

SPEECH BY THE MEC FOR EDUCATION, MS LINDI MASINA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE SIGNING OF THE PLEDGE OF GOOD CONDUCT BY GRADE 12 LEARNERS AT KHUNJULIWE SECONDARY SCHOOL, LEKWA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Programme Director and Chief Director: District Coordination, **Mr. Chukudu Manyabeane**,

Executive Mayor of Lekwa Local Municipality, **Cllr. S.M. Mngemezulu**,

Chairperson of the Lekwa Pastors Fraternal, **Pastor Vusi Mashinini**,

Deputy Director-General for Curriculum, **Mr. Elijah Nkosi**,

District Director for Gert Sibande, **Mr. PP Magagula**,

Members of Senior Management,

Members of District Management Teams,

Circuit Managers,

School Principals,

Teachers,

Support Staff.

Parents and Guardians,

Leadership of COSAS

Representative Council of Learners

Representatives from the Media

Distinguished Guests.

Most importantly, **the Class of 2026**.

Sanibonani

It is with immense pleasure and a deep sense of responsibility that I stand before you today at Khunjuliwe Secondary School as we witness an especially important moment in the lives of our Grade 12 learners.

Today, learners across South Africa are expected to sign the Pledge of Good Conduct as they prepare to enter the final and most demanding stage of their twelve-year schooling journey.

Here in Lekwa, we are invited to learners from neighboring schools because we want to send a clear message that you are not walking this journey alone.

Your teachers are with you, your parents have embraced you, your communities are walking with you, and the government of the people has your interest at heart.

Today is about making a solemn promise to yourselves and to the people who have invested so much in you.

When you sign this pledge, you commit that you will give these examinations your best, that you will remain focused, respect the rules and that you will conduct yourselves with discipline.

You confess in your heart and in front of all of us, that you will do everything humanly possible to uphold and observe the rules and regulations and protect the integrity of the National Senior Certificate Examination.

You publicly confirm that when the examination begins, your marks will be a true reflection of your own work, knowledge, preparation, determination, and courage.

We acknowledge that there are those of you who have travelled a difficult road to reach this point. Some of you have faced financial difficulties at home.

Some of you had to attend school while carrying responsibilities that young people should not always have to carry.

It can be true that there are some amongst you who experienced loss, disappointment, illness, or difficult family circumstances.

Others may have struggled academically and wondered whether they would ever make it this far.

Today, you made it and you are still standing. You must be saying to yourselves, “ **Look at me now.**”

The fact is that you must never allow circumstances to convince you that you cannot succeed or achieve greatness.

We wish that you approach this examination with greater confidence. ***Do not enter the examination room already defeated.***

Do not look at the question paper and immediately tell yourself, “***I cannot do this.***”

Instead, tell yourself, “God did not lead me this far, to leave me. I have prepared for this, I have worked on this journey for the past 12 years; **I can do this.**”

Manage your time wisely, use the knowledge and guidance from your teachers, remain calm when you encounter tricky questions.

If one Examination paper does not go as you expected, do not allow that experience to destroy your confidence, pick yourself up, turn the page and prepare for the next paper.

Remember that the examination is a journey, and every paper gives you another opportunity to demonstrate what you know.

While we want you to succeed, we want you to succeed honestly, there can be no meaningful victory in a qualification obtained through cheating.

There can be no pride in a mark that does not belong to you. We therefore ask you to protect the integrity of your examination with everything you have.

Do not bring unauthorized material into the examination room, use a cellphone or any other electronic device during the examination, do not allow another person to assist you unlawfully, and do not assist another learner to cheat.

If you become aware of any wrongdoing, have the courage to report it to the appropriate authorities.

The Province has a proud record when it comes to the integrity of the National Senior Certificate examinations.

For **sixteen** consecutive years, we have successfully managed an incident-free National Senior Certificate Examination process, with no question-paper leaks.

This is an achievement that belongs to all of us, and it is an achievement that we must protect.

We must therefore not allow anyone to compromise on the credibility of an examination that represents the hopes and dreams of an entire generation.

We have put measures in place to ensure that the 2026 National Senior Certificate examinations are conducted in a credible, fair, secure and professional manner. Please help us to achieve that objective.

This year, Mpumalanga has registered the biggest number of candidates in the history of our province, with **85,530** candidates expected to write the 2026 National Senior Certificate Examinations.

Behind every number is a young person with a dream, a family with expectations and a community with hope.

We are not simply managing an examination system; we are protecting the dreams of our children and the future of our Province-the Place of the Rising Sun.

The examinations will be written from [13 October](#) until [25 November 2026](#), across **588 Examination Centres** throughout Mpumalanga. We have prepared for this moment, and we are confident that our systems will be ready.

This is the time to study, revise, ask your teachers for assistance where you do not understand, support one another and remain focused on the task before you.

Our province has set an ambitious target of achieving a **91% pass rate**, building on the impressive **86.55%** achieved by the Class of 2025.

We believe that this target is within our reach. We have seen the dedication of our teachers throughout the year.

We have implemented interventions to improve learner performance, and we have mobilized our stakeholders around the success of our learners. But when we speak about achieving **91%**, we are not speaking merely about a percentage.

We are speaking about thousands of young people whose lives can be changed by an opportunity to proceed to university, college, vocational education, employment, or entrepreneurship. Every learner matters.

I therefore wish to appeal to our teachers to continue giving our learners the support they need during these final days. You have been more than educators. In many instances, you have been counsellors, mentors, parents, and sources of hope.

Continue encouraging our learners. Remind them that they are capable. Help them to overcome anxiety and uncertainty. Your words during this period can make a profound difference in the life of a young person.

To our parents and guardians, I also make a heartfelt appeal: please stand firmly behind your children. Create an environment that allows them to study. Encourage them rather than frightening them. Where they are anxious, reassure them.

Where they are tired, encourage them to rest and then continue. Where they are discouraged, remind them of how far they have come. Do not compare your child with another child. Every learner has their own journey. Let us build our children up at the very moment when they need our love and support the most.

To our religious leaders, traditional leaders, community organisations, and all stakeholders, we appreciate your continued support. Education is not the responsibility of government alone. It is a societal responsibility.

When we say that it takes a village to raise a child, we are speaking about precisely this kind of moment.

We need the entire community to create an environment where our young people can concentrate, study and prepare for their examinations without fear or unnecessary distractions.

We cannot ask learners to perform miracles where the conditions for learning are absent.

We must continue working to improve our schools, support our teachers, strengthen our curriculum interventions, and create an environment in which every learner can realize their potential.

This is part of the broader responsibility of the democratic government: to expand opportunities, to break down barriers and to ensure that the circumstances of a child's birth do not determine the limits of their future.

We want you to remember that you are part of a generation that must carry our province and country forward.

South Africa needs young people who are educated, disciplined, ethical, innovative, and compassionate.

We need young people who will not only look for jobs but will also create opportunities for others.

We need young people who will enter universities, colleges, workplaces, and communities and say, ***"I am here to make a difference."***

When you sign this pledge, I want you to think beyond the examination room, think about the person you want to become.

You may be from a township, a rural community, or a small town, but your dreams do not have to be small.

Your background must never become a ceiling or determine your destiny ; you can come from Lekwa and compete with the best nationally and globally.

You can come from a family that has never produced a graduate and become the first.

You can be the doctor, the engineer, the teacher, the scientist, the entrepreneur, the lawyer, the artisan, the journalist, the researcher, or the leader your community has been waiting for.

Remember the teacher who stayed behind to help you, your parents who sacrificed for your education and the community that supported you.

We will continue to support you, but when you enter that examination room, you must carry the responsibility yourselves.

May God guide your minds, strengthen your hearts, and reward your hard work.

May every learner who sits these examinations be given the strength and courage to perform to the best of their ability.

The Place of the Rising [Sun](#) is behind you.

May the Class of 2026 rise, shine and make the grade.

May God Bless You, May God Bless Our Province!

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