

**A SPEECH DELIVERED BY MEC MAVHUNGU LERULE-  
RAMAKHANYA AT THE NATIONAL TEACHING AWARDS  
PROVINCIAL CEREMONY HELD AT THE RANCH HOTEL ON 01  
SEPTEMBER 2023.**

**Executive Mayor for Capricorn District  
Executive Mayor for Polokwane Municipality  
Head for Limpopo Education Department  
CFO,DDGs and Chief Directors Present.  
SGB Associations  
All the Sector Unions Present  
SAPS Band  
Our School Choir  
Members of the media Present  
And all those who are following on virtual Platforms.**

It is my singular honour and privilege to be in your presence this morning as we gathered here to celebrate and honour our frontliners, our hardworking and dedicated educators from our 10 education districts. Your resilience and dedication has brought us under this roof to honour and appreciate the noble field that produces leaders irrespective of the profession. All the professionals, scholars and business people we know, were moulded and taught by an educator at some point. It is for that reason why we are here to celebrate you. We are proud as Limpopo that since the inception of the Teaching Award 23 years ago, the province got recognition in the National and internal stages. We are known as a rural province with less resources, but your work speaks volume.

Let me first start by congratulating all the winners who ascended the stage few minutes ago to receive accolades and awards as our way of appreciating your devotion to your work. You have come a long way to be nominated and be declared winners. Every educator in the hall who competed are winners. You may have not had the honour to ascend the stage this morning but we appreciate the work that you do. We are proud of your achievements and loyalty to the calling to teach the nation.

We are gathered here on a spring day, the beginning of a new season where we celebrate our diverse culture and heritage. A month where we are urged to foster greater social cohesion, nation building and a shared national identity. It is the month where as South Africans we gather to

celebrate and embrace what we inherited from our forebears. A culture that we need to instil at school and continue to educate the nation about our roots and to take pride of their heritage. The heritage month is celebrated under the theme, “**change and continuity**”. A call to all of us to be innovative in preserving our culture for the coming generations. I see most of you are proudly dressed in your diverse cultural attires to mark the day and we are happy that you remain true to your roots.

This is a very important day in our Calander as we celebrate Casual Day. A day that we are reminded to embrace people living with different disabilities. We are celebrating and recognizing the day under the theme, “**Share a smile**”. As the Department of Education, we also vested with a responsibility to ensure that learners living with disabilities have access to education and must be cared for. To us, every learner matters, and we will continue to give them the special attention that they deserve. I also want to take this opportunity to thank care-givers and educators in our special schools, we know what it takes to look after our learners with special needs.

I may not be able to visit each and every school in the province but through our data analysis and the results we got, I am in a position to understand what educators in various circuits are doing. We have educators who over the years dedicated their time in ensuring that the provision of quality learning and teaching is realized. Their sterling work in various fields is well noted and appreciated. Allow me Programme Director to appreciate the following educators who are here today as my special guests. I had the privilege of meeting them at the briefing session. It is important that I also take this time to introduce them to you. I will not dwell much on their individual achievements due to time constraints but allow me to introduce my special guests, whom I invited to be with us this morning. I will request each one of them to stand up and take a bow as we appreciate the good work that they do.

- **Mr. Tlou Ramara** the Principal of Taxila High, one of the high enrolled school with a very impressive matric results record.
  
- **Ms Desire Conradie** – Principal of PEMPS Primary School who has been at the helm of the school for the past 10 years.

- **Mr. Mohlala MJ**, The principal of Potoko Secondary school from Sekhukhune East who against all odds is producing 100% pass in his subjects.
- **Mr. Marubini MF** from Thengwe High School, a selfless mathematics guru who is assisting Vhembe East District, the Circuits and the Province in the development of Mathematics.
- **Komape KI** from Mashooro High School under Mawa Circuit in Mopani West under the stewardship of District Director Modika, A resilient Mbokodo who against all odds is also leading and steering the ship towards calmer shores.
- **Mr. Masalesa FD**, a young grade 12 Mathematics teacher at Dennis Mahlaba Secondary School under Mogalakwena, He has been performing above 80% and still rising.
- **Mr. Hlengani Patrick Mabasa** an Educator from Hanyani Primary, Mopani East District whose love for sports has benefited the province immensely. A cricket fanatic who is keeping our children busy with extra mural activities.
- From Sinthumule Secondary School, a dedicated Mathematics teacher for 30 years, another Mbokodo who is making mathematics fashionable and also a role model to a girl child, let me appreciate **Mrs. Meriam Rambuda**.
- **Sokana Leuba Alfred** an educator from Sefoloko Secondary School in Capricorn North, a former winner in the national stages, Physical Sciences and Life Sciences teacher.
- And lastly, another educator with passion for extra mural activities, a man with countless number of trophies in the school cabin. Lets honour and appreciate our educator **Mr. Stanely Mokgawa** from Kgakoa Secondary School in Capricorn North on his 31 years uninterrupted service.

A lot has been said about you and if I were to dwell on your achievements, we would take the whole day here but it suffices to say that your contribution to the sector is well documented and appreciated.

**Programme Director**, we are now counted amongst the provinces that are performing above the 70% matric pass rate because of the dedication of our educators. Your sacrifices at the camps and the efforts you put in extra classes will surely assist us to maintain the standard. We are also aware that it is not smooth sailing for you but you always strive to give us the best you can offer. It is for that reason why we take this programme seriously and to reiterate our support. In the previous edition of this competition, Limpopo produced the best teacher in the country and I am confident that we will retain the position.

Today is not a day for long speeches but to celebrate men and women who continue to show commitment to their calling. We do not take for granted what you go through on a daily basis in your respective space of work. You are confronted by unruly learners, bullies and harsh working conditions that at times demoralize you to soldier on. I know infrastructure is amongst the challenges that deter and demoralize you. We have declared this financial year as the year of infrastructure and we have made inroads in addressing some of the challenges. I was in Sekhukhune East with the Premier in January when schools reopened and we were exposed to overcrowded rooms and make-shift classes. We have attended to some with the provision of mobile classes and plans for permanent structures are underway. We remain committed to our promise of restoring the dignity of a black child.

I urge the SGB structures, parents, QLTC and Safety structures to ensure that our educators are free. Let us protect them from harm, we need to teach our children to respect the teachers the same way they show us respect at home. We need violence free schools where these educators will conduct classes freely. Let us make sure that our schools are afforded the decorum they deserve and remain a source of learning.

Let me once again take this opportunity to thank each one of you, the participants who won today and still to proceed to compete at the national stage. We are affirming our support, to be with you all the way to the finals.

I thank you!!