

Speech by the Premier of Limpopo, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, at the Announcement of the Grade 12 National Senior Certificate Results (Matric)

The Ranch Hotel, 14 January 2025

Programme Director, MEC Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya,
Speaker of Limpopo Legislature, Ms Makoma Makhurupetje,
Deputy Speaker of Limpopo Legislature, Ms Tebogo Mamorobela,
Members of the Provincial Legislature,
Members of the Executive Council,
Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Education, Ms Nkakareng Rakgoale,
Executive Mayor of Capricorn District Municipality Cllr Mamedupi Teffo,
Executive Mayor of Polokwane Municipality, Cllr Makoro John Mpe,
All Executive Mayors and Mayors,
Chairperson of Limpopo House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders, Hosi Peni Ngove,
Deputy Chairperson of Limpopo House of Traditional and the Khoi-San Leaders, Kgoshi Rammupudu,
Director General of Limpopo, Mr Nape Nchabeleng,
ANC Provincial Secretary, Vhamusanda Vho-Reuben Madadzhe
His Grace The Right Reverend of the Zion Christian Church, Bishop Barnabas Lekganyane,
His Grace The Right Reverend of the St. Engenas Zion Christian Church, Bishop Engenas Lekganyane
Roman Catholic Church, Bishop Jeremiah Masela,
United African Apostolic Church, Bishop Miriri,
South African Council of Churches, Bishop Naledzani Sikhware, and other Pastors
SAPS Provincial Commissioner, Lieutenant General Thembi Hadebe,
Representatives of Chapter 9 Institutions
Labour Representatives
Chairperson of SADTU and other teacher union organisations
Donors, Investors
The most important guests today, the learners
All Media,
Distinguished guests
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good morning!

It is with great joy that we come together today to mark an important milestone in our educational journey. My first congratulation goes to the 93,000 learners who have been able to sit for the matric exams in Limpopo.

As we celebrate the achievements of our learners, I am reminded of an African proverb: "Fear no forest because it is dense." This proverb speaks to the resilience and determination we have embraced since the beginning of our journey together in the seventh administration, just seven months ago.

We have faced challenges, but we have remained steadfast in our commitment to improving our matric pass rate beyond the impressive 79.5% achieved by the class of 2023, and I am proud to say we have made remarkable progress.

Today's gathering is an indication that hard work that has been put in over the past 30 years. We have steadily improved our results from some 38% in the 90s, and while there have been some challenges, we have made significant strides.

Our educators have consistently nurtured talented students who have gone on to become leaders across various sectors in our country.

The accomplishments of our learners reflect the exceptional quality of education in Limpopo.

I stand before you today filled with pride as we reflect on the results announced by the Minister of Education yesterday. Our aim was to maintain an 80% pass mark and achieving 85.5% is a commendable accomplishment that speaks to the dedication of our learners, teachers, parents, and departmental officials.

For the first time since our democracy, we have surpassed the 80% mark in our matric results, with all but one circuit performing above 70%. It's heartening to see that over 90,000 learners completed their matric in 2024.

We will continue to prioritise quality, particularly in bachelor pass rates, as we aim to position Limpopo among the top five provinces by 2025.

We would also want communities to bear with us that we get skills relevant to schools where they are without having to be pushed into the "ngwana wa mobu" syndrome. This is especially in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects where some of our schools are lacking.

While we celebrate these achievements, we must also recognise that there is still work to be done, particularly in the Sekhukhune District. We commend their improvements, but we must strive for even greater results. I call on our traditional leaders in Sekhukhune to collaborate with us in fostering a culture of education and adapting our traditions to support our youth.

It is essential that our learners are ready to start their studies promptly and seize every opportunity to learn.

Alongside our dedicated teachers, we are committed to improving educational infrastructure throughout the province. Our government is focused on building schools and enhancing facilities that support effective learning.

As we reflect on our achievements, let us remember that education is a continuous journey, and we honour the legacy of those who came before us by striving for even greater heights. Collaboration among all stakeholders -parents, teachers, community

leaders, and government - is vital in nurturing our learners and ensuring they have access to quality education.

Looking ahead, I encourage everyone to commit to the vision of a prosperous Limpopo. Let us set ambitious goals and challenge ourselves to innovate and improve.

To our educators, continue to inspire our learners and ignite their passion for knowledge. And to our learners: remember that your dreams are valid, and your potential is boundless. Embrace every opportunity and commit to hard work.

We must also prioritise mental health and well-being in our educational environment. Creating safe spaces for learners to express themselves is crucial to fostering a supportive atmosphere.

We also recognise the challenges posed by teenage pregnancy in our province. It is important that we work together as a community to provide support and resources for our youth. We appreciate the involvement of churches and community organisations that have come forward to assist our learners, showing their commitment to education.

As we strive to improve, let us also encourage parents from other provinces to consider bringing their children to Limpopo. Our improved results reflect the quality of education we provide, and we want to showcase our province as a destination for academic excellence.

For those learners who may not have succeeded this time, please know that setbacks are temporary. Remember that many successful individuals have faced challenges along their educational journeys, but they persevered. There is always an opportunity for a second attempt, and I urge you to take it.

In closing, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to MEC Mavhungu-Lerule Ramakhanya and the education team for their hard work and dedication. Your efforts have brought joy to our hearts, and you have proven that our achievements are a result of commitment and collaboration.

Let us celebrate this achievement together, but also remain focused on the work that lies ahead. Together, we can build a brighter future for our learners and ensure that Limpopo continues to shine as a beacon of educational success.

As we embark on this new academic year, let us carry forward the enthusiasm and commitment we have shown today. Each one of us has a role to play in nurturing the potential of our learners, and together, we can create an environment that fosters growth, innovation, and excellence.

I urge everyone to remain engaged and proactive in supporting our education system. Whether you are a parent, teacher, community leader, or student, your contributions are invaluable. Let us work hand in hand to cultivate a culture of learning that empowers our youth and prepares them for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate how proud I am of each learner who has contributed to our achievements this year. Your hard work and determination have brought us to this moment of celebration. To our teachers and parents, thank you for your unwavering support and guidance. It is through our collective effort that we can continue to make a difference in the lives of our learners and, by extension, our communities.

Thank you, and congratulations to all our learners! Let's keep striving for greatness!