

Speech Delivered by Limpopo Education MEC Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya at the Matric 2023 countdown held in Giyani, Harvest Time Church on 29 September 2023

Executive Mayor for Mopani District Municipality Pule Shai

Greater Giyani Municipality Mayor cllr Thandi Zitha

Members of the Mayoral Committee

House of Traditional Leaders

HoD Onicca Dederen

CFO,DDGs, District Directors and Chief Directors Present.

SGB Associations

All the Sector Unions Present

Members of the media

And all those who are following us on virtual Platforms.

Ndi Matsheloni!!!

It is an honour to be in your midst to mark the countdown for the 2023 Final Matric Examination. We have brought this event in Mopani East this morning to give you the much-needed moral injection as we start counting down to the final hurdle of your basic education programme. We are here today to lay a foundation of your transition to the tertiary level where you are expected to be totally independent. We know and understand the anxiety and the nervousness that you are grappling with. We are

here to assure you that you will make it, let fear not deter you from your goals.

The Solidarity walk we took from the Community Hall to this Church was solely to symbolize our unwavering support to all of you in your different uniforms. As a parent and the Political head of the Department, I have been assured that you had enough time to study, catch-up and you will soon start with revision. I know you invested a lot of time from January to now preparing for your exit. Your educators have been with you since the re-opening in January. You had your time on weekends and in camps preparing for the exams. Instead of being nervous, use the opportunity to showcase the fruits of your investments.

It is common knowledge that as the Province, we are still at the bottom of the list compared to other provinces. We have noted the improvement by the 2022 cohort but we are still not where we envisaged to be. Mopani East is one of the three Districts that performed below 70 percent last year. You were number 8 ahead of the two Sekhukhune Districts. I want this day to be the turning point for this district. I want this cohort to change the perception about this district. It is about time Mopani East rises and be counted amongst the best, it starts today and you are the change that we need. You are not far off the mark. Last year, 12 057 learners who sat for Matric Exams last year managed to pull 68,4%. We are grateful for their hard work understanding that they were the cohort most affected by the Covid Pandemic. I am pinning my trust and hope on you to improve and do even much better.

I don't want to compare you to any other district, but it will be fair that I contrast you against the bordering district, Mopani West. Through hardwork, they clinched position three with 76%. I want you to take a leaf and compete amongst yourself, you have what it takes to go above the 70 percent threshold. I will be proud to have a learner from Ritlhavile Secondary or any of the 27 schools

represented here today ascending the stage in January when we reward the best achievers. I want you to promise me that our visit and the solidarity walk we had today will not be in vain. I want **Zanele Baloyi, our learner** from the host school, to ascend the stage to pledge on your behalf that you will surpass the previous class.

The pledge by Ritlhavile represents all of you in this hall today. I expect nothing but the best result that will not only make us proud but a ticket to tertiary. Good results will enable you to access any institution of higher learning to pursue the careers of your choice. As I conclude, I want to acknowledge the presence of one of the brightest learners from Ritlhavile currently doing grade 11, **Risima Masangu** as she takes a bow. You have been chosen by your school to be a recipient of the new jacket I am wearing today. The school believes that you have the potential to encourage other learners to work hard, I will have the honour to hand it over to you after the official proceedings.

Ritlhavile must not take our support for granted, we want you to shine like other schools in the country. I also know of your infrastructure challenges, you are on our priority list for this current financial year and we will surely attend to your infrastructure needs. I am using Ritlhavile as an example since they are our host school but all my beautiful learners in the hall today are important to us. We appreciate your dedication and the journey you have travelled so far.

As I conclude, I want to take this time and talk to our stakeholders in the hall and parents following us on social media. Our learners will be writing in a few weeks, we need to give them a break from hard domestic chores. Their energy must be directed to school work, catch and revision. Please give them time to rest, allow them time to sleep after their long study sessions. I also want you to monitor them to ensure that they are indeed studying. The

use of cellphones must be very minimal. Make sure that they use their gadgets for academic purposes. If they are doing contrary, confiscate the phones for the duration of the examinations. They may not agree with your decisions, but they will thank you later.

I thank you!!!