

Statement by Gauteng Education MEC Barbara Creecy at the announcement of the 2012 Matric examination results at the Linder Auditorium on 3 January 2013

Thank you HOD Boy Ngobeni, our programme director,
Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga,
Premier Nomvula Mokonyane.

Fellow MECs

Executive Mayors and Councillors

The chairperson of the Education Portfolio Committee and fellow MPLs

Officials of the Gauteng Department of Education

Leadership of our teacher unions and organised labour; school

governing body associations; faith based organisations; civic

associations; and youth; learner and student bodies

Principals; Educators; Parents; our top achievers who have joined us here today.

Ladies and Gentlemen, comrades and friends.

Today is a very proud day for Gauteng!

The learners born as our democracy dawned in 1994 have done us all proud.

Working with their teachers, principals, and parents, guided and supported by the Department, they have not only produced the best matric results in the country, they have produced the best matric results our province has seen since the birth of our democracy. The best results since we introduced universal access to education.

And most importantly, the best results ever not just in terms of numbers, but in terms of the quality of the results by schools, by districts, and across the province

Minister,

Premier,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

One struggles under these circumstances to find the words to fully express the pride we take today in our young people, our educators, the staff and leadership of the GDE.

And so I am grateful to Minister Motshekga and Premier Mokonyane for joining us today in congratulating everyone who has played a role in achieving what can only be described as a truly magnificent outcome for Gauteng, for our learners, and for all within the GDE

All of you involved in securing these results have made a massive effort.

All of you have shown determination.

All of you have taken up the challenge of creating consistent, measurable improvement in how we teach and how we learn.

Today we celebrate the top achievers from across the province who have joined us here.

We celebrate those who are not on the front pages of the newspapers, but whose results represent hours of hard work, discipline, diligence and a determination to do their best.

And we commiserate with those who have not achieved their aim, for whatever reason.

To you we say there is no shame in giving it your best effort.

You are not alone; there are many options for you going forward.

Find out from your school exactly what your results are, whether you should think about writing a supplementary exam, taking all your exams again at the end of this year, or what other options may be open to you.

But if you are feeling down, go to your religious or community leaders, talk to your parents or someone else you trust.

And if things are looking bleak, please phone Lifeline on 0861 322 322, they have many good people who can help you.

Minister,

Premier,

Speaking to learners at the beginning of the matric exam, I made the point that education is not a sprint, it is a marathon.

It is a long distance endurance race; for learners; for educators for all of us involved in policy formulation and implementation. For all who represent the interests of one or the other segment in our spectrum, whether the representative organisations of teachers, ancillary staff, parents, or learners.

So before looking briefly at the detail of our results this year, allow me to say a few words of thanks.

I would like to thank my head of department, Boy Ngobeni.

He is living proof that in leading 80 000 staff members it is a fine balance between diplomacy, determination, discipline, and dedication which inspires, and which wins the day.

Gauteng would not be celebrating these results today were it not for the massive team effort of all in my office, and in the GDE across the province.

We would not be announcing the best matric results ever in Gauteng without our educators and principals.

Thousands of you have gone the extra mile, attending courses, participating in our in-service development offerings, upgrading your management skills, and – most importantly – putting our learners at the centre of your efforts every day.

Let me also mention the many parents from across the province who have again this year proved how valid that old maxim that it takes a village to raise a child.

We are grateful to all of you who have given of your time, your skills, and your dedication to serve on school governing bodies, help with repairs and renovations or coaching, or many of the other activities that make up school life.

Your efforts, your contribution to the outcomes we are celebrating today prove that our children and our country are best served by constructive engagement, by parental involvement which seeks to build and not to barricade.

Which leads me to my thanks to all of the leaders of our teachers' organisations and workers' unions operating within the education sector.

I would also like to thank members of the provincial legislature for their continued support.

We have come a long way together, and together we have charted a course which puts consultation ahead of confrontation. That this approach can benefit all is shown not least by the very significant and extremely pleasing improvement in the results from what has traditionally been one of our most challenging districts, Johannesburg Central, which includes Soweto

It is no accident, I believe, that results in Joburg Central are up by 12 percentage points, from a pass rate of 67.8% last year to 79.9% this year

As we see, there is a direct connection between a stable education environment and positive effects on performance.

To our teachers, and to your organisations, your constructive approach has helped to make a very important difference to the lives of many, many young people!

Minister,

Premier,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good working relationships are one very important aspect of what Gauteng has achieved.

Plans and programmes to ensure consistent improvement across everything we do is another

Our Secondary School Improvement Programme, called SSIP for short, targeted 65 000 grade 12 learners in priority schools from the word go in February 2012.

These are schools that obtained a pass rate of below 80% in the 2011 examinations.

The SSIP programme involves extra classes by expert teachers on Saturdays and during school holidays, as well as the final matric revision camps in October.

It involves meetings with parents to encourage them to ensure their children make use of these additional possibilities.

Our strategy focused on teaching and learning, monitoring late coming and educator absence, assessment practices, accounting sessions with school management teams, setting of and compliance with targets, provision of learning and teaching resources, data management and record keeping, as well as leadership and governance.

We held monthly meetings for facilitators and assessed progress on work schedule coverage, school based assessment completion, and analysis of learner performance.

And in July, we held the Soweto Learners Education Summit where learners developed programmes to improve their own learning conditions.

The improved Soweto results, where many of our SSIP schools are located, shows that this approach works.

But it was not just Soweto which benefitted

We have had no fewer than 366 schools across the province in the programme – all of them contributing to our improved results

Minister,

Premier,

I am proud to announce that the results of the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations have increased by 2.8 percentage points to 83.9%.

This is the third consecutive year that results have improved in Gauteng

We have moved from a pass rate of 71% in 2009 to 83.9% this year, an improvement of almost 13 percentage points or over 18% in four years

It is the second time in the past three years that Gauteng has taken the number one spot in the country

Perhaps as important in terms of the marathon we are all running, our results also show significant improvement in the quality of passes achieved in the province

This year, 71% of learners passed mathematics compared to 61% in 2011, with a 25% increase in distinctions to 1817. Physical Science pass rate improved to 70% compared to 60% in 2011.

The number of distinctions achieved has risen from 33 959 last year to 35 089 this year, and I am very pleased that some of the learners who contributed to that growth have been able to join us here today.

We will be honouring them a little later on today.

Significantly in terms of what education contributes to the future of our knowledge based economy, the number of learners achieving a pass which qualifies them for university has risen by almost 2 500 to 32 449 from 30 037 last year.

This represents an over 8% rise in the number of Gauteng learners achieving a matric pass enabling them to study for a bachelor's degree, when compared with last year.

As the industrial and economic heartland of the country this is a very pleasing result not just for those of us in basic education, but also for business and the professions.

One of the more significant factors in creating greater consistency in our results is the effort that continues to go into ensuring better flow-through rates.

What this means is that our attention is also focussed on ensuring that more and more children who start Grade 1 also stay in school until matric.

This is not without its challenges, but our figures show that some of Gauteng's success in improving matric pass rates can be attributed to the work that goes into keeping children in school, all the way from Grade 1 to Grade 12.

All of our districts have contributed not only to better flow through rates, but also to our improved overall results.

This year, not a single school district in Gauteng has performed below the national average.

The best performing districts in terms of number of schools that obtained a pass rate of over 80% is Ekurhuleni North, and our warmest congratulations go to all involved.

Twelve of Gauteng's 15 districts have pass rates above 80%.

There are three more close to 80%, with Johannesburg Central at 79.9%, Sedibeng West at 79.2%, and Johannesburg South at 77.9%

In addition, Sedibeng West district is the second most improved district

Gauteng North has once again obtained the highest percentage pass rate in the province at 89.8%

The best performing school this year is Hoërskool Waterkloof, and we congratulate the principal, school management, educators, learners, and the parents.

Let me in this context also mention Dr WK du Plessis Skool in Springs, Prinshofskool in Pretoria, and Nuwe Hoopskool in Pretoria, all of which achieved a 100% pass rate, with the majority of learners achieving bachelor passes.

This is a remarkable achievement for three schools for learners with special needs, we are proud of all of you and wish you and your learners very well for the future.

We are also particularly pleased that so many township schools continue to improve the quality of learning and teaching.

Of the seven learners who obtained 100% in Mathematics, no fewer than six are from township schools.

Four learners from township schools obtained full marks in physical science, nine got full marks in accounting, and a total of five learners obtained 100% in Life Sciences, Geography, and Business Studies.

This is nothing short of a very remarkable achievement.

Township schools have produced 7284 distinctions compared with 6109 distinctions in 2011.

I am particularly pleased in this context to mention two township schools which have shown what can be done if everyone involved pulls together

The most improved school in Gauteng is Edward Phatudi in Atteridgeville.

From a pass rate of 36.6% in 2011, the matriculants at Edward Phatudi excelled themselves this year, achieving no less than 90.5%, and we congratulate the learners, educators and parents.

Our technical schools in the townships have also shown significant and very pleasing improvement

All five of the highest achieving technical high schools in the province are situated in townships.

Our top technical school in the province is Kgomotso Secondary School in Soshanguve.

We have paid special attention to the technical high schools because we know that as an industrial country and a highly industrialised province, technical skills are in demand, and we are determined to ensure that our learners leave school as well equipped for the future as possible.

As part of our efforts to this end, we have ensured that all learners who have passed at technical schools will be linked to a learnership or vocational programme working with the private sector in Gauteng.

In this context, I am pleased to announce that Jabulani Technical, which was the lowest performing public school in Gauteng in 2011 with a pass rate of just 16%, has this year achieved a 65.5% pass rate.

This is a 49.5 percentage point improvement.

Only one public school has performed below 40% this year in Gauteng and only 10 schools are between 40% and 50%.

Minister,

Premier,

This is indeed a good day for education, and a good day for Gauteng.

I wish to thank the Premier of Gauteng and the executive council for their support for education.

Thanks to the examination team under the stewardship of Len David and Prince Masilo, once again, we have had a clean, successful examination process in Gauteng.

Finally, thanks to the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga .

Most importantly, my heartfelt congratulations to all our learners!

We are very proud of all you!