



MY DISTRICT TODAY

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OUTCOME 1: IMPROVED QUALITY OF BASIC EDUCATION

Reaping the rewards of investing in quality education

By Mojalefa Senokoatsane: GCIS, Free State

The Free State is still riding on a cloud of euphoria because of beating eight other South African provinces, including those with technological and developmental advantage, to claim the best performing province in the 2013 Matric results.



The Principal, School Governing Body, Cllrs from Ngwathe and officials from the Department of Education on the first day of school at Phiritona High School, wishing the Class of 2014 well.

Schools around the country have already reopened and it's all systems go for all schools within this predominantly rural province. This remarkable milestone was not achieved haphazardly. It took dedication, hard work, and the buy-in from all relevant stakeholders, including children, parents, school governing bodies as well as the provincial government

that understood the mandate of prioritising education.

The Department of Education in the province has not been resting on its laurels, gloating about the results of last year. Instead the department has pushed the envelope even further by ensuring that the classrooms were ready for teaching on the first day school on 15 January.

In Heilbron two high schools performed remarkably notwithstanding the challenges. All the learners from the schools in this town were expected to report to school on Monday 13 January, when every learner received their school material for 2014.

This exceptional feat was possible because the Provincial Department of Education ensured that by the end of 2013, all schools had received their material, to be distributed to learners before the official opening of the schools to ensure that classes commenced on 15 January.

Learners were eager to start with their school work, especially the Grade 12s who are

determined to surpass the Class of 2013's achievement. The first day of school was dedicated to teaching and learning – pleasantries were exchanged later.

One of the 2014 Grade 12 learners, Thabang Mosese said that although the Class of 2013 performed remarkably well his class wants to top their performance. Given the way schools in the Free State started 2014, it would take some time before it is overthrown from being the best performing province.

The new Grade 1 pupils started their school careers, which would end in 2025 when they complete their matric.

One of the Grade 1 learners is Lerato Mthobi who was accompanied by her mother. Although the first day of Grade 1 is an emotional event, Lerato confidently declared that she would one day become a doctor. Judging by the confidence that this young lady oozed, it was not difficult to see why her mother believes she could achieve her goal. While her peers were crying for their mothers not to leave them, this young lady was

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OUTCOME 1: IMPROVED QUALITY OF BASIC EDUCATION

School monitoring legislature programme culminates in stakeholder meeting

By Msawakhe Nyadi: GCIS, KwaZulu-Natal



The SGB Chairperson of Mphelandaba High, Mr Albert Kleinboo.

The KwaZulu-Natal Legislature School Functionality Monitoring Programme culminated in a fruitful meeting between members of Parliament and uMgungundlovu District education stakeholders, who attended the meeting in large numbers at the fully packed hall of Carter High School on 16 January 2014.

The KwaZulu-Natal Legislature delegation, led by the KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Finance, Ina Cronje (who is also the champion MEC for uMgungundlovu District), listened attentively to concerns and suggestions made by members

of the school governing bodies (SGBs), community leaders and school management teams. Infrastructure issues that were raised by stakeholders dominated the meeting.

The SGB Chairperson of Mphelandaba High, Mr Albert Kleinboo said that his school did not have enough toilets. "If the department can attend to the issue of building enough toilets for my school, we will highly appreciate that."

Speaking at the meeting, Member of Parliament Mr Siphso Gcabashe said, "When assessing the

schools' readiness for the new school year, it becomes really difficult to get the sense of what is really happening in each corner of the district. Hence, we made a decision as Legislature to visit as many schools as possible on the first day; and on the second day to meet with potential stakeholders who can give us an indication of what is happening in other areas of the district where we cannot reach."

"This engagement will benefit the education of the entire province because, with the information that we get from the stakeholders today, we can report back to Parliament about the state of readiness in uMgungundlovu, which will also give us an opportunity to deal with issues and concerns raised by stakeholders in the district. From here we will compile a report with a detailed programme on how we are going to deal with all the issues, and then come up with an action plan and time frames, which will be communicated back to all the stakeholders via the right channels," Gcabashe said.

The Legislature delegation showed gratitude to all the stakeholders for the role they each play in ensuring that the doors of learning and culture are open to all.



OUTCOME 1: IMPROVED QUALITY OF BASIC EDUCATION

Mini bus handed over as part of back-to-school campaign

By Madire Mocketla and Reneilwe Moningi: GCIS, Limpopo



The principal of Siloe School for the Blind (in the cream suit) with some of the educators in front of the MV combi donated by Rand Water in partnership with Limpopo Nissan BB Auto.



The Nissan MV 2000 Combi donated to Siloe School for the Blind.



Limpopo MEC for Education, Ms Dikeledi Magadzi, also attended the occasion.



People who attended the occasion at the Siloe School for the Blind.



Deputy Minister Ms Rejoice Mabudafhasi (with the black shawl) handing over the keys to Ms Molepo, the principal of Siloe School for the Blind.



Some of the dignitaries who attended the event.

The Deputy Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Ms Rejoice Mabudafhasi handed over a mini bus to the Siloe School for the Blind in Thokgoaneng village on 14 January 2014. The school was identified as one of the schools in Limpopo in dire need of several resources to honour the legacy of the world icon and father of our nation, the late Tata Mandela. The school achieved a 99,9% matric pass rate during 2013.

Limpopo MEC of Education Ms Dikeledi Magadzi said Ms Mabudafhasi understands of the needs of the community. She adopted the school on 26 July 2012 as part of Vision 2020, aimed at addressing one of the department's mandates (namely public education with a special focus on learners at basic education level and lending a helping hand to disadvantaged people).

Through a public-private partnership initiative, Rand Water donated R200 000 to Siloe School. The school then approached Polokwane Nissan BB Auto to purchase a combi to transport learners. Unfortunately there was a shortfall of R45 000, which Nissan gladly donated to cover the full expense of the MV 200 combi.

Not only did the school receive the combi; MTN donated 200 blankets, Anglo Platinum fixed the broken furniture in the school, Polokwane Chemicals donated 40 trees, Polokwane Municipality deposited R20 000 into the school's account, Limpopo's First Lady Foundation donated R10 000, and Lepelle Northern Water delivered and installed 30 Jojo tanks and committed R250 000 for the drilling of a borehole at the school.

Deputy Minister Mabudafhasi indicated that the Government's theme of "working together we can do more" has been realised, and that they would not just drop off the resources at the school but continue to support it so that Siloe learners can participate like any other children in the country.

The school's principal, Ms Ramokone Molepo, could not contain her happiness. She said that words could not explain her gratitude. She stated that sharing does not divide but multiply. "Motho ke motho ka batho; thank you for caring when needed most," she said.



Interview at Valley FM

OUTCOME 1: IMPROVED QUALITY OF BASIC EDUCATION

Cape Winelands district schools ready for 2014

By Peter Titus, GCIS Western Cape



Interview at KC FM

On Monday 11 January 2014, two days before the official opening of most schools, the newly appointed Director of the Cape Winelands Education District Office, Mr Benjamin, was on radio – accompanied by the Institutional Management and Governance (IMG) Manager, Mr John Goliath. The director was featured on the drive-time slots of both Valley FM and Radio KC to speak about the matric results and performance, school readiness and safety in schools.

Mr Goliath mentioned that the district has done very well – with a high pass rate of 87%; even better than the province. The success features a university pass rate of 48% and only two schools underperforming with less than 60%. He specifically mentioned Drakenstein Municipality, which has 20 schools in the area and all schools achieved an above average pass rate, which

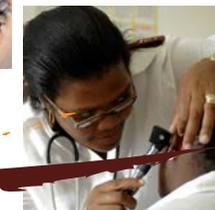
makes them the best performing schools for 2013. Five of these schools attained a 100% pass rate. The director acknowledged everyone who played a role in this success – from non-government organisations (NGOs) to parents and teachers – for their dedication in making sure the district performed better than expected.

The director confirmed that the schools in the region are ready to accept thousands of learners; and that learners would start with classes immediately on Wednesday. “I expect learners to go home on Wednesday with books and teachers to start classes Wednesday; not the following week.”

Speaking on the issue of safety in schools, the director confirmed that they have availed funds to fight crime in schools. “The plan is to make our schools safe places so

that learners can learn effectively,” said Mr Benjamin. With the Safe School Programme, the district office is planning to assist schools with different things regarding safety and crime at schools. The district will avail money for proper security and also create more programmes that involve youths and field workers to ensure safety at schools.

A key message from the director for the year is a quote by Winston Churchill, which states, “Failure is not fatal, neither is success final. It is the courage to continue that counts.” This is the same quote he shared with all the district principals when they came to the district office to get the matric results. “This quote actually defines our operating in the environment we find ourselves in. We are facing so many challenges that make it very easy to give up. Hopefully every single one of our 135 000 learners, irrespective of what they’ve achieved, would have the courage to continue,” said Mr Benjamin.



Saving water in and around the house / business



- Turn the tap off when washing your face, brushing your teeth or shaving.
- Showering can use up to 20 litres of water per minute.
- Don't over-fill containers like cooking pots, as this may result in using more energy to heat the water.
- Fix a leaking toilet otherwise it can waste up to 100 000 litres of water in one year.
- Use a bucket rather than a hose to wash your car. If you have to use a hose, use a sprayer that can be turned off in-between spraying the car. Using a garden hose could use as much as 30 litres of water per minute.

The government has a great track record in delivering clean water to the majority of the people.

Since the advent of democracy, access to drinking water has improved significantly. Access to water infrastructure at RDP standards or higher sits at 95%, while households with access to free basic water increased from 11,3 million in 2010/11 to 11,6 million households in 2011/2012 – an increase of about 300 000 households.

Through the Strategic Integrated Projects (SIP) 18, South Africa has a 10-year plan to address the estimated backlog of adequate water supply to 1,4 million households and 2,1 million households to basic sanitation.

The water projects will provide new infrastructure, rehabilitation and upgrading of existing ones, as well as improve water management infrastructure.

South Africa is a water-scarce country, and access to and preservation of water-remains a critical part of government's development plan.

"As a water scarce country, South Africa has made great strides in harnessing this resource in support of a strong economy and a vibrant society. Water is central to the economy, as it intersects various sectors and has been an enabler and foundation for planning and development.

"This is achieved through effective water resources planning, infrastructure development and service delivery," said Mava Scott, Water Affairs spokesperson.

He urged communities, business, society and government to join hands and work together to implement smarter water resource management.

Households, business and public places are encouraged to implement methods to improve water conservation and also support local government by paying their water bills.

Communities are urged to use the platforms that government has put in place, such as izimbizo, to engage and interact with officials to address challenges.