

**KEY NOTE ADDRESS ON THE SCHOOL OPENING**

**BY HON. MN MOKOENA MPL,**

**MEC: COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS**

**VULINDLELA SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL, KABOKWENI**

**13 JANUARY 2010**

**THEME: "MAKING EDUCATION TO BE EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS"**

The Principal

Educators

Members of the SGB

Learners Representative Council

Union leaders and Parents

Learners

It is my privilege and honour to be part of this historic, year 2010 school opening programme. As a Provincial Government we have decided that Education must be elevated from being a departmental issue, or even a government issue, to a societal issue - one that occupies the attention and energy of all our people. We are making all efforts to ensure that we all active players in crafting a bright future for our children and indeed our country through quality education. Education remains fundamental to the achievement of the society envisaged in the Freedom Charter.

Teachers are the critical element in our important task of ensuring quality education for all children. Teachers continue to be nation builders and we are proud of your contributions through the production of leaders in politics, business, doctors, lawyers and engineers. We are also grateful about the achievement of the school in producing academics giants, such as **Dr Maphanga (Surgery at Kanyamazane)**, **Dr Maseko (An Optimetrist at Kabokweni)** to mention but few. In sports, your school has produced top players like **David Nyathi, former Kaizer Chiefs, Orlando Pirates and Bafana Bafana** player. You have also made a mark, by producing a **Chess Player Champion in Sifiso Mahlangu**, who represented Mpumalanga in the National Championship. We are still expecting more with regard to nation building including a resolute commitment to the profession.

On the 9 January 2010, during the ANC January 8<sup>th</sup> Statement, the President reiterated our set of non-negotiables “Our teachers must commit to a set of non-negotiables - **to be in school, in class and teaching for seven hours, on time, everyday, no abuse of learners and no neglect of duty**. Equally we have agreed on some set of non-negotiables for learners: “**Learners must accept that the main reason for being in school is to learn and develop academically, socially and culturally, adhere to school rules, do your homework at all times, respect the legitimacy and authority of teachers**”.

As government we have similarly, committed ourselves to restore, uphold and promote the status of teachers by remunerating them as professionals and improving the conditions in which they work. As the province shall pay a particular focus in developing the capacity of our teachers, improving the capabilities of our existing educators while training a new generation of teachers equipped with the enthusiasm, values and skills that will be needed to build a new education system. This approach necessitates a new approach to quality teacher training.

As a province we offer our congratulations to the matriculants of 2009, for their hard work and dedication, and to the parents, teachers and officials who provided support and encouragement. The National pass rate of the National Senior Certificate examinations for 2009 is **60.7%**. This means that there is a slight decline in the pass rate from **2008 of 2%** across the country. In Mpumalanga, the pass rate dropped from **51.8% in 2008 to 47.9% in 2009**. A decline of **3, 9%**. I have noted that your school in 2007 achieved **74%**, which was good and last year you dropped to **19%**. In 2009 you got 25, 8%. This is a cause for serious concern for all of us.

These results indicate, however, that there is still a long path that needs to be travelled before we can achieve a pass rate appropriate to the requirements of a successful nation. As citizens of this province we need to begin now to respond to the challenges of education, and revive the proud tradition of activism that was once the hallmark of education struggles like “back to school campaign”/ “it’s cool to be a student” etc.

Our provincial government’s commitment to Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign has started and reconfirmed by the MEC for Education, Ms Reginah Mhaule, at the occasion of the announcement of the 2009 Matric results. She committed all of us in that the province will spare no effort to accelerate and ensure excellence in the delivery of quality education in Mpumalanga. She further made a call that no school-going child should be out of school missing out on the opportunity to learn. To all learners, let us embrace this commitment.

We will work together with educators, parents, school governing bodies and other stakeholders to make education the priority of all. I wish all of you a successful 2010 schooling year and we shall walk side by side in making history to be seen by the generations to come.

Working together, we can do more to improve our children future through education!!  
The doors of learning and culture have been opened to all!!

**'Making Education Everybody's Business'**

I THANK YOU