



Remarks at the Opening of Autumn Schools by the Acting MEC for Education Mr Gift van Staden.

Diamantveld High School

Kimberley Girls High School

Kimberley,

3 April 2017

Programme Director

Ladies and gentlemen

Today marks a very exciting day in your academic career. Today will see you strengthening the firm foundation whereupon you will built your future as you pave the way to a life filled with promise and opportunity.

Education is seen as the foundation of every prosperous and progressive community, society and nation. It is one of the top priorities of government and we will pursue this goal of a well educated nation to the fullest. It is on this premise that the Northern Cape Provincial Government is committed to ensure that we

wholeheartedly and with the resources at our disposal, invest in the education and development of our young people both in school and out of school.

The matric class of 2016 has done us immensely proud by allowing us to be the Province with the most improved matric results. The overall Grade 12 pass rate increased from 69,4% to 78.7%. That represents an increase of 9.3% - the highest in the country. We are delighted by the progress made and once more congratulate our learners and moreover, our educators who sacrificed their time and comforts to ensure that our children receive the best possible aid to realize their dreams of furthering their education.

On behalf of Government I wish to acknowledge and relay our gratitude to all teachers who individually and collectively contributed to our improved performance. The challenge therefore is laid down to you to do better. And I, looking around here am confident that you will accept this challenge.

We acknowledge that we can do better and better we shall do. Especially in the field of mathematics and the sciences and judging from the performance of the class of 2016 I am confident that the class of 2017 will indeed do better. We also acknowledge that many deserving and promising students miss their opportunity to further

their studies due to various reasons, the biggest being financial constraints.

And this intervention today is but one of the many means by which this caring government invest in our young people. You are our future and it is time that you realise the great responsibility that comes with it. You as you are gathered here today is regarded as the cream of the crop and it is important that you understand the roles you fulfil in society today and that that will be required of you in future. And I promise you that if you sacrifice your time now and work tirelessly to that goal of tomorrow, your future shall be as you say... lit. It will be hot and you will throw shade and show flames to the ones who chose to blow away the opportunities presented today.

The Provincial Government sees as very critical the need to assist students who sometimes cannot further or complete their studies due to a lack of finances. This is also in line with ensuring that we build a suitably qualified and skilled youth and in turn a prosperous Province.

One of our biggest challenges during the school holiday period is that children are left unsupervised. Young people often make unhealthy and risky lifestyle choices because they have limited access to recreational opportunities. This is particularly the case in high crime and gang activity areas. But as much as we can blame government

for the lack of recreational facilities we should also understand that the choice to do right and the choice to do wrong rests with the individual. You made that conscious decision to come here today and that is commendable. Your peers chose not to and instead spend their time idle and in wrong company. This is a partnership we are in. And as with any partnership it requires of both partners to work together to make it work. Working together we will make our country work.

Although the province registered a huge increase in pass rate it lacked the same performance in the quality of the passes. The bachelor performance percentage was below the target of 26%, set by the Department of Basic Education..

Poor performance in the 2016 NSC when compared to other Provinces. The Inter-provincial comparison shows that we performed below expected levels, especially in the STEM subjects: Mathematics, 5th in the country, Physical Science, 8th in the country and Life Science, 6th in the country.

Economics was the only commerce subject to show substantial improvement. The Inter-provincial performance level of the commerce subjects was as follows: Economics, 3rd in the country,

Accounting, 5th in the country and Business Studies, 5th in the country.

As part of and beyond our partnership with students, the Department of Education has introduced these Autumn Schools for 234 Progressed and modulated learners, 2123 borderline learners and 180 top-achieving learners. This intervention has proven to be successful in the past since its aim is to (1) reinforce classroom learning by allowing learners to put their knowledge and skills into practice through revision exercises and consolidation of content and (2) To facilitate the teaching of certain skills which are problematic, through the deployment of remediation exercises.

Top-achieving learners offering Mathematics and Physical Sciences have been enrolled in a special camp through a collaboration between the Northern Cape Department of Education and The University of Stellenbosch.

Our combined efforts as Government, civil society organisations, parents and communities at large can help ensure that no children are put at risk during the summer holiday period. I would like to wish all the Grade 12's the very best of luck with their studies over the holidays and for what is the most important examinations they will write in their school careers.

Primarily, the onus is now on you – the candidate. Nothing is ever achieved without hard work, and I have every confidence that you will make yourselves and the Northern Cape very proud.

Thank you.