

# **Keynote address by the Premier of the Northern Cape, Ms Sylvia Lucas at the Matric Awards**

**AGS Tabernacle**

**5 January 2017**

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**Programme Director**

**Members of the Northern Cape Executive Council**

**Speaker, Deputy Speaker and Members of the Provincial Legislature**

**District and Local Mayors present**

**Director General, Mr. Justice Bekebeke**

**Representatives from Standard Bank, Scarlett Mining and MTN present**

**Senior Government officials present**

**Educators, parents and learners**

**Members of the media**

**Ladies and gentlemen**

It is that time of the year again where we come together to announce and also celebrate the outcomes of the much anticipated 2016 National Senior Certificate examinations. It is always both an exciting and a tense time, but is definitely a time that all those who sat for this all important examination look forward to and we are exceptionally pleased to spend this

important day with the top achievers of the Northern Cape and all key stakeholders in education in our beautiful province.

The outcomes of the National Examinations are perhaps the most important occasion in the Educational Cycle of our learners and these results are closely watched and commented on. We should be cognisant of the fact that the results are a reflection of the effectiveness of our education system.

At this point, **Ladies and gentlemen**, allow me to highlight some of our achievements:

- For the 2016 academic year, a total number of Ten Thousand and Forty Two (10 042) learners sat for their Final Examinations.
- Our pass rate significantly increased from 69.4% to 78.7%
- We recorded the highest improvement nationally. This by no means is an easy feat and we are extremely proud of the Class of 2016.
- 20 schools obtained a pass rate of 100%, compared to the 9 schools in 2015;
- 1 649 candidates obtained distinctions, compared to the 1 381 in 2015;
- 2 606 candidates obtained access to Bachelor degree university entrance, compared to the 2 451 in 2015;

- Namakwa District is the top performing district with a pass rate of 91% and we extend our sincere congratulations to the Region. You have laid down a serious challenge to the other Regions for 2017 and I encourage the Regions to work tirelessly to topple Namakwa this year.
- All Districts achieved above 70% pass rate;
- We have reduced the number of underperforming schools from 39 in 2015 to 20 in 2016;
- Kharkams High School is the top performing Quintile 1 school in the province with a pass rate of 97.8% and;
- Rietvale High School showed the best improvement from 35, 3% in 2015 to 94.1% in 2016. You will agree with me Ladies and gentlemen, that this is a remarkable achievement and I commend the staff and learners as well as all those, including the parents who contributed to this enormous achievement. You can leave here today loud and proud of what you have achieved. It is simply amazing and once again, well done.

**Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls,** to declare that we are proud of the result is perhaps an understatement. Bearing this in mind, we also have to be realistic and acknowledge that we can do better. Judging by the performance of the Class of 2016, I am confident that we will do better.

The class of 2017 can be assured of our continued support and commitment as they embark on the beginning of the end of their schooling career. My appeal is that all of us, educators, learners and management start very early and leave nothing to chance.

Most of the learners who will receive awards at this ceremony here today studied under particularly difficult circumstances and we are proud of what you have accomplished. Celebrate today bearing in mind that this is but the start of your journey to adulthood and excellence. You have laid a strong foundation upon which you can build and prosper.

Education remains a central, critical determinant of the economic and social success of any country. It is probably the most effective means to eradicate poverty and ensure prosperity and growth.

Our Government has developed a basic education sector plan and is called: “Action Plan to 2014: Towards the realisation of Schooling 2025”. This is a long range plan to respond to the challenges our Education System are faced with.

Based on this sector plan, the President with Ministers and MECs has signed a delivery agreement with clear outputs to improve the quality of basic education. The agreement expects from Provincial Departments to meet the following:

**Improve the quality of teaching and learning focusing on:**

- Improving teacher capacity and practices
- Increase access to high quality learning materials

**Undertake regular assessment to track progress focusing on:**

- Establishing a world class system of standardised national assessments
- Extract key lessons from on-going participation in international assessments

**Improve early childhood development focusing on:**

- Ensuring universal access to Grade R
- Improving quality of Early Childhood Development

**Ensuring credible outcomes focussed planning and accountability system focusing on:**

- Strengthening school management and promote functional schools
- Strengthening the capacity of district offices

**Ladies and gentlemen**, creating an enabling environment where learners can learn and teachers can teach not only rests on the shoulders of Government, but calls for a collective approach and action. We therefore call upon all relevant stakeholders to play their part in ensuring that education becomes a societal matter. Education is not about a classroom and a book. All role players need to join hands to ensure that this is realised and that what we have achieved thus far is sustained and improved.

To those learners who could not succeed, there is always another tomorrow. John Maxwell once said, **“A successful person is somebody who once failed but told himself that he is not a failure”**. Failure is not a permanent feature but a temporary inconvenience that serves as a source of experience. All learners should immediately register and start preparing for the supplementary exams without delay. We want you to succeed and as Government, we will support you to do so.

To the successful learners, especially, the top achievers of our Province we again extend our congratulations. As you move on to the next step of this journey called life I would like to impart

important advise as so eloquently stated by Robin Sharma when he said:

**“Success is created through the performance of a few small daily disciplines that stack up over time to produce achievements far beyond anything you could have ever planned for”. “Daily ripples of excellence – overtime – become a tsunami of success”.**

To our educators, who are often blamed for all the failures of the system, you have unleashed the natural powers that Robin Sharma mentioned in his book, ‘The leader who had no title’, “Every one of us alive today has the power to inspire, influence and elevate each person we meet by the gift of a great example. And you need no title to do that. Every one of us alive with life can passionately drive positive change in the face of negative conditions. And you need no title to do that”.

Added to our efforts and support to students, the establishment of the Sol Plaatjie University, will definitely have a positive development on education and our students going forward. In the same vein we wish to encourage learners to make this University their higher learning institution of choice and personal development as we forge ahead to 2017 and beyond.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Executive Council and the entire Provincial Administration, I express our gratitude to the collective who made 2016 a memorable year. We will however not rest until we are number one in the Country and for that to happen we need to work together and we need to work harder. The Class of 2016 has set a standard and a challenge- and on behalf of the Class of 2017 I say- challenge accepted.

**I thank you.**