

Speech by Limpopo Premier Dr Phophi Ramathuba During the Solidarity Walk with 1000 Grade 12 Learners Preceding the Launch of the 2025 Matric Examination Countdown, France, Ga- Nkwana Ground, R37, Sekhukhune District

Programme Director,
MEC for Education, Ms Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya,
Members of the Provincial Legislature,
Mayor of Fetakgomo-Tubatse Local Municipality, Cllr. Eddie Maila,
Officials from the Limpopo Department of Education,
Our dedicated School Principals and Teachers,
Our beloved Parents and Community Leaders,
And, most importantly, the shining stars of today, the brilliant Grade 12 learners of our province,
Members of the Media

Thobela, Avuxeni, Ndi matsheloni, Good morning, Goeie môre,

Education is the light that never dims, the bridge that carries us from the present into the promise of tomorrow. It is the ladder on which dreams climb, and the compass that points us to greater horizons.

When a child takes their first step into a classroom, they are not only learning to read or write, but they are also beginning a lifelong journey of discovery. Education sharpens the mind, builds character, and it nurtures resilience. It gives us the courage to imagine a future bigger than ourselves and the tools to build it.

Today, as we walk side by side, we are reminded that every step you have taken from your first day in pre-school, through the hallways of your primary years, into the challenges of high school has led you to this final stretch. Grade 12 is not just another grade; it is the bridge to university, the gateway to your careers, and the launchpad of your future.

Class of 2025, you have come a long way, and now you stand at the last hurdle before you soar. Believe me when I say this: you will make it.

Last year, your brothers and sisters, the Class of 2024 made this province immensely proud by achieving an outstanding 85.1%, lifting Limpopo to the sixth position nationally. That milestone was not just a statistic. It was proof of what happens when learners, teachers, parents, and government work together with one purpose.

That achievement is your inheritance, but it is also your challenge. It says to you: excellence is possible. It says to you: you too can achieve greatness. In fact, we believe you can take Limpopo even higher. Why not aim for the top five nationally? Why not dream of Limpopo producing the best-performing learners in the country?

The world is waiting for you. Careers are waiting for you. Opportunities are waiting for you. Think big, aim high, and refuse to be limited by anything.

We, as your government, your teachers, your parents, and your community, are walking with you in body, in spirit, and in unwavering support. You are not alone in this journey. We love you, we believe in you, and we will support you all the way.

This solidarity walk we are part of today is more than physical exercise. It is a statement of unity. It is a declaration that education is everyone's responsibility, government, educators, parents, communities, and yes, you the learners yourselves.

As the Seventh Administration, we continue to invest heavily in education because we know that it is the cornerstone of development. From improving school infrastructure, strengthening scholar transport, ensuring timely delivery of learning materials, and introducing digital learning, we are laying the foundation. But no matter how much government invests, the true success lies in your hands. We can build classrooms, but only you can fill them with knowledge. We can provide textbooks, but only you can read them. We can create opportunities, but only you can seize them.

Let me remind you of something very important: this examination is not just a test of memory; it is a test of perseverance. It is a measure of the discipline you have built, the sacrifices you have made, and the resilience you have shown.

Some of you may have faced challenges, financial struggles, long distances to school, overcrowded classrooms, or personal difficulties at home. Yet here you are, standing tall, preparing for the final lap of your schooling journey. That alone is proof of your strength.

And as our former President, Nelson Mandela, reminded us: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". You, the Class of 2025, are holding that weapon. Use it wisely. Use it to build, not destroy. Use it to uplift your family, your communities, and your country.

Remember: these exams measure what you know today, but they do not define your worth as a person. You are valuable, you are gifted, and you are destined for greatness regardless of the outcome. However, we also believe that you are capable of excelling, and we encourage you to push yourselves beyond limits.

I want you to carry three powerful messages as you prepare:

1. Trust your preparation. You have been equipped with tools, knowledge, and guidance. Believe in your abilities. Walk into those exam rooms with confidence and let your hard work shine.
2. Protect your integrity. Write these exams with honesty and dignity. Do not take shortcuts. Success earned through dishonesty is not true success. Your honest effort is your greatest pride.

3. Take care of yourselves. Study hard, but do not neglect your health. Rest well, eat well, and manage your time wisely. A healthy body and a calm mind will carry you to the finish line.

So, Class of 2025, walk into those examination rooms with courage. Carry with you the hopes of your families, the pride of your communities, and the aspirations of an entire province. When you sit for those exams, remember that you are not writing for yourself alone. You are writing for your parents who have sacrificed, for your teachers who have worked tirelessly, and for the province that believes in your potential.

Make yourselves proud, and in doing so, you will make Limpopo proud. I wish you strength, focus, and confidence as you take on this last stretch.

Your moment is here – seize it.

I thank you.