

**Remarks by the MEC for Education, Ms. Cathrine Dlamini at the
Occasion of the Winter School Centre Visit at Dumisani Secondary
School in Mkhuhlu, Bushbuckridge Local Municipality**

Programme Director and Director: Bohlabela Ms. Lorraine Goba

Members of the SGB present

Pastor **Ali Mokoena**

Members of the Senior Management

Members of the District Management Team

Circuit Manager: **Mrs. Venetia Mthethwa**

Principals of the Participating Schools

Teachers

Representative Council of Learners

Officials of the Department of Education and

Learners

Sanibonani,

Programme Director, let me preface this gathering with my greatest gratitude to every teacher and learner present here for making the right decision towards the creation of a brighter future.

Braving the cold and being here as a learner tells us about your sense of purpose and your intent to improve your lives through education. It also brings a sense of honour and urgency to this winter school programme

hence I am convinced that we are ready to move forward as a collective district and province with regards to improving learner performance this year.

Programme Director, I must say that this winter school centre visit is of great value to me and it is a representation of the wishes and views of the provincial community, especially parents who want to see their children passing this grade at the end of the year.

The winter school programme provides me with some hope that there could be some improvement in learner performance this year. My worry is deeply imbedded in the poor performance of the Class of 2023.

The target set by the Department for the 2023 school year was an **83%** pass rate in the National Senior Certificate, Grade 12 examinations.

We however failed to reach that target as we fell short to a **76.95%** pass rate and we need to turn that corner.

Your District Bohlabela greatly regressed from a pass rate of **79.3%** in 2022 to **69.1%** in 2023. This is a **10.2%** decline and I am sure that the 2024 Class can do much better.

Ehlanzeni District got **81.8%**.

Gert Sibande got **79.8%**.

And **Nkangala** got **76.4%**.

This paints a picture of where Bohlabela is and I hope you all want to find yourself back at the top.

Your circuit Mkhuhlu did not do well either as it underperformed by getting a **68.3** pass percentage which is a drop compared to the **77.1%** of **2022**. It managed position number 61 out of the 71 circuits in the province.

The best performing circuit following the 2023 NSC examinations in Bohlabela District is **Mashishing with 82.4%**. I must say that the circuit performance is a reflection of the performance of the schools within the circuit.

In this instance **Makhosana Manzini High School** outshined all the schools in Mkhuhlu Circuit with a 92.4% pass rate. The school had **238** candidates who wrote and **220** passed. It got **144** Bachelors, **57** Diploma and **19** Higher Certificate passes.

Madzuma High School had **48** candidates who wrote and **43** passed thus the school obtained **89.6%** pass rate with **19** Bachelor, **18** Diploma, **06** Higher certificate passes.

Mkhukhumba Secondary School had **48** candidates who wrote and **42** passed thus the school obtained **87.5%** with **28** Bachelor, **10** Diploma and **04** Higher Certificate passes.

Chayaza Secondary School had **153** candidates who wrote and **124** passed thus the school obtained **81.0%** pass rate with **66** Bachelor, **42** Diploma and **25** Higher Certificate passes.

Mkhuhlu Secondary School had **49** candidates who wrote and **36** passed thus the school obtained **73.5%** pass rate in the 2022 NSC examination, with **14** Bachelor, **13** Diploma and **09** Higher Certificate passes.

Madondo High School had **176** candidates who wrote and **128** of them passed which translates to a **72.7%** pass. Of these candidates, **28** got Bachelor, **47** Diploma, **52** Higher Certificate and **01** NSC passes.

ML Nkuna High School had **102** candidates who wrote and **62** who passed which is a **60.8%** pass rate with **18** Bachelor, **17** Diploma and **27** Higher Certificate passes.

Gezingqondo Secondary School had **105** candidates who wrote and **53** who passed which is a **50,5%** pass rate with **12** Bachelor, **27** Diploma and **14** Higher Certificate passes.

Mbhandule Secondary School had **120** candidates who wrote and **54** who passed which is a **45.0%** pass rate with **04** Bachelor, **18** Diploma and **32** Higher Certificate passes.

Dumisani High School had **251** candidates who wrote and **108** who passed which is a **43.0%** pass rate with **43** Bachelor, **34** Diploma and **31** Higher Certificate passes.

I want to draw to your attention that every school that has performed below **70%** in the province is deemed to have underperformed, and judging from these results the picture for these schools and circuit is gloomy.

It is thus clear that you should understand that all the schools should work as a team for the circuit to perform outstandingly. Some schools have achieved around **80%** pass rate in this circuit but have been dragged down by the schools that performed dismally.

I am relaying this to you so that you can make your own judgement as to where you are in terms of learner performance and to inspire you to improve.

Those learners who have passed outstandingly are normal persons just like you and their performances lifted their schools' pass percentage points.

You should also bear in mind that Bohlabela was the number one District of the four in the Province with regards to the National Senior Certificate performance in 2022 but became the last in 2023.

I believe that each school has a plan to improve on its performance, however, such plans can only be actualised through the performance of learners.

I must confess that our wish is for every child to pass which translates to a 100% pass as no parent wishes for his or her child to fail. We are thus here to express that wish and also to motivate you towards that goal.

Your ability to have passed the lower grades is evidence that you have the ability to pass your grade 12. We are quite convinced as a Department that you are well equipped and capable to do that.

Our presence, today is just a formality meant to remind you of your responsibilities, abilities and to urge you to focus on your school work, to work hard and smart to outperform the Class of 2023.

I am sure that most of you have already started preparing for your end year performance as this is an important and life-long assignment or project that begins on day one of the re-opening of schools.

Those of you who have not yet started with studying for your secondary school exit should do so and be reminded that there is now no weekend or holiday for you as every day should be efficiently utilised for school work and studying to guarantee your success at the end of the year.

Let me remind you that the time is near for you to start applying for your tertiary admission and bursaries.

Let me stress the point that you need to apply now for both bursaries and admission. My advice to you is to apply at different institutions and not just one.

Circuit Manager, Mrs. Venetia Mthethwa, principals, teachers, parents, support staff and especially you my beloved learners, our hope is on your shoulders.

We are here to offer our support to all of you so that you can achieve your possible best. Let us hold hands and work together to make it happen.

In that case, I would like to get a commitment from the learners. Let me request all those who want to pass their grade 12 to stand up.

Thank you for standing up, can you thus please say after me,

“I hereby make a commitment to work hard and smart, to study at home and my homework. To respect my teachers and use my time well doing my school work. I therefore commit to do my best to pass at the end of the year.”

Thank you my children, please don't forget your pledge to pass and please work towards your goal with all your might and time. You may be seated

Programme Director, in Mpumalanga province, we have a culture of rewarding good performance and excellence. I hope you are aware that the 2023 overall best grade 12 learner **Nianda Coetzee** from Nelspruit Hoerskool obtained distinctions in all her subjects. So did the 2022 best learner, **Bathobile Nkambule**, from Elukwatini too and others before them.

As rewards for their achievements, they received, **R10 000.00** courtesy of SASOL, **R 15 000.00** courtesy of Standard Bank, **R 20 000.00** courtesy of ABSA, **R 15 000.00** courtesy of IDC, a tablet from Vodacom, a Power Bank and Bluetooth Headphone from Telkom as well as a Bar Fridge, Steam Iron and Travel Bag.

They also received full bursaries from the Mpumalanga Provincial Government that caters for tuition, accommodation, stationery, meals and a monthly stipend. They also received a brand new sponsored car.

Many of our learners often hide behind their background and social status, using these as a shield that blocks them from breaking through barriers.

Bathobile Nkambule, the 2022 Top Learner from Elukwatini challenged and changed the odds stacked against her and the mind-set prevalent in our communities that it is only learners in former model C schools who are able to excel and be at the top.

You too, can perform like her and even get more than what she achieved. This is possible only if you listen attentively to your teachers and make decisions to do things better with more vigour and commitment.

You need to embrace the fighting spirit and the tenacity of **Nianda Coetzee** and **Bathobile Nkambule**. ***It is doable – It is all in your hands.***

Our intention as a Department is to inspire you to pass your grade qualitatively moving your schools beyond the 70% pass rate and your circuit from the position it finds itself in the province.

You must stop blaming your environment and others for your lack of focus and laziness but look at the positive side of things and make things work for you.

It is only you who must rise to the occasion in order to be counted amongst the best of the best.

The stories of **Bathobile Nkambule** must inspire you and invoke in you the desire to succeed at all cost.

This is our call to you to learn so that you can begin by improving your lives so that you could be able to improve the lives of others in your communities and the nation of South Africa.

With humility, wisdom, integrity, self-discipline and accountability, the character of a winning learner, your dream of passing grade 12 can come true.

Every dream does come true but one needs to work towards it.

This is your chance, take advantage and make it count.

Conclusion

As I conclude, it is only fair to say that the achievement of **Bathobile Nkambule** and **Nianda Coetzee** must be a challenge to all learners in the Province.

As Abigail Adams once said, “**Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardour and attended to with diligence.**”

You can also do the same and even better. It is on those bases that I make a challenge to the Class of 2024 to improve your performance and strive to even out do yourselves.

My beloved learners, there is no better time to begin than now. Let us begin today to take up this challenge with new drive, attention, confidence and resolve.

Ngiyabonga.