

MEC Ravi Pillay visits the Schools in the Sisonke Region under theme: *“Doors of learning and culture shall be opened”*

Reports Angel Sibisi and photos by Sbongile Dlangalala



As seen above (left): The District Manager; Mr DJ Sibisi updating the MEC and his delegation, the SGB and other stakeholders. School children as they were in jubilation during the MEC's visit.

As the 2014 academic calendar commences 'education' remains the leading key priority in KwaZulu-Natal. The opening of schools on Wednesday the 15th of January 2014 saw the KZN Provincial Legislature embarking on a Schools' Opening Functionality Monitoring Programme. The KZN Provincial Legislature delegation led by the MEC for Public Works and Human Settlements, Honourable Ravi Pillay who is also a Champion for the Sisonke District visited schools in the Sisonke District to monitor the state of readiness for the 2014 school year.

During the briefing sessions, the MEC's delegation listened attentively to the issues of concerns and suggestions that were raised by the School Governing Bodies (SGB's), Community leaders and school management teams. The lack of resources and Infrastructure dominated the list of issues that were elevated by the stakeholders.

The Principal of Nombewu High School, Mrs VN Sibutha said "the school does not have proper infrastructure; it is originally a mud school that was built in 1959 and

was later renovated. There are not enough toilets and the school doesn't have water." Speaking at the meeting, the Chairperson of the SGB, Mr Mbhele said "drugs were still a challenge amongst learners and the poor Fencing enables school property to be vandalized by anyone."

As the day's programme unfolded, the delegation proceeded to the second school, identified as Thibane High School which is based under the Greater Kokstad Municipality. This is the municipality populated mostly by a rural farming community whereby people are not employed. The Principal of the school Mr Mndlazi said that their biggest challenge is the lack of resource. "This negatively affected the 2013 matric results which were 42.86%. The school has a total of 16 classes but 10 educators that run a combined school of 386 learners" he added.



As seen in the above pictures (ltr): MEC Pillay addressing the SGB, the Thibane School team and other stakeholders.

The Education District Manager, Mr DJ Sibisi who also had his fair share of opportunity to interact with the guests said that "Assistance, intervention and support towards education will raise the bar in the KZN schools. The Sisonke District has improved the pass rate from 68% to 70% this is evident that engagement of this calibre is a crucial involvement from the government. This commitment will benefit the quality of the education not only in the identified schools but the whole province at large."

Amongst the recommendations that were taken on the 2014 Schools' Opening Functionality Monitoring Programme at the Sisonke District is the following:

- To improve the infrastructure; building of new ablution facilities, provision of fencing, repairing floors, roofs and ceilings.
- District Municipality to intervene immediately; and see to the provision of the Jojo Tanks.
- All unqualified teachers will not be reappointed as per DOE policy.

Education is more than reading, writing and arithmetic; it is a catalyst and an investment that reflects good civilization. The Schools' Opening Functionality Monitoring Programme is more than just a school visit but it is an engagement, which encouraged all stakeholders to be role-players in the betterment of the education in our province.