

REMARKS OF THE EASTERN CAPE EDUCATION MEC MANDLA MAKUPULA, MEDIA BRIEFING ON THE RELEASE OF THE 2011 NSC EXAMINATION RESULTS AT THE EDUCATION LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE, STIRLING, EAST LONDON, THURSDAY 5 JANUARY 2012

Madam Premier

Members of the Provincial Executive Council

Members of the Provincial Legislature

Heads of Department

Other Distinguished Guests

Members of the Media Fraternity

Ladies and Gentlemen

Once again, welcome and thank you for joining us as we unveil the New Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grade 12 Class of 2011. This takes place against the backdrop of momentous occasion for our country's ruling party, The African National Congress, as it will, in a few days, on the 8th January 2012, be kick-starting its centenary celebrations, a huge milestone for the continent's oldest liberation organisation. Whilst this is indeed a good reason to celebrate, it is also an opportunity to undertake a comprehensive introspection about whether we are living up to the expectations of our founding fathers who dared to dream of a world without oppression and racial domination.

Education remains a key priority for our government, that means each and every one of us are obliged to do everything in our power to ensure that we optimise the utilisation of the significant resources that have been availed to us.

The Department is working very to ensure that our systems fully adhere to the expectations spelt out in the framework of the *Action Plan to 2014: Towards the realisation of Schooling 2025*, which is long term plan that seeks to develop intervention to respond to the continued shortfalls in parts of our education system.

Indeed, it is common knowledge that our past challenges have also resulted in an intervention from national government, which sought to assist in ensuring that basic systemic operations are normalised. President Jacob Zuma has emphasised the country's expectation in our province by imploring that, *"There is a lot that must be corrected to normalise education delivery in the province. We are very optimistic and determined to make this intervention a success. As of now, everybody must focus on ... children. They must not be further disadvantaged, they deserve the best quality service like all other children"*.

In that regard, the department is working hard to ensure that the challenges that confronted us at the beginning of last year including scholar transport programme, delivery of learner & teacher support programme, the school nutrition programme and the issue of temporary educators.

The provincial government took a decision to relocate the scholar transport programme to the provincial Department of Transport as at the beginning of this financial year. A lot of work has been done by the two departments to ensure that a comprehensive verification is undertaken of all the learners who are supposed to benefit from this programme, thereby eliminate the fraud and corruption that had bedevilled this programme. This intervention has indeed greatly improved this programme and the systems that have been put in place are welcomed as they have enhanced transparency in its operations.

The department has also developed systems to deal with the procurement and delivery of LTSM in a structured manner that seeks to fast-track the timeous delivery of required materials. As we speak, the delivery of stationery to all our section 20 schools, which commenced on the 29 November 2011, will be finalised on the 13 January 2012. Deliveries to section 21 schools will also be finalised on the 9th January 2012. Delivery of CAPS textbooks for the foundation phase (Grade 1 – 3) and Grade 10 for both section 20 and 21 will commence on the 11 January 2012 to ensure that by the end of January deliveries are finalised.

The delivery of the School Nutrition Programme has been greatly improved through a decision taken to decentralise it to the schools, with full management of budget and procurement of required foodstuffs. That has greatly empowered the schools and local communities as they now have a direct role in determining the kind and quality of food consumed by their children.

In order to put to rest the issue of provision of teachers for our schools, the Department is currently in the process of implementing the 2012 Post Provision declared in September last year. That entails ensuring that our teachers are correctly located in schools that are in need of their services. This is the most crucial aspect for the Department if we are ever to decisively deal with the issue of perennial over-expenditure.

RELEASE OF 2011 RESULTS

In releasing the results for the academic year 2011, it is my pleasure to present the results of all grades from Grade 1 to 12, although the main focus for today is the Grade 12 class of 2011.

Whilst the results of all Grades from 1 to 11 are contained in the results booklet, I wish to draw attention to the performance of learners in the nationally prioritised grades. In Grades 3 the pass rate was %, the pass rate in Grade 6 was % and in Grade 9 it was %.

GRADE 12 RESULTS

I now turn my attention to the highlight of the day: the release of results of the Grade 12 Class of 2011.

It is my privilege and pleasure to inform you that the Provincial Education Department released this morning, the results of 65 359 learners who have done us proud.

The class of 2011 has recorded a pass rate of 58.1%, which is a decrease of 0.2% compared to the 58.3% achieved in 2010. Whilst we set a target above 60% for this year, buoyed by our significant improvement last year, it is quite obvious that a lot of work still needs to be done to regain the momentum brought about by our interventions. The current performance unfortunately places us last amongst the other provinces.

The number of candidates qualifying for admission to a Bachelor Degree increased from 10 225 to 10 291. Diploma courses increased from 15 281 to 15 530, which is an increase from 23.8% and for Higher Certificate from 11 711 to 12 102. This would suggest that qualitatively our results have indeed shown an improvement.

There are still pleasing qualitative improvements in spite of our disappointing setback that has resulted in our marginal decline; for instance, the province has increased the number of schools that have performed at 100% from 44 in 2010 to 47 in 2011. Furthermore, the number of schools performing at below 60% has decreased from 497 in 2010 to 481 in 2011, a reduction of 16 schools.

ANALYSIS OF 2011 RESULTS

In 2011, there were 68 123 full time candidates who enrolled for the National Senior Certificate Exams but 64 090 wrote. The analysis of the results for 2011 is as follows:

1.1 SUBJECT PERFORMANCE

In the high enrolment examinable subjects, the province has produced varying results with some improving, whilst others have shown a worrying decline. English 1st additional language has again shown consistent increase, moving from 89.6% in 2010 to 92.9% in 2011. Agricultural Science continues to also show consistency in its progress, moving from 68% to 73.2% in 2011, coming from a low base of 47% in 2008.

In 2010 there was a significant improvement of 14.62% in Physical Sciences, where 27 163 wrote and obtained a pass rate of 43.3%, compared to the pass rate of 2009 which was 28.6%. That improvement has been sustained again in 2011, with Physical Science improving to 46%. On the other hand, Life Sciences has marginally decreased by 0.8% from 65.9% to 65.1%.

Mathematics continues to be a challenge even this year. The pass rate has declined from 37.3% in 2010 to 33.5%, a decrease of 4.1%. Maths Literacy recorded a 79% pass rate which is a marginal decrease of 1%.

Whilst History recorded a pass percentage rate of 73.2% last year, this year it has declined significantly to 64.4% which is a decrease of 9.2%. Geography again declined by 5% from 66.8 % in 2010 to 61.8%. In the commercial field, Accounting declined by 7.77 % from 61.9% pass rate in 2010 to 54.13%. In contrast, Business Studies has increased from 64% to 72%, which is even more

heartening when you consider that the actual number of learners taking the subject has increased from 21 797 in 2010 to 22 270 in 2011, which signifies a quantitative and qualitative improvement.

1.2 DISTRICT PERFORMANCE

The numbers of underperforming districts, performing at below 60%, are still a still a worrying factor, even as the number has marginally decreased from 12 to 11. The **best performing District** in the province for 2011 is Cradock, where 601 candidates obtained a pass rate of 73.8%. This is a marginal decline of 1.5 % by the District. Still, congratulations are due to Cradock on their continued hard work and achievement. Maluti comes closely behind at 71.8%, from 69.4%. Congratulations to them as well.

The **most improved district** in the province for 2011 is Mt Fletcher, with an increase of 13.5%. The pass rate for 2010 was 54.9% compared to 68.5% in 2011.

The **lowest district pass rate** has been recorded by Libode at 39.8%.

As much as the number of underperforming districts has increased, it is also significant that there have been a few districts that have achieved significant improvements in their overall performance; these include: Mt Fletcher by 13.5%, followed by Cofimvaba which recorded 12.3%.

WAY FORWARD IN 2012

As the department, it is imperative that we recommit ourselves to the fundamental tenets and resolve spelt out in the Learner Attainment Improvement Strategy (LAIS) that was the basis for stabilisation and systemic improvement we experienced over the past four (4) years. In pursuit thereof we will continue to focus on the following key strategic interventions:

- **Improving management and governance systems:**

Leadership remains the biggest factor in determining a school's capacity to respond to learner expectations of deriving quality learning and teaching in our schools. As the Department, we will continue to focus on interventions that seek to strengthen School Management teams, District Based Support Teams and School Governing Bodies.

- **Implementation of CAPS:**

The focus on teaching learning and assessment as the core business of education shall remain a fundamental pillar of our turnaround strategy. The implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement in Grades 1 – 3 and 10 will further assist us in standardising specific learning content for each grade and the concomitant assessment.

- **Integrated Human Resource Development Strategy**

Strengthening management and leadership and management at all levels as well as bridging content gap for teachers in all subjects and learning areas in the GET and FET band.

- **Refining Quality Learning & Teaching Campaign (QLTC) engagement systems**

In response to the President's call that education should reclaim its position as a societal issue, the department will continue to mobilize all stakeholders around the agenda of education transformation, parents, traditional leaders, religious fraternity and social partners

- **Resourcing Education**

Addressing physical resource backlogs as well as the schools destroyed by tornados, human resource challenges and timely supply of LTSM to schools.

Conclusion

It is indeed a fact that the year 2011 was marred by many issues, that unfortunately played out in the public domain, and had the unfortunate effect of re-enforcing all of the negative stereotypes that have come to be associated with our Department. In second half of the year, we worked very hard, with the assistance of government, to put in place support systems and an overarching turnaround framework geared responding holistically to all of the myriad of issues that were at the root of our malaise and structural weaknesses that had led to the implementation of the Section 100 (1) (b) by the national government. As I have spelt out at the onset of this statement, the four critical areas of concern, namely Scholar Transport, School Nutrition, delivery of learner support materials and adequate teaching complement for our schools, have all been dealt with adequately, and are now no longer a source of concern for the Department.

It is now in the best interest of all of us to now focus all of our efforts on instilling cohesion, unity of purpose and stability. We all need stability for all of us to work for a singular goal of reclaiming the heritage of our province as the bastion of educational best practice. The onus is therefore on us to solidify working relations from the school level to the national stage. School Governing Bodies and local school communities have as much responsibility for the success of our education system just as much as teachers and officials in the Department. Evidence of government support is already manifest in the many officials from the Office of the Premier and the Treasury that are currently deployed to assist in the Department of Education. That is the template that we wish to replicate throughout our system.

We wish all of Class of 2011 the very best for the future; those who have done well must go out there, in institutions of higher learning and beyond, and do us proud! Those that have fallen short must not despair, they must get up, dust themselves off, and start again.

As the Department, we will be implementing our back-to-school programme of next week complemented by a comprehensive plan of recovery from the stumble experienced this year. Please partner with us in that important voyage of rediscovery.

I thank you!

