



**basic education**

Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **Keynote Speech Delivered by the Minister of Basic Education, Ms Siviwe Gwarube, MP, at the PRIMESTARS Event held in Johannesburg**

**15 August 2024**

Managing Director of PRIMESTARS, Mr. Martin Sweet

Our learners

Sponsors

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my honour to be invited to participate in this important gathering today.

We meet during Women's Month, so it is proper for me to seize the moment and encourage young-women of our country to participate in the sciences. Women are formidable partners for innovation and justice and we cannot leave them behind in these noble initiatives.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is important to look back at the journey you have travelled thus far as PrimeStars. Despite being at the Genesis of my tenure as the new Minister of Basic Education, I am aware that the eduCate programme was launched in partnership with the Department of Basic Education in 2010. Since then more than 300 000 learners have benefited from comprehensive revision sessions and more than 1000 lower quintile Public Schools have benefited from the initiative.

Maths and science, plays a crucial role in preparing students for the future by equipping them with essential skills for a rapidly evolving job market. The poor uptake of STEM subjects in public schools, and the low Matric Math and Physical Science pass rate at basic education level, is extremely concerning, as it poses significant challenges for institutions of higher learning and inevitably, our economy.

By fostering an interest in STEM from an early age, schools can help learners develop the competencies required for future careers, drive economic growth, and ensure that the next generation is well-prepared to tackle the challenges and opportunities of a technology-driven world.

It deeply saddens me to note that the limited resources in lower quintile public schools, and further shortage of revision support/tutoring for matric learners leading up to final exams has contributed to a low matric pass rate in these critical subjects.

Therefore, from the bottom of my heart, I'd like to thank PrimeStars for the eduCate programme, which has benefited thousands of learners in 2023 alone.

With the 2024 implementation underway, I have no doubt our learners will continue to thrive. The programme and its edutainment implementation model has proven itself to be one of the most powerful interventions of its kind. We however need more partners. We need more investment!

Programmes like these contribute to shaping futures and vocations of our young people. As you already know, some come from child-headed households and others from destitute families, we need to

continue doing what we can to ensure that these learners are not left behind.

As we pause to notice the strides made, we wish to convey our deepest appreciation for PrimeStars as noble partners with the Department of Basic Education. Your collaboration with and support for DBE is significant. This programme has been running and changing futures for 14 years and I look forward to many more years of impact, success and growth!

My department supports and strongly encourages initiatives that assist South African learners to perform above their academic expectations and become more meaningful contributors to our economy.

Partnerships are key to the success of learners and the system as a whole. It is in this spirit that I wish to encourage PrimeStars, Standard Bank and other partners not to lose heart but to keep doing more, contributing to build a competitive and winning country.

This week, we published the results of the 2024 MAY/JUNE matric result for those who wrote the National Senior Certificate and Senior Certificate for the second time. The results are available on the DBE website and at the place where candidates sat for their examinations.

While we are encouraged by those who took the opportunity to write the examinations again during the May/June session, our wish is that the class of 2024 will pass their examinations at the first opportunity.

I am pleased that the eduCate programme is aligned to this vision. We really need to ensure that every young person in our country has at least a matric. The truth is that without it, your chances of progressing are thin.

We know too well that it takes a village to raise a child; the wisdom of this saying is not limited to a physical village, it incorporates the corporate village too, and with this, I would like to encourage more partners to join the initiative and help us build our next generation of data analysts, scientists, engineers and more.

These are the kinds of partnerships that will continue to make South Africa work and tell a story of unity, collaboration hope.

## **Conclusion**

As we stand at the crossroads of an ever-evolving global landscape, it is imperative that we equip our learners with the foundational skills necessary for future success. Mathematics and Science are not merely subjects; they are the bedrock upon which we build our future professionals, innovators, and leaders.

We need to all join hands and build a solid foundation for a quality and efficient basic education system, from Early Childhood Development (ECD), through the Foundation, Intermediate and Senior Phases, to the Further Education and Training (FET) Band.

There is no doubt in our minds, that our country has indeed ushered in a new period characterised by working together irrespective of our political views and beliefs.

Thank you.

Ends.