

Address by the Honourable eThekweni Councillor, Representing Her Worship, The Mayor of eThekweni, Councillor Zandile Gumede, on the occasion of the Shumayela High School Unison Prayer on 19 October 2018 at the Sumaleya High School.

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- Program Director
- Wards School Principals
- Members of School Governing Bodies
- Educators and Learners
- The Learner Christian Organisation
- Mrs Thabsile Mnqayi
- Members of the Community
- Distinguished Guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning.

On behalf of the Mayor of the eThekweni Municipality, it gives me great pleasure to join on this spiritual occasion.

It is our hope that this this Prayer Agreement session, seeking God's intervention, hosted by the Learner Christian Organisation, and led by Mrs Thabsile Mnqayi, will be of great help to the Matriculants of the schools of various local wards, and it will also be of spiritual assistance, to all Matriculants, sitting for the 2018 Matric Exams, across our beloved country.

I also wish to extend my gratitude on behalf of the city, to all Principals, Teachers and Spiritual leaders present. Your combined efforts today, greatly displays your leadership and your commitment to better serve our children who are the future leaders of tomorrow. These boys and girls will be leading us soon enough, so we need to prepare them, to best serve the nation, as best we can.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear boys and girls. The mission of this government and your schools, are to raise educational standards. But Government and your school can't raise standards if pupils miss school and behave badly when they are there.

Attendance and good behaviour are preconditions for effective learning. Tackling poor behaviour is as much part of improving pupil performance as good teaching is.

Program Director, Prayer, seeking God's blessings, goes hand in hand, with living a life that God wants us to live. We cannot pray, and then go and do things that do not match up to our prayer. Our actions and prayer, must meet. Both these, must be one, with God.

So as we are here to humbly bow our heads and hearts to God in deep meditation and invoking, we have also come to speak of discipline and righteous living, that will spur us to success, in this material world, with the Blessings of God.

For the Bible says, "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." ( Unquote)

So dear Learners, you must be faithful to the academic calling that God has placed on your life.

And how are you going to be faithful to this academic calling?

First, education is about values as well as knowledge and skills. Values such as respect, courtesy and consideration are the foundations of a moral society. That includes respect for others and respect for authority.

Heads, teachers and other school staff deserve respect.

There can never be any justification for subjecting them to assault - verbal or physical.

Bulling of fellow learners is also unacceptable behaviour. Bulling does not only have to be physical.

Bullying is when you or a group of you abuse your power to hurt or intimidate others. There are different types of bullying. For instance, verbal bullying, physical bullying or social bullying. All of which are unacceptable.

Dear learners, also note, that to be successful in your education, you have to keep away from people who are involved in social ills in your community. Always keep with good company. It will help you stay focused.

Dear Grade 12 learners, in a few weeks' time you are expected to sit for the National Senior Certificate examination.

I am sure every adult in your life has already told you how important this exam is, and this prayer session, re-enforces this importance. The results of this exam will determine not only whether you pass or fail, but whether you qualify for university studies. So I will not add to the pressure, for that is the last thing you need right now. I will, however, offer you 10 pieces of advice as you prepare for the exams.

- Do not panic. The key is to remain calm and rely on what you already know and your preparation in the various school subjects since Grade 10 and even earlier. Listen to music or have a good laugh at Trevor Noah.
- Do not cram. Plan your time appropriately. Do not leave everything to the last minute and get a good night's sleep before your exam.
- Keep perspective. If you do poorly in the exams, it is not the end of the world. You can retake the examination or do a bridging course to university. Whatever you do, do not harm yourself. One examination can never be a judgment on your worth as a human being and a potential scholar of the future.
- Be realistic. If you are unrealistic you could set yourself up for disappointment.
- Hang out with positive people. There is nothing more debilitating than to have friends at this stage who are negative and who tell you to expect the worst. Hang out with calm, positive people in the days and weeks leading to the examinations.
- Be super-organised. In the week before an exam, plan how you will spend each hour. Plan when you will sleep, when you will study what subject and when you will relax with music or whatever works for you.
- Block out distractions. It is important to stay away from things that upset or disturb you in these final days before you write, stay calm at all times. Find a peaceful, quiet place to study.
- Study with someone who is smarter than you. You can motivate and confer with each other and boost one another when you get tired.
- Ask for help. This is not the time to be embarrassed if you do not know something. Raise your hand and seek help when it is needed.

Expect to win. Be positive. Hold your head high. Believe in yourself. Pray! Go for it!

Program Director, in closing, I wish to commend the entire schooling community from all the wards present, for their dedication and commitment, by going the extra mile in seeing to it, their learners are given support beyond the walls of the classroom. I wish all our prayers are accepted, and I wish the class of 2018, everything of the best, in their exams, and the future.

Thank you.