass the grade.

It is therefore disturbing that we see or hear some members of the community advocating for or planning to disrupt the examination of their own children in their own community thus participating in the delay of their own development and a bright future for their children.

What is more worrisome is that the reasons that are being advanced for such disruptive behaviour are more of self-centered means.

Last year, we had more than 1000 grade 12 learners at Emalahleni Local Municipality who could not write Mathematics on a scheduled day due to a community protests. It was indeed a sad day, in the history of education in this Province where the future of some of our bright and promising learners was put at risk.

We continue to receive calls and delegations who are threatening to disrupt the education of their own children, almost every day.

What we have learnt in most instances, is that those who are making such threats and disruptions are people who do not have children in the schools they are disrupting.

They call themselves concerned community members who want to have their hands dipped in tenders for the construction and renovations of schools. ***We request that we also pray to stop this tendency.***

We ask that you pray for the **68 681** full time candidates to be calm, focused and successful as we wish that all of them should pass these examinations.

In the event that for some reason that our target wish of 100% does not happen, the Department will be satisfied to register a **83%** pass rate this time around as this will be in line with the target set in the National Development Plan.

This target is informed by the extent, degree and level of support the Department provided to the Class of 2023.

The support included the provisioning of Ubuhlebuzile e-learning Programme, Support visits to schools by the executive, officials and subject advisors, convening of winter and spring classes and convening of motivation sessions amongst others.

Schools were expected to develop and implement their school based support programmes which included morning, afternoon, evening classes and weekend classes.

Most schools have convened school camps to close the lost ground.

Relatively, this class enjoyed a favorable environment for learning and teaching notwithstanding few areas where there were disruptions.

The Department is making a clarion call to the learners to appreciate that this is their time to finish the school journey they had started about 12 years ago.

Our learners need to be aware that it is out of their hard work, dedication and commitment that they made it up to this far.

They need to know that the last few kilometers of any marathon are the hardest.

**To this end**, they need to remain vigilant and not allow anything to divert their attention towards writing and completing their grade 12.

They need to be alert and not allow anything to rob them of their bright future. They need to be more focused this time around and avoid any distractions coming their way.

We need to assure and remind them of all the hard work they have put in over the past 12 years.

We also need to remind them that they are capable of great things and that they are not alone but have the support of each and every member of the community within the Place of the Rising Sun.

The Class of 2023 is the future of our province and our country.

We need them to succeed. We need them to be the best that they could be.

We also ask that you pray for the invigilators, markers, officials and all other members of staff who will be involved in the examination process.

I urge you to join me in praying for the Class of 2023. And I encourage you to motivate them to continue working hard and to believe in themselves.

Thank you for your time and your support. Together, we can help the Class of 2023 achieve their most desired goals.

I wish to take this opportunity to extend our sincere appreciation to everyone who played a pivotal role in contributing to the success of the Department to be where it is today.

We are truly confident that the 2023 final examinations will progress without any serious challenges because more than before, we have the backing and the support of the entire provincial community.

Programme Director, we are grateful to labour unions and Associations of School Governing Bodies for the labour peace which ultimately impacted positively to the learning and teaching process within the Province.

We remain indebted to the stewardship of the Honourable Premier, Mrs. Refilwe Mtsweni-Tsipane together with the entire Executive Council as well as the Portfolio Committee under the Chairpersonship of **Honourable Gillion Mashego** for the support to the Department.

The great moment has come and it is now time to lift up our eyes and look up the mountains to seek the face of the Lord and for his hand to cover all our learners, teachers, parents and officials for a successful examination process.

We wish to take this opportunity once more to extend our profound best wishes to the Class of 2023.

We assure them that No One will be left behind.

**Ngiyabonga**