

SPEECH OF THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF RANDFONTEIN AT
THE FUNCTION FOR THE BEST FIVE PERFORMED
STUDENTS PER SCHOOL HELD ON 12 JANUARY 2006

Our Honourable Guests

Parents who are present here today,

Principals: Mr. Buhner, Mrs. Flank, Mr. Mathuisa, Ms Mayekiso, Mr. Katzke,
Mr. Molefe and the other of Mr Mathuisa of Phokompe High and Head of
Department Amy Appelgryn.

Councilors

Members of the press

Colleagues,

I would like to greet you and welcome you all in this august occasion made possible by the young people of our town.

Today is not a day for long speeches but it is a day to celebrate the superb achievements done by these young people, who have shown us that hard work and perseverance yield good results.

I am honored and proud today to stand here, representing the people of our town in congratulating the young men and women who are the bright future of our country. Among you there are those who have made us particularly proud by being among the **BEST OVERALL TWENTY CANDIDATES IN GAUTENG WEST.**

These four pupils are all from Riebeeckrand High School:

Tertia Hindley with 10 distinctions

Andri Van Aarde with 9 distinctions

Elzette and Marian Du Toit, the twins who have both received 6 distinctions.

We say to you and all of you who are here today: **twinkle, twinkle, little star.**

You have not just made your families and schools proud, but you have spread the same sense of pride to the entire community and government.

To the teachers I would like to say, the government in general appreciates your good work, and as you rightfully delight on your success and accomplishment, may I ask you to always remember the importance of your challenge.

In your daily undertaking of empowering young people with the necessary skills for success, remember that we're building the future of this community, of this nation and the world. I wish you well, I admire your work, and I know that you will all do it very well again this year.

Education of our children is our greatest national responsibility, the core of our democracy, and the source of our freedom, we need to make drastic reforms in the approach we have in the education of our children as parents, teachers and the community in general.

We all need to understand that the powerful forces of laxity would not allow the needed reform unless all involved rose up and demand change. The needed reform will require the spirit and the zeal of the 1976 youth together with the bravado and courage of the 1956 women that march to the Union building.

If we can be realistic for a moment, our general results have not increased to the levels we were hoping for. Majority of our students are falling behind, and there is every indication that, if we allow the status quo, we will continue to fall behind. And our nation will be left behind.

From the 2006 matric class it became unarguably clear, that if current educational attainments are allowed to continue, underachievement will be a disaster, not only for our students, but our nation as well. Educational disparities threaten the country itself, our very way of life.

Our nation has continued to prosper and become more stronger at other levels and fields. But the world is not static. The world is moving forward and becoming even more complex and intertwined. It is important that we keep up. This does not have to be a responsibility of any one particular sector.

You are entering the real world. Your participation and involvement to turn the situation around will be critical in the next coming years. We rely on all of you to make a meaningful contribution towards the attainment of the broader vision of our country. We accept that at the moment you aim at attaining qualifications and earn a living, but achievement of good education is not just about jobs...it is also about quality of life. A sound education gives purpose. It provides companionship and solace. It enriches the mind and spirit.

Time is speeding on, and forcing us into a race with destiny, into an impending revolution fuelled by rapid change, global competitiveness, and yet undefined international relationships.

Unless extra effort is put by students, teachers and parents, South African students will not be competitive with students in other countries, dooming future generations to less opportunity, greater levels of poverty, and further disparities in health and economic status.

Those who are not prepared like you to work harder, and achieve more through education will sit on the sidelines, confronting poverty, dead-end jobs, and hopelessness. We never fought for democracy to be poor and uneducated, we never engaged in battle against oppression to be lax and careless. The government is striving on all its policies to adhere to bill of right, particularly to education. So the challenge lies squarely on all our shoulders to use the fruits of our freedom for all of us.

Go out there, be the shining stars that you are, let the whole world see Randfontein through you, be our ambassadors and represent us well. Achieve more, require more and get more. Above all, give more, particularly to those who are less fortunate.

No man is an island, isandla sihlamba esinye, ayikho inkomo edla yodwa, een hand was ander hand, mabogo dinku a thebana, these values are the foundation for the South African society. So as you leave here today, keep doing what is right and embrace these values that have been with your families for centuries, do not be the generation that rejects them.

I wish you all the best as you join the real world, may God bless you and keep you as you journey into the adult world.

Thank you,