



**Address by Her Worship, the Mayor, Cllr Zandile
Gumede on the Occasion of the Star College Girls High
School High Tea**

**29 September 2016 – 11h30
Star College Girls High School**

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- Programme Director,
 - Principal and Deputy Principal of Star College Girls High School,
 - School Management Team,
 - Members of the School Governing Body,
 - Educators and learners,
 - Distinguished guests and dignitaries,
 - Ladies and gentlemen,
 - All protocol observed,

Good day ladies and gentlemen!

What a wonderful occasion to be surrounded by young blood, our future leaders who will take our country forward. Let me begin my address by thanking you for extending this invitation to us.

I honoured it particularly because education is close to my heart and ensuring that the future of this country is good capable hands is a priority for our government.

My children, education is critically important in building solid societies and growing our local economy. With that in mind, education must also be considered as a societal issue.

Education remains the only key that can unlock all doors and set you on a path towards reaching for your dreams.

It is an important tool used to empower, it is a tool that can be used to fight the imbalances of the past and most importantly, it is a tool that has the power to open opportunities for **YOU**, as the future leaders of our country.

I am of the view that education remains the only hope we have for the complete liberation of a young mind.

The first democratic president of our country, the late Dr Nelson Mandela once said: "Education is the most powerful tool one can use to change the world".

Ladies and gentlemen, these words by Tata Madiba resonate with this occasion, more especially when I think of the challenges that this country faces and the possible solutions thereof.

I chose to emphasise this by quoting these powerful words by our struggle icon because I wanted to highlight the importance and significance of education in the development of the country.

Education contributes immensely to the economic growth of the country. Education supports the growth of civil society, democracy and political stability, allowing people to learn about their rights and responsibilities as well as acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to exercise them.

We all agree that education is a vital tool but we are still faced with the challenge of young people falling through the cracks of social ills. This is of great concern for government.

Programme Director, government's concerns emanate from destructive activities that our young people are engaging in.

These are alcohol abuse, substance abuse, criminality and early engagement in sexual activities which often lead to teenage pregnancies, HIV infections and school dropouts.

Socio-economic factors such as poverty, unemployment and peer pressure can contribute to social ills.

Ladies and gentlemen, we must agree that South Africa is a much better place than it was before 1994 and once again, building capacity in all sectors of our economy through education is the primary factor that has helped us to achieve this feat and to be where we are today.

Efforts have been made to improve the education system in terms of infrastructural upgrades, curriculum changes and many more other interventions that were put in place by the democratic government of the new South Africa, but we cannot depend on government alone.

This then calls for a collective effort from all sectors of society to work together in ensuring that we all play our part to help develop our country by educating our children.

We need to ensure that every child goes to school and gets an education, as per stipulated in the South African Constitution.

In closing, I would like to encourage our young people to focus on turning their dreams into reality. You can achieve anything your heart desires through your commitment to education.

On behalf of eThekweni, I am wishing you all the best for your final matric examinations. Remain focused as you move to the next chapter in your lives, where you will be going into training for different career paths and some of you will be entering the job market.

Make the right choice and put your education above everything else, because education is the only key to a better life.

My children, education is an investment to your bright future!

Thank you!