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BANA PELE ECD REGISTRATION DRIVE STRENGTHENS EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT.

By Hanedzani Mbedzi

Guided by the 2026 theme, “A Year of Transformation and Development,” the Limpopo Department of Education, together with the Department of Basic Education, hosted the Bana Pele Early Childhood Development (ECD) Registration Drive at the Premier Hotel in Thohoyandou, Vhembe East Education District.

The purpose of the programme was to speed up the silver and gold registration of ECD centres and to educate practitioners about the services and support available to them.

During the event, four ECD centres were assessed and 69 ECD practitioners received certificates including Health and Safety packs. The programme also included support with eCares

applications provided by district social workers, as well as visits to four ECD centres. These visits assisted centres to meet registration requirements through infrastructure assessments and verification of practitioner qualifications.

The District Director of Vhembe East Education District, Rendani Munzhelele, welcomed practitioners and stakeholders to the provincial launch of the Bana Pele Silver Activation Project.

In his welcoming address, Munzhelele highlighted the importance of Early Childhood Development (ECD), emphasizing that practitioners participate in the programme out of passion and commitment to the development of young children.

“For us, this is not just about making a living. It is about having the passion and desire to contribute to the welfare and development of young ones,” he said.

He further noted that all ten education districts are participating in the project with a shared purpose of strengthening ECD services and improving support for practitioners. He also warmly welcomed officials from the Department of Education, partner organisations, community stakeholders, and guests from various districts, expressing appreciation for their continued collaboration.

District Director Munzhelele encouraged participants to remain committed to the programme, stating that collective dedication would help advance quality early learning opportunities for children.

Mongwe Miyela, A Social Worker from Mopani East Education District, stated that the initiative helps ensure that ECD centres receive the necessary support, adding that social workers will visit centres to guide practitioners and monitor progress towards full compliance.

Department of Basic Education Project Manager Ivy Rapoo introduced the purpose of the activation session by reflecting on the department’s efforts to improve Early Childhood Development (ECD) registration across the country. She reminded practitioners that when the ECD function moved to the Department of Basic Education, a new registration process was introduced to support centres to comply.

“We realized that although many ECD centres were on the database, a large number were not registered, which painted a bad picture for the department,” she said.

Rapoo emphasized that the bronze, silver and gold registration system, together with the e-care platform, was created to make registration easier by allowing centres to upload their information and required documents online. She encouraged practitioners to take advantage of the activation session.

Social workers will conduct follow-up visits to provide further support and ensure centres meet the necessary requirements.







SEHLOI PRIMARY SCHOOL SETS THE BENCHMARK IN SCHOOL NUTRITION EXCELLENCE

By Conny Mabunda

Excellence is not only acquired through curriculum in a classroom but can also be served on every plate. This is the case with one of Limpopo's best NSNP primary schools. Sehloi Primary School has emerged victorious in the 2025/26 National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) Best School Awards after achieving an exceptional score of 97%, outperforming all participating schools across the province.

The prestigious awards ceremony, hosted at their school in the Sekhukhune East Education District, celebrated schools that demonstrate outstanding commitment to providing nutritious meals and creating supportive learning environments that empower learners to succeed academically.

By clinching the first spot, Sehloi Primary School has earned the honour of representing the province at national level. Mashianoke Primary School from Capricorn North followed in the second place with 84%, while Dithlakaneng Primary School from Capricorn South secured third position with 77%. Sepedi Primary School from Mogalakwena, Pondo Primary School from Mopani East and Ponani Primary School from Mopani West ranked among the top six performing schools, showcasing strong implementation of the programme across districts.

The NSNP awards focus on Quintile 1–3 schools, farm schools and special schools, ensuring that learners in vulnerable communities receive nutritious meals that enhance concentration, attendance and overall academic performance. Schools are assessed according to strict criteria, including innovation and creativity in implementation, the establishment and maintenance of a functional school food garden that supplements the feeding scheme, adherence to hygiene and food safety standards, clean and compliant storage facilities, timely serving of meals, proper supervision of learners during feeding times and accurate record keeping through monthly reports.

“Without a school food garden, a school cannot enter the competition. Hygiene and food safety are also considered, including clean storage areas and whether meals are served on time,” concluded Anna Mamabolo, Assistant Director for NSNP.

Dan Raboshiwana, standing in for Director Matamela Matanga highlighted that the awards are held every financial year as a way of recognising excellence among Quintile 1–3 schools. He noted that the programme enhances the learning environment by promoting healthy eating and the provision of nutritious meals. Facil-

itated through circuits, the competition ranges from school gardening initiatives to the effective delivery of balanced and healthy meals.

“Hosting the awards marked a historic milestone for Sekhukhune, as it was the first time the district hosted such a prestigious event. The National School Nutrition Programme, which began as a feeding scheme and later evolved into a

comprehensive nutrition initiative, continues to play a vital role in supporting learners across the province.

We appreciate the food handlers for the role they are playing in ensuring that every child is well fed,” concluded circuit manager Petronella Mphahlele.





LEADING WITH PURPOSE BY ADVANCING QUALITY EDUCATION

By Conny Mabunda

Not just a lip service but real transformation driven by action and commitment as MEC for Education Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya, monitored infrastructure and unveiled fully refurbished blocks during an oversight visit to storm-damaged schools in the Capricorn North Education District, reaffirming the Department's commitment to safe and dignified learning environments.

The visit forms part of the Department's infrastructure recovery programme aimed at restoring schools severely affected by storm. The MEC toured Mashianoke Primary School and Botsikana Secondary School at Ga-Mashashane village to assess the reconstructed facilities and engage school management on challenges affecting teaching and learning.

Mashianoke Primary School with 253 enrolled learners, was among the hardest hit. The Department constructed two fully furnished classroom blocks comprising of 9 classrooms. Of the four dilapidated blocks, two were demolished and two renovated to enhance safety and functionality.

The school also achieved Position 1 nationally in the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) and Position 2 provincially, highlight-

ing its commitment to learner to a safe hygiene environment.

At Botsikana Secondary School, which has 324 learners enrolled for the 2026 academic year, upgrades included six fully furnished blocks with three classrooms each as well as four new sanitation blocks to improve hygiene and learner safety.

"We are very pleased that the MEC visited our school, and we are grateful for everything the Department has done for us," said SGB Chairperson Melita Motwa.

"The school results keep improving yearly after it was previously underperforming and I am very pleased with the work done by the contractors as they did a splendid job," said Botsikana principal Steven Morobane.

"The Department remains committed to rebuilding and maintaining school infrastructure to ensure that no learner is deprived of quality education due to unsafe or damaged facilities.

We also urge learners to make full use of these improved learning environments by dedicating themselves to their studies," concluded Lerule-Ramakhanya.





WELLNESS, FITNESS AND TEAMWORK TAKE CENTRE STAGE AT EDUCATION DEPARTMENT EVENT

By Katlego Mashula

Polokwane - A healthy body and mind are deeply connected, a best recipe for a sound mental well-being employee. Limpopo Department of Education's much-anticipated Fun Day took place at the Capricorn High School Stadium in Capricorn South Education District, bringing together employees for a lively day of wellness, teamwork, and the spirit of camaraderie.

The event promoted physical activities and strengthened workplace relationships, featuring a wide range of entertaining activities. Participants actively engaged in a fun walk, aerobics sessions, tug-of-war, musical chairs, sack races, and the classic egg-and-spoon race.

Adding to the excitement were friendly matches in ladies' soccer with attracted cheers and laughter from spectators.

Opening the session, Head of Department Maropene Seshibe emphasised the importance of stepping away from daily work pressures to recharge and connect with colleagues in a relaxed environment.

He highlighted that such initiatives play a crucial role in fostering a healthy work-life balance while strengthening unity within the department.

"This fun day encourages exercising, team spirit, and team building," Seshibe concluded.

The atmosphere at the stadium reflected enthusiasm and unity, as staff members seized the opportunity to unwind, socialize and celebrate teamwork beyond the office's daily routines.

The Fun Day did not only promoted wellness but also reinforced the department's commitment to creating a supportive and motivated workforce.

Mr Naphtaly Molohe, Chief Director responsible Corporate Services in Department thanked everyone for taking the opportunity to get involved in the activities.

All participants reflected a high level of discipline that must be applauded. To all participants, whether you won or not all of us are winners," said Molohe.

The overall winner of all the activities at the event was Corporate Services walking away with a championship trophy and all participants received medals for participation.

The event left lasting memories and renewed energy among employees, ultimately enhancing collaboration and productivity across the department.





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MEC HANDS OVER NEWLY REFURBISHED SCHOOLS

By Conny Mabunda and Katlego Mashula

A saying that success does not come overnight is not far-fetched, it comes through resilience, commitment and hard work. Makgongwana secondary school stands as testament that true transformation is possible as the MEC for Education Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya officially handed over the newly refurbished school in the Capricorn South education district.

The event brought together key stakeholders including, the speaker of the local municipality, teacher union representatives, members of the School Governing Body (SGB) and the royal leadership.

Once faced with academic challenges, the school has turned its fortunes around through strong leadership, dedicated educators, committed learners and unwavering community support. It now ranks among the top performing schools in the circuit, district and across the province.

In the 2025 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations, the school achieved an impressive 87,9% pass rate. With a total enrolment of 2 012 learners, including more than 500 Grade 12 candidates, the school continues to prioritise academic excellence. While Humanities remains the dominant stream, efforts are underway to mobilise interest in Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST) subjects to expand opportuni-

ties for learners. Beyond academics, the school also excels in sports and choral music, promoting holistic development.

As part of the infrastructure upgrade, the MEC handed over 6 newly built classroom blocks, a modern administration block and 8-seater sanitation facilities, creating a safer and more conducive teaching and learning environment.

The project was implemented in collaboration with the Independent Development Trust (IDT). IDT representative Bali Mamabolo noted that construction began in 2022 and was completed in December 2025, despite social challenges encountered along the way. The project created 19 job opportunities and benefitted the marginalised groups.

A representative from the local chieftaincy expressed gratitude to the department and urged the community to unite in supporting the school to achieve a 100% pass rate.

Addressing the Grade 12 learners, the MEC encouraged the 2026 cohort to protect the newly built infrastructure and remain focused on their academic goals.

“You can’t condemn your future through actions. Maximise your knowledge and maximise it to the highest level so you can defy the odds,” concluded MEC Lerule-Ramakhanya.

Few kilometres from Makgongoana, MEC Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya officially handed over newly refurbished infrastructure at Nkoshilo Secondary School in the Capricorn South Education District.

Nkoshilo has an enrolment of 887 learners. The infrastructure project, implemented by the Independent Development Trust on behalf of the Department of Public Works, included the installation of 28 enviroloo sanitation units, refurbishment of 12 classrooms, and the demolition and reconstruction of 18 classrooms, along with the construction of septic tanks.

The school had previously faced significant infrastructure challenges, including cracked floor

tiles, a classroom block damaged by heavy rains and electricity-related issues that negatively affected the learning environment.

SGB Chairperson of Nkoshilo Secondary, Jeritha Netshiavha was beaming with pride due to the state of their school.

“I am very happy and grateful for the infrastructure that MEC has provided us with. May this good work continue to others and not stop with us,” said Netshiavha.

The handover marks a significant step towards creating a safe, functional and conducive learning environment for both learners and educators at Nkoshilo Secondary School.





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ACADEMIC REFLECTION SESSIONS STRENGTHEN PERFORMANCE ACROSS EDUCATION DISTRICTS IN LIMPOPO

By Katlego Mashula

The Limpopo Department of Education continues to intensify efforts to strengthen learner performance through ongoing Academic Reflection Meetings held across districts. Head of Department, Maropene Seshibe, convened the sessions in Waterberg and Mogalakwena before proceeding to Mopani East and West, Capricorn North and South and concluding in Vhembe East and West Education Districts.

The sessions form part of a structured approach to evaluate academic results, identify gaps and implement targeted interventions aimed at restoring and sustaining excellence in schools. Key issues identified include sanitation challenges, infrastructure maintenance and the need to strengthen curriculum delivery.

Principals and Circuit Managers were urged to intensify classroom monitoring and ensure that quality teaching and learning consistently take place. Districts were further encouraged to adopt a focused three-year improvement programme to restore confidence and academic standards in schools.

Mogalakwena achieved a pass rate of 90.8% in the 2025 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination results, securing the top position in the

province. Waterberg Education District, which previously held the top provincial position, reaffirmed its commitment to excellence, pledging to consistently achieve a pass rate above 90%.

“It is in our best interest to ensure that districts perform. I am here to remind you of the significance of your role in the province, both individually and collectively. I am also here to congratulate you on the work done,” said HoD Maropene Seshibe.

Capricorn South was the third district visited during the reflection programme. HoD acknowledged a slight 0.1% decline in performance while emphasizing that the district remains a critical contributor to provincial outcomes.

The district comprises 16 circuits and 162 secondary schools, with 34 schools currently classified as underperforming. Concerns were raised regarding declining performance in Mathematics, although participation in the subject is improving.

Chronic underperformance in certain schools was highlighted, while top-performing schools such as Maswiakgomo Secondary School, which achieved a 100% pass rate and Makgoka

Secondary School, which achieved above 90%, were commended for their excellence.

“To principals and Circuit Managers, follow policies and procedures, including compliance with progression requirements, and do not gate keep learners,” said Rinae Sikhwari, Education Data Analyst (Data-Driven District Dashboard).

Capricorn North, the fourth district visited, demonstrated significant progress, achieving an impressive 87% pass rate. Commending the district, the HoD congratulated officials and educators for their dedication and hard work. “When we return to our schools, let us ensure that we give each and every learner the support and care they deserve,” she emphasized. The district also surpassed its baseline target for Bachelor passes and recorded the best performance in Agricultural Sciences and Geography.

District Director Mothemane highlighted that the district has consistently produced top learners both provincially and nationally, reinforcing its reputation for academic excellence.

Vhembe West also recorded an increase in its pass percentage in the 2025 NSC examination results, an achievement welcomed by the HoD. Despite the progress, the district acknowledged areas requiring attention, including the repeated use of question papers and limited integration of ICT tools, such as tablets, in teaching and learning.

The HoD emphasized the importance of innovation and collective accountability, urging all stakeholders to ensure full buy-in as the district moves forward.

“As we celebrate the targets achieved, let us ensure that everyone commits to sustaining and improving this performance,” Seshibe concluded.

The Academic Reflection Meetings continue to serve as a strategic platform for strengthening accountability, enhancing curriculum delivery, and ensuring that every learner across the province receives quality education and adequate support.







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BANA PELE ECD REGISTRATION DRIVE

The Limpopo Department of Education invites all Early Childhood Development programmes to take part in the **Bana Pele ECD Registration Drive** aimed at accelerating Silver and Gold registrations.

Services to be offered:

Silver registration briefings

- eCares application support
- Assistance with required documentation
- Health & safety compliance guidance
- Site visit scheduling

For more information contact,
ECD Bana Pele Champions,
Ms Caroline Mongwe at **061 475 0532**
and Mr Gift Hlongwane at **061 477 6634**

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