

**LAUNCH OF THE FOUNDATIONS FOR LEARNING CAMPAIGN
EASTERN CAPE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
16 September 2008**

MEC for Education
Head of Department
Senior Officials of the Department of Education in the Eastern
Cape
Principals, Teachers, Parents
Ladies and Gentlemen

This morning it gives me great pleasure to be present at the launch the Foundations for Learning Campaign in the Eastern Cape. This campaign is a call to schools, communities and all our partners in government and in the private sector to focus on reading, writing and calculating.

Through the Government Gazette of 14 March 2008, the expectations for teaching and learning in the Foundation and Intermediate phases have been set out. These expectations indicate, the time allocated for teaching and learning, the basic minimum recommended resources, the key daily activities that learners and teachers should implement and the assessment required to ensure that learners are reaching the required standards.

President Nelson Mandela once said “ education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world.” Over the years we have seen how education has changed people’s circumstances, alleviated poverty and enabled people to lead better lives. In recent years our vision has expanded to strive for quality education for all children.

In pursuing our goal of quality education, we are acutely aware that the early years of schooling are the most critical years in a child’s life- it is at this stage that the fundamental skills of reading, writing and calculating are taught. These skills form the foundation on which all future learning will be built- this, ladies and gentlemen, you will agree, is the foundation for quality education.

The Foundations for Learning Campaign will lay a solid foundation in literacy and numeracy in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases. At the end of 2011, we will conduct a national evaluation

to ascertain the impact of the campaign on our target of learner performance of no less than 50% in Literacy and Numeracy.

We will succeed if all stakeholders shoulder this responsibility in a committed manner by ensuring that:

- ***every classroom is appropriately resourced.*** Each school must ensure that every teacher has at least the basic minimum resources in the classroom as listed in the government gazette of 14 March 2008.
- ***teachers plan and teach effectively.*** Nothing will replace the skills of a good teacher, questioning, challenging, encouraging, motivating, monitoring, and evaluating. Schools will put the core task of teaching at the centre of the stage. All teachers are expected to be in their classes teaching planned lessons during contact time. Every learner is to spend 30 minutes a day reading for enjoyment; does extended writing for at least one hour a week; and is taught mathematics for at least one hour a day -10 minutes of which time should be spent on stimulating mental mathematics.
- ***teachers assess learner performance regularly*** Standardized annual assessments for learners in grades 1-6 will be provided by the Department of Education, commencing this year. The results of which must be reported to the Department of Education via the provincial office. To assist teachers to manage continuous assessment, a framework has been provided which indicates the milestones for the expected attainment in mathematics and languages.

Those are the non- negotiables for the campaign. This morning I call on all principals in the Eastern Cape to ensure that they set targets for their schools and design strategic plans in which they motivate their teachers and learners to attain these targets. We expect that every principal will prepare a plan setting out how academic performance at school level will be improved and also manage and support teachers in their effort to improve the ability of learners to read, write and calculate at age appropriate levels.

The education of our children is not the sole mandate of teachers. It is a shared responsibility of teachers and parents. We challenge all parents to do more than just pay school and transport fees. It is your responsibility to ensure that your child does his homework and that you read to him everyday or listen to him read. This will support the teaching that takes place in the classroom and also strengthen your own relationship with your child. Research has shown that learners who engage regularly with parents in

academic activities, develop a stronger self confidence and do better in all areas of schooling.

We appeal to our partners in education- unions, business and non-governmental organizations to join hands with your local schools and assist them in reaching our targets of improved literacy and numeracy of all learners in grades 1-6. If you don't already know how to support schools, I urge you to contact the district officials who will give you more information of how you can get involved in the campaign.

In this campaign, we appeal to the South African community at large to join in a concerted effort to ensure that teachers teach, principals manage, learners learn and parents support the education of their children. I conclude with the fitting words of Nelson Mandela, as I invite you to reflect on your involvement in this campaign:

"We all have a role to play - leaders and citizens, public and private organisations, children and young people. What we demand of our leaders, we also demand of ourselves. We call on everyone, everywhere, to do as much as possible, in their own time and their own way, for and with children" -
Nelson Mandela

I look forward to watching with interest, the progress of the implementation of the campaign in the Eastern Cape.

Together we can do this.