

Speech by the MEC for Education, Ms Lindi Masina at the Teacher Appreciation Ceremony Hosted in Partnership with TS Galaxy Football Club in the City of Mbombela Local Municipality.

Programme Director, Mr Thwala

The CEO of TS Galaxy Football Club, Mr Tim Sukazi,

MEC for the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation, Ms. Leah

Mabuza

Officials from the Mpumalanga Department of Education,

Our distinguished teachers, principals, and learners,

Members of the media,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

It gives me great pleasure to stand before you this afternoon as we gather to celebrate excellence, commitment, and passion in the teaching profession.

Today's event is a moment of immense pride for our province, a moment when Mpumalanga shines as the home of the best teachers in South Africa.

Indeed, at the recent National Teaching Awards hosted by the Department of Basic Education, teachers from Mpumalanga once again proved that dedication, hard work, and innovation in the classroom truly make a difference.

We are especially proud of Mr Thulani Sibiya, who was crowned the Best Teacher in the Country.

This recognition not only honours his personal excellence but also symbolizes the collective effort of all our teachers who give their best every day to nurture our learners.

Last week, Mr. Sukazi, our province gathered in the Emalahleni Local Municipality to celebrate **11 years of the OR Tambo Mathematics, Science and Technology Academy**, a flagship initiative that has significantly increased the number of learners who participate and excel in Mathematics and Physical Sciences.

This milestone coincided with our commemoration of the great Oliver Reginald Tambo, the father of our democratic dispensation, who himself was an exceptional Mathematics and Physical Science teacher.

How fitting it is that Mr Thulani Sibiyi, like OR Tambo, is a Mathematics and Physical Science teacher and continuing the legacy of excellence and service through education.

Tomorrow, our Grade 12 learners will sit for their Mathematics paper as part of the ongoing National Senior Certificate Examinations.

We therefore take this opportunity to wish them all the best and express our deepest gratitude to their teachers who have guided and prepared them for the past 12 years.

Your dedication, perseverance, and commitment are the driving force behind their success.

Today's occasion holds special meaning because it was initiated and fully sponsored by TS Galaxy Football Club under the visionary leadership of Mr Tim Sukazi.

This remarkable gesture demonstrates that education is not the sole responsibility of government, but a shared societal mission.

You have gone beyond the call of duty by recognizing and rewarding those who dedicate their lives to shaping the future.

On behalf of the entire education community, I wish to extend our heartfelt appreciation to TS Galaxy for this generous initiative and unwavering support.

This partnership between the world of sport and the world of education sends a powerful message that when we unite our strengths, we can transform lives and uplift communities.

You have shown that appreciating teachers is not just a formality, but an act of building a better and more compassionate society.

To our teachers, thank you.

Thank you for your patience, creativity, resilience, and unwavering belief in the potential of every learner.

You are the foundation of our education system and the architects of our nation's future.

Let us all take inspiration from the generosity and community spirit shown by TS Galaxy.

Let us each find ways to honour and support our teachers whether by mentoring learners, supporting schools, or simply acknowledging the incredible work that teachers do daily.

Together, let us continue to create an environment where teaching and learning thrive, and where excellence is recognized and rewarded.

As we close Teachers' Month, may this celebration remind us that teaching is not just a profession, it is a lifelong mission of hope, growth, and nation-building.

To all our teachers we salute you. We value you and we truly love you.

To TS Galaxy, we thank you profoundly.

Let us continue to work together so that education remains the heartbeat of our province, the Place of the Rising Sun.

I thank you.