

Selected Extracts from speech by Gauteng MEC for Education Mr Panyaza Lesufi

Schools Social Audit Summit - YMCA, Rathebe Street Soweto, Saturday 16 May 2015

Hosted by Equal Education and a coalition of Gauteng community organisations.

- Equal Education “can operate in all schools without fear or favour” (2:20)
- Increased budget for sanitation from R300,000 to R150 million (2:40)
- “I made an audit of all schools in Gauteng” (3:25)
- “I’m not going to chase you away. I’m going to embrace. I’m going to work with you. Because I can’t be all over. So your presence is assisting me...I should be the first the one to welcome your audit because those that have been given the responsibility to keep our toilets clean have failed. That’s why we have this audit. If your toilets were clean, we’d never have this audit. I share your frustration. I share your hopes. I share your dreams. But in me, I can assure you, you’ve got a partner for life.” (5:10)
- From 1 May, made all schools Section 21. (7:10)
- From 1 April 2015, “for maintenance alone, we have transferred 750 million to schools.” (8:20)
- “Sanitation is dignity. IN the absence of sanitation, there will never be dignity to our children in our schools. If you can’t fix small things like toilets, you’ll never fix big things that we need to solve in education.” (8:50)
- “My concentration is that all resources in the white schools, Indian schools must be available to all our children” (9:30)
- From 1 June, “I’ve forced and finally they’ve accepted: The SGB of Sandton High in Sandton and the SGB of Alexandra High in Alexandra – from the 1st of June, these two schools are going to be led by one SGB allowing the children in Alexandra to use the resources of Sandton High.” (9:45)
- From 1 June, “Lindhurst Primary School and a township called Pimville. These schools are merged to be one. In Bronkhorstpruit, I’ve matched two schools from a poor township school and a rich school – they are now one.” (11:15)
- “I’m calling for the conference of the culprits. I’m a culprit, I accept. But other culprits like local government who must provide water must come on board as well. It must be not be me alone. It must not be me alone. I’m calling for the conference of the culprits. I’m culprit number one – I’ll be there at that conference. The Minister of Water and Sanitation must come to the conference of culprits. She has a mandate to deal with water and sanitation. I have a mandate to teach learners. Municipalities must come to the conference of culprits because they have a responsibility to provide water in schools. So my argument is clear: Let all culprits be identified. It must not be willing culprits that are condemned. Because I’m a willing culprit, I’m the one that is condemned. Those that are hiding, those that don’t want to come to our meetings, are praised outside. So I’m not going to run away from my responsibilities.” (12:50)

- “I want to confirm: I fully accept all your demands. I fully accept all your demands unconditionally. I’m not even going to put conditions. But let me tell you if this thing was load shedding: You are at stage one of load shedding, I’m at stage 3 of load shedding.” (14:25)
- “I’ve already taken an audit of 570 schools with pictures. I know the cost of repairing those toilets. I know the worst toilets where they are. I’ve committed myself: the 50 worst schools in this province during the June holidays all those schools are going for the total overhaul....Those 50 schools, we are not going to change the paint, we are not going to repair the doors, we are not going to fix the water pipes – we are demolishing the 50 and starting afresh. That is why I’m saying I’m accepting your challenge [of] openness. I’m going to give the list of those 50 schools to your observers. They must go back after July to go and check those 50 schools” (15:00)
- “You are requesting that girl learners don’t have facilities in our schools. Last week Wednesday, with the MEC of Social Development and the MEC of Health, under my pressure, we have signed an agreement: When the schools reopen after June, we are going to give 21,000 dignity packs every month to all our girl children in all our schools. That’s the partnership we want to build. That’s the support we want to give to ensure that we don’t have these problems. ”(16:30)
- “When the schools reopen in June, all the matric classes in the townships and the toilets they are using in those township schools – all matric classrooms, we are changing the ceiling, we are changing the floor, we are putting new curtains and we are putting all the systems you are having – now in June! When you are coming back from your June holidays, the classroom that you are in now will be different. The toilets that you are using will be different” (17:40)
- “I want to declare here now chair: This we are doing because we want our children to compete with other children in any part of the world. I want to say this as I conclude, Chair. The matric classes in Gauteng after June, no one will use a chalk, no one will use a chalkboard, no one will use a duster in those schools. When you come back from your June holidays, there will be no single classroom that will ever have a chalkboard in your school – I’m telling you.” (18:30)
- “The struggle for quality education cannot be betrayed. Your pain is my pain. The conditions that you are in must be improved. I reaffirm my commitment to Equal Education. I support all the programs of Equal Education. We will change the face of education in this province. I can assure you, quality education will happen in our lifetime.” (20:10)

For full audio: <https://soundcloud.com/doron-isaacs/lesufi-speechmov>