

SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION ON THE OCCASION OF THE 150TH FOUNDERS' DAY ANNIVERSARY KINGSRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

07 March 2025

Principal

Educators

Parents

Past Pupils and Esteemed Guests

and Most Importantly the Girls in Blue of Kingsridge High School,

Good Morning

It is an absolute privilege to join you today as we celebrate a truly remarkable milestone—the 150th Founders' Day Anniversary of Kingsridge High School. To reach a century and a half is no small feat. It is a testament to the enduring legacy of excellence, resilience, and commitment to education that has shaped generations of young women who have walked through these doors, including myself. Today, we gather not just to commemorate the past but to reaffirm our dedication to the future.

This school is more than just a building to me; it is a home of knowledge, a place where my dreams took flight, where my young mind was molded, and where my character was built.

Over the past 150 years, Kingsridge High School has been an institution that has shaped young girls into confident, capable, and accomplished young women—women who have gone on to lead, to inspire, and to break boundaries in every field imaginable.

Today, as we reflect on the incredible journey of our beloved school, we recognize the role that this school has played in empowering young women to transition from adolescence into adulthood with strength, grace, and intelligence. KHS has equipped us with knowledge, discipline, resilience, and the courage to face the world head-on. It is a place where we are all taught not just the curriculum, but also the values of leadership, integrity, and of service.

It is also fitting that we gather here today on the eve of International Women's Day, a day dedicated to reflecting on the progress we have made in improving the status of women in South Africa and across the world. While we celebrate the many achievements of women in every sphere of life, we must also acknowledge that there is still much work to be done. Gender inequality continues to persist in many areas, and it is our collective responsibility to change that reality.

One of the most powerful ways to uplift women is through education and economic empowerment. As young women of Kingsridge High School, you have the power to redefine the future. I want to encourage you today to boldly venture into industries that have long been considered the domain of men—science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and even the Presidency of this country. From amongst you here today, we should produce a woman president.

South Africa—and the world—needs more female engineers, doctors, AI innovators, coders, software engineers, scientists, and entrepreneurs. We need young women like you to be at the forefront of shaping the digital future, building sustainable cities, discovering medical breakthroughs, and leading industries that will define the next century.

You are in a school that provides you with resources, facilities, and opportunities that many young girls across the country do not have. KHS is among the former Model C schools that continue to offer world-class education, modern infrastructure, and highly skilled educators. This privilege is not to be taken lightly. You have access to opportunities that other people can only dream of.

But I must hasten to add that privilege comes responsibility—the responsibility to work hard, to be ambitious, to apply yourselves fully, and to use the education you are receiving to make a real impact in your communities.

Your journey here is not just about personal success; it is about lifting others as you rise.

As we celebrate 150 years of this great school, I urge you to go beyond just being learners who pass exams. Be young women who think critically, who ask tough questions, who seek solutions to real-world problems, and who are relentless in their pursuit of excellence.

More importantly, I urge you to be responsible and valuable members of your communities. Success is not just about what you achieve for yourself, but also about what you give back. Be available to mentor others, to share your knowledge, to uplift those who do not have the same opportunities as you. Use your privilege to spread empowerment, kindness, and hope to those who need it most.

As I look at the bright, confident faces before me, I have no doubt that the future is in excellent hands. This school has produced phenomenal women over the past 150 years, and I have no doubt that you will continue to uphold its legacy of excellence.

Dream big!

Be bold!

Challenge the status quo. Work hard. Stay focused. And always remember—you are the future, and the future belongs to those who dare to lead.

So, go out into the world and conquer it. As our former Ms Universe Zozibini Tunzi said “Take up space”.

Happy 150th Founders’ Day, Kingsridge High School! Here’s to another 150 years of excellence!

Thank you.