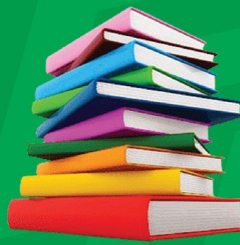


EDU



NEWS

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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SCHOOL FUNCTIONALITY MONITORING



**HOD CONDUCTS SCHOOL
FUNCTIONALITY
MONITORING**



**DDG WEZIWE HADEBE
CONDUCTS SCHOOL
FUNCTIONALITY
MONITORING**



2024 MATRIC AWARDS

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MESSAGE FROM THE MEC

MR. S.E HLOMUKA



As we step into the 2025 academic year, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the remarkable achievements of the KwaZulu-Natal Class of 2024. With an impressive 89.5% pass rate, KwaZulu-Natal ranked second in the entire country, a testament to the resilience, dedication, and commitment of our learners, educators, parents, and all stakeholders who continue to invest in the future of our province.

I extend my deepest appreciation to our local municipalities, including district officials and council members, for their unwavering support in creating a conducive learning environment and recognizing excellence among our top achievers. Your collaboration in ensuring access to education, infrastructure development, and learner support services has been instrumental in this success.

The role of communities in shaping the future of education cannot be overstated. As a department, we remain committed to strengthening these partnerships.

Looking ahead, the implementation of the Basic Education Laws Amendment (BELA) Act marks a significant milestone in the education sector.

In response, we will commence train-the-trainer workshops on the BELA Act across all 12 districts in KwaZulu-Natal, starting with Umlazi, Pinetown, and iLembe on 14 February 2025. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) conducted roadshows on the BELA Act in various provinces, including KZN, in late 2024 and encouraged provinces to conduct similar engagements targeting principals and School Governing Body (SGB) members.

The opening of schools for the 2025 academic year has been met with great enthusiasm. Our monitoring teams have been on the ground to ensure a smooth start, addressing challenges related to admissions, the delivery of Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM), and learner placements. While most schools are fully operational, we remain committed to resolving any outstanding issues to ensure uninterrupted teaching and learning.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOD

MR. G.N NGCOBO



Happy New Year to the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education community, and in particular, a happy academic year to our teachers and learners.

We start this year with renewed vigour, emanating from our stellar 2024 NSC performance where all districts achieved a pass percentage of over 80%. Coming from well-deserved rest over the summer holidays, we are refreshed and eager to high quality service delivery.

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education welcomes back all our past learners and also our newly admitted learners. We wish them an informative and successful journey ahead.

Our officials, who have hit the ground running to ensure smooth transfers, admissions, and the delivery of LTSM, are highly appreciated. Through our robust school functionality monitoring programme, we discovered that a large portion of groundwork had already been done. Learners were in classes from the first day of school and were met by enthusiastic and professional teachers.

We are thrilled to have moved with swift progress and embraced ECD centers, offering them all the necessary support as mandated by our legislative framework.

The budget for these centers has been dully moved from our sister department, Social Development to the Department of Education allowing us to cater for their financial needs accordingly.

The minor teething issues encountered by schools were swiftly attended to, allowing teaching and learning to continue without delays.

We witnessed school kitchens open their doors, offering nutritious meals through the NSNP programme, which kicked off smoothly. We witnessed curriculum delivery beginning right from the very first period, and we were pleased with the teacher and learner attendance statistics.

We can therefore confidently declare that schools in KwaZulu-Natal opened without any major issues and will continue to offer tuition and extramural activities in accordance with the academic calendar.

We thank each and every one of you who have practiced good work ethics and delivered on our promise of offering good quality education.

May this year be prosperous for all of you as we gear up for what lies ahead.

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: UMLAZI DISTRICT 2025 STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING

By: Mbaliyabenguni Zulu, Xoli Thompson & Philakahle Ngubane

“Begin with the end in mind.” – Stephen Covey

The Umlazi District Director, Ms Busi N. Mahlambi expertly pioneered the 3-day Umlazi District’s 2025 Strategic Planning Meeting at Northlands Primary School in Durban North. The meeting brought together directors, sub-directorates, MANCO members, unions, sponsors, and stakeholders to introduce innovative strategies aimed at strengthening the district in 2025 and ensuring quality education for all.

Discussions during the meeting focused on developing strategic goals and objectives, analyzing the strengths and challenges from 2024, and promoting growth and sustainability for the Class of 2025. A highlight of the meeting was the Head of Communications, Mr Muzi .W. Mahlambi’s presentation of a communications strategy designed to establish norms, strengthen government communication systems, and support long-term success.

On the second day, the theme “2025: A Year to Innovate, Collaborate, and Achieve – From Ideas to Action: Pioneering the Path Ahead” guided discussions. Presentations from MANCO officials representing directorates such as Extracurricular Support Services, Nutrition, SNES, Teacher Development, and Finance provided insights into key areas of focus.

Ms Thembelihle Charma, NECT KZN District Change Agent, delivered a presentation titled “Moving from Chaos to Clarity Through the 5D Framework for Effective Curriculum Delivery and Management as a District on the Rise,” emphasizing proactive monitoring, reporting, and support for schools.

Day three of the planning session focused on reports from three commissions addressing district challenges and solutions. Mr Sboniso Khomo, representing Curriculum Delivery, Management, and Assessment, outlined strategies for teacher development, technology integration, and improved assessment practices to enhance learner performance. Ms Nomusa Shamase, representing Basic Functionality, Leadership, Management, and Governance, presented measures to improve the performance of circuits and Circuit Management Centres (CMCs) through coordination and standardization. Ms Thulile Dlamini, representing District Planning, Provision of Resources, Monitoring, and Evaluation, discussed fostering collaboration across sub-directorates to ensure efficient and resourceful district operations.

In her closing remarks, Ms Mahlambi highlighted the district’s vision for 2025, stating: “This is the year to innovate, collaborate, and achieve.” She concluded the session by outlining the district’s strategic focus for the year ahead, emphasizing the importance of teamwork and commitment in achieving shared goals.



UMGUNGUNDLOVU DISTRICT HOLDS A STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING



By: Fisokuhle Zungu

The Umgungundlovu District held its annual strategic planning meeting today, 20 January 2025, at Pietermaritzburg College. The meeting focused on reviewing the district's academic achievements in 2024 and outlining plans for the 2025 academic year.

In his welcome and opening remarks, District Director Mr. Mabinza stressed the importance of working together effectively within the district. Mr. Mabinza encouraged everyone to collaborate harmoniously to achieve the district's goals of providing excellence in education and service delivery.

The district celebrated an attainment rate of 89.3% on the 2024 National Senior Certificate (NSC) results, a significant improvement of 4.2% from the previous year. This achievement was recognised with a National Award in Physical Science for Nqubeko Bekwa from Emzamweni High School.

During the meeting, Mr Ramula, presented data on NSC pass rates from 2020 to 2024, showcasing the district's consistent outperformance compared to provincial and national averages. In 2024, the district achieved a pass rate of 85.3%, significantly higher than the provincial average of 80% and the national average of 75%.

Mr. B Simelane, one of the key speakers at the meeting, presented the district's visionary Academic Improvement Plan. The plan outlines several key objectives, including increasing the overall pass rate to 95% by 2025 and significantly boosting the number of learners achieving Bachelor's degrees. The plan further puts emphasis on improving the quality of Higher Certificates and National Senior Certificate passes. Recognising the importance of technology in modern education, the plan also prioritises the inclusion of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) into teaching and learning practices.

During this meeting, Chief Director, Ms TA Gumede, highlighted the district's past successes, bringing to attention that Umgungundlovu consistently achieved top performance between 2016 and 2017. She urged the district to re-evaluate its strategies to regain its previous position of leadership in the province. "We need sharp pointed, focused and straightforward intervention," Ms. Gumede emphasised, "Remember, we are about the child and not ourselves."

Moving forward, the district remains committed to achieving its ambitious goal of a 95% attainment rate in the 2025 NSC Examinations. This will be achieved by solidifying, absorbing, and implementing all of the day's discussions and strategies.



SCHOOL FUNCTIONALITY MONITORING IN THE ILEMBE DISTRICT



By: Qinisile Mkhize & Fisokuhle Zungu

The KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Education, Mr Sipho Hlomuka, accompanied by the Head of Department, Mr Nkosinathi Ngcobo, and the KwaDukuza Deputy Mayor, Mr Cele, conducted a school functionality monitoring visit in the iLembe District on 15 January 2025. The delegation, which included Ms Thembelihle Gumede, Chief Director: District Operations Management, visited Dr B.W. Vilakazi Primary School and Groutville Secondary School to assess their readiness and challenges as the 2025 academic year commenced.

At Dr B.W. Vilakazi Primary School, the delegation was warmly welcomed by Acting School Principal, Ms J.W. Cindi, who provided an overview of the school's profile. She highlighted a significant increase in learner enrolment, with numbers rising from 1,762 in 2024 to 1,892 in 2025. This surge has led to overcrowding, creating an urgent need for additional classrooms, floor space, and furniture.

The delegation toured classrooms for Grade R, Grade 1, and Grade 7, observing the conditions and interacting with learners and educators.

MEC Hlomuka and HOD Ngcobo acknowledged the critical challenges raised and committed to prioritising solutions, including improved fencing and expanded infrastructure. MEC Hlomuka emphasised the importance of providing adequate resources to support quality education, stating, "Education is a cornerstone of every individual's future and well-being. Therefore, it is essential to support and provide all necessary resources for the betterment of all learners, ultimately benefiting the entire province."

The visit continued at Groutville Secondary School, where MEC Hlomuka addressed learners during their assembly. In his address, he inspired learners to focus on their studies and work diligently throughout the year. "Today, as you begin the academic year, we wish you well. Focus on your studies, and you will reap the rewards at the end of the year," he said.

The school functionality monitoring programme demonstrated the Department's commitment to identifying and addressing challenges within schools to ensure a successful academic year for all learners in the province.



SCHOOL FUNCTIONALITY MONITORING: GAMALAKHE COMMERCIAL HIGH SCHOOL



By: Philakahle Ngubane

The Deputy Director General for Institutional Development and Support, Ms Weziwe Hadebe, embarked on a school functionality monitoring drive to mark the opening of schools and the start of the 2025 academic year. Her first stop was Gamalakhe Commercial High School, located in the Ugu District in the Gamalakhe area.

Upon arrival, DDG Hadebe was briefed on the school's state of affairs by the School Principal, Mr Vusi Myeza, in the presence of the School Management Team (SMT), the School Governing Body (SGB) Chairperson, Mr E.R. Chiliza, and Ugu District officials. The District Director for Ugu, Mr Nkosinathi Madadi, led the KZN Department of Education delegation during a walkabout of the school premises.

The monitoring delegation inspected various areas, including the school kitchen, the staff room, and mobile classrooms, and engaged with Grade 8 learners. DDG Hadebe expressed her satisfaction with the school's professionalism, cleanliness, and overall infrastructural maintenance. She commended the school for its management and academic excellence, stating, "Your academic excellence is bred by the impressive management style of this school. Well done, Team Gamalakhe!"

The visit highlighted the department's commitment to supporting schools and ensuring a productive start to the academic year.



SCHOOL FUNCTIONALITY MONITORING AT ISANDLWANA HIGH SCHOOL

By: Philakahle Ngubane

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education conducted a school functionality monitoring visit to Isandlwana High School under the King Cetshwayo District. This initiative is part of a broader provincial programme where senior members of the Department visit schools to ensure that teaching and learning proceed without disruption.

The delegation comprised of Dr Ngogi Mahaye, Director in the Office of the MEC, Mr Muzi Mahlambi, Head of Communications, and the District Director for King Cetshwayo, Ms W.C. Nzama, among other dignitaries.



Isandlwana High School, a smart school that performed exceptionally well in the 2024 NSC Examinations, currently enrolls over 700 learners. During the visit, the school's Principal, Mr Bhekinhlanhla Nodolo, and SGB Chairperson, Mr Dev Nadasan, expressed gratitude for the visit by the delegation.

"We are thrilled to visit this school and find that it's all systems go. The school is fully functional," remarked the District Director.



SCHOOL FUNCTIONALITY MONITORING PROGRAMME CONTINUES IN UMLAZI DISTRICT



By: Qinisile Mkhize & Philakahle Ngubane

The Deputy Director General (DDG) for Institutional Development and Support, Ms Weziwe Hadebe, led the school functionality monitoring programme in the Umlazi District on 20 January 2025. This initiative, which follows visits to schools in the Pinetown and Ugu Districts, focuses on ensuring schools are equipped and ready for the 2025 academic year.

The monitoring began at Ogwini Comprehensive Technical High School, one of the largest schools in the district, with over 3,000 learners and a commendable pass rate. Accompanied by the District Director, Ms Busi Mahlambi, and other senior officials, DDG Hadebe engaged with the School Management Team (SMT), School Governing Body (SGB) members, and district officials. Discussions focused on critical areas such as learner admissions, the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), LTSM delivery, and infrastructure improvements.

The delegation conducted a physical verification of assets and infrastructure, guided by the School Principal, Ms Sibongile Gcwabaza, and SGB Chairperson, Mr Bheki Zikalala. Commending the school for its achievements, DDG Hadebe remarked, “Your marks indicate great potential.

We now expect a 100% pass rate, and we are confident that you will attain it.”

The DDG then visited Umlazi Comtech High School, where she met with the leadership team led by Principal Mr Nathi Shandu. The school highlighted its 94% pass rate in the 2024 NSC examinations despite challenges such as inadequate water supply. Cricket South Africa has pledged to assist in revitalizing the school’s sports fields. DDG Hadebe applauded the SMT for their dedication and assured them of the Department’s commitment to resolving outstanding issues swiftly.

At Manzolwandle Primary School, the delegation was warmly welcomed by Principal Mr Thulani Langa, who provided a detailed overview of the school’s state of affairs. DDG Hadebe praised the school’s efforts in establishing a strong foundation in Mathematics and Science while offering guidance on effective management practices. She acknowledged the hard work of the leadership and staff in fostering a supportive learning environment.

These visits highlight the Department’s commitment to supporting schools in overcoming challenges and ensuring the delivery of quality education across the province.



UMZIMKHULU 2024 MATRIC PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS



By: Fisokuhle Zungu

KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Education, Mr Sipho Hlomuka, attended the Umzimkhulu Local Municipality 2024 Matric Excellence Awards at Esayidi TVET College on 31 January 2025. The event, themed “Celebrating Excellence in Education,” recognised the outstanding achievements of the Class of 2024.

MEC Hlomuka applauded learners and educators for KwaZulu-Natal’s second-place ranking in the 2024 National Senior Certificate (NSC) results, with no district scoring below 80%. He commended teachers for their dedication and acknowledged the remarkable achievements of schools in quantile 1, 2, and 3 despite resource challenges.

Umzimkhulu CMC emerged as the leading circuit in the Harry Gwala District with a remarkable improved pass rate, rising from 69.31% in 2017 to an impressive 91.5% in 2024.

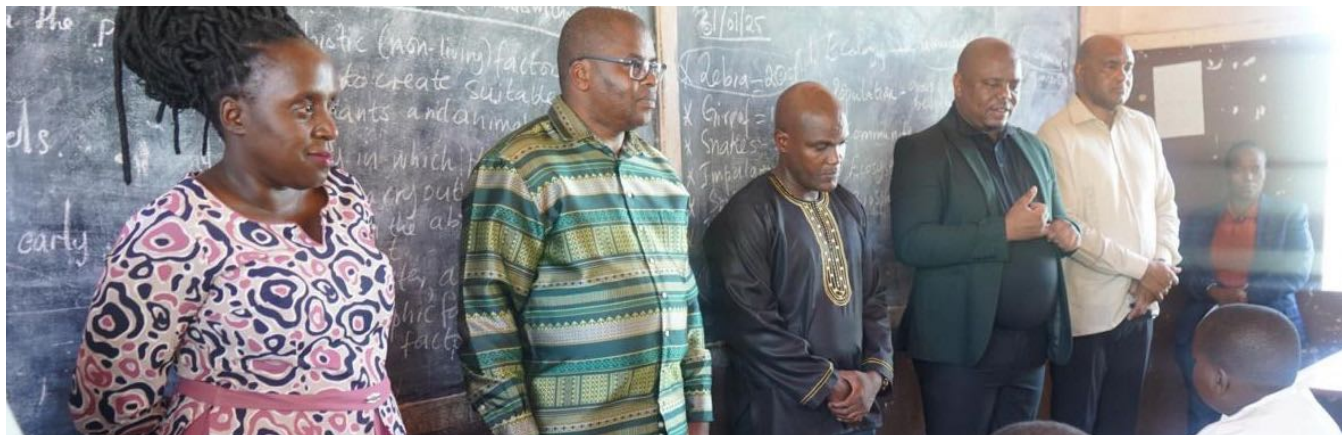
The event was attended by key stakeholders, including Higher Education Minister, Honourable Dr Nobuhle Nkabane, Harry Gwala District Mayor, Mr Zamo Nxumalo, and Umzimkhulu Local Municipality Mayor, Cllr. Jabulile Msiya.

Minister Nkabane announced new courses at Esayidi TVET College to align with workforce demands and awarded bursaries to the top ten matriculants. The principal of Msundukeni Senior Secondary School, Mr Thembaletu Ndita, was honoured for improving the school’s pass rate from 59% to 100% in three years. Inkosi Zimema Mchunu rewarded him with a cow in recognition of his efforts.

Social partners contributed by awarding laptops and stationery vouchers to high-achieving learners, reinforcing the commitment to educational excellence. The success of the Umzimkhulu CMC demonstrates the power of collaboration between educators, learners, and stakeholders, ensuring a brighter future for the district.



MEC HLOMUKA MONITORS SCHOOL FUNCTIONALITY IN THE HARRY GWALA DISTRICT



By: Noluthando Zitha

KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Education, Mr Siphso Hlomuka, conducted an important visit to Mariathal Combined School in the Harry Gwala District to assess the institution’s readiness for the 2025 academic year.

Chief Director, Dr David Chonco, warmly welcomed MEC Hlomuka, who was accompanied by Mayor Cllr. Zamo Nxumalo and Harry Gwala District Director, Ms Bongive Ntombela.

In her presentation, Ms Ntombela expressed enthusiasm about the MEC’s visit and provided a comprehensive overview of the school’s current state. She emphasized the district’s commitment to excellence, reflected in its inspiring slogan: **“100% Here We Come!”**

School Principal, Ms Thando Mncadi, discussed the school’s readiness for the new academic year, highlighting the importance of learner enrollment. She provided a brief history of the institution, demonstrating its alignment with the mission of the Department of Education.

Ms Mncadi asserted that learners must achieve a balance between learning and play to thrive. Currently, the school accommodates 1,299 learners from Grade R to Grade 12.

Cllr. Nxumalo expressed sincere appreciation to the principal and the School Governing Body (SGB) for their unwavering support to supporting learners in the district. He encouraged parents to take an active role in their children’s education, as their involvement is crucial for academic success.

MEC Hlomuka underscored the significant impact of established school policies and parental involvement in shaping learners’ futures. While commending the achievements of the Class of 2024, he stressed the need to focus on foundational learning from Grade R to Grade 4 and the critical Grade 10 year. He advocated for comprehensive improvement plans across all grades.

Additionally, he emphasized continuous learning and collaboration among all stakeholders. During his visit, MEC Hlomuka toured the school and distributed school shoes to learners, reinforcing the spirit of support and community involvement.



CEREMONY FOR TOP ACHIEVERS AWARDS OF NDWENDWE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY MAYOR



By: Mbaliyabenguni Zulu

On 30 January 2025, Mr Sipho Hlomuka, the MEC for Education in KwaZulu-Natal, attended the Mayoral Top Achievers Awards Ceremony alongside Mayor Cllr Samuel Mfeka at the Johnny Makhathini Hall in Ndwedwe, under iLembe District.

The prestigious awards ceremony aimed to honour and acknowledge the outstanding contributions of educators and learners from the Class of 2024.

ILEMBE District Director, Dr Musawenkosi Madondo, highlighted the significance of the occasion, while Mayor Cllr Samuel Mfeka welcomed all esteemed attendees.



Dr Madondo conveyed his heartfelt appreciation to everyone who contributed to the district’s success, particularly educators and learners.

Delivering the keynote address, MEC Sipho Hlomuka stated, “We have come together to celebrate the achievements of educators, learners, and the broader community working in collaboration. The support from SGBs is always valued, and we genuinely appreciate the assistance we have received from our stakeholders. This year, we are ranked number 2 in South Africa, and our goal is to improve our overall percentage results. Ilembe is among the top-performing districts, ranking first among provinces in bachelor passes, and we continue to lead the way,” remarked the MEC.



MEC HLOMUKA PLEDGES SUPPORT TO RIVERSBEND PRIMARY AMIDST URGENT INFRASTRUCTURE CHALLENGES

By: Nikelo Dlamini

As part of his ongoing school monitoring programme, KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Education, Mr Siphon Hlomuka, visited Riversbend Primary School in Estcourt to assess its conditions as well as address the challenges faced by learners and educators. The visit highlighted the school's dire need for improved infrastructure, network connectivity, and additional teaching staff.

Opening the agenda, District Director, Ms Mapaseka Mokoena expressed gratitude for the MEC's presence, describing it as a beacon of hope for the school's revival. "We are grateful to the MEC for coming. This makes us believe that the desired change to improve this school is coming," she said. Riversbend Primary, located in Matshesi, operates as a multigrade school with only two classrooms. One classroom accommodates Grade R to Grade 3 learners, while the other houses Grade 4 to Grade 7. The school currently serves only 19 learners, and with no dedicated teachers apart from the principal, Ms Nonhlanhla Ndlovu, teaching and learning remain difficult.

Ms Ndlovu acknowledged the Department of Education's past interventions, including the construction of toilets in 2024, the provision of cell phones and routers for communication, and the recent development of a road leading to the school. However, she emphasized the pressing need for proper network infrastructure, as the school has little to no connectivity.

She further stressed the importance of expanding the school, stating that limited classroom space hinders effective learning.

"There is pain in being introduced to a subject in high school that you did not learn in primary school.

With only two classrooms and a shortage of teachers, our Grade 7 learners struggle to keep up when they progress to high school," she said.

Over the years, the school has lost learners, as many parents opt to send their children to town schools with better resources. This decline in enrolment poses a serious threat, as continued loss of learners could lead to the school's closure. The School Governing Body (SGB) has also raised concerns about the school's future. Mr Zamani Mthethwa, the chairperson of the SGB, described the state of the school as heartbreaking. "I attended this school, as did my children and grandchildren. It was built by our parents, and we see it as part of our community's inheritance. We hope the MEC will help us revive it instead of witnessing its decline," he said.

Responding to these concerns, MEC Hlomuka assured the school that the department would take immediate action. He thanked Ms Ndlovu for reaching out to the department, emphasizing that with 5,890 schools in KZN, letters from principals help the department identify and prioritize schools in urgent need.

He then committed to delivering a mobile classroom equipped with electricity before the end of February 2025 to ease the classroom shortage. Regarding the connectivity issue, the MEC confirmed that Vodacom has committed to improving network access in rural schools, which will also benefit the surrounding community.

"As part of the public-private partnership agreement, Vodacom will assist in providing network coverage for schools like Riversbend. This will not only help the school but will also benefit the community," said the MEC.

Regarding the lack of teaching staff, MEC Hlomuka acknowledged that although a teaching post was advertised in 2024, it was never filled.

He committed to investigating why the post remained vacant and to taking steps towards ensuring that the school receives a teacher. In addition, the MEC announced that he would personally adopt Riversbend Primary and encouraged parents to enrol their children to prevent its closure. "We urge parents and the community to increase learner enrolment. If numbers continue to drop, the school will unfortunately have to close. However, I want to reassure parents that quality education is the same everywhere, whether in a rural or urban school," he said.

MEC Hlomuka pledged to provide full school uniforms for all learners at the school. Additionally, he committed to purchasing uniforms for the current Grade 7 learners for any high school of their preference for the year 2026.

The visit to Riversbend Primary reaffirms the department's commitment to improving education in rural areas through infrastructure development, public-private partnerships, and direct learner support. As these promises take shape, the community remains hopeful that the school will not only survive but excel.

With a transformed focus on strengthening education in underserved communities, MEC Hlomuka's visit to Riversbend Primary signals a step toward addressing long-standing challenges.



UMLAZI DISTRICT EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2024: A CELEBRATION OF ACHIEVEMENT



By: Xoli Thompson

The Umlazi District Excellence Awards 2024 took place at the Amanzimtoti Civic Centre, bringing together key stakeholders to celebrate the district's outstanding academic achievements. The event was graced by the Head of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, Mr Nkosinathi Ngcobo, alongside Deputy Director-General for Curriculum Management, Mr Mbongiseni Mazibuko, Umlazi District Director, Ms Busi Mahlambi, and senior officials. Also in attendance were the Chief of the Luthuli Clan, Madlanduna, representatives from teacher unions, school governing bodies, sponsors, and top-performing learners.

District Director, Ms Mahlambi, opened the ceremony with a warm welcome, reflecting on the district's remarkable achievements in the 2024 academic year. Messages of support poured in from various stakeholders, including school governing body representatives, sponsors, and teacher unions, all commending the dedication and hard work that led to these exceptional results.

Delivering the keynote address, Head of Department Mr Nkosinathi Ngcobo applauded the district's accomplishments and extended special recognition to Ms Mahlambi for her leadership in driving excellence.

He emphasised the importance of teamwork and commitment in sustaining the district's success and urged all stakeholders to continue working together to build an even stronger future.

DDG Mazibuko expressed his gratitude to principals, educators, and learners for their collective effort in maintaining high academic standards.

He highlighted the significance of bachelor passes, acknowledging the crucial role of teachers in guiding and inspiring learners to excel.

The awards ceremony recognised excellence across three key categories. The Schools of Excellence category honoured schools that achieved a 100% pass rate, setting a high standard for academic performance. The Top 10 Performing Schools were acknowledged for their exceptional achievements in various subjects, including IsiZulu Home Language. Additionally, the Most Improved & Consistent Performance Schools category celebrated schools that demonstrated significant academic progress and maintained excellence for seven consecutive years.

The event also showcased vibrant performances, including a spirited contribution from Adams College learners, adding to the celebratory atmosphere. As the ceremony concluded, there was a shared commitment to maintaining Umlazi District's legacy of excellence and striving for even greater achievements in the years ahead.



MEC HLOMUKA VISITS LIHLITHEMBA TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL



By: Mbaliyabenguni Zulu

Shortly after schools reopened on January 15, 2025, the KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Education, Mr Sipho Hlomuka, began a campaign of school visits as part of the School Functionality Programme. This initiative aims to ensure operational effectiveness in schools.

On January 30, 2025, MEC Hlomuka visited Lihlithemba Technical High School in Ndwedwe, within the iLembe District, to oversee the programme's implementation. Among the attendees were the Mayor of Ndwedwe Local Municipality, Cllr Sam Mfeka; iLembe District Director, Dr Musawenkosi Madondo; Director in the Office of the MEC, Dr Ngogi Mahaye; and Circuit Education Specialist for Ndwedwe CMC.

Lihlithemba Technical High School has an enrollment of 1,149 learners for the 2025 academic year. The Class of 2024 achieved an impressive 88% pass rate, marking significant improvement from the previous year.

For 2025, the school has 147 matric learners. Acting Principal Mr Mlungisi Ndlovu delivered an insightful presentation covering key areas such as Learner and Teacher Support Material (LTSM) and the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP).

Speaking during the engagement, MEC Hlomuka commended the school's efforts, stating, **"We truly appreciate the dedication and hard work of the officials. We also acknowledge the Acting Principal, Mr Mlungisi Ndlovu, for his detailed presentation. The school had set a target of 85% for the 2024 matric results and exceeded it by achieving 88%. We appreciate for the excellent work being done."**



SCHOOL FUNCTIONALITY MONITORING CONTINUES AT UTHONGATHI PRIMARY SCHOOL



By: Sphe Madlala

On January 17, 2025, the Deputy Director-General (DDG) for Institutional Development and Support, Ms Weziwe Hadebe, concluded a series of school visits with a meaningful visit to uThongathi Primary School.

During the visit, DDG Hadebe reaffirmed her unwavering commitment to providing ongoing support to the school, emphasizing the importance of continuous improvement to uphold the highest standards of education.

“Our primary focus is to empower every learner with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the 21st century,” said DDG Hadebe. “This includes providing the necessary resources, professional development for teachers, and fostering a supportive learning environment that encourages creativity and critical thinking.”

The visit included a comprehensive assessment of the current learning system at uThongathi Primary School. DDG Hadebe engaged with the school leadership to gain deeper insights into the school’s strengths and to identify areas that may require further support and development.

DDG Hadebe stressed the vital role learners play as the future leaders of the nation and under-scored the importance of delivering a high-quality education that equips them to overcome challenges and seize future opportunities.

She reiterated the Department’s commitment to working closely with schools to ensure that every learner is empowered to reach their full potential.

“Investing in education is an investment in the future. By providing our learners with the best possible education, we are building a brighter tomorrow for all,” concluded DDG Hadebe.



VISION

To be a centre of Excellence when the whole community is positively encouraged and fully engaged educationally and emotionally in participating in effective, enjoyable, successful experiences across all areas of learning and teaching, creating citizens for tomorrow today.

PINETOWN DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION FOR 2025

By: Qinisile Mkhize

The Pinetown District hosted its strategic planning session at Anton Lembede MST Academy on 21 and 22 January 2025, following its impressive 89.4% pass rate in the 2024 NSC examinations, marking a 3% improvement.

Chief Director of District Operations, Ms Thembelihle Gumede, emphasized the importance of effective planning and addressing areas requiring specific support to further enhance the district's performance. **“Let us strengthen target setting across all grades. Our interventions should equip learners beyond the basic education system. They should become critical thinkers and aspire to be employers,”** remarked Ms Gumede.

During the session, officials engaged in commissions focusing on a SWOT analysis of the district, identifying strengths and opportunities to maximize for sustained improvement.



Concluding the session, the District Director for Pinetown, Ms Sibongile Nkosi-Tembe, expressed confidence in her team. **“I am confident in the team. The deliberations through the plenary session should be able to take the district forward,”** said Ms Nkosi-Tembe.



EDUCATION PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



By: Sphe Madlala

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, led by MEC Mr Sipho Hlomuka, participated in the Education Portfolio Committee (EPC) stakeholder engagement at eNdumeni, uMzinyathi District. The session, chaired by EPC Deputy Chairperson Ms Mavimbela, aimed to reinforce accountability and transparency, ensuring that the legislature and the broader KZN community remain informed about key education matters.

Among the attendees were the Head of Department, Mr Nkosinathi Ngcobo, all Deputy Director-Generals, Advocate Bheki Masuku, Ms Weziwe Hadebe, Mr Mbongiseni Mazibuko, and Acting CFO Ms Ntokozo Mlaba. Also present were uMzinyathi District Director Mr Siphiwe Kheswa and other senior officials from the department.

The engagement provided a platform for local government representatives, traditional leaders, organized labour, school governing bodies, and community members from eNdumeni and surrounding areas to discuss pressing educational challenges. Topics raised included Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM), infrastructure, non-compliance by certain National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) service providers, staffing, and broader social issues affecting education.

During the session, department officials presented on the financial constraints facing the department and outlined strategies to address shortages of essential resources. Acting CFO Ms Mlaba highlighted the impact of budget cuts, stating that the department was under financial strain due to budgetary reductions, with a significant portion of its funds allocated to salaries.

The draft Strategic Plan for 2025/26 was also presented, detailing priorities across key education sectors, including administration, public and independent schools, special education, early childhood development, infrastructure, and examination-related services.

Community members actively engaged in the discussions, asking critical questions based on the presentations. In response, HOD Mr Ngcobo emphasized the department's openness to community input while acknowledging that some challenges require broader collaboration. He stated that the department would continue raising these issues with Treasury, as the lack of funding significantly impacts service delivery.

MEC Hlomuka reassured stakeholders of the department's resilience and commitment to education, affirming that while challenges exist, solutions are also being implemented.

He highlighted that the department's performance results reflect the hard work and dedication invested in the education sector. He further expressed appreciation for the legislature's role in monitoring school functionality across the province, reinforcing the importance of such engagements in ensuring accountability and service delivery.

The stakeholder engagement underscored the department's commitment to addressing educational challenges through collaboration and transparency while striving to provide quality education despite financial constraints.



UMLAZI DISTRICT MEDIATION OF THE BASIC EDUCATION LAWS AMENDMENT ACT – 32 OF 2024



By: Qinisile Mkhize

Umlazi District Director, Ms Busi Mahlambi warmly welcomed the attendees including the Chief Director and the team from head office, stating, “We are the third-best performing district in the province. We are delighted that this roadshow has started in our district, setting the tone going forward,” remarked Ms Mahlambi. The BELA Act is here to ensure that education is accessible to all.

The Chief Director for Curriculum Development Programmes, Mr Skhumbuzo Manganye, stated, “We are here to take you through the provisions of the BELA Act. Everything we do in the Basic Education sector must be within the law.”



This workshop is part of a series of workshops planned across the province to address the implementation of the Act, which was signed into law by President Cyril Ramaphosa on 13 September 2024. The roadshow aims to equip district officials with accurate information. Presentations from officials provided relevant information and offered principals and governing body members the opportunity to ask questions and receive policy-based guidance.



KLIPRIVER CIRCUIT EXCELLENCE AWARDS: CELEBRATING THE MATRIC CLASS OF 2024



The Klipriver Circuit, under the leadership of Circuit Manager Dr M.B.S. Molefe, proudly celebrated academic excellence at the Klipriver Circuit Excellence Awards. The event acknowledged the exceptional commitment of schools, educators, learners, and their supportive parents.

The programme featured motivational messages from DDG for Curriculum Management, Mr Mbongiseni Mazibuko, who extended words of encouragement to learners, educators, parents, principals, and officials. Ms Nomakhosi Mkhize, Deputy Director from the Office of the DDG Advocate Masuku, served as the guest speaker. Messages of support were also delivered by representatives of primary school principals, unions, school governing bodies (SGBs), and sponsors.

The circuit achieved an impressive 87.3% pass rate across its 10 secondary schools, with 2 schools attaining a remarkable 100% pass rate, 5 schools achieving over 90%, and 3 schools surpassing 74%.

Additionally, 100 educators were recognized for achieving a 100% pass rate in their respective subjects. The top three learners from each school were awarded for their outstanding performance, with the top learner hailing from Ladysmith High School.



MOUNTVIEW SECONDARY

2024 NSC TOP

ACHIEVERS AWARDS



By: Philakahle Ngubane

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education joined Mountview Secondary School in celebrating the achievements of the Class of 2024 during the school's awards ceremony.

Mountview Secondary, under the Pinetown District, achieved an impressive 90.4% pass rate in the 2024 NSC Examinations. The school is evidently performing well, and this is reflected in the high learner enrollment for 2025, a clear indication of the Phoenix community's pride in Mountview Secondary School.

In his address, the Head of Communications, Mr Muzi Mahlambi, remarked, **"Your success is no coincidence but the direct result of your hard work and resilience. We are proud of you."** He extended congratulations to the learners, teachers, and parents for a successful 2024 academic year and wished the current learners the best of luck for their studies.

A former learner and guest of honour, Dr Ashlin Rampul congratulated the Class of 2024 and shared an inspiring journey of how he achieved his dreams after receiving his own matric results at the school.

Learners were awarded with trophies and certificates in various categories, recognizing achievements from **Grades 8 to 12**.





Global Education Fest 2024-2025

A Hub for Collective Learning and Innovation.
Busani Ian Biyela, Principal of Grantham Park Primary School was honoured at the Global Education Fest 2024-2025 held in Delhi, India.

The Global Education Fest serves as a hub for intellectual exchange and collaborative efforts in the realm of education.

This festival, part of a worldwide series of educational conferences, unites education leaders, educators, teachers, and policymakers to celebrate and promote global cooperation in education.

“On behalf of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, we like to congratulate you on being recognised internationally,” said KZN MEC for Education, Mr Sipho Hlomuka.



Flying the SA Flag Proudly!

The KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Education, Mr. Sipho Hlomuka, congratulates Ms. Pinky Thandeka Ndlozi, our exceptional 2022 National Teaching Awards winner from King Cetshwayo District!

Ms. Ndlozi represented South Africa on the global stage at the Global Education Fest 2024-2025 in India. Her dedication and excellence in education have not only earned her national recognition but now position her as a beacon of inspiration worldwide.

“Your journey exemplifies the power of passion and hard work, Ms. Ndlozi! We are immensely proud as you showcase South Africa’s brilliance in education to the world.” Said MEC Sipho Hlomuka.



Congratulations to Dr. J.L. Dube High School – KZN Provincial Champions!

The KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Education, Mr Sipho Hlomuka, extended his heartfelt congratulations to Dr. J.L. Dube High School for their incredible victory in the Schools SA20 Girls Tournament Phase 2 Provincial Final!

Your triumph over Bonginhlanhla High School from Pongola has secured your place as the KZN Provincial Champions, and we are immensely proud of your dedication and hard work.

As you prepare to represent KwaZulu-Natal at the National Schools SA20 Tournament in Pretoria this March 2025, we wish you all the best.

Thank you to Cricket South Africa, the SA20 crew, and the KZN Coastal Cricket Union for supporting this initiative and empowering young talent in our schools.

Good luck, Dr. J.L. Dube High School, fly the KZN flag high!



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