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Office Of The Premier
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

The provision of quality education is a collective responsibility

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Durban: KwaZulu-Natal Premier Senzo Mchunu has called on stakeholders in the education sector to work as a collective in order to turn around the situation. He was speaking during the opening of the Education Indaba in Durban. The lineup of speakers included the Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga, MEC for Education Peggy Nkonyeni, organized labour and representatives of school governing bodies.

“During his first State of the Nation Address during the previous term of office, His Excellency President J.G Zuma announced that education was one of the Top Priorities of this government. This was followed by a meeting between him and school principals from across the country.”

“It was really for the first time that a Head of State in this country or the world over meets with school principals. In this meeting the president emphasized the importance of education as the only key tool to be used to drive socio-economic development. He singled out educators as agents of change and called on school principals to provide strong leadership in their schools.”

“It is not surprising that subsequent to that meeting, we witnessed improvements in matric results in the country and in this province. The excellent improvements were a demonstration of a collective will to accelerate progress towards achieving a rising quality of education in this province.”

“The downward trend which we have been experiencing since 2014 is a cause for concern to all of us. We have convened this gathering in order to find long lasting solutions to the decline. As the provincial executive council we take full responsibility for this decline because we have been mandated to run the province. We refuse to the temptation to blame the MEC for Education, principals, teachers or learners.”

“Whilst we take full responsibility, we must acknowledge the fact that the provision of quality education is everybody’s responsibility. We need to examine the causes of the decline but more importantly we must emerge out of this gathering with a clear action plan focusing on the improvement from the current pass rate.”

“I do not believe that today is time for finger-pointing. We must guide against the use of valuable time and energy on highlighting our differences in such a way that we magnify our weaknesses and diminish our strengths. We must reach a point where we all agree that education of our children is sacrosanct and thus nothing should be allowed to get between learners and quality education.”

“We must all stick to the agreed set of basic non-negotiables: **teacher in school in class on time teaching and the learner to be in class on time learning and respecting the teacher. Parents and communities at large must be involved in the education of children.**”

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“As the provincial government we have taken the position that good quality education has to be relevant to the needs of the provincial economy, and it should be judged by the extent to which it makes an individual self-sufficient and able to maintain sustainable livelihoods on leaving school, irrespective of the level attained.”

“Critically, we understand that quality education depends on the linkages between education and a variety of other social and economic outcomes. In this regard, we appreciate the role of big business especially those who have partnered with government to improve physical infrastructure such as classrooms and laboratories.”

“The availability of basic services such as water, sanitation and electricity, including bursaries for needy learners will go a long way towards supporting the schooling system. Whilst government has allocated resources for such services, it is however not adequate. We will always rely on the private sector because we all have a responsibility to produce enough skills required to grow the economy of the province.”

Ends

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