



**mineral resources  
& energy**

Department:  
Mineral Resources and Energy  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **SPEAKING NOTES BY THE HONOURABLE**

### **MINISTER OF MINERAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY**

**MR GWEDE MANTASHE (MP)**

**Back-to-School: Springvalley Primary School**

**Lekwa Municipality, Mpumalanga**

**31 January 2024**

Principal of the School, Khoza C

Chairperson of the School Governing Body, Mokone ET

Teachers and Members of the SGB

Representatives of Government Departments

Representatives of Mining Companies

And most importantly, greetings to our learners

We are here today as part of Governments' ***Back-to-School*** programme which is aimed at ***encouraging and motivating*** you – learners, teachers, and members of the SGB - as you begin this academic year.

It is encouraging that despite the tough conditions under which you teach and learn, you have consistently ***maintained the over 90% performance*** since 2021.

Following the realisation of democracy in 1994, government, guided by the Constitution, has constructed a democratic ***state that represents all the people***.

It has developed and put in place policies that guarantee fundamental freedoms, human rights, and ***seek to build a better life for all***.

At the centre of building this better life for all is the ***development of young people through education***. This is why government remains unwavering in its commitment to ***open the doors of learning to everyone***.

Today, ***millions of School going children*** attend school at no-fee schools, over ***9 million learners receive a meal daily*** through the school nutrition programme, and over ***700 000 students*** at tertiary level are ***funded*** by the ***National Students Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)***.

In addition to these initiations, more than **18 million people** in our country **receive social grants**, including some, if not most, of these learners here today.

All these initiatives are done at **no cost to the parents**. They are not necessarily free, because the **state pays** for all these initiatives for the reason that **no child in South Africa must be deprived of their right to education** because of the **poor economic status at home**.

Principal, I am certain that you have observed the **steady improvement in performance of learners from the no-fee schools** in recent years. This improvement demonstrates the positive impact of government's efforts to provide **support to learners from poor and working-class backgrounds** and enhance the quality of life and dignity of the people of South Africa.

Without further ado, allow me to **convey our best wishes** to you **for the year ahead**. We hope that these gifts will help you in your journey.

Allow me to conclude by saying, reality of the matter is that **life today, is far better than it was before 1994**. However, much **more needs to be done** to improve the conditions under which our learners learn from. Let us work together for a better life for all.

**I thank you.**