

Speech to Learners and Educators

Opening of Schools

11 January 2017

Mayor and Councillors present;

Principal;

Teachers and Educators;

Religious Leaders;

Members of the School Governing Body;

Parents present;

Ladies and Gentleman;

Most importantly, our learners

I am bringing greetings to all of you this morning from the entire Executive of the Northern Cape Provincial Government. I am also happy that learners, teachers, parents are ready for the first day of the academic years.

The ANC – LED Government has taken a decision to prioritize Education and make it a societal issue. This decision must be understood clearly by all of us.

FOR LEARNERS

This decision means you will be at school every day, doing your school work without fail. It means you will respect the rules of the school, your teachers and your peers.

FOR TEACHERS

This decision means there will be greater accountability expected about your work. It means you must be at work, on time, teaching. It also means you will uphold the integrity of the profession in the eyes of your community at all material times.

FOR THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM (SMT)

This decision means that they must focus their energies in building better teams and ensuring that teachers perform at their best and are supported in a structured way.

The SMT must ensure that the school performs in line with the priorities set out and they must also manage and monitor adherence to curriculum implementation.

IMPROVED QUALITY OF BASIC EDUCATION

Our focus this year will be on Learner Achievement because, we all want Improved Quality of Basic Education and Better Performance by our children. We are confident that the building blocks for a high performing system are in place.

The school has received a full Staff Establishment, all its Allocations, Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) has been delivered and work must begin.

This also means that the School Management must familiarise themselves with Action Plan 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025 because improving performance is at the heart of Basic Education.

So quite clearly, the improvement of Learning Outcomes is a key requirement from all schools.

We are also calling for more structured focus in the Foundation Phase because as we know, there have been low levels of Reading and Writing as demonstrated in the Provincial Reading Programme. Reading is at the heart of Learning.

As part of improving Learning Outcomes, we are also saying communities should help us as well, because other reasons inhibiting achievement of Learning Outcomes are related to Parental Involvement.

We are saying parents are a catalyst in helping their children to perform at the highest level and attending School every day.

It must be the duty of a parent or guardian to sit with the child every day and do cooperative learning. This form of support is critical in developing self-discipline in children for the future.

The department has also ensured that we provide critical interventions as part of improving learning outcomes and promoting access and equity. The department has declared 80% of our schools No-Fee Schools, the Provision of the National School Nutrition Scheme, the Learner Transport Initiative, the provision of free LTSM. Through these interventions, we are removing the obstacles inhibiting access and ensuring that All Children can perform at their best irrespective of their parent's material conditions.

ON GOVERNANCE

The SGBs elections have passed and we are expecting cordial working relationship between the SMTs and SGBs. This means that all parents must take the responsibility of supporting Governance. We are calling on our structures, councillors, ward committees, Church and Youth Leaders to start mobilising parents behind supporting schools and the education of our children.

Stability in our schools is critical. For this to happen, we need men and women in the SGBs who will serve honestly and for the benefit of our children and communities.

SGBs are critical in ensuring that the school remain a safe haven for our children to learn.

Today we will be handing over school bags and stationary to the learners I do hope that initiative will reap off positive results to ensure that we establish an environment for quality learning. We will continue to invest in the future of our learners, which will guarantee them success.

We wish all learners the very best in this new academic year and call upon all stakeholders to work with us to improve the quality of education in our schools.

I thank you!