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Disclaimer: Opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the Mpumalanga Department of Basic Education

Editorial Comment

Victor Hugo, a French Poet says, “He who opens a school door, closes a prison”. His wise words encapsulate the value and importance of education in society. Raising children in a formal and structured way requires a lot of sound organisation, skills and a vibrant value system.

As much as these virtues form the external part of the education process, they are in many ways learnt to form the inner behavioural patterns of the child. Such children will display good characters as they model out the learnt behaviour and thus grow to be responsible citizens.

In our quest to provide good quality education, we are faced with a myriad of challenges. In this journey, we have to contend with social ills that are a hurdle in education delivery. It is time that we heed the African proverb 'He who raises a child, raises it for the village.'

The moral of this proverb is that every child belongs. Even those who may be called orphans also belong to the village or immediate environment.

As a Department, our call has been 'making education a societal phenomenon' and this highlights our plea for all stakeholders to bring their heads together to figure out ways and means that will propel the Department to greater heights.

Our view is that the convergence of ideas is not solely for the good of the Department but for the good of the learners in our schools.

The reality of the matter is that we need each other and we must find one another to ensure that we all move forward together. This is also a call to all stakeholders to continue this dialogue of promoting education excellence in our Province.

This edition puts into perspective the gains made in the improvement of school infrastructure especially in Ehlanzeni Region. A collaboration of private and public partnership has emerged and is a good model for the future.

We need to give credit to the companies and individuals who have put their money where it is worth. At the same time we make a call to other businesses and private individuals to follow suit by investing and ensuring that the fight against the infrastructural backlog is won.

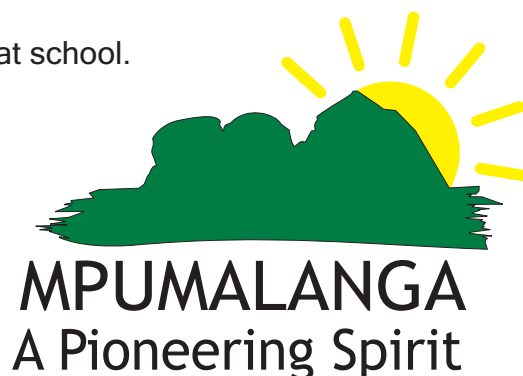
We also need to give credit where it is due. We make this call to all our stakeholders to inform us about learners, schools and educators who are excelling in their field of specialization. We appreciate such good stories and we would like, not only to know about them, but to publicize them to the world.

The FIFA Soccer World Cup kick-off is just at the door. Let us welcome the nations of the world the South African way. Let Ubuntu prevail as we allow our generous warm spirit melt the soul and heart of the world. We must not forget that as we compete with the world in the world of soccer, we also compete in the literacy and numeracy field, hence we need to up our commitment in our quest to be counted amongst the best nations in the world.

Your contribution is needed, keep in touch and help a learner excel at school.



education
DEPARTMENT: EDUCATION
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE



Abridged Speech from the MEC

I have all the courage to stand before you today because the results I am releasing have been declared credible by Umalusi.

In a statement issued yesterday (06/01/10), the Chairperson of Umalusi, Professor John Volmink said, "Umalusi's Assessment Standards Committee has made a detailed analysis of the data on an examination centre basis and found no evidence of systemic deviations that would suggest widespread compromise of the integrity of the examination process in Mpumalanga. Umalusi Council therefore approves the release of the results of Mpumalanga".

The overall pass rate is standing at 47.9 percent compared to the 51,8 percent that was achieved last year. This provides a regrettable 3.9% decline from the results obtained in 2008.

The Mpumalanga Department of Education remains obliged to do everything possible to improve the provisioning of quality education in this province for the benefit of all as stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

What will happen is an urgent analysis's of the results looking at the trends and details of performance per subject, region, circuit and school.

Going forward, I will convene an urgent meeting with stakeholders to present the analysis and together we will develop a focused intervention programme to intensify the implementation of our quality and teaching programme.

We need to deal decisively with chronic under-performance in schools. If it takes removing a teacher, principal, circuit manager or any official who plays a major role in the under-performance, let us do that.

By now, teachers should be familiar with the methodology, content and assessment related to the new curriculum. In addition, the Minister has this morning emphasized the need to streamline the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement and reduce the workload in 2010 by cutting down on the number of projects per subject and portfolio requirements.

There is therefore no excuse for under-performance. No amount of resourcing can substitute time on tasks and good teaching.

The delays in releasing the 2008 Grade 12 results were a serious setback for the Department.



Mrs Reginah Mhaule, MEC for Education

As if that was not enough, the leakage of question papers before the commencement of the 2009 examinations affected us badly. We will co-operate with the National Department of Basic Education to re-establish our Examination Unit. We must also commend the South African Police Services for their co-operation and the swiftness in which they acted on this matter.

I want to take this time to congratulate all learners who passed the 2009 grade 12 examinations and at the same time wish the best in their future endeavours. We also want to congratulate the Adult Basic and Training Level 4 candidates who sat for their examinations in 2009 and passed.

The department planned to award each of the top ten learners with certificate of merit; a trophy and a copy of Mpumalanga History and Heritage Book. BHP Billiton, Energy and Coal Company sponsored each of the top ten learners with a laptop, portable printer and flash disks. Sasol has committed to sponsor six top learners in Mathematics and Physical Science with R5 000 each which must assist towards university registration.

We appreciate this progressive contribution from the institutions mention above. I must also indicate that the learners who failed for the first time will be given a second chance by all our schools. Principals are urged to co-operate in this regard.

Thank You.

2009 Grade 12 Examination Results

PROVINCIAL % OF PASS – 6 YEARS

Provinces	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
W. Cape	87.1	85.0	84.4	83.7	80	78.7	75.7
Gauteng	81.5	76.8	74.9	78.3	74.6	76.3	71.8
N. Cape	90.7	83.4	78.9	76.8	70.3	72.7	61.3
Fr State	80.0	78.7	77.8	72.2	70.5	71.6	69.4
N. West	70.5	64.9	63.0	67	67.2	67.9	67.5
KZN	77.2	74.0	70.5	65.7	63.8	57.2	61.1
E. Cape	60.0	53.5	56.7	59.3	57.1	50.6	51.0
Limpopo	70.0	70.6	64.9	55.7	58	54.7	48.9
Mpumalanga	58.2	61.8	58.6	65.3	60.7	51.8	47.9
National	73.3	70.7	68.3	66.6	65.2	62.2	60.6

Together Educating the Nation



Regional Performance



Mr MJ Lushaba
Ehlanzeni Region: **56.95%**



Mr JJ Mabena
Ehlanzeni Region: **53.6%**



Mrs NW Mthethwa
Gert Sibande Region: **52.2%**



Mr DM Mtembu
Bushbuckridge Region: **28.2%**

Best Circuit



Lydenburg Circuit: 84.6% Pass Rate

Best School



Hoërskool Nelspruit: 100% Pass Rate

Overall Best Learner



Niki Bezuidenhout: 6 Distinctions

REGIONAL PERCENTAGES - 2009

Region	Total Entered	Total Wrote	Total Passed	Pass %
Ehlanzeni	15877	15365	8751	56.95
Nkangala	13748	13299	7132	53.6
Gert Sibande	11684	11336	5919	52.2
Bushbuckridge	14253	13806	3897	28.2

REGIONAL PERFORMANCE 2008 & 2009

Region	Total wrote		Total Pass		% Pass		
Year	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	Diff.
BBR	12268	13806	3670	3897	29.9	28.2	-1.7
Ehlanzeni	15822	15365	9235	8751	58.4	56.95	-1.45
Gert Sib	11281	11336	6123	5919	54.3	52.2	-2.1
Nkangala	14005	13471	8289	7287	59.2	53.6	-5.6
Prov. Av	53376	53978	27317	25854	51.8	47.9	-3.9

Overall Top Ten Learners



Niki Bezuidenhout
Hoërskool Middelburg



Nasiha Osman
Hoërskool Standerton



Andrea Belzar
Hoërskool Gen Hertzog



Anneke Grobler
Hoërskool Secunda



Sujay Surendran Nair
Lowveld High



Muzi Tshabalala
Khutsalani Sec



Treavor Mlungisi Vilane
Takheni Sec School



Jamela Mthembu
ML Nkuna High



Piet Ndimande
Mabusabesala Sec School



Themba Mkhonza
Imemeza Sec School

Top Ten Schools



Hoërskool Bergvlam
100%



Hoërskool Nelspruit
100%



Mathews Phosa College
100%



Sinethemba Girls School
100%



Hoërskool Middelburg
99.5%



Hoërskool Generaal Hertzog
99.5%



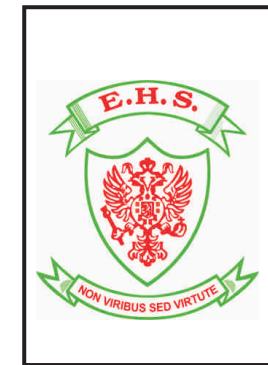
Hoërskool Rob Ferreira
99.3%



Hoërskool Standerton
99.3%



Hoërskool Sybrand v Niekerk
99.2 %



Hoërskool Ermelo
99%

Top Learners per Subject



Niki Beduidenhout, Hoerskool Middelburg (Business Studies)



Muzi Tshabalala, Khutsalani Sec (Mathematics)



Nasiha Osman (Accounting)



Neelu Mathew, Hoerskool Rob Ferreira (Life Sciences)



Treavor Mlungisi Vilane (Geography)



Jamela Mthembu, ML Nkuna High (Agricultural Science)

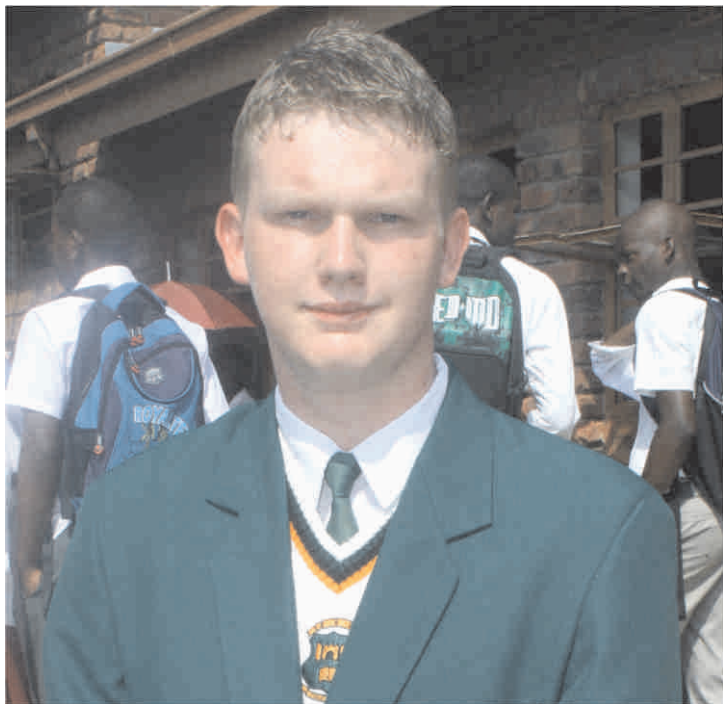


Mareli Olivier and Naomi Smit, Hoerskool Ermelo (History)



Louise Prinsloo, Hoerskool Delmas (English FAL)

Overall Best Learner



Niki Stefan Bezuidenhout

Inspired by people who have the ability to stand up after failure, the eighteen (18) year old, Niki Bezuidenhout, from Hoërskool Middelburg topped the Mpumalanga Grade 12 class of 2009.

Niki Stefan Bezuidenhout got distinctions in Mathematics, Afrikaans, English, Accounting, Business Studies and Computer Application Technology.

"I am always motivated by the will to succeed in every challenge I take on. I strive to do my best and work hard to achieve my goals. Hard work, determination and support from my family, friends and teachers have contributed to my success with these examinations," said the 2009 Mpumalanga Provincial Overall Best Learner.

Niki aspires to study for a B.com in Accounting Sciences at the University of Pretoria this year as he hopes to qualify as a chartered accountant in seven years time. His wishes and aspirations to study will be realised, thanks to a bursary from Moore Stephens Chartered Accountants.

As a person who always aims high, he also hopes to contribute a lot in the business world. His message to other learners is that hard work will be rewarded and thus to persevere is crucial as it pays off at the end.

Best Mathematics Learner



Muzi Tshabalala

Against all odds, sixteen year old Muzi Tshabalala has scored 100% for Mathematics and broke the history books of Khutsalani Secondary School by becoming the first learner to achieve this in the history of the school. This second born child to Ms Zodwa Zwane from Kabokweni Township achieved this feat not withstanding the fact that the Mathematics paper has been described as difficult. He also got 96% for Geography, 90% Life Sciences, 86% English, 85% SiSwati, 76% Life Orientation and 87 Physical Science.

The MEC for Education, Mrs Reginah Mhaule congratulated Muzi for being the best Mathematics achiever in the Province.

According to the principal of Khutsalani Secondary School, Mr. Timothy Nkosi, "Muzi is a good, hard working and intelligent person who values education. I am very happy about his achievement as the first learner to achieve such a feat in the history of Khutsalani. We want to believe that more learners will learn from this and move on to achieve just like him."

Muzi says he owes the good achievement to his dedication and passion to his school work and the will to be the best in whatever he does. "I am very happy to have achieved a 100% pass in Mathematics. I must also say that I did not expect to get the 100%. Muzi wishes to study actuarial science and financial management," he concluded.

Messages of Support

COSATU in Mpumalanga congratulates all the learners who have passed their matric examination especially those who have received distinctions and qualify for university enrollment. Those who did not fare well should not despair because there is always a second chance to improve and correct our shortcomings.

We are cognizant and alive to the reality that some of these learners from previously disadvantaged communities, have struggled and achieved success under very bad and unfavourable conditions.

The lack of resources in the poorest schools has a direct impact on the quality of the students we are producing as a country and province. We need to address the systematic problems in our education system. Most schools are still overcrowded, there is a shortage of properly qualified educators especially in key subjects such as maths, science, and accounting thus teacher development has to be prioritized so as to enable us to produce quality and competitive graduates.

While we condone and appreciate the work of Umalusi in monitoring the standard and quality of our examinations, we condemn with the strongest contempt it deserves the deliberate delays in completing the investigations in time. It is highly unacceptable that within 48 hours of the release of the results Umalusi announces that the Mpumalanga results will not be released while they had more than three months to investigate the alleged irregularities. This is a display and demonstration of inefficiency and gross negligence from the side of Umalusi.

COSATU in Mpumalanga condemns with the strongest contempt it deserves the actions of those who want to profit from the theft of question papers. We call for decisive action against those who are found guilty. We call for the immediate investigation of all the private schools suspected and the immediate closure of those involved in this criminal practices.

We are impressed by the professionalism and prompt reaction from the Provincial Department of Education in particular, the dynamism demonstrated by the MEC for Education by taking all interested parties into her confidence during this most difficult and challenging patch in the history of our Province.

We promise to cooperate with her and the entire department in ensuring that we improve the

standard of education in the Province from grade one to grade twelve.

COSATU in Mpumalanga calls for an Education Indaba to discuss amongst others the formation of the University in Mpumalanga and the improvement in the administration of education.



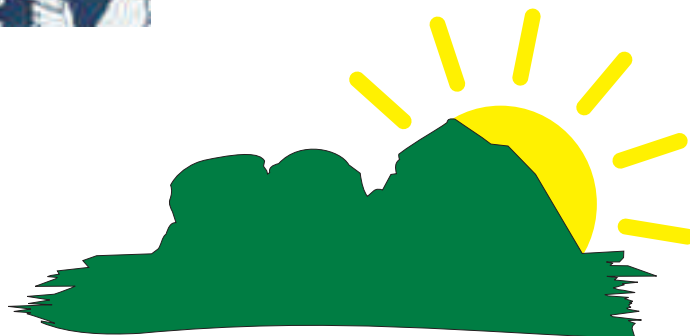
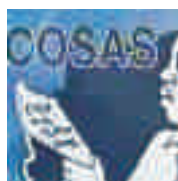
Chairperson of Umalusi, Professor John Volmink:

“Umalusi's Assessment Standards Committee has made a detailed analysis of the data on an examination centre basis and found no evidence of systemic deviations that would suggest widespread compromise of the integrity of the examination process in Mpumalanga. Umalusi Council therefore approves the release of the results of Mpumalanga”.



Mbulelo Mandlana, COSAS in Mpumalanga:

“The systems need to be shape, the department of Basic Education must come up with a mechanisms to fix the system.”



MPUMALANGA A Pioneering Spirit

Stakeholders' Forum

In response to the decline of performance with regard to the 2009 Grade 12 examination results, the Mpumalanga Department of Education embarked on a drive to rope in the involvement and participation of all education stakeholders in the education process in the province. To this effect, a provincial stakeholders' forum was held at the Emalahleni Old Protea Hotel on 19 January 2010.

The objective of the stakeholders' forum was to establish a buy-in of all stakeholders in education towards working together to uplift learner attainment performance. The forum strived to come up with a collective responsibility to leverage the education system to respond to the needs of society, business and economic growth and development.

In her opening address, the MEC for Education, Mrs Reginah Mhaule said, "Unlike other provinces, Mpumalanga enjoys some form of stability, sound stakeholder relations on matters of teaching and learning. The challenges we are facing are far less compared to what other provinces are contending with. The contradiction presents itself on the results. This suggests that there is something that is not right with in our system."

In the main, the discussions and deliberations looked at how the regions and circuits performed and a way forward was charted as follows:

- ensure that all schools receive the necessary resources in time for teaching to commence without hassles;
- ensure that all schools have their full staff allocation and that vacancies are filled without delay;
- improve our knowledge and skills base to be more effective;
- always be available to assist schools, principals and teachers;



Delivering her keynote Address: MEC Reginah Mhaule



Paying attention and taking notes: Officials during commissions

and teachers;

- respond to requests and concerns of education stakeholders;
- visit all schools within the regions on a regular basis;
- monitor teacher and student attendance,
- ensure that no child is out of school missing out on the opportunity to learn and
- Assist all schools to improve their performance, ensuring that regular assessments are conducted and results are reported to parents ■

Grade 12 Improvement Plan

The Mpumalanga Department of Education has developed a strategy for learner attainment that identifies focus areas of high impact and programmes to be implemented to improve performance.

This strategy seeks to improve the quality of learner attainment by ensuring that all learners reach the expected outcomes for their age. It will also link the provincial strategy for learner attainment with the numeracy and literacy strategy of GET to ensure that all learners in the system are afforded a fair chance to succeed.

The strategy seeks to raise the performance of schools that have scored an overall pass rate below 60% in an endeavour to realize above 60% provincial pass average by 2010 while performance below 60% shall be regarded as underperformance.

The improvement of the quality of learner attainment by ensuring an increased number of learners qualifying for admission to Institutions of Higher Learning to do a bachelors degree programmes as well as devising strategies to ensure that at least 50% of learners choose Mathematics and Physical Science from grade 10, rewarding schools that perform well under difficult conditions by allocating resources (special grant) to the top 50 schools from historically disadvantaged background and mobilizing all stakeholders to play a leading role in ensuring successful learner attainment and creating a culture of schooling across the province are other objectives of the strategy.

DEALING WITH UNDERPERFORMANCE IN 2010

In an attempt to revitalize the provincial strategy for learner attainment, two stakeholders' forums were convened and consultations were made with all the Regions and Directorates. All recommendations were compiled and analysed. The Performance of school management teams (SMT), implementation of curriculum Support to teachers, provision of resources, stakeholder involvement, systemic issues, additional support to learners, special and focused support to dysfunctional and under-performing schools were identified as pillars of the strategy in 2010.

Performance of School Management Teams (SMT)

School Management Teams will play a pivotal role in improving learner performance, particularly, the role of the school principal.

The focal points for the intervention will be; the improvement of performance of SMTs to manage and lead departments. This will be achieved by empowering SMTs to manage human resources.

Learner discipline will be improved by empowering educators on alternative ways of dealing with discipline of learners; and apply cooperative discipline. Educator discipline will be improved by ensuring that all teachers are in class on time, teaching for 7 hours a day. As for schools which consistently under-perform Section 5B, sub section 5 (a) of the South African Schools Act, 1996 as amended will be applied.

Implementation of curriculum

Particular attention will be focused on effectively implementing the curriculum. There is a need to improve the content knowledge of some educators and curriculum implementers. The low performing subjects will be targeted (Mathematics, Physical Science, Accounting and Agricultural Sciences).

The quantity and quality of class work given to learners will allow learners to have enough practice for the desired learning outcomes; learners must be given enough exercises in all classes. This exercise will strive to achieve acceptable performance levels in all phases / classes doing away with the tendency to ignore the levels of performance in lower grades.

Particular attention will be on monitoring adherence to pace setters / work schedules to complete the learning programme on time. The relevant documents are made available to all schools. Moderation will be done to ensure that quality assessment tasks are administered, evaluated, feedback given and remedial work undertaken. Question banks will be compiled for all grades and will be distributed in electronic format to all schools to support schools in providing quality assessments.

Loss of contact time shall be avoided at all costs. All subjects are to receive enough contact time per subject per day according the prescripts of the curriculum policy.

Teacher Support Programmes

Teacher support is an essential component for implementation of curriculum. The improvement of content knowledge, improvement of pedagogical skills, management of assessment competently, in-class teacher support, education on alternate ways of dealing with indiscipline among learners have

Grade 12 Improvement Plan(continued)

been identified for specific attention in teacher support activities. The mode of support should be school based and should be done in collaboration with teacher unions.

Provision of Resources

The strategy seeks to provide one text book per subject per learner, strengthen retrieval rate of textbooks and provide a desk per learner.

Stakeholder Involvement

Parent involvement in school/ education should be encouraged. Stakeholders shall be mobilized into forums in the municipal ward, circuit, regional and provincial. Each school will identify a patron who will be an ambassador to mobilize support and resources.

Adoption of schools, i.e. performing and underperforming schools will be done by Senior Management. A Senior Manager will be assigned an underperforming and a performing school. Adoption of schools by public representatives shall be encouraged.

Retired educators will be utilized as mentors to motivate and advise learners and educators while partnerships with corporate sector will be established to improve conditions of learning in schools and support teaching and learning.

Systemic Issues

Independent schools will be monitored to check their levels of functionality and deal with those that are underperforming (all independent schools have to reapply for registration as exam centers in compliance with policy). The flow of communication will be managed at various levels of the system to enable schools to get information on time. All intervention and support programmes will be streamlined to have synergy. The programmes shall not be duplicated and wastage of resources will be avoided. A guideline on this will be developed.

.Direct Learner Support

All schools are to be encouraged to provide extra tuition to learners during school holidays, weekends and after contact time. A minimum of one hour study time at least twice a week for all schools will be introduced. The strategy will also re-enforce the utilization of the dial-a-tutor programme, encourage the organisation of Winter schools,

Spring schools and study camps during holidays, facilitate maximum participation in Olympiads and other competitions, distribute supplementary learner support material (Past question papers & memos, Study Mate, Maths 911, learning channel DVDs, etc.) to all schools.

Motivational talks for learners of underperforming schools will also be organised while the availability of scholar transport for deserving learners during all sessions will be ensured. The National Student Nutrition Programme to qualifying schools through out will also be Implemented.

Special and intensive support to Underperforming Schools (below 60%)

There are 360 schools that have obtained below 60%. Special focus will be on the 126 schools that have obtained below 30% as well as on different categories of underperformance. These schools will be monitored, mentored or co-managed. Schools which registered a drop of more than 10% in their 2009 exam average pass percentage will also be supported.

The 21 schools which obtained below 20% for the last two consecutive years are considered to be dysfunctional and will be closely monitored and mentored. These schools will receive letters to explain the causes of their underperformance and to indicate turnaround strategies. Provisions of the Employment of Educators Act pertaining to incapacity will be applied in these schools.

There are 45 schools that have scored below 20% for the first time in 2009, these schools shall be monitored and mentored to improve their performance. There are 172 schools that have obtained between 30% and 50%, these will be specially monitored as they are on the verge of performance.

MONITORING OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

Quarterly Performance Review Summits

The Performance of learners shall be collated, reports drawn and trends identified. Review summits shall be held once per quarter to analyse the findings and to find solutions to remedy challenges identified. The first quarter performance review summit will be regionally based, only the second quarter review summit will be provincial. The strategy will be monitored at three levels (Circuit, Regional and Provincial)■

School Infrastructure Development

Mpumalanga Department of Education embarked on a media tour to showcase the progress made with regard to school infrastructure development. Media houses from around and outside the province were invited to tour the Ehlanzeni Region to witness for themselves and provide an eye for the public.

The tour kicked off with a visit to **Tenteleni Inclusive School** in Kanyamazane. Tenteleni Primary School caters for 1154 learners of which 227 are physically challenged. (Learners who are physically challenged but have full use of their mental abilities).

The school is fitted with ramps and rails to provide easy access for learners on wheelchairs easy access. The ablution facilities are also located closer to the classrooms. Tenteleni also caters for from neighbouring schools who need moderate support. The school is also equipped with a tennis court and a soccer field. On the curriculum front, the school has a fully equipped library, a functional laboratory and a computer centre.

The next stop was the **Shongwe Education Development Centre** located at the former Shongwe Secondary School in Nkomazi. This Education Centre is the first development centre to be built from scratch and was still under construction. It has a hostel facility that will be used to accommodate teachers and learners who will be using the facility to better their knowledge with regard to curricular matters.

The Education Centre will mostly cater for capacity building programmes on subject content, computer training and teaching methodology, educator needs and matters pertaining to classroom teaching and learning.

The contributions of the business community were evident in **Joseph Mathebula Secondary School** which was built by the Buscor Company in honour of one of the company's founders, Mr. Joseph Mathebula. This school, with 22 classrooms, a library, a computer laboratory and a science laboratory, was opened by the founding father of South African Democracy and former President of the Republic, Dr. Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela in 2002. Vodacom donated 12 computers to the computer laboratory of the school. There are also computer lessons conducted on Saturdays at the school.

Department's endeavour to eliminate the backlog of classrooms. Six classrooms were damaged by storms. To offset this challenge, six mobile classrooms were brought in as a temporary measure to ensure that teaching and learning takes place.

Hanyane is Shangaan for “live”. Hanyane Secondary School is testimony of the life that Government aspires for the rural communities. This state of the art school is situated in deep rural Magudu, Nkomazi near the Swaziland border. It is the kind of structure that will make every learner proud of attending school there. Hanyane secondary has 16 completed classrooms and is equipped with all the amenities that make schooling possible such as a library, laboratory, hall and computer laboratory ■



A view of the spectacular Hanyane Secondary School



Shadow Mkhabela getting a helping hand from Nellie Motlala from Tenteleni Inclusive School

Robert Gumede: Ploughing Back to the Community

The business mogul, Mr. Robert Gumede has his heart on the well-being of the less fortunate. He has endeared himself to the hearts of the Kabokweni community through his philanthropy. Mr. Gumede has donated 21 computers to his former primary school, Mgwenyane in Kabokweni. Mgwenyane is just one of the beneficiaries of the computer donation by the billionaire.

The Philanthropist, who also donated an equal number of computers to Thembeke and Khaliphani Secondary Schools, said that he is willing to give bursaries to learners who have passed well and are interested in studying for a degree in Information Technology. He requested school principals to send him the names of such learners through his company, Gijima Ast.

The motive behind these donations is to allow previously disadvantaged pupils to acquire computer skills, which can later transform into multi-million rand companies such as Gijima Ast.

His office offers about 50 bursaries to learners from previously disadvantaged communities with the zeal to study further. His company has dedicated a number of individuals to administer the process of selecting such learners. This office is lead by Ms Thoko Mnyango who is the marketing and communication manager of Gijima Ast.

Mr. Gumede also made a pledge to build a fully functional computer centre that will accommodate the 21 donated computers at Mgwenyane Primary and has already began building a grandstand at the school sports ground.

The MEC for Education, Mrs Reginah Mhaule expressed her gratitude to the philanthropy displayed by Mr. Gumede and challenged other businessmen to plough back into their communities like this true son of the soil.

The excitement and sense of gratitude was written all over the learners' faces as some of them have never touched a computer before. Mr Gumede has made it possible for these young ones to experience the information highway at a tender age and to make research an easy exercise.

This will surely enrich their learning experience by making learning exciting. The digital divide is slowly closing for the Mgwenyane community, thanks to the generosity of Mr. Gumede. We hope that other businesses will follow suit and plough back to communities ■



Good hearted: Mr. Robert Gumede.



Mr. Robert Gumede and MEC Mhaule sharing a thought.



MEC Reginah Mhaule teaching a learner on computer usage.

Lighting up the Peace



Let the light shine: Ms Kedibone Sesenyamotse handing over the Torch of Peace to Mr JM Tshoba.

The Torch of Peace was initiated as a symbol of support for the “16 Days of Activism against violence and abuse of children and women.” This campaign focuses primarily on increasing awareness of the negative impact of violence on women and children and mobilizing all sectors of society to fight and combat it.

To mark the significance of the campaign, a Torch of Peace will burn in all Provincial Education Departments and schools to make schools a place of safety and care. The current spate of violence in schools creates more demand for the Torch of Peace to be lit in every school. On the 26 February 2010, the Torch of Peace ascended the green valleys of Mpumalanga. Lindile High School in Ermelo was afforded the opportunity to play host. Previously, the school has been afflicted by high prevalence of violence, learner misconduct and safety threats.

Learners came in their droves and listened attentively as speakers ascended the podium to speak words aimed at building a new culture and forgot about the violent tendencies. The Northern Cape Department of Education was represented by Chief Director: Ms Kedibone Sesenyamotse, who handed the Torch of Peace over to the Mpumalanga Department of Education represented by the Chief Director: Corporate Services, Mr. JM Tshoba. Ms Kedibone Sesenyamotse intimated how the Torch of Peace will bring light to Lindile High School in particular and the province in general.

In reply, Mr Tshoba implored the learners to take kind words of wisdom from other speakers and change their school. “This Torch of Peace campaign will raise awareness, provide education and ensure effective intervention strategies to prevent learners of Lindile High, as well as other learners from being scarred by the traumatic experience of violence in their lives,” he said.

The Mpumalanga Department of Education had to pass the Torch of Peace to their counterparts in the Free State. On 03 March 2010, Mr. JM Tshoba represented the Office of the MEC and headed to the Free State province to hand over the Torch of Peace to the Deputy Director General: District Management, Mr. MB Monnane. The handover ceremony was held at Lephola Secondary School that is situated in Thabong location. The Department of Education wishes every school to allow the light of the Torch of Peace to burn in their schools by ensuring that every learner's safety is guaranteed. We need learners to be equipped with skills for conflict resolution and conflict management. Community members should take active part in ensuring that safe schools become a reality. Together Educating the Nation. ■

Pitso's Dream Come True

Twenty two years old Pitso Rathaba's big dreams were nearly shattered when he ran short of funds to further his studies while he was at the University of Technology in his province Free State.

In pursuit of a better life, the Botshabelo homeboy headed to Mpumalanga, Secunda, where his father stays because of work commitments.

Though he was in the province to look for a job as his dream of studying was already dying slowly, he heard advertisement on radio, about the courses offered at the Gert Sibande FET College.

“Wow! I rushed the following day to make personal enquiries and I was told that there were also bursary opportunities available,” said Pitso who was the second best student at the College in the 2009 academic year.

Currently, he is registered for level 3 under Office Administration at the Evander Campus of the college. He has vowed to even produce better results in the current year.

During the November 2009 National Certificate Vocational results, Pitso obtained six clean distinctions and one B symbol, with an average of 82,2%.

“The secret to obtain excellent results is to always be at least two chapters ahead of the lecturer,” Pitso said. He is quite confident that he can do the same, if not better in the current year, let alone 2011, which will be his final year at the college.

The soft spoken Pitso would like to be one of the great help givers in the country. He believes that life is a puzzle to be figured out. He concedes that some people need help to be able to negotiate the paths of life to success and would love to be one dishing out the help.

The Mpumalanga Department of Education wishes Pitso all the best in his studies and future endeavours.

Pitso is currently financed by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme bursary and has vowed to make the best of it. He aspires to having a formal qualification in Law (LLB) and become a reputable lawyer ■



Mr. Pitso Rathaba

Graduation Ceremony



MEC Reginah Mhaule congratulates a diplomat while the ETDP SETA CEO, Ms Nombulelo Nxesi looks on

The 16 March 2010 was a great day for all the students who came from the four corners of the Province for their graduation. In the quest to alleviate skills shortages, the Mpumalanga Department of Education has worked in collaboration with the ETDP SETA to empower the people of the Province. This has been done through the enrolment of students with various institutions of higher learning.

The Department of Education, together with ETDP SETA, celebrated the graduation of ninety four (94) learners in different learnerships.

Thirty learners graduated in Project Management, fifty in Business Administration and fourteen in Occupationally Directed Education, Training and Development (ODETD).

The learners who participated in the learnerships came from the four regions of the Province and the ceremony was a culmination of a year that was characterized by training and dynamic interaction between stakeholders that included the service providers. Regenesys offered courses in Project Management, KLM in Business Administration and Very Cool Ideas in ODETD.

The MEC for Education, Mrs Reginah Mhaule said, "I am deeply impressed in that all these certificates are not of 'FLY BY NIGHT' nature, they are candidly accredited. This is the time for me to convey my congratulations to the graduates. From the depth of my heart, I want to say to you: 'A Big Well Done, fellow compatriots. You have made us proud'.

"Let me hasten to indicate that I am indebted to ETDP SETA for putting the Mpumalanga Province's citizens on the skills development map. ETDP SETA has over the years demonstrated a steady adherence to the working partnership with the Mpumalanga Government," the MEC concluded.

Write to Us



Please send us your comments, suggestions, criticism and any information that may help to improve the delivery of quality education in this province.

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