

**SPEECH BY THE MEC FOR EDUCATION, HON. LINDI MASINA, MPL,
AT THE PROVINCIAL PRAYER MEETING FOR THE 2026 NATIONAL
SENIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

Programme Director; **Rev,Dr MM Nthali**

Executive Mayor of Emalahleni Local Municipality, **Cllr. VJ Nhlapho**

Nkangala District Executive Mayor, Cllr. T.D Ngwenya

Head of Department, **Mrs. Lucy Moyane;**

Provincial Chairperson of the House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders,
Kgoshi Lameck Mokoena;

Leadership of the Education Sector Unions

Leadership of the QLTC

Leadership of the National Education Development Trust

Members of Senior Management

Nkangala District Director, **Mr. DM Maja;**

Leaders and Representatives of the Provincial Moral Regeneration
Movement;

Pastors,

Members of the Media

Sanibonani

It is with a deep sense of humility, faith and collective responsibility that we
gather here today.

We gather considering that as government officials, educators, parents or
members of society for this final examination have throughout the year done
everything humanly possible to prepare our learners for the final
examination.

We acknowledge with great humility that now the ball is with our learners, as
such, every support including prayers are essential.

We are grateful that it is prudent to place our children, teachers and staff before God in prayer, as they prepare for this examination.

We come to pray for our learners, our teachers, their parents and families, the officials who will administer and manage these examinations, and indeed the entire education community of Mpumalanga.

The National Senior Certificate Examination represents the culmination of thirteen years of schooling.

For many of our young people, it is the gateway to further education, training, employment and a better life.

As we gather in prayer, we must also acknowledge the work that has already been done.

We started the 2026 academic year on a high note, following the impressive performance of the Class of 2025, which achieved an **86.55% pass rate**.

That achievement was not accidental, it was the product of the dedication of our teachers, the perseverance of our learners, the support of parents, the leadership of our principals and the commitment of education officials and stakeholders throughout the province.

Even when heavy rains affected the reopening of some schools at the beginning of the year, our education community demonstrated resilience and ensured that teaching and learning continued.

Throughout the year, we have worked collectively to create conditions that are conducive to teaching and learning.

We have engaged our stakeholders, supported our teachers, implemented learner support programmes and strengthened our interventions through the 2026 Learner Performance Improvement Plan.

We have implemented winter classes, spring classes and camps, and have continued to mobilise communities around the importance of education.

Our teachers have worked tirelessly, often beyond the call of duty, to prepare our learners for this important moment.

Programme Director, this year, the province has registered the largest number of candidates in the history of Mpumalanga, with a total of **85 530 candidates**.

Behind every number is a young person with a dream, a family with expectations and a future that must be protected.

Every learner counts, and deserves the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and what they are capable of achieving.

The examination will take place from **13 October to 25 November 2026** in **588 examination centres** spread across the province.

We have appointed and trained **588 Chief and Deputy Invigilators**, and we are collaborating with the South African Council for Educators to strengthen examination integrity and ensure that the highest standards of professional ethics are maintained.

Tomorrow, all candidates are expected to sign the Pledge of Good Conduct. The pledge is a commitment by our learners to uphold honesty, discipline and the integrity of the examination. Our wish is that this e

I will visit **Khunjuliwe Secondary School in Lekwa Local Municipality** to observe this important occasion.

The Province has also established the Provincial Multi-Disciplinary Committee, **PROVJOINT**, to manage security-related matters associated with the examination.

This includes securing examination nerve centres, escorting the delivery of question papers and proactively identifying potential risks.

We have strengthened our monitoring arrangements, developed a Provincial Monitoring Plan and compiled risk profiles for examination centres.

Resident monitors will be deployed, particularly to high-risk centres, to ensure that any potential challenge is identified and addressed promptly.

We are taking these measures because we cannot compromise the integrity of an examination that has such profound implications for the future of our children.

We are encouraged that electricity load shedding is no longer the challenge that it once was.

Nevertheless, as a responsible Department, we continue to prepare for contingencies, and examination centres are encouraged to have alternative sources of electricity, including generators, on standby.

Our responsibility is to ensure that every reasonable measure is taken to protect the continuity of the examination and to minimize disruptions that may disadvantage our learners.

On **15 October 2026**, the examination will be in full scale as all candidates will be writing **English Paper 3**.

Together with the Hon Premier, we will visit Masana Secondary School in Bohlabela District to support our learners and monitor how the examination is progressing.

This will be part of our continued commitment to being present where our learners and teachers are working.

After the writing of the examinations, the marking process will take place in **23 marking centres from 01 to 12 December 2026**, involving **7 287 markers and administrators**.

The training of Chief Markers and Moderators will be concluded on **10 October 2026**.

The results will subsequently be announced nationally by the Minister of Basic Education on **Sunday, 10 January 2027**, followed by the provincial announcement on **Monday, 11 January 2027**, at the University of Mpumalanga at **09H00**.

Programme Director, we have set ourselves an ambitious target of **91%**, building on the **86.55% achieved in 2025**.

We believe that this target is achievable because we have witnessed the dedication of our teachers and the commitment of our learners.

We also witnessed the outstanding work of our educators at the recent National Teaching Awards, where teachers from our province represented Mpumalanga with distinction and flew the flag of our province very high.

I once again congratulate all the teachers who represented us and all our educators whose daily contribution continues to make a difference in the lives of our children.

However, as we pursue the 91% target, let us remember that behind every percentage is a human being.

Our greatest ambition must be to ensure that every learner who sits for this examination has the best possible opportunity to succeed.

When we say “**every learner counts**”, we mean precisely that.

We want every learner to make the grade. We want every learner to discover their potential. We want every learner to leave the examination room knowing that they gave their very best.

This is why the role of the Church and the faith community is so important at this moment.

Our pastors, ministers, religious leaders and traditional leaders occupy a unique position in our communities. You reach families that government does not always reach.

You speak to hearts that cannot always be reached through government programmes and policy documents.

You provide hope when people are discouraged, guidance when young people are uncertain and spiritual support when families are under pressure.

We therefore call upon our religious leaders to walk with our learners during this examination period, to pray with them, to encourage them, to counsel them and to remind them that success requires discipline, sacrifice, perseverance and faith.

We also appeal to our parents to support their children throughout this examination period. Create an environment that allows your children to study.

Encourage them rather than placing unnecessary pressure on them. Listen to them, support them and remind them that you believe in them.

Sometimes a child does not need another lecture; a man child simply needs to hear from a parent, **“My child, I believe in you. You can do this. God is with you, and we are behind you.”**

Such words can restore confidence in a young person who may be anxious or uncertain about their ability.

We appeal for your continued support, Let us protect our learners from crime, violence, alcohol and substance abuse during this critical period.

Let us ensure that they can travel safely to and from examination centres.

Let us create an environment in which they can study without unnecessary disturbances.

We must continue to uphold the principle that teachers must be in class teaching, and learners must be in class learning.

My dear children, I want you to know that the whole of Mpumalanga is behind you. You have travelled a long road to reach this point.

You have faced challenges, overcome obstacles and continued to move forward.

Now the time has come for you to demonstrate what you have learnt. Your teachers have played their part.

Your parents have played their part. Government has played its part. Your communities have played their part. **Now the ball is in your court.**

Go into the examination room with confidence. Go with discipline. Go with honesty. Go with courage.

Take a moment, compose yourself, read the question carefully and give it your best answer.

Remember that every mark counts and that every effort brings you closer to your goal.

The Place of the Rising Sun has your interests at heart. We love you; we believe in you and we want to see you succeed.

I want to remind you that when you enter that examination room, you are not alone.

Your teachers are with you. Your parents are with you. Your communities are with you. Your province is with you.

And today, the people gathered here are praying for you. We are asking God to give you wisdom to understand, memory to recall, concentration to focus and courage to persevere.

We are praying for those who are anxious, those who are facing difficult circumstances at home, those who have lost confidence and those who may feel that their dreams are beyond their reach.

The Scriptures tell us in **Isaiah 40:31**, *“But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.”*

This is the message we want to leave with our learners today. Hope does not mean that we do nothing. Faith does not mean that we abandon preparation.

Faith gives us the courage to continue working even when the road is difficult.

We have prepared, we have worked and we have done what we can. Now we ask God to bless the work of our hands and to give our learners the strength to finish this journey with distinction.

As we pray today, let us also pray for our teachers and invigilators, for the officials who will administer these examinations, for our security personnel, for our parents and for every person who will play a role in ensuring that the examination is conducted successfully.

As we conclude, let us remember the words of Romans 8:31: **“If God is for us, who can be against us?”**

May the Almighty bless the Class of 2026. May He bless our teachers, parents and education officials.

May He bless every examination centre in Mpumalanga. May He protect our children, and guide them through this important examination period.

May He continue to bless the **Place of the Rising Sun**, and may He bless the Republic of South Africa.

Siyanqoba! Siyafunda! Siyaphumelela!

God bless the Class of 2026. God bless Mpumalanga. God bless South Africa.

Ngiyabonga.