

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
2009 MEDIA STATEMENTS AND ADVISORIES

DECEMBER 2009

FICKSBURG CELEBRATES R37 MILLION NEW SCHOOL GRAND OPENING

6 December 2009

Community of Meqheleng in Ficksburg will on Tuesday, 8 December 2009 celebrate the grand opening of the R37 million new Mehopung Primary School. This is part of the Free State Department of Education 'design and build programme' which seek to eliminate the platoon schooling system in the province. The R585 million 'design and build programme' which include the construction of the 11 brand new schools and extensive upgrading of four existing schools is the biggest in the country.

Mehopung Primary School will be the first of 11 of schools to be completed within a record of 13 months. The project started in September 2008 and was completed in October 2009. About 500 temporally jobs were created during the construction of the school.

More than 1 000 learners who were previously platooning at the adjacent Masaleng Primary School will be benefit from this new school. The school's facilities include 26 classrooms, administration block, media centre and school hall, storeroom facilities for all classrooms as well as requisite earthworks and steel pallasade fence.

Free State Education MEC Tate Makgoe will officially open the school at the celebration on Tuesday morning. More than 2 000 people including the Mayor of Setsoto Municipality and many people associated with the school and local community will attend the official opening.

Details of the opening are as follows:

Date: 8 December 2009

Venue: Mehopung Primary School Hall (Ficksburg)

Time: 10h00

Media is invited to attend.

Enquiries:

Howard Ndaba

Cell: 079 503 5485

VODACOM'S YEBO HEROES TO JOIN 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM CAMPAIGN

2 December 2009

The fight against violence against women and children will be strengthened when Vodacom's Yebo Heroes in the company's central region join concerned members of the public, in a protest march in Bloemfontein on Friday, 4 December.

At least 1 200 people, including 400 school children from four schools, 300 supporters of Bloemfontein Celtic, and 500 adult members of the public, are expected to join in the march, which will start from Glass Palace and end with a motivational talk at the Free State athletic stadium.

Yebo Heroes, a Vodacom foundation programme, creates a platform for employees to contribute to social projects by expressing their inherent need to share their time, talents and skills with communities and effect positive change.

Neville van Niekerk, Regional Executive of the Vodacom Central region, says: "Vodacom is very aware of the damaging impact of violence against women and children, on society at large. In partnership with government departments and sporting bodies, we are pleased to be part of an initiative that seeks to end this scourge in our society. We urge all who attend this march to listen with great care to the message that will be given, take its meaning to heart and also spread to many others."

The initiative is the result of collaboration between several partners, including Vodacom central region's Yebo Heroes, Bloemfontein Celtic, Child Welfare and Child Helpline, the Department of Social Development, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), the mayor's office in the Mangaung municipality, the Departments of Education and Correctional Services, Central University of Technology (CUT) and the South African Police Service (SAPS).

The theme of the march is 'Men, rise up and take your rightful places', and the message is expected to focus on the need for men, including husbands, fathers, brothers and uncles, to stand up and become leaders of their communities, homes and families by taking their responsibilities seriously.

The march is part of a broader campaign focusing on the 16 Days of Activism from 25 November to 10 December 2009. The four participating schools; Heide Primary, Sentral Primary, Polokehong Primary and Botlehad Primary, are taking part in poetry and drawing competitions that will capture the theme. The R2 500 prize for each category is being sponsored by Vodacom.

All the children taking part in the march will receive a Vodacom branded t-shirt, while the first 500 adults will also get a t-shirt. The t-shirts will also feature a message for the 16 Days of Activism.

The initiative, is one of 270 projects that Yebo Heroes have become involved in countrywide, since the inception of the programme in 2007. To date, 2 046 Vodacom employees have registered as Yebo Heroes to become involved in voluntary activities in communities around them.

Examples of the projects through which the Yebo Heroes are "showing their hearts" include:

- painting a wall and planting vegetables in a shelter for abused women
- cuddling a baby in a home for abandoned babies
- spray painting their own and sports fans' heads in aid of a cancer charity, cleaning up a sensitive wetlands area.

The Vodacom foundation was established in 1999 as the main vehicle for coordinating Vodacom's corporate social investments (CSI). Since then, the foundation has invested more than R500 million to uplift and improve communities. The foundation's vision is to give life to the Vodacom group's commitment to explore opportunities available to share the company's successes with communities who have helped achieve them. Its focus is to enhance the quality of life of vulnerable people, with special emphasis on the application of information and communication technology to address challenges in education, health and security.

Contact:

Ruth Coggin

Tel: 011 487 0026

Cell: 082 903 5819

E-mail: ruth@quo-vadis.co.za

Palesa Chabula

Tel: 011 653 5661

Cell: 082 997 1677

E-mail: palesa.chabula@vodacom.co.za

SEPTEMBER 2009

2009 NATIONAL TEACHING AWARDS

18 September 2009

Free State teachers were honoured at a gala event on Friday, 18 September 2009. MEC for Education, Mr Tate Makgoe told hundreds of principals, teachers, government official and well wishers at Protea Hotel Central in Bloemfontein that the teachers who were being honoured were those active social beings, change agents and custodians of knowledge and values' who constantly struggle to work for a better life for all.

"It is the single most powerful instrument for empowering and enlightening the nation, thus enabling people to avoid exploitation and abuse."

MEC Makgoe said the National Teaching Awards initiative serves to ensure teachers that the path they have taken, the dedication they have shown and the passion with which they continue to do their work, will not go without recognition.

"We honour teachers who without any doubt value and honour the value of upright communal life in society, as well as the importance of quality education for sustainable livelihoods. They have toiled diligently in pursuit of improved performance at their respective schools for the benefit of social and civic life in our province and the country as a whole. They have earned the honour being bestowed upon them."

The MEC said a look at the history of the initiative shows the Free State teachers are rated among the best in the country.

"In 2006 we had teachers who participated in the national finals and we obtained the first position in the Early Childhood Development (ECD) category. In 2007 our teachers worked even harder, because unlike in 2006, three teachers won position one, two and three respectively in five different categories. The trend was repeated in 2008 when our teachers finished in positions one and two respectively in six different categories. Today I hope we have surpassed our previous years' performance by a notable margin."

"As we recognise the outstanding contributions of the recipients of the National Teaching Awards 2009, we reaffirm our commitment to supporting all of our teachers in their ongoing work of opening the doors to a better world."

Winners for the 2009 National Teaching Awards are as follows:

- * Excellence in primary school teaching
Mrs J O'Neill of Aurora Primary School in Welkom, Lejweleputswa district
- * Excellence in secondary school teaching
Mr RI Ralengoele of Tikwana Comprehensive School in Hoopstad, Lejweleputswa district
- * Excellence in primary school leadership
Ms FR Motloutung from Letotolo Primary School in Qwaqwa, Thabo Mofutsanyane district
- * Excellence in secondary school leadership
Mrs MA Mangwegape from Tikwana Comprehensive School in Hoopstad, Lejweleputswa district
- * Excellence in Grade R teaching
Mrs S Rossouw of Welkom Preparatory School in Welkom, Lejweleputswa district
- * Excellence in inclusive education and special needs teaching

Mrs M van Eeden of Rosenhof High School and Youth Care Centre in Bloemfontein, Motheo district

* Excellence in adult basic education and training

Mrs ED Mathe of Thusanang Bahale Public Adult Centre in Bothaville, Lejweleputswa district

* Lifetime achievement award

Mrs MA Mphatane from Meloding Secondary School in Virginia, Lejweleputswa district

Enquiries:

Solly Magalefa

Tel: 051 404 8314

Cell: 082 573 3404

E-mail: Magalefasr@edu.fs.gov.za

LAUNCH OF OPERATION HLASELA CAMPAIGN AT FEZILE DABI DISTRICT

4 September 2009

The launch of Operation Hlasela went hand in glove with Free State's MEC for Education, Mr PHI Makgoe's visit to Fezile Dabi district.

This follows the Premier's call for all departments to maintain high levels of public investment in infrastructure through expanding and building rail networks, public transport, roads, public health and education infrastructure and housing construction.

MEC Makgoe met with the parents of both primary and high schools in Tumahole in Parys to emphasise the important role parents play in their children's education. The MEC encouraged parents to attend school meetings and check their children's books regularly to ensure progress. He condemned the behaviour of educators who become sexually involved with the learners and advised parents to inform authorities of such educators or school principals.

The meeting with parents of high schools was graced by the presence of Premier Magashule, Members of the Executive Council and heads of department from around Free State.

The journey of launching Operation Hlasela campaign started with the Premier meeting with Ngwathe municipal workers. It continued by unfolding lots of government projects including amongst others bringing government service close to the people, visit to public hospitals, visit to people's housing construction sites, donation of bicycles to the learners of Lembethe Primary School, issuing of identity documents and birth certificates and helping out with grants. The Premier also donated food parcels to needy white community members living near Tumahole. Premier Magashule concluded his journey with a Community Imbizo.

Operation Hlasela campaign focuses on mass mobilisation, intervention, collaboration and partnerships to fulfil the notion of 'doing more together'. The main objective of Operation Hlasela is to: Improve the living conditions of the people of the Free State province, turn the tide against poverty, set the province on a higher and sustainable growth trajectory, foster integrated development across all three spheres of government, create jobs and expand employment opportunities, provide social protection and fight against crime and corruption.

MAY 2009

MEETING WITH REITZ SCHOOLS, COMMUNITY AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

21 May 2009

The MEC for Education in the Free State, Mr Tate Makgoe, accompanied by the Acting HoD, Mr Khoarai Khorai and some Members of Senior Management, held separate meetings with School

Management Teams (SMTs), Educators, School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and the parents community of all schools in Petsana near Reitz in Thabo Mofutsanyana District.

The meetings were aimed at resolving the situation at Petsana Schools, where classes were disrupted by some unruly elements. This follows the closure of Rehatelapele Primary School, which resulted into revisiting of all primary schools in the area, so as to streamline and evenly share learners at Rehatelapele Primary in the same area. The sharing of learners was influenced by correcting phasing of four other schools, namely: Phind'uzame Primary, Reatile Intermediate, Petsana Primary and Leifo-Iziko Secondary School.

Furthermore, the MEC wanted to find out why decisions reached and agreed to by all stakeholders during the consultative processes in 2008 regarding schools in Petsana were not implemented.

After elaborate deliberations, the SMTs, Educators and SGBs all agreed with the MEC and his entourage that the education of children is very important and that the department has a responsibility to ensure that effective learning and teaching take place. They also all agreed that the situation prevailing in Petsana, is not conducive to efficient and effective learning and teaching.

However, the meeting with parents almost turned into some episode from "Ripley's Believe it or Not," as some "syndicate of two or three foul mouthed ladies" bent on disrupting the proceedings cried foul at all suggestions meant to resolve the matter amicably for the benefit of all children in Petsana.

Nonetheless, the MEC emphatically stated that the department cannot build a new school as there are 40 classrooms that are not utilised in schools in Petsana.

"The money that could be used for building a new school could be utilised to buy resources such as computers and Learning Teaching and Support Materials (LTSM) to enhance efficient and effective learning and teaching which would lead to quality results. I also wish to state that the existing problems in this community have solutions. We all have to have the interest of our children at heart and not deprive them of their Constitutional right which is the right to education."

The MEC called on parents to play a pivotal role in the education of children. He also emphasised the importance of discipline in schools. He said discipline is an integral part of society, and that in a school situation, it starts with the principal, deputies, educators and then learners.

"We have to manage the situation. It's going to be tough, but we have to win this battle. Collectively, we can make a difference in the lives of our children and community. We cannot afford to play with our future, because our children are our future."

He said learners would be moved from churches to schools as agreed in previous meetings with all education stakeholders.

"Some decisions may look bad to others and I know that my decision will not satisfy all of you. The process will hurt others. But after having met all stakeholders, high school learners will go to high school. Thus, my decision is that from now:

- * Kgotso-Uxolo Secondary will have Grade 7 to 12 learners
- * Leifo-Iziko Secondary will have Grade 7 to 12 learners
- * Phinduzame Primary will have Grade R to 6, and
- * Reatile Primary will have Grade R to 6.

Rehatelapele Primary School is now officially closed."

For further enquiries:

Solly Magalefa

Head: Communication, Public Relations and Marketing

Cell: 082 573 3404

Tel: 051 404 8314
Fax: 086 545 0569

MEC FOR EDUCATION IN THE FREE STATE, MR TATE MAKGOE MEETS HEAD OFFICE STAFF

18 May 2009

The newly appointed MEC for Education in the Free State, Mr Tate Makgoe, met all departmental personnel at head office at Grey College hall in Bloemfontein. The MEC was warmly welcomed amidst ululations and cheering by staffers.

In outlining the purpose of the meeting and presenting the MEC to the house, the Acting Head of Department (HoD), Mr Khoarai said the arrival of the new MEC was a sign of good things to come as his approach was also different. He said the MEC wanted employees to talk to him about their problems and other pertinent work related matters of concern. This was well received by the staffers from head office.

In his remarks, the MEC said education is one of the ingredients to take people out of abject poverty. He reminded the officials that focus should be on learners as the primary core business of the department is learning and teaching. Thus, concerns raised by the curriculum branch needed to be given urgent attention. He said the department is one of few that get evaluated every year through the grade 12 results.

"We have to make education comparable and comparative. The department is going to make difficult decisions to improve the existing situation. And in dealing with the existing problems, some of the solutions may not be in everyone's favour. We have to raise the moral of our officials for them to be able to give the teachers all the support they need, to produce quality education. We need to work together as a team to overcome all the shortcomings."

The MEC, who is a chemical engineering graduate from Technikon Vaal Triangle, told of his passion about mathematics and science in schools. He called on officials to be innovative and help come up with a comprehensive provincial maths and science strategy.

"It is time to move away from obsession with qualifications and move towards obsession with performance. Today's meeting is part of a journey that we have to undertake, and not just an event," he said.

Enquiries:
Solly Magalefa
Tel: 051 404 8314
Cell: 082 573 3404
Fax: 051 404 8082
Fax to E-mail: 086 545 0569
E-mail: magalefasr@edu.fs.gov.za