

REMARKS DELIVERED BY KZN MEC FOR EDUCATION MR SIPHOSIHLE EMMANUEL HLOMUKA DURING THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE 2024 MATRIC EXAMINATION RESULTS, 14 JANUARY 2025, AT THE ALBERT LUTHULI ICC, DURBAN, KWAZULU-NATAL.

Programme Director,

Minister of Higher Education, Dr Nobuhle Pamela Nkabane,

The Premier of KZN Province, Mr Arthur Thamsanqa Ntuli,

My colleagues in the EXCO, Honourable MECs,

Speaker of the Legislature, Ms Nontembeko Boyce,

Deputy Speaker of the Legislature, Ms Mmabatho Tembe,

Members of the Provincial Legislature,

Members of the Portfolio Committee, led by the Chairperson – Ms Phumzile Buthelezi

District Mayors,

Leaders of various political parties,

Leadership of the African National Congress led by.,

Traditional Leadership, (CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR)

Religious leaders,

Our Social partners

Our Organized Labour, NEHAWU and PSA,

Leadership Of our SGBs and Civic Associations,

Student Representative Organisations

South African Council of Educators (SACE),

**Head of the KZN Department of Education, Mr Nkosinathi Ngcobo and his
Executive Management Team,

District Directors,

Circuit Managers,

Principals and Educators of this glorious Province of KZN,

Parents and guardians,

Our Sponsors and Education Partners Members of the fourth, the Media,

My VIPs,

Our beautiful learners,

Comrades and Compatriots,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

SANIBONANI!!!!**

On behalf of the education sector, and especially the students whom we are here to celebrate, I want to echo the previous speakers in welcoming you to the eGagasini for this important occasion in the development journey of the youth of our country.

As we gather here to announce the results for the Matric class of 2024, let us also bow our heads in honour of Prof Sibusiso Bhengu who was laid to rest last week. He was appointed by President Mandela as the first the Minister of Education in the democratic dispensation. He played an important role in

implementing policies which sought to transform the education system post-apartheid and laid the foundation.

We are grateful to him and the successive leaders at national and provincial level who came before us to build an education system that is inclusive, responsive and acts as a compass that guides us toward the country's aspirations as outlined in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030. I also want to acknowledge my predecessor, MEC Frazer for her role in leading this organisation.

Today, is also a very significant day for our Province because will be announcing the very first NSC Results under the 7th Administration of Provincial Government of Unity, as we lay the foundation for a modern, growing and successful Province of KwaZulu Natal.

The matric **CLASS OF 2024** has navigated a path that was unlike any other in recent history. This remarkable group of young individuals we are honouring today traversed this path, facing unprecedented obstacles that tested their mettle. Despite the adversities, they stood tall, and today, we celebrate their triumph over the culmination of their 13-year educational voyage.

We applaud their perseverance despite facing an unprecedented journey filled with challenges, victories, and transformative moments over the last decade. These experiences will shape not only your minds but also our character going forward.

This Class of 2024 commenced their high school journey during the peak of **COVID-19** pandemic, an unforeseen global challenge, which disrupted not only the education sector but the very fabric of our learners' lives.

We also watched in awe and inspiration as they took advantage of a crisis by embracing new learning modalities and navigated uncertainty with bravery and resilience.

We appreciate the leadership of MEC Mshengu who was in the forefront of making sure the sector continued to forge ahead.

Some of you sitting here today not only contracted the virus, but you never gave up when you witnessed loved ones, educators and peers tragically losing the battle against the virus.

In addition to the challenges brought about by the pandemic, our province of KwaZulu-Natal has experienced the devastating impact of climate change in the recent years.

The recent Tongaat and surroundings (North Coast) Tornado which impacted on about 20 schools around eThekweni Municipality, forced the department to mitigate against the odds. Some learners were forced to write their NSC examinations in unfamiliar environment in a form of other schools because theirs were damaged. Such natural disasters are considered as a setback to our infrastructural development and our livelihood at large in many forms as it continues to exacerbate the challenges faced by our communities in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal.

The trail of destruction left in expressing my gratitude, I must acknowledge the officials of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, the dedicated educators, and all the supporting staff who worked tirelessly to ensure that every learner had access to their Constitutional right to basic education. Despite financial constraints that hindered the Department's ability to fill several vacant posts and swiftly respond to requests for additional resources, their commitment did not falter. The sacrifices made by these individuals have not gone unnoticed, and we owe them a debt of gratitude for their unwavering dedication.

We salute your determination, and unwavering commitment to your education during the most testing times. This have truly set you apart from the rest and today we collectively celebrate you.

Program director, I want to paraphrase an African adage that says it takes a village to educate a child. Addressing the Africa Presidential and Premiers Education awards, President Nelson Mandela explained what this means for government when he said "Government on its own cannot achieve our nation's educational goals. We need to harness the energies and resources of the whole nation.

Therefore, I wish to acknowledge the village that continues to work with us to nurture the capacity of our learners. To the Educators and Principals, our foot soldiers who are our first line of contact with the learners in each and every day, **Siyabonga!** Your commitments and sacrifices that you make from the beginning of the year, conducting after school classes, holiday classes just to name the few, are highly appreciated. Nisibongele emndenini yenu niphinde nisixolisele ngokudla isikhathi sabo esingaka, but it is all for a good cause,

and it is in times like this when we celebrate your hard work that brings about a very good feeling and satisfaction. Konke ebenikwenza beningakwenzeli ize imiphumela iyabonakala, ningadinwa nangomso.

May you find motivation to continue to shape the future of our country in the words of the former President of India:

“Teaching is a very noble profession that shapes the character, calibre, and future of an individual. If the people remember me as a good teacher, that will be the biggest honor for me.”- P. J. Abdul Kalam.

Our appreciation also goes to the parents and guardians who have been firm pillars of support. You have seen our learners at their worst because of the anxiety that comes with being a grade 12 learner and you have stood by them holding their hand throughout the journey. Indeed, you remain an integral part of the education system. We also thank you for entrusting us with the education of your children. Our partnership has been invaluable, and together, we have overcome numerous challenges over the past 13 years. **Lord, indeed ,We did it!**

To all educational stakeholders from labour unions to traditional leaders, oversight committees, non-governmental organisations, and the business community for consistently providing critical backing to our department. Their collaborative efforts brought the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education closer to its vision of being an innovative hub for quality teaching and learning, creating an environment that fosters the holistic development of our learners. As I have been repeatedly saying **“Education is a societal matter”**

I also thank all our service providers who work closely with the schools and learners to provide services on our behalf. Last week, I held a meeting with

the HOD and his team where we discussed some of the challenges in the space, including the allocation of norms and standards. We are alive to the challenges, so we will continue to improve coordination between ourselves and the service providers to ensure efficiency in programs like the School nutrition and learner textbook and stationery programmes.

Let me take this opportunity to assure the public of our Province that we have put systems in place to ensure that the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) commences on Wednesday when schools open for the new academic year. Working together with our service providers in executing this noble cause by ensuring that each one of us remain committed in fulfilling our constitutional mandate.

Program director, the results we are about to announce today are a result of the democratic government's commitment to taking advantage of the demographic dividend by expanding access to quality education to all.

Once again we owe a debt of gratitude to our predecessors who have committed to what President Mandela, Prof Bhengu, and MECs of education sought to achieve. We will recall that in 2009, MEC Senzo Mchunu convened an education indaba which resulted in the development of the 12 -Point Improvement Plan for our education outcomes. This also contributed to the results we are announcing today.

Provincial Results

Without further suspense, it is my pleasure to share the KZN Provincial Matric results for the class of 2024.

Honourable guests, after recording 86.4% pass rate in 2023, today we are thrilled to report that KwaZulu Natal has re-joined the league of sister provinces that are in the 85% bracket. The class of 2024 has done us very proud by achieving a historic 89.5% pass rate.

This means that out of the 161962 of our learners who wrote the 2024 NSC Exam, 144990 of them passed. Our province continues to contribute the highest number of candidates who sit for a pass the National Senior Certificate examinations in the country. The number of our schools that obtained 100% pass rate also increased significantly from 246 in 2023 to 321 in 2024. We were also able to reduce the number of schools that performed below 75% from 288 in 2023 to 182 in 2024.

Ladies and gentlemen, as the Department we are proud to report that no school in this province obtained a 0% pass rate. Our interventions to eradicate the 40% and below category of performance in the 2024 National Senior Certificate exams are yielding results and we will continue to put more efforts towards addressing this bracket.

Performance per District

KwaZulu Natal is not only the most improved province in the country, but we are also home to the most improved district nationally, which is uMkhanyakude. All 12 districts performed above 80%. The overall pass percentage per district is as follows:

- uMkhanyakude remained top sport for the second year with 92.8% pass rate in 2024.
- Ugu got 91.7%
- Amajuba and Umlazi got a tie of 89.8%

- Ilembe and Zululand got a tie of 89.5%
- Pinetown got 89.4%
- Umgungundlovu got 89.3%
- Umzinyathi got 89.1%
- Harry Gwala got 88.9%
- King Cetshwayo got 88.6%
- Uthukela got 85.0%

Congratulations to all of them

Ladies and gentlemen, our most improved district is King Cetshwayo they have moved from 83.4% in 2023 to 88.6%.

Quality of the results

The quality of our results is indicative of the sterling work of our district teams and educators as well as the dedication of our learners to their academic work. Our bachelor passes have increased from 72099 in 2023 to 84470 in 2024. The number of diplomas passes decrease from 43769 in 2023 to 42830 in 2024. The number higher certificates also decreased from 20435 in 2023 to 17609 in 2024. I must clarify that our aim as the Department is to see more of our candidates to get bachelor passes because we want them to be in a better position to further their studies post matric level.

While we recorded increased in a number of gateway subjects, as the Department we want to see an improvement in English First Additional Language, Mathematics and all science subjects.

Our learners also performed exceptionally well in languages resulting in KZN recording a 100% in IsiXhosa First Additional Language, 99.9% in IsiXhosa

Home languages, 99.9% in IsiZulu Home Language, 98,5% in Afrikaans Home Language, 100% in SeSotho, 83.0% South African sign Language

99.8% in IsiZulu Home Language, 98.4% Afrikaans home Language and 97.9% in SiSwati Home languages. Our learners who wrote the South African Sign Language also led to an achievement of an 89.4% pass rate

Performance of special schools

Ladies and gentlemen, six out of 11 special schools obtained a 100% pass rate. Three of them are in the Pinetown district and they are Kwantintwa, VN Naik as well as Fulton, King Cetshwayo district king Cetshwayo Vuleka, we also had Open Air in the Umlazi district, St Martine De Porres in Ugu obtaining 100%.

As the **CLASS OF 2024** takes the next step in their academic journey, many will benefit from government-funded free tertiary education, bringing them closer to their chosen careers. I have the utmost confidence that these young minds will grow into agents of positive change. Armed with knowledge and skills, they are well-equipped to address the numerous challenges faced not only by South Africa but also, by those in other parts of the world. Their success is not only a personal triumph but also a testament to the power of education to transform lives and uplift communities.

In closing, I extend our heartfelt congratulations to the **MATRIC CLASS OF 2024**. Their achievements are a testament to hard work, perseverance, and dedication. As they embark on this new journey, I have full confidence that the solid foundation they received in the basic education sector has adequately prepared them for whatever comes ahead.

Once again, let us give a round of applause for the educators for the stellar job so far. You have set the bar very high for the Classes of 2025 and beyond to try and emulate. We must now commit to continuous improvement by implementing the BELA Act.

The ACT accords with our vision of transforming our national education system to reflect the values of the Constitution and our democratic society. It also affirms the protection of the constitutional rights of learners by, amongst others, abolishing corporal punishment and making Grade R the compulsory entry point into basic education for all children.

We will consult with SGBs schools, parents and other stakeholders to ensure that compulsory Grade R is available in our schools.

We call on all of society to rally behind the full implementation of the BELA Act. It is a potent instrument at our disposal to practically open the doors of learning by expanding the pathways to education for learners, regardless of socio economic background. Future generations will judge us harshly if we fail to do so, we dare not fail them.

Once again congratulations class of 2024, you have indeed made us proud as this greatest Province of KwaZulu-Natal.

Ngiyabonga!

