

# **SPEECH FOR MEC VIOLA MOTSUMI DURING THE 2024 PROVINCIAL NTA HELD AT MMABATHO CONVENTION ON 14 AUGUST 2024**

Protocol greetings:

Revolutionary greetings to you all!

Good evening, distinguished guests, esteemed colleagues, and most importantly, our incredible educators.

Tonight, we come together to celebrate excellence in teaching – to honour those who have gone beyond the call of duty to educate, uplift, and shape the future of our beloved province. The role of a teacher, as many of us here know, extends far beyond the walls of a classroom. You do not just teach; you inspire, nurture, and guide the leaders of tomorrow.

This year has been marked by trials that have tested our resilience as educators and as human beings. We have faced the devastating loss of beloved colleagues and learners who were taken far too soon. The tragic loss of life reminds us of the fragility of our journey and the immense emotional weight carried by our teachers every day.

You, our teachers, have worn many hats: teachers, nurses, mothers and fathers, healers of minds and hearts. The challenges you face daily – from managing ill-discipline among learners to confronting social ills that permeate our schools – remind us that education is not just about imparting knowledge; it is about guiding and protecting our children in a world that is often unforgiving. We recognise that at times, you too have needed counsel and protection, with our law enforcement stepping in to help safeguard your well-being.

But through it all, you have stood strong, embodying the ideals of the teaching profession – dedication, integrity, and an unwavering commitment to your learners.

In your hands, you hold the power to transform lives. You are beacons of hope in communities where hope can be scarce. You shape the minds and the souls of our children, not just by what you teach but by how you teach. In the words of Nelson Mandela, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

Let us remember that teaching is not a profession; it is a vocation. It is a calling that asks more of you than most are ever asked in their professional lives. And tonight, we celebrate those among us who have gone even further – who have reached above and beyond to impact lives in ways that cannot always be measured.

Your work does not go unnoticed. You are the unsung heroes of our communities, and tonight we sing your praises. We thank you for your tireless dedication to education and for standing tall in the face of adversity. You are proof that teaching is not just about academic achievement – it is about moulding characters, creating future leaders, and ensuring a brighter tomorrow for all.

As we honour you tonight, let this moment be a reminder that your efforts are valued, that your sacrifices are acknowledged and that your work is changing the world, one learner at a time.

I want to believe that, like me, many of you here strive for a better education system in a society where the following are recognised as some of the national flagship and strategic frameworks being part of investing in our teachers:

- **Enhancing teacher’s voices** to ensure active participation through the establishment of Professional learning communities. Your practical

experiences gained through action research in daily classroom activities are critical to policy development, implementation and effectiveness.

- **Recruitment, retention and induction** of teachers who are not marginalised. We want to elevate the teaching profession, we need to boast of quality teachers.
- **Teacher professional development** is a key factor in retaining teachers. The filter of learning must start with the teaching force. This goes far beyond financial compensation.
- **Assessment** of teachers with proven track record in raising the bar of academic results, development of learners and improvement of school culture must be emphasised time and again.

I wish to eternally thank you for the greatest gift that you have given our sector. A gift so immeasurable that it can never be bought, a precious commodity- your time.

Thank you, and congratulations to all of tonight's award recipients. May you continue to inspire and elevate the noble profession of teaching.

I do not doubt that those who will represent the North West at the national level will bring back the trophies and craft a positive niche for the North West province on the national platform.

Thank you to the team that hosted us with so much elegance. To every one of you, you made this event the platinum glitz and glamour- from the least you to the most.

Congratulations to all nominees and winners.

Have a great evening. Kealeboga.