



agriculture & rural development

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MEC remembers school days

MHLABUNZIMA MEMELA

A NUMBER of former pupils of Ziphathele Secondary School in Clermont paid an unexpected visit to their former alma mater this week.

They included agriculture and rural development MEC Cyril Xaba, who joined pupils at the morning assembly of his high school west of Durban.

Xaba thanked the teachers who had played a significant role in shaping his future and pledged R20 000 towards school uniforms for 22 pupils.

He presented the initial R10 000's worth of uniforms bought by the eThekwinini metro's Ward 22 councillor Sbondiseni Mkhize to 11 pupils.

Mkhize said: "Buying a uniform for these 11 children means they will have more courage to come to school and perform well in their studies."

Grade 11 pupil Nobuhle Mbewana said she was grateful to have a uniform because her parents were unemployed and could not buy her one.

"I have to study hard and this gift encourages me," Mbewana said.

Ziphathele used to be a meeting place for political leaders and student movements during the struggle days. UDF president Archie Gumede and Mpho Scott of the National Education Crisis Committee launched an anti-apartheid campaign at the school when Xaba was still a student there.

This led to the school becoming the



REUNION: MEC Cyril Xaba addresses the assembly at the school where he cut his political teeth. PICTURE: MBLUYSELO NDLOVU

epicentre of student activism after the banning of the Congress of South Africa Students in August 1985.

It was an emotional reunion between Xaba and his former schoolmates and teachers.

"I cut my political teeth in the school. One episode that comes to mind was when I received news in September

1986 that my comrades Andrew Zondo, Bridget Xulu and Lucky Payi had been hanged at Pretoria Central Prison three months after the declaration of the state of emergency," an emotional Xaba said.

He said as student activists they were never called into the principal's office for disrespecting teachers.

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