

**ADDRESS BY MEC FOR EDUCATION IN KWAZULU-NATAL, MS MBALI
FRAZER, DURING THE NAPTOSA KZN MANAGERS CONFERENCE
HELD IN DURBAN ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Programme Director

CEO of NAPTOSA, Mrs Moodley and the entire collective leadership

Head of the Department of Education in KZN, Mr Nkosinathi Ngcobo

Senior officials from the Department of Education

Academics from different institutions

CEO of the Governing Body Foundation, Dr Cereseto

Principals, deputy principals and head of departments from various
schools

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning

It is an honour and a privilege to be invited to address this important
gathering of school managers - our leaders in education.

1

I would like to start off by expressing my gratitude to the leadership
of NAPTOSA for convening this managers' conference. As a
Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal, we value and appreciate

our meaningful engagements and collaborations with NAPTOSA, which we consider to be one of the critical stakeholders in the delivery of quality education in our province. We will continue supporting this organisation's efforts to advance professional development of educators.

2

I'm encouraged by the spirit of cooperation and ubuntu that I witnessed during this week's consultative engagements with the Education Labour Relations Council and School Governing Body Associations. This further cemented my belief that the Department of Education's partnership with teachers' unions and parents is critical for the stability of the education sector in KwaZulu-Natal. Driven by our shared commitment to the education of every learner in this province, I have no doubt that together we will continue to record great milestones. These include improving the quality of not just the matric results but outcomes of every grade, starting from the literacy and numeracy skills in the foundation phase.

3

Ladies and gentlemen, as you are all aware, the past three years have been the most challenging period for the education sector in KwaZulu-Natal. We had to deal with the devastating Covid-19 outbreak, last year's civil unrest and the floods, which wreaked havoc across the province in April and May. It was during these trying times that you –

our school managers - showed unmatched resilience, tenacity and persistence. Many of you went beyond the call of duty to ensure that teaching and learning was not severely disrupted. We, the people of KwaZulu-Natal, owe you a great debt of gratitude for your courageous leadership and unwavering commitment to the delivery of quality education in all our schools.

4

It would be very remiss of me not to note that today's conference also comes on the eve of the final examination period – a critical time on our academic calendar. The KZN Provincial Government has set an 80% target of matric pass rate for the class of 2022. All our districts were also instructed perform at 80% and above. However, Academic Improvement Plan has not only been focused on the matric pass rate. The Department has also been consistently rolling out programmes that seek to improve the performance of the entire education system because we want to see learners in all grades excelling in their subjects. These programmes include supporting and upskilling our educators, so they are better capacitated to deliver according to the needs of the curriculum. I'm sure you will all agree with me that if we get things right from the foundation phase, our learners are bound to flourish all the way to matric level.

5

Any management position comes with a lot of responsibility and expectation. Your character is tested every single day. Since you are in our schools, you are also entrusted with our shared constitutional responsibility to realise the Department's vision to be an innovative hub for quality teaching and learning that produces learners developed to exploit opportunities for lifelong success. But gatherings like today's should serve as a reminder that you are not expected to do this alone. You have support from NAPTOSA, the governing bodies and most of all, us, the Department of Education. As the Department, we regularly host workshops to capacitate our school-based managers with the necessary skills to effectively carry out their duties. These go beyond curriculum delivery as they also include issues of compliance and consequence management.

6

Being a manager in a school environment takes relentless fortitude and passion for education. It is one of the most patriotic things one can do for their country because you are essentially safeguarding the future of our learners and nation by ensuring that schools provide a safe and conducive environment for teaching and learning. This means being proactive in dealing with challenges that threaten to disrupt lessons or put any of our educators and learners at risk. It also means coming up with strategic and innovative ways to keep schools viable

and well capacitated for optimal curriculum delivery and learner development. It starts with the basic, making sure that every classroom has an educator, and every learner has the appropriate books.

7

I have even more respect and appreciation for what you do because I previously served as a school's head of department, deputy principal and later a principal. I know that it literary takes blood, sweat and tears but you never back down from challenges because there are hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of people looking up to you to lead them and you can't afford to fail even one of them. From that little girl and boy in Grade R to our teenagers in Grade 12, all of them matter, so their educational needs take priority at all times.

8

Ladies and gentlemen, our society is in desperate need of leaders who are forthright and just. These are people who do not abuse their power but use it to do good. As managers you make many decisions every day, but it is the quality of those decisions that demonstrate your values as leaders. There must be transparency and empathy in everything you do. Being a manager does not mean you are entitled to the respect of your staff members and school governing body. You must continuously earn it and also show respect to other people – both young and old - at all times. You can do this by showing humility

through dignity and awareness of your staff's strengths and weaknesses. Don't be scared of constructive criticism but use it as an opportunity to learn and grow.

9

A great leader inspires others by leading with integrity. This is someone who champions accountability, humanity and selflessness. This is someone who shares victories with their team instead of taking all the credit as if they achieved everything alone. A former senior officer in the United States' army, Omar Nelson Bradley, once remarked, "The greatness of a leader is measured by the achievements of the led". I want you to let that sink in for a moment. It means your strength as a manager should be seen in the successes of those you are managing. If your educators and learners are not excelling, then you cannot claim to be a leader.

10

That leads me to my next point, which is on the legacy of a great leader. Your journey as a manager cannot just end with your reign at the helm. Your societal responsibility also includes mentoring the next generation of leaders. My appeal to all of you is that you each mentor at least three other future leaders who will continue running this race when all of us are no longer there or in retirement. At least two of those people must be women. This will be your contribution towards gender equity and redressing the imbalances of the past where

women were deprived of opportunities because their gender. That can be your legacy, and rest assured, history will judge you more kindly if you also do your part to in this regard. Remember the plea from the Mother of Black Freedom in South Africa, uMama uCharlotte Maxeke, who said, “Kill that spirit of ‘self’ and donot live above your people. If you can rise, bring some with you.”

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Ladies and gentlemen, I would now like to take this opportunity to wish you a fruitful and insightful conference. I hope to see you soon when we visit your schools in different parts of the province.

I thank you!