

Press Release – Making Schools Work Program in Metsweding District Area

The ANC in the Metsweding Region through the ANC Parliamentary Offices of Kungwini and Nokeng Tsa Taemane, ANC Caucuses of Metsweding, Kungwini and Nokeng Tsa Taemane are embarking on a program, as a tradition, to assist a smooth commencement of the 2009 Schools Calendar Year. We take note of the Matric Results and recognise that these are the first of their kind following the introduction of the New Curriculum Statement.

The results demonstrate that progress is being registered in the transformation of education in our country. We cannot actually make a comparison of the results with previous results as these are completely different and new. A fair comparison can only be made from this year's benchmark with the following results in the coming years. However, this was a good start and the 76.4% we received in the Gauteng Province and the 73.48% that the Metsweding Region (Gauteng North) obtained should be equal to inspiration and signal of hope for greater improvement in our education system, especially with regard to performance of learners. Even greater focus will need to be shifted to the foundation and intermediate phases to ensure that we invest appropriate and sufficient preparation of learners to manage and perform within and beyond expectations once they reach the further education and higher education levels, including the prioritisation of the centrality of the Early Childhood system as a "head start on numeracy and literacy"¹.

As part of our program to ensure that the "doors of learning and culture shall be opened"², the ANC in Metsweding will be doing its bit by embarking on "Making the Schools Work" program. This program is driven by the ANC Public Representatives – MPs, MPLs, and Councillors, in partnership with community and schools' leadership, designed to make critical interventions in our schools as an oversight act but also a leadership and activist role to help improve conditions in our schools for both learners and educators. To this effect, we will undertake the following programs:

1. Clean-up Campaign
2. Schools Visits
3. Free uniforms
4. Bicycles for farm schools
5. Meeting with Local Education Stakeholders
6. Matric Awards

THE CLEAN-UP CAMPAIGN

This campaign targets at least, one school per ward in our District area and seeks to identify those schools that need urgent repairs and make-overs. Volunteer teams of all ANC Councillors and ANC branches will carry out painting of the ablution blocks, cutting of grass and general cleaning of the school physical environment. We also welcome the initiative of the Gauteng Youth Commission who also will be embarking on a similar campaign, targeting about five schools in our region.

¹ ANC 2009 Working Together We Can Do More Manifesto

² Clause of and from the Freedom Charter

Our intervention in this regard is intended to ensure that the school environment can be a positively welcoming one and create a better conducive circumstance for learners to learn and educators to teach. Through this, we hope that minimal disruption will take place on the day of schools reopening and effective learning and teaching can take place as from day one.

SCHOOLS VISITS

Unannounced schools visits will take place on the 14th and 16th of January 2009 to high schools that have performed well and those that did not, as well as foundation and intermediate schools. Our objective is essentially to check on three things, viz.:

1. Access to Education
2. School and Learner Safety and
3. School Cleanliness and Learner Health

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

This area is to focus more on the issues of:

- Free Education including progress in implementing no-fee schools;
- Availability of learning and teaching material on time;
- Building of schools – with particular focus on newly built or soon to be built schools; and
- Learner transport for rural schools

SCHOOL AND LEARNER SAFETY

Focus around this area will be:

- Efforts to prevent violence in school premises;
- How abuse of alcohol and substances is being dealt with; and
- Prevention of burglary and vandalism of schools and its property.

SCHOOL CLEANLINESS AND LEARNER HEALTH

This area will cover the following issues:

- Maintenance in schools, particularly toilets and the greening program;
- Diseases Prevention Program and active engagement of learners in sport; and
- Plans to Address teenage pregnancy

FREE UNIFORM

The Gauteng Department of Education in partnership with the Department of Social Development have a program of issuing out school uniforms to deserving learners throughout the province. This is part of a demonstration of a caring government, sensitive to the reality that there are many learners who come from poor families who rely on government grants and can therefore not afford to buy uniform for their children. So far resources permitting, only one school has been identified in our district and we look forward to the Deputy Minister of Social Development Dr. Jean Swanson-Jacobs and the Gauteng MEC of Social Development, Cde Kgaugelo Lekgoro visiting our District at

Ve Zulwazwi Primary School, in Zithobeni, in the Kungwini Local municipal area, on the 16th of January 2009. The event will commence at 9h00 at the school grounds.

BICYCLES FOR FARM SCHOOLS' LEARNERS

The Department of Public Transport, Roads and Works in Gauteng handed over 200 bicycles towards farm school learners in the past year. During this month, Metsweding District Municipality in partnership with its local municipalities of Kungwini and Nokeng Tsa Taemane, will hand these bicycles over to 200 learners who are facing challenges of access to their schools as a result of long distances they have to travel. The Program dubbed "Si shova kalula" is a national government initiative to encourage communities to utilise non-motorised form of transport to access social and economic opportunities at a cheaper cost, while being environmentally friendly, as well enhancing a healthy lifestyle.

MEETING WITH LOCAL EDUCATION STAKEHOLDERS AND REGIONAL EDUCATION SUMMIT

We expect Local Education Stakeholders meetings to be convened throughout the province of Gauteng by ANC Election Structures by the 21st of January 2009. These meetings are intended to address the challenges that we have picked up during our interaction with schools and its leadership during the Schools Visits. But other things to address will be those that appear on the ANC 2009 Manifesto relating to Education and identifying ways of ensuring that we make a contribution towards their realisation. These Local Education Stakeholders Meetings together with meetings by Public Representatives with Education Officials will culminate into Regional Education Summits during the February 2009 month. These Summits will conclude Matric Awards, look at the Education Department Plan of Action to address problems at schools and how the Manifesto can be actualised at a local level.

MATRIC AWARDS

The Matric Awards Ceremony will take place on the 7th of February 2009 at the Bronkhorstspuit Sports Centre, commencing at 10h00. This is geared to express our appreciation and recognition of excellent performance. We are proud to have learners who did exceptionally well, in certain instances, under difficult conditions, but surpassing their adverse circumstances to deliver results that make all of us to stick our necks out. Our Executive Mayors of Metsweding, Kungwini and Nokeng Tsa Taemane, the Members of Parliament and Members of the Provincial Legislature of Gauteng deployed in our region, in partnership with the Gauteng North District Office of the Department of Education will hand out prizes and accolades to well-deserving 2008 post-Matriculants who did us proud.

Issued by the ANC Metsweding Region, Parliamentary Constituency Offices of Kungwini and Nokeng Tsa Taemane and the ANC Caucuses of Metsweding, Kungwini and Nokeng Tsa Taemane,

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