



# GAUTENG PROVINCE

EDUCATION  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## MEDIA STATEMENT

**To: All Media**

**Att: News Editors**

**For immediate release**

**23 August 2019**

### **MEC Lesufi Officially Unveils Rietondale Secondary School**

The Gauteng Education MEC for Education and Youth Development, Mr Panyaza Lesufi, has today **23 August 2019**, officially renamed the Pretoria-based Höerskool Hendrik Verwoerd to Rietondale Secondary School.

“This is for me a historic occasion as it opens a much-needed discussion about what we do with historic colonial and apartheid symbols as we build a new nation,” said MEC Lesufi.

“Many will ask – why all the fuss? What is in a name? Should we not just go on with our lives? Some who ask these questions are doing so out of innocence. Yet some do so to protect old privileges.”

He said it was the department’s mission to reverse everything Verwoerd has done to South Africa’s education system.

MEC Lesufi said in renaming the school, GDE was removing one of the offensive symbols of apartheid history. He added that HF Verwoerd represents the most virulent form of apartheid euphuistically called separate but equal.

He continued to say to achieve this aim Verwoerd disrupted the lives of many black South Africans through forced removals, enforcement of the pass laws and a police state that closed off political space by banning organisations, individuals and a whole-scale arrest of political activists.

“Of course, we are slowly emerging from a bitter and divided history – a history of oppression and economic exploitation. Much as we have achieved so much in the past 25 years, the journey to a new society is not over. The legacy of the past still exercises so much influence and

has proven hard to eradicate,” said MEC Lesufi, vowing that other names like Jan Smuts will also fall.

MEC Lesufi said as Minister of Education, Verwoerd presided over the introduction of Bantu Education, whose aim was to keep the black child subservient to whites. We should not forget this history.

He said he has committed his life to eradicate what HF Verwoerd sought to achieve both as a young student activist and as MEC for Education.

“Before I am accused of targeting Afrikaans, I wish to declare today that we will embark on a campaign to change offensive school names, including schools named after former Bantustan leaders. This is not a revenge mission,” said MEC Lesufi. “The only thing I share with him is a first name, Africans were denied using theirs.”

“As we rename these schools we must take pride in our new national symbols. We have made it a priority for the next five years to promote national unity in our schools. Racism, sexism, tribalism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination have no place in our schools and society. I wish the school the best as it opens a new chapter in its history. I believe in equal education for all. I believe all our children deserve the best and have a right to learn in their mother tongue,” said MEC Lesufi.

**For more information, contact the Gauteng Department of Education’s Spokesperson, Steve Mabona on 072 574 3860.**

**Issued by the Gauteng Department of Education**

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