

# Northern Cape Teaching Awards 2019

Keynote Address by Premier of the Northern Cape, Dr.  
Zamani Saul

Mittah Seperepere Convention Centre

Thursday, 3 October 2019

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The Members of the Executive Council for the Department  
of Education: Mr. Mac Jack;

Members of the Executive Council and the Legislature of  
the Northern Cape;

Collective Leadership of the ANC led Alliance;

Head of the Department Education: Mr GT Pharasi;

Senior Managers and Departmental Officials present;

Worker and/or Teacher Unions;

SGB's, Stakeholders and Partners in the Education Sector;

Most importantly, the Educators, the Provincial Finalists of  
the 2019 Northern Cape Teaching Awards;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Distinguished guests;

## Programme Director

It is an honour, and, of course one is also humbled by the request of MEC for Education: Mr. Mac Jack to give an address for such a remarkable and distinguished group of educators who represents the best that the Northern Cape can offer. I'm humbled because there are so many outstanding, passionate, creative educators out there who challenge, inspire, and support their learners every day. You are fine examples of incredible educators who have made a world of difference within their communities, and who continues to inspire, not only your learners, but also your fellow educators.

As a matter of fact, Ladies and Gents, allow me to digress in highlighting some of the few matters that the Provincial Administration needs to deal with, which are of course the mandate of the Department of Education. Factors that are taking place at the school level and needs to be eradicated at all costs are:

- Learner Pregnancy;
- Teacher-Learner Sexual Affairs;
- Corporal Punishment Isolated Cases;

- Learner Attacking Teachers;
- Alcohol, Drug and Substance Abuse; and
- Gangsterism.

I am mentioning some of these issues because we expect teachers to be a leading force in collaboration with parents to address these social ills manifesting themselves at the school level.

In an endeavour to address some of these issues, the 6<sup>th</sup> Administration Cabinet has since tasked the MEC of the Department of Education: Mr. Jack to convene a School Safety Summit which will bring all stakeholders together that will yield a strategy of how to address crime at the school level. In addition, we expect the department to eradicate mud schools and pit-latrines, as well as to come up with a sustainable solution towards the exorbitant learner transport money that the Department is paying.

Ladies and Gents, in the contemporary development, we noted with concern, misleading media reports and social media posts claiming that learners could leave school in grade 9. That is far from the truth.

The GEC certificate is predicated on the 3-Stream Model which has the academic pathway, the technical vocational pathway and the technical/occupational pathway.

The plan aims to send more learners into technical education. Under the technical vocational stream, there was a target of 10 000 artisans per year. The Department has also introduced new subjects - technical mathematics and technical science - which could be referred to as applied mathematics and applied science. These were relevant in supporting areas of specialization and schools that offer these subject were currently being unveiled in different parts of the country.

Apart from facilitating the transition from school to college, a GEC would address the current problem of hundreds of thousands of young people leaving education completely each year with no national qualification with which to navigate the labour market.

The purpose of awarding a General Education Certificate (GEC) is to equip learners with the values, knowledge and skills that will enable or enhance meaningful participation in society, contribute towards developing sustainable communities, provide a basis for learning in further education and training, and establish a firm foundation for

skills develop that will prepare learners for the workplace (SAQA: 2001).

The GEC (Schools) at the end of Grade 9 acknowledges a broad foundation of knowledge and skills as a basis for further learning and study, which could happen in a range of further education institutions. Offering a GEC is not an indication of the exit of learners from a learning pathway in schools but provides better decision-making for and access to further learning after Grade 9.

Be as it may, today is a celebration of seeing our teachers succeed, hence our deliberate efforts to acknowledge and recognize their efforts and the extra miles that they undertake at ensuring that they shape and produce for our communities. You have shown your quality, your commitment and your love for the teaching profession.

Education contributes to the well-being of each citizen and the overall development of the country. It is not only a medium to improve productivity and growth of the economy, but is also an effective tool of enlarging and raising participation in democracy, reforming if not the transformation of a society. Thus, the role of education is very important in every Nation and the teachers take a leading role to nurse the process of cognitive human growth

and development through quality teaching from a very fundamental, up to an advanced stage.

In this modern era, where our students are pounded every day by the digital maze, a publishing scholar in the field of Education Alvin Toffler, in his book, Future Shock wrote “The illiterate of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn”. Education must become a lifelong endeavour, and sources for education need to evolve to provide those opportunities. Attributes such as creativity, curiosity and design-thinking will be essential for the future workplace. People will no longer start a career path and only grow with one role, so nurturing competent lifelong learners becomes essential for the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution (4IR).

Our teachers play an important role in this regard in helping our children - learners navigate this mass of information at a very young age; about learning the values of mutual respect, responsibilities and how to treat each other. More importantly, how to instil the culture of their moral compass and thinking capacities to guide them in life on an everyday basis.

Teachers are at the heart of the Education system. Teachers take it upon themselves to guide, creating the

time and space for learners to better understand themselves, their strengths and weaknesses and even interests and passions. They know that it is more important for a child to grow into a confident, empathetic and resilient individual – all the attributes that make a complete person without being jealous of the future prospects of such stars.

The tremendous effort teachers put into the training of the country's future manpower is invaluable and must, therefore, be recognised as such. Teachers are the most important components of the education system. Academic developments of teachers are crucial and necessary for the success of the education system because teachers are the prime movers and catalysts of all round development of learners. Teachers play a significant role not only in improving the quality of education but also maintaining it; the professional upgrading of a teacher is a key guarantee of quality education. Continuous up-grading of knowledge enhancement systems for the professional efficiency of the teachers that goes to contribute towards inculcating high professional competency amongst learners, therefore becomes important.

I would, therefore, like to take this opportunity to salute all teachers for giving it their best as classroom teachers. At

every point in one's life, the teacher's influence is very much prominent. The teacher acts as the guide for life, shows the path towards success and enriches the personality of his/her learners by imparting academic, professional and ethical knowledge.

Education must not only empower the learner to do things, it must ensure the development of his or her body and mind-intelligence, sensibility, aesthetic sense, personal sense of responsibility and spiritual values. It should also develop the learner's physical ability, the power of reasoning and judgement, motivation and ability to communicate with the universe.

Being a teacher is so much more than standing in front of a class teaching. The best teachers are happy to extend their role beyond lecturing because they know it makes the learners educational experience so much more beneficial.

Many learners suffer from lack of parental contact at home. In fact, there are students whose parents leave for work before they wake up for school, and who return from work after they've gone to bed. Parents may be either working many hours and unable to be with their children or they're absent from their children's lives.



As a teacher, you may find certain learners who lean on you for support and come to you for advice or to share their good news. Positive adult contact is crucial to raising well-balanced children, and teachers are often given the charge of being surrogate parents for their learners.

Learners look to teachers as examples of professional adults. They often have more contact with their teachers than their own parents, so it's important for teachers to always reflect a positive image and teach children things like respect, trust, and responsibility.

In conclusion, as teachers, we need to constantly remind ourselves that, for our nation to develop, we all need to play our individual roles very well. Let us all discipline ourselves to do what is right and important, although difficult. I also urge our teachers to also take advantage of the several opportunities for continuous education and self-development to sharpen your teaching skills in these times of continuous change. This will ensure you will always remain current and will be in a better position to impart modern and relevant knowledge to your learners.

Lastly, I want to take this opportunity to appreciate the role of all Teacher Unions in the manner in which they supported the National Teaching Awards.

Our Teacher Unions are our important and valued stakeholders and we want to thank you for your dedication to the noble cause of educating our nation.

I also would like to thank and acknowledge the invaluable sponsorship by Phakama Research, Vuyani Monyabisi, Old Mutual, NCEDA, BBB Mojake, and ETDP SETA. Should it not being of your invaluable contributions, this programme would have not being a success.

When we say that education is a societal responsibility, this is what we really mean. Thank you very much for your generosity and commitment in education.

Partnerships of this nature are very crucial if we are to achieve a better future for our country. Thank you for investing in the future of our children. It is indeed partnerships such as these that will enable us to provide quality education to our children.

Congratulations to all recipients of the prestigious teaching awards! I wish all of our Provincial Winners well, and trust that they will fly the Northern Cape flag high at the National Teaching Awards.

Enjoy your evening with us!

I thank you!!!