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● New R150m premises handed to overjoyed community in Gqeberha's northern areas

# David Livingstone Secondary School rises again, after years of delays

Bryan Goliath

Patience has finally paid off for the pupils, parents and staff of David Livingstone Secondary School, who have been officially presented with a sparkling new building.

After years of delays, funding issues and contractual disputes, the completed construction project, worth about R149.6m, was handed over to acting principal Ashley Stuurman by Eastern Cape premier Oscar Mabuyane yesterday.

Mabuyane was accompanied by a high-level delegation of officials who toured the newly upgraded school in Schauderville, in Gqeberha's northern areas, which now boasts a host of modern amenities.

**'What we saw in this school is what we want to see in many schools. We need people who want to move forward'**

The premier said the occasion was not only a handover of the school but a celebration for the community and teachers who persevered in the face of difficult circumstances.

"The parents never gave up on the school," he said.

"Many products from this school played a role in where we are today. I am humbled to be here today.

"What we saw in this school is what we want to see in many schools. We need people who want to move forward."

"Not every child is good academically. Our economy needs skills."

"Good things will come from this school. We must keep the legacy and flame burning."

"The government wants every child to have access to education."

"Nelson Mandela Bay is an economic hub."

"I am not sleeping as a premier. I am worried about joblessness and will fly to China next week to secure investments."

"We want projects to be on time and in budget."

The school, which was built in 1967, had become



Eastern Cape premier Oscar Mabuyane and acting principal Ashley Stuurman at the unveiling of the school's plaque

dilapidated in recent years, to the extent that lessons had to take place in temporary classrooms on the sports fields.

The premises have now had a complete makeover with state-of-the-art facilities including a modern administration block comprising a computer room, library, kitchenette, staff room, two deputy principal's offices, an administration office, reception area, counselling office, printing room, strongroom, kitchen, dining area and storage facilities.

The first floor accommodates several new classrooms. New ablution facilities have been constructed to cater for

boys and girls, including facilities that are accessible to people with disabilities.

Extensive repairs and renovations have also been completed, including an office for heads of department, a fully equipped science laboratory, an auditorium, caretaker's room and storage facilities.

The project included significant external works such as the construction of a netball court, rehabilitation of the rugby field, installation of boundary fencing, walkways, a guard house, refuse area, parking facilities, landscaping, stormwater drainage, as well as electrical and mechanical



Eastern Cape premier Oscar Mabuyane, accompanied by education MEC Fundile Gade and other dignitaries, at the official handover of the newly built David Livingstone Secondary School in Schauderville, Gqeberha  
Pictures: EUGENE COETZEE

installations. The building project started in 2017 but was beset by various delays, including contractors abandoning the site due to nonpayment, ballooning costs and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The newly renovated school was warmly welcomed by the community, staff, pupils and other role players.

An overjoyed Stuurman declared that the pride of the

northern areas' people was etched on their faces.

"We have a sense of belonging. Inclusive education is possible," he said.

"We have 876 learners and we keep on improving yearly with the matric results."

"Once a Livvie always a Livvie."

ANC MP Cedric Frolick said the school was built on the shoulders of giants,

emphasising that the community was its key stakeholder.

Eastern Cape public works MEC Siphokazi Mani-Lusithi said the school was a platform to provide quality education and skills to young people in the surrounding community.

Also in attendance at the handover were Eastern Cape education MEC Fundile Gade and head of department Sharon Maasdorp.