



LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

The official Internal Newsletter
of the Department of Education

NEWS FLASH

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NEW BUSES FOR LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

By Hanedzani Mbedzi

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step and Limpopo Education MEC Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya is taking that step even further. Strengthening the Department's longstanding commitment to safe and reliable access to education, the MEC is once again putting learners first by expanding transport support for special schools across the province.

In 2024, the MEC handed over 10 school buses and 23 administrative vehicles at Bana Ba Thari Special School in the Capricorn South Education District. The effort benefited schools including Bana Ba Thari, General Piet Joubert, Setotlwane, Phatlhaphadima, Yingisani, Rehlahleng, Fulufhelo, Mhinga, Tshilwavhusiku and Thusanang.

This year, the initiative has grown significantly. Fulufhelo Special School in the Vhembe East Education District hosted the official handover of 28 brand new buses to 25 special schools, a significant achievement that underscores Limpopo's determination to remove barriers for learners with special needs and strengthen their right to quality education.

The schools that benefited from this initiative are Botlokwa, Helene Franz, Ratanang, Rethuseng, Benedict and Hope, Grace and Hope, mahlasedi, New Horizon, Siloe, Tsoga-O-itirele, Leb-one, Ramokgwagwa, Nthabiseng, Pfunanani, Letaba, Jane Furse, Asiphumelele, Bosele, Ipelegeng, Matobule, Grace and love, Fulufhelo, Thilidzini, Rivoni, Sedibeng and Susan Strydom special schools from all 10 Education Districts.

The aim of this Initiative is to ensure that every learner attending a special school has dependable, dignified and safe transportation. Reliable mobility allows learners to attend school consistently and participate fully in academic, vocational and social activities.

The Director of Inclusive Education, Mathukwane Makgato, oversees 35 special schools, 25 full-service schools and all public ordinary schools in the province. She highlighted the Department's continued investment in learner mobility.

"We have already procured 40 buses, including two luxury coaches for long-distance educational trips, sports and music events. Treasury has confirmed funding for 22-seater buses, which will be delivered before the end of the financial year to schools transporting 100 or more day scholars. Our special schools continue to do exceptionally well because they equip learners with real and employable skills. Every learner is a national asset, we must support and accommodate them all," she said.

Traditional leader, Vho Thovhele Gole Mphahuli applauded the initiative, speaking to the broader impact beyond transportation. "Today we are not just handing over buses, we

are opening doors of opportunity. When a child living with a disability is given safe and reliable transport, we remove one of the biggest barriers standing between them and their future. Education must belong to every child, no matter where they come from or what challenges they face. When we invest in our learners, we invest in the strength and prosperity of our communities," he said.

During her address, MEC Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya emphasised partnership and collective responsibility in building a stronger education system.

"Progress is never a one person journey, it is a team effort. It is not by my will alone, but because of the joint effort of the seventh administration led by Dr Phophi Ramathuba. With these buses, we are saying to all schools: do better. To parents, we are saying you will now save on transport costs for trips and school activities. Schools will no longer need to hire transport, this is your resource," said MEC Lerule-Ramakhanya.

Through this expansion, the Department is investing directly in the future of learners with special needs, promoting access, supporting inclusion and reaffirming its commitment to providing quality education for every child in Limpopo.





EARLY LEARNING CENTRES PROVIDE A FAIR ADVANTAGE

Hanedzani Mbedzi

Children with access to Early Childhood Development programmes have a better chance to remain in school and develop much faster. Itireleng Crèche, an innovative incubation centre in Lephalale is nurturing curiosity, creativity and foundational skills in 44 early childhood development (ECD) centers across the Waterberg Education District. The Limpopo Department of Education MEC, Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya visited the hub to witness how partners and sponsors like Cotlands are helping children learn and grow as they get ready for school.

The hub provides children with curriculum themed toys and activities, safe outdoor play areas and workshops for parents on creating low-cost educational tools and enhancing nutrition, health and interactive learning at home.

Practitioners also receive specialized training to improve classroom practices.

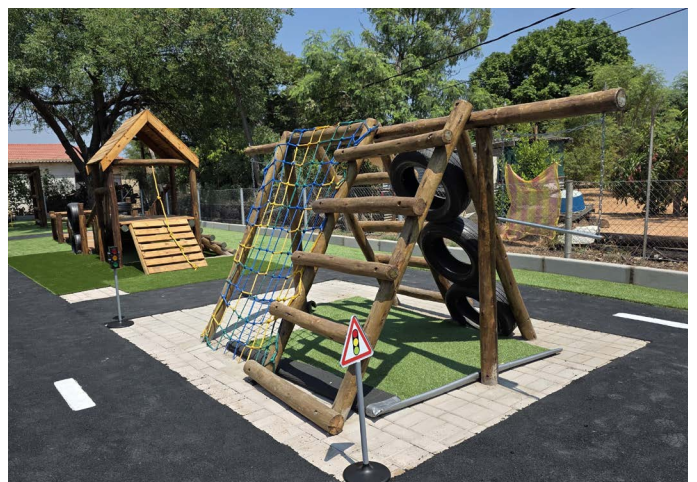
The objective of the visit was aimed at showcasing how ECD centers offer a holistic learning environment, nurturing cognitive, language, social, emotional and physical development. Interactive areas include reading and story corners, pre-writing stations, fine motor activities using clay, fantasy and role-play spaces, puzzles, educational games and technology and engineering stations each designed to prepare children for school.

Amanda Bossinger from Cotlands' Business Development team highlighted the hub's broad impact. "Through this hub, we reach over 2,600 children, rotate themed kits and train practitioners to ensure children get the right stimulation at the right time. Parents learn how to make meaningful toys from everyday materials and practitioners take practical training back to their centres," she said.

Tumi Motlana, Exxaro's Manager of Social Development, emphasized the company's commitment to early learning. "Early childhood is a critical stage in every child's life, and at Exxaro, we are committed to providing safe and stimulating learning environments. Our support includes infrastructure, learning materials, and educator training, ensuring young learners have the foundation they need to thrive."

MEC Lerule-Ramakhanya in appreciating the good work done by donors and stakeholders emphasized the importance of partnerships. "This hub is more than toys, it is a training space, a parent resource, and a safe place for our young learners. Collaboration between government, industry, and sponsors strengthens early learning and gives children a better start." Said MEC Lerule-Ramakhanya.

The Itireleng Crèche Hub stands as a shining example of how strategic collaboration can create a lasting impact in early childhood development.





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NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE (NSC)
OCTOBER/NOVEMBER EXAMINATIONS TIMETABLE

WEEK FIVE

WEEK 5	09:00	14:00
Monday 17/11	Life Sciences P2 (2½hrs)	Dramatic Arts (3hrs)
Tuesday 18/11	Geography (Rural and Urban Settlements, Economic Geography of SA and Map Work) P2 (3hrs)	Engineering Graphics and Design P2 (3hrs)
Wednesday 19/11	Economics P1 (2hrs)	Tourism (3hrs)
Thursday 20/11	Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Xitsonga, Tshivenda HL P2 (2½hrs), FAL P2 (2½hrs), SAL P2 (1½hrs) South African Sign Language HL P2 (2½hrs)	Agricultural Sciences P2 (2½hrs)
Friday 21/11	Afrikaans HL P2 (2½hrs) Afrikaans FAL (2½hrs) Afrikaans SAL P2 (1½hrs)	Economics P2 (2hrs)

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DID YOU
KNOW?

You cannot combine National Senior Certificate (NSC) subjects with N3 subjects to obtain a matric certificate.

However, if you completed Senior Certificate (SC) subjects or Amended Senior Certificate subjects before November 2014, you can combine those with N3 subjects to qualify for a Senior Certificate (Amended) — also known as a Technical Matric.

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MEC CONTINUES TO MONITOR NSC MATRIC FINAL EXAMINATIONS

By Katlego Mashula

As the National Senior Certificate (NSC) final examinations enter their fourth week, MEC for Education, Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya, conducted a monitoring visit at Makhutjisha Secondary School in Modimolle-Mookgophong, within the Waterberg Education District. Learners were writing Geography.

The visit forms part of the Department's continued commitment to ensuring that the exam process runs smoothly, fairly, and in a conducive environment for all Grade 12 candidates. Makhutjisha Secondary is one of the highly enrolled schools in the district, with a total enrolment of 1 690 learners, including 196 Grade 12 candidates writing the 2025 examinations.

Despite not having enrichment camps this year at their school, learners at Makhutjisha Secondary have remained self-driven and motivated, demonstrating a high level of commitment to their studies.

To strengthen oversight and curb examination irregularities, the Limpopo Department of Education has resolved that one school will be visited each week. Priority is given to highly enrolled and high-performing schools to ensure full com-

pliance with examination rules and the smooth running of processes.

Councillor Manaka showed gratitude to the MEC for having chosen their school. "As a councillor I have so much confidence in our school and learners, I am aiming for 100% pass rate and believe that it is possible," said councillor Manaka, Mookgopong ward councillor.

Before the commencement of the paper, MEC Lerule-Ramakhanya addressed the learners, offering words of encouragement and reaffirming the Department's support throughout the exam period. She also extended her appreciation to Circuit Managers, principals, and educators for their unwavering dedication throughout the academic year.

"The only difference we can make in society is through education. To my learners, keep up the momentum — let us finish this race we started on a high note. I would like to congratulate you for your hard work and continued studying.

To all parents, thank you for the support you provide and for ensuring that learners come to write their examinations on time," concluded MEC Lerule-Ramakhanya.





EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PRIORITISES STRENGTHENS PARTNERSHIP WITH COMPANIES

By Hanedzani Mbedzi

MEC Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya visited Nelsonskop Primary School in the Waterberg Education District, where Exxaro handed over its completed infrastructure projects, demonstrating a strong partnership, progress, and commitment to creating safe and conducive teaching and learning environment. The partnership between Limpopo Department of Education and the mines continues to create impact to improve school infrastructure for learners in the province.

The visit aimed at ensuring that learners and educators are empowered by providing safe, fully equipped and supportive learning environment to enhance educational outcomes and overall development.

Circuit Manager, Ms. Phuti Mabotja expressed heartfelt gratitude for Exxaro's contribution, highlighting how the partnership has transformed the learning and teaching environment for both teachers and learners. She described the project as a powerful example of collaborative commitment, noting that such investments strengthen the foundation of quality education and uplift the entire school community.

"I am truly grateful for your presence. I am proud of the excellence we continue to build together. Today is not only about examinations, it is about

endurance, resilience and the strength of our learners, the sons and daughters of the soil. Your support, commitment and partnership reflect the true spirit of service in education," said Mabotja. Exxaro's continued investment goes beyond infrastructure, extending to programmes such as health screenings that ensure learners receive remain in good state of health.

Dr Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, the Chairperson of Exxaro's Social and Ethics Responsibility Committee, emphasized the company's broader commitment.

"At Exxaro, our responsibility goes far beyond infrastructure. It is about restoring dignity, creating opportunities, and ensuring that every community we serve feels the impact of sustainable development. When we invest in education, water, and social programmes, we are investing in the future of our nation."

MEC Lerule-Ramakhanya praised Exxaro's efforts, particularly in communities that were long affected by overcrowding and limited access to quality education. She stressed that progress is not just about placing children in classrooms but ensuring they receive meaningful, dignified, and empowering education. She also welcomed programmes such as eyesight and hearing screen-

ings, noting their importance in helping teachers understand learners' needs and improve academic performance.

“We truly appreciate Exxaro’s investment. Giving children a place in school is not enough, we must provide quality education that will change their lives. Quality is what gives our learners a future,” the MEC concluded.

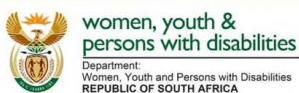
By addressing both infrastructure and essential support programmes, Exxaro and the Department of Education are creating an environment where learners can thrive, teachers are empowered, and the wider community benefits, proving that education, when properly supported, can transform lives.



3 November - 3 December
DRAM 2025
 DISABILITY RIGHTS AWARENESS MONTH

“Creating Strategic Multisectoral Partnerships for a Disability-Inclusive Society”

#DRAM2025
 #DisabilityInclusiveSA





GRADE 12s EMBARK ON THE LAST PHASE OF NSC JOURNEY

By Conny Mabunda

The Class of 2025 has entered week 5 and final lap of the Grade 12 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations. MEC for Education in Limpopo, Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya visited Thengwe High School in the Vhembe East Education District located at Tshandama Village to monitor the progress and to ensure that candidates have the calm and secure environment they need to finish strong. The school has 494 grade 12 candidates and have been performing well at over 90%.

“I am very pleased with the presence of candidates during exams as absenteeism rate has very low. The school is one of those contributing a high percentage for the province to be where they are,” concluded Lerule-Ramakhanya.

#Every Child is a National Asset



OVER THREE DECADES OF EXCELLENT SERVICE

By Hanedzani Mbedzi



The saying that “Sky is the limit”, a common idiom that resonates with an exciting but yet challenging journey of excellent service by Mr. Nhlashana Mphahlele, a Chief Director who is tasked with the smooth running of exams in the Limpopo Department of Education.

Mphahlele Nhlashana serves as the Chief Director of Examinations and Assessment in the Limpopo Department of Education, where he oversees the planning, management and administration of examinations across the province. With over 37 years of experience in education, his expertise spans all levels, from high school teacher to Chief Education Specialist, which earned him respect in curriculum implementation and assessment management.

Chief Director Mphahlele began his career during the apartheid era in the Bantustans. Although initially passionate about agriculture and animal farming, he pivoted to teaching to address the shortage of educators in rural communities. His long-standing commitment to education reflects a deep sense of service and responsibility to learners across Limpopo.

Looking ahead, Mphahlele envisions well-resourced district hubs that serve as active centers of learning. He is committed to leveraging technology and AI to transform examination manage-

ment, ensuring a secure, credible and efficient assessment system that continues to uphold the integrity of education in the province.

He specializes in Grade 12 examinations, managing both internal and external assessments for the National Senior Certificate (NSC) written in May/June, September and October/November. He also manages Senior Certificate examinations, Grade 10 and 11 common examinations and the Grade 9 General Education and Training Certificate (GEC).

For him, planning is non-negotiable. He believes that effective examination management relies on precision, discipline, attention to detail and flawless execution. Teamwork and consultation are central to his approach, and he takes pride in the strong team spirit and robust systems established within the examinations unit. Under his leadership, the department ensures examinations are conducted fairly and securely. This includes:

- Strict invigilation led by trained teachers, chief investigators and circuit managers.
- Secure storage and distribution of question papers under armed supervision 24/7.
- Double-lock systems and tamper-evident packaging to protect examination integrity.
- Contingency plans to manage unexpected disruptions, with support from police, municipalities and the Health and Wellness unit.

Mphahlele strongly condemns cheating and urges educators to safeguard every answer script, emphasising that compromised exams jeopardise learners’ future opportunities.

Over the past three years, Mphahlele’s team has stabilised the appointment of markers and candidate registration processes.

Developed proper moderation systems for School-Based Assessment (SBA), which have led to improved performance. Planned for the integration of Artificial Intelligence into examination monitoring to enhance efficiency and security.

2026 CALENDAR FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2025 SCHOOL CALENDAR

January 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

February 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

March 2025						
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						1
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Public and School Holidays 2025	
01 January	New Year's Day
21 March	Human Rights Day
18 April	Good Friday
21 April	Family Day
27 April	Freedom Day
28 April	Freedom Day' observed
29 April	Special school holiday
30 April	Special school holiday
01 May	Workers' Day
02 May	Special school holiday
16 June	Youth Day
09 August	National Women's Day
24 September	Heritage Day
16 December	Day of Reconciliation
25 December	Christmas Day
26 December	Day of Goodwill

April 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

May 2025						
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

June 2025						
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

July 2025						
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

August 2025						
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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

September 2025						
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

October 2025						
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

November 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

December 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

	Weekends
	Days for administration
	School days
	Public holidays
	Special school holidays
	School holidays

SUMMARY OF 2025 SCHOOL CALENDAR FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Duration	No. of weeks	No. of days	No. of public holidays	Actual no. of school days
(13) 15 January - 28 March	11	53 (55)	1	52 (54)
08 April – 27 June	12	59	4+3	52
22 July – 03 October	11	54	1	53
13 October – (10) 12 December	09	43 (45)	0	43 (45)
Total	43	209 (213)	6+3	200 (204)



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