I would like to thank the Principal, Mr. E.L. Mnisi, and the Chair of the School Governing Body for inviting me to be part of your Farewell and prize giving ceremony. They say: “your school years are the best years of your life”. It is true; however you as pupils would beg to differ. These are the best years of your life, owing to the fact that it is the only time in your life where you have no responsibilities and you are provided support by your parents, teachers, and the state.

This School has a proud history, that is rooted in our Zulu culture and which all teachers and pupils can be proud of. This is owing to the fact that it is in the heart of Zululand, where our heritage as a Zulu nation can be traced. Zululand is also the place where many battles took place between the Colonial powers and the mighty amaButho. Thus you can be proud of the fact that this institution and others in the area are at the centre of Zulu history.

Mfinyeli High School has a history of influential and successful leaders. It is named after Induna uMfinyeli Xulu. This school was established by Dr. H.P Mayise who is now the Mayor of Hlabisa Municipality. After Dr. Mayise, Mr. E.L Mnisi took over leadership of the school Mr. Mnisi
is currently the Deputy Chief Education Specialist. Thus it can be seen that this school has had and currently has leaders that are perfect role models for pupils.

In the province of KwaZulu Natal, a survey was conducted that depicted unemployment figures:

- 939 457 Black people
- 17 845 White people
- 10 392 Asians

These figures depicted that majority of the unemployed are women.

In this district which falls under the Zululand District Municipality, there are 158 428 people that are unemployed. There are 157 436 Black people which are unemployed, which is 99%, and there are only 318 Coloured people and 51 Indian people, and 638 Whites, in this district who are unemployed. These figures are an indication of the harsh unemployment conditions that our country is currently facing.

As teenagers you are at an age whereby you are easily influenced by your family, friends, society and the media. You aspire to the lifestyles portrayed by personalities found in the media. Even marketing companies will target certain brands at teenagers, owing to the fact that they make up the bulk of the consumer market and are easily persuaded. Many teenagers seek to find their role models among celebrities found in the media.

Some of these celebrities are people who lead lifestyles that are corrupt. There are many factors which lead to a person leading a dangerous and corrupt lifestyle which results in that individual failing to lead a successful life. These are factors such as the use of drugs and alcohol, and stealing. Factors such as these result in coming into
conflict with the law and ending up in jail. Academic success can also be hindered by getting involved too early into relationships and as a result, early teenage pregnancy. In a survey done in 2004/05 based on the rate of teenage pregnancies in this area, it emerged that there are 628 young women that conceive before the appropriate time. Factors such as disrespecting parents and failing to listen to the guidance of parents are the factors that lead to an unsuccessful lifestyle.

It is important to have role models that can inspire you in a positive manner. However many of you miss the role models that you come into contact with in your everyday lives and that are part of your life. These people are not glamorous T.V personalities, yet they have had to strive for success. These are people like your parents. There are some of you here today who come from single parent families. Whereby the single parent has to play a double role and in addition has to single handedly provide income to support the family. Such parents are an example of emotional strength and perseverance.

There are parents who are motivating their children towards academic excellence, and who are almost obsessive about this. Yet, they are unable to read and have never received any form of school. Such parents are an example of striving for your dreams. They were denied these opportunities and thus dedicate the rest of their lives to providing their children with such opportunities.

Another example of role models are your teachers. These men and women have to conquer the hindrance of under – resources and try to provide you with the best quality education that the limited resources allow them to provide. They dedicate their time and effort to ensure that you achieve academic excellence.
These are just a few examples of role models which are closer at home, and which you can learn from. At the end of the day, a role model is an individual who you can aspire to owing to the fact that they are able to conquer challenges and move forward successfully.

I would like to congratulate the Principal, the teachers and the Governing Body of this school. I would like to congratulate the teachers on a job well done. Although this school lacks resources, the Principal and the teachers were able to produce academic results of a high standard. The matric pass rate results from this school have improved tremendously, from a low 29% to an amazing 94%.

I would like to turn my attention to the matric pupils from last year. The end of last year marked the beginning of the rest of your lives. You have embarked on a journey into the world. Some of you will move to tertiary institutions, others will enter the working environment and some of you, will be unable to proceed in either direction due to lack of funds or sponsorship, or lack of employment. As you leave high school, you will be leaving as adults. As an individual, you become an adult from the amount of responsibility that you undertake and by always facing up to these responsibilities.

As you leave High school, not all of you will enter the corporate environment; some of you will become entrepreneurs of tomorrow. The department of Public Works has special programmes for people like you, who are interested in becoming entrepreneurs. We have a programme called “uShikishi Youth Project” which is especially geared towards the youth. It is a programme whereby young people unite to create a project, they submit their Business Plan to the department, and we
conduct a thorough investigation to find out if their Business Plan is feasible or not.

I would like to wish Mr. Mnisi all the best in his endeavours, he can be proud of the excellent job he has done at this school.

I would like to congratulate those pupils who will be receiving awards for their outstanding performance. Congratulations, keep up the good work! To those of you who will not be receiving awards I would like to say to you that, it is a known fact that the President of the United States, Mr Bush, was a C student. If you are dedicated, and you strive for excellence in your studies, you will succeed.

I would also like to congratulate the School Governing Body for working so well with the Principal and staff of this school in the efficient running of the school.

Mr. Mnisi you can be proud of this school and the work that you have done. I am sure you will be missed by all. I would like to congratulate the rest of the staff for the work that you do in our school, to ensure that our children have a bright future. I would like to wish all pupils a successful academic year.

To all those who will be travelling over the Easter weekend to attend church services and to be with their loved ones, I hope you have safe trips and enjoy your weekend.

I thank you.