

**KZN AGRICULTURE MEC KAMADLOPHA-MTHETHWA CALLS FOR SUPPORT
TOWARD UMKHANYAKUDE DISTRICT SCHOOLS**

An oversight visit by the MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Ms. Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa, and members of the Provincial Legislature to Ingwavuma, is expected to fast-track the urgent provision of water through the erection of a borehole and renovation of fencing in special schools around uMkhanyakude District. This was part of the Schools' Functionality Monitoring Programme, focusing on catering to learners with special needs. The members visited Jozini, buoyed by the recent matric results that ranked uMkhanyakude District as a top-performing education district, securing first place in KwaZulu-Natal and second place nationally in last year's matric results.

The legislative members sought to consolidate previous efforts, explore rural schools' resources, and identify challenges facing special schools in the province. Ms. kaMadlopha-Mthethwa, in her official capacity as the District MEC Champion, accompanied by legislative members, noted numerous challenges affecting learning and teaching programs at Mpontshini Full Service Primary School in Ingwavuma and Sizakele Special School in Bhambanana.

These challenges include the lack of infrastructure, lack of electricity, poor network coverage, structural damage to buildings, delayed delivery of textbooks, and lack of funds for inclusive education. The mountainous terrain with gravel roads surrounding the school was another challenge exacerbating access to the school. Despite these obstacles, the school was commended for delivering quality education.

The education department acknowledged these challenges and committed to upgrading the school's kitchen, renovating the fence, and providing electrification. Furthermore, the department's authorities said the school's needs would be prioritised once funds became available. They said staffing challenges were being addressed, and necessary support would be provided. Some issues, such as water connection and fencing, might be resolved in the new financial year once the budget was available.

KaMadlopha-Mthethwa praised the school principal for ensuring quality education despite all the obstacles stacked against it in the deep rural areas of the province. "Even though this is a primary school, the school principal is commended for contributing to the improvement of matric results. I am pleased that the Legislative members were made aware of the challenging environment, particularly given the school's role in accommodating learners with special needs. The district obtained excellent matric results last year, and let's allow all stakeholders to ensure this was consolidated and that support is given to the district's schools."

**ISSUED BY THE KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT**