Together Moving South Africa forward through quality education and skills development
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LAUNCH OF THE STUDENT PARLIAMENT

Vumani Shezi

In a serious drive to encourage the culture of debating and grooming leaders whilst they are still in schools, the MEC for Education in KwaZulu-Natal, Ms Neliswa Peggy Nkonyeni, officially launched Students Parliament at Phendukani Full Service High School.

Nomnotho Nxumalo who is in the (RCL) of the school was given an opportunity to explain the purpose of the event. She informed the attendees that the purpose of launching the Student Parliament is to improve overall academic performance of the school and the main objective of the Student’s Parliament is to educate learners about parliamentary procedures and to boost moral values that promotes social awareness and tolerance. In her address the MEC said, “Our young people have a huge role to play in taking our country to the next level. It therefore remains our duty to make sure that we prepare them from as early as possible for this huge role.”
The MEC presided over the Sod-turning and introduction of the contractor at Nyonyana Primary School. The SOD turning and handover took place at Nyonyana Primary School under Umzinyathi District on Tuesday, 19 April 2016. The school is already under construction and will now be large enough to accommodate the children’s from the Nyonyana community. The project cost the Department R23, 6 million.

MEC remarked, “With the school that is being rebuilt here, we have no doubt that the quality of education learners are going to get will be at a desirable level. We are building a number of other schools in various rural parts of the province with the aim of making sure that all our learners receive the same and equal education irrespective of where they stay.”
The Isibaya Community Trust launched the Matric Academic Development Initiative at Stanger ML Sultan Secondary School in the Ilembe District on 26 April 2016. The initiative is aimed at assisting poor performing schools in the province. This initiative is led by the Chairman of the Sibaya Community Trust, Mr Vivian Reddy and will see R10-million being invested in education. This initiative also motivates learners and educators through incentives like awarding bursaries and cash prizes. These awards range from R10 000 to R200 000 for best performing learners and educators. Mr Reddy gave a motivational speech to learners and told them that regardless of their background, they can achieve all that they set out to achieve.

The MEC acknowledged the poor performance of the class of 2015. She urged students to focus on their studies and be responsible for their education.

“It is all up to you, take responsibility for your own education, there are distractions out there, and you should dedicate time in your books”.

Nkosenhle Shezi
The Acting Head of Department, Adv. Bheki Masuku, conducted a meeting with the UThungulu District MANCO which was held at Grantham Park Primary School on 05 May 2016. The purpose of the visit was to present the Department’s Turnaround Strategy and Plan on the Improvement of the National Senior Certificate Results at the end of 2016 Academic year.
The MEC for Education in KwaZulu-Natal, Ms Neliswa Nkonyeni, MPL, delivered the Department’s budget speech on Friday, 22 April 2016 at the KZN Legislature in Pietermaritzburg. The Department was allocated R 45,464,373 billion which is the biggest allocated budget in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal. The budget is going to fund programmes like National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), infrastructure development and many other departmental programmes. During her address she highlighted that, “The Department has and is still continuing to lay a solid foundation for a better life for all our learners who are the future of this country. Indeed, we have done so much with the sole purpose of making a difference in the lives of our learners in this Province,” said the MEC.
Amajuba District-Newcastle CMC hosted the Second Annual District Awards Ceremony on Friday, 08 April 2016 at Ferrum High School. These prestigious awards were for the best performing schools, principals, teachers and learners who performed extremely well in 2015 Academic Year. Dr Mdu Gama who was the keynote speaker during this event urged principals, teachers and learners to constantly strive for excellence. The District Director, Rev Nelson Sithole delivered an inspiring speech. In his address he said, “We thank all learners who did their best in the National Senior Certificate Examinations and all the educators who sacrificed their time to ensure that learners are well taught. We are so proud of each and every one of you, especially for the dedication you shown in 2015 academic year,” said Rev Sithole.
Responding to a call from a local chapter of The 67 Blankets Project for local schools, Alexandra High School was one of the first schools in Pietermaritzburg to hand over their blankets that were knitted in a few days. Alexandra High School teacher Mrs Yvonne Farr said she knew they had to come on board as knitting was one of her hobbies. “I love knitting as it is good for using left and right brain. So there is no excuse not to knit or crochet blankets”, said Mrs Farr.

Nicky Durell who is the local co-ordinator of the project said the main purpose of this project is to give back to the children, elderly and disabled people in the community for them to have a warm winter this year. “Nelson Mandela’s dream was to ensure that each child gets warm in winter and this campaign ensures that the needy children, old people and disabled people are warm in the winter. Stitch by stitch we pledge to keep thousands and thousands of people less fortunate than ourselves warmer over all the winters to come”.

Nobuhle Phungula
The MEC for Education, Ms Neliswa Peggy Nkonyeni, MPL, was a key note speaker during the mass meeting of Representative Council of Learners (RCL) that was held in Ugu District on Saturday, 23 April 2016. The main purpose of this meeting was to remind the RCL’s of their roles and to check if there are any challenges that affect their roles and responsibilities. In her address the MEC said, “We have convened this meeting to, amongst other things, outline the roles and responsibilities of RCL’s. Beyond that, it is also important that we have RCL’s who are very well capacitated and able to deliver on their mandate.”

Among the roles and responsibilities it was emphasized that the RCL’s should liaise and communicate with learners, professional School Management Team (SMT) and the Governing Body at the school. Since the RCL’s represents the learners, it must accept that the well-being of the school and learners is its primary task. Also they must promote and maintain discipline among learners and promote general welfare of the school. The MEC has also visited other districts and will have her road shows until she has covered all the 12 districts.
Principals and schools from Mtubatuba under Umkhanyakude District were awarded for their hard work and dedication at the awards ceremony held on the 13 April 2016. The top three schools were Emchakweni, Nhliziyo, and Madwaleni high schools. The schools that were recognised for the best achievement and excellent results were Madwaleni High school for producing the top pupil in the circuit and was awarded for having most consistent results over five years. KwaGxaba High School received the award for most improved school, while Mdungandlovu High School was the school with most bachelors with 100% in history. Almost eight schools achieved 100% pass rate in Zulu, four achieved 100% in English and four in Tourism.

The best performing schools in critical subjects were Emchakweni, Madwaleni and Mdungandlovu high schools for Accounting with 86.9% respectively, while Emchakweni High School achieved 100% in Business Studies. The school also received an award for competing at an international level in karate.