ADDRESS BY HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR CLLR MXOLISI KAUNDA AT THE ETHEKWINI MATRIC EXCELLENCE AWARDS, 5 MARCH 2021 – FRIDAY, DURBAN ICC

- Programme Director
- Executive Committee members
- Councillors
- Acting City Manager
- Deputy City Manager
- City Management
- Our sponsors and stakeholders
- Education District Directors
- Principals
- Educators
- Learners
- Distinguished guests and dignitaries

- Members of the media
- Ladies and gentlemen

Today we are celebrating yet another important occasion of the eThekwini Matric Excellence Awards to recognise the exemplary achievement of our learners, obtained under challenges condition posed by COVID-19.

This occasion is significant in that the ANC government always subscribe to the notion of recognizing and individuals who show dedication in their work to build the culture of excellence in our country.

We are delighted that this morning, we will honour learners and schools who have excelled against all odds in the 2020 National Senior Certificate Examinations. We have no doubt that your achievements will inspire the class of 2021 to emulate you or even strive to surpass your performance. Congratulations to all of you!

On this joyous occasion, we would like to thank the Department of Education from MEC Kwazi Mshengu, officials, parents, learners and organized labour

for their sterling work. Your efforts have paid off as we today celebrate KwaZulu-Natal's 77.6 percent matric pass rate.

Our two districts in eThekwini, uMlazi and Pinetown achieved 80.9% and 75.8% respectively. This remarkable achievement contributed to the outstanding performance of our province. You have indeed sent a strong message to all of us that as the young people you are committed in bringing the best out of you because you want to be the agents of change in the society.

Ladies and Gentlemen, education is important in addressing the imbalances of the past as well as to complete liberation of young people. Through the interventions the ANC government is implementing to address the faultiness in our education system, we have laid a firm foundation upon which we can build a skilled population and a prosperous society.

While these interventions are critical in the provision of quality education, commitment by all education stakeholders is critical. We therefore thank our teachers for their selflessness as they volunteered their time to assist our

leaners. It is only through the spirit of volunteerism that we can transform our lives and fast track development.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the demands of our economy require that we must improve the performance of our learners, particularly on critical subjects such as Mathematics and Science. It is for this reason that we welcome the establishment of the Anton Lembede Mathematics, Sciences and Technology Academy by the provincial Department of Education in La Mercy. This academy will produce learners that are relevant to the economic needs of our country.

During the current academic year, as a city we have set aside over R160m to assist learners from poor households to further their studies and help those who are currently pursuing their studies in areas regarded as critical skills with bursaries.

While our bursary scheme which assists 99 beneficiaries has been allocated R71m, we have set aside R2m as a student relief fund to assist 150 prospective students from poor households.

For unemployed youth, the city has allocated R20 million for learnerships and artisan development programmes which assist our youth with skills that are relevant to the job market. In an effort to assist the you to gain experience in the workplace, we have allocated R70 million in the current financial year for the internship programme. We are pleased to report that 874 beneficiaries have already been selected to be part of this programme.

As various sectors of the society, it is our duty to ensure that our youth does not fall through the cracks of social ills. Therefore, we call upon you to play your part in helping out young people to realise their potential.

The learners we are honouring today have demonstrated that they want to succeed even if odds are against them. As eThekwini Municipality, we commit ourselves to walk with you throughout this journey of building a brighter future not only for yourselves but your families and communities in which you live.

We wish you everything of the best in your 2021 academic year and we look forward to seeing you contributing to the growth and development of this city after competing your studies.

I thank you.