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Gauteng

Together We Lead – Sihola ma sisonke

SAPA Gauteng Leadership Brunch 2026

1) Welcome, gratitude, and the significance of today

Programme Director, Mr Vela Mdledle;

distinguished guests; departmental and district representatives; our partners, sponsors and exhibitors; the SAPA Gauteng Provincial Executive Committee; principals and school leaders; colleagues and friends—**good morning.**

It is an honour and a privilege to welcome you to the SAPA Gauteng Leadership Brunch 2026, here at Emperors Palace, and to thank you sincerely for honouring this provincial gathering with your presence.

Colleagues, this moment is deeply meaningful to me. It is the first time in 2026 that I am addressing you physically.

So allow me to say it plainly: thank you for coming. Thank you for choosing unity. Thank you for choosing professional growth. Thank you for choosing leadership—especially at a time when school leadership is demanding, sometimes lonely, and always consequential.

We have already been guided through the morning processes—registration, seating, and the official opening—thank you for your punctuality and professionalism.

Colleagues, our theme is direct and powerful:

“Data-driven principals: Informed decisions for accountability and school excellence.”

This theme is not a slogan—it is a call to action.

Because a data-driven principal is not a principal who loves paperwork. A data-driven principal is a principal who leads with clarity, courage, and consistency—and who uses evidence to build fairness, improve systems, and protect teaching and learning.

As the saying goes: what gets measured gets managed.

And in our schools, we must measure what truly matters:

- learner attendance and punctuality;
- curriculum coverage and assessment pacing;
- quality of teaching and learning;
- performance patterns per grade and subject;
- and the impact of our interventions.

Colleagues, the goal is not to produce numbers. The goal is to produce better learning outcomes, stronger school cultures, and sustainable excellence.

Let me add this: data must never be used to shame people.

Data is a flashlight, not a weapon. It shows us where support is needed, where routines must tighten, where leadership must intervene, and where we must celebrate progress—so that improvement becomes intentional.

Colleagues, SAPA is a professional home for school leaders across Gauteng—serving diverse communities, diverse contexts, and yes, diverse beliefs. Our unity is built on something bigger than our differences: a shared commitment to school excellence and the success of every learner.

That is why today matters: we are here to learn, to connect, to sharpen our leadership practice—and to remind each other that no principal should carry the burden of leadership alone.

Now colleagues, a professional family must pause to welcome, celebrate, and honour.

Firstly, I want to acknowledge school leaders who are attending a SAPA Gauteng provincial gathering like this for the first time. If today is your first time at a SAPA Gauteng Leadership Brunch or a provincial engagement of this nature, please stand so that we can welcome you properly.

Colleagues, let us give them a warm round of applause.

We say: welcome home. SAPA is your professional home—where you will find support, guidance, and solidarity in the work of leading schools.

Secondly, I want to celebrate colleagues who have recently been promoted—whether acting or permanent: principals, deputy principals, heads of department, or new leadership responsibilities.

If you have recently been promoted, please stand so that we can celebrate you.

Colleagues, congratulations. Leadership is both an honour and a responsibility. May you lead with wisdom, fairness, courage, and consistency. And as we celebrate you today, we also commit to supporting you—because no leader should lead alone.

Thirdly, we want to honour colleagues who are going on retirement.

If this is your final year, or you are approaching retirement, please stand so that we may honour you.

Colleagues, we salute you. Thank you for years of service, sacrifice, and legacy. You have taught classes, built teams, carried communities, and held schools together through storms. Retirement is not the end—it is the crown of faithful service. We honour you today.

Colleagues, in every season of celebration, we must also remember that life is fragile and time is not promised.

Today, we take a moment to remember those who have passed on—our colleagues in education, the learners of our schools, and, in some cases, members of our school governance structures.

I request that we observe a moment of silence in their honour.
(*Moment of silence — 10–15 seconds*)

Thank you, colleagues. **May the departed rest in peace, and may their memory strengthen and inspire us to serve with purpose.**

Colleagues, allow me now to introduce the leadership that serves you at provincial level.

Our Provincial Executive Committee incorporates MANCO—the Management Committee—made up of the President, Deputy President, General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary, and the Treasurer.

May I request **MANCO members** to stand as I call your names:

- **Deputy President:** Freddy Tihavani – Mondeor Primary School
- **Treasurer:** Noko Selepe – Primrose Primary School
- **Secretary:** Norah Malefo – Nellmapius Ext 1 Primary School
- **Deputy Secretary:** Rosie Koloko – Thorntree Primary School

Thank you, MANCO. Colleagues, this is the team that carries daily responsibility for coordination, implementation, communication, and accountability—on behalf of SAPA Gauteng.

Now, may I request our **PEC members** to stand as a collective—please stand, EXCO.

For the record, our PEC members are:

- Ms. Julia Hlahle – Moriting Primary School
- Ms. Fikile Gininda – Siyavuma Primary School
- Ms. Matshidiso Lekalakala – Khula Sizwe Primary School
- Mr. William Mabe – Isipho Sethu LSEN School
- Mr. Nndivhaleni Madzena – PKL Moraka Secondary School
- Ms. Noko Maila – Bramley Primary School
- Ms. Fikile Manyaka – Nong Primary School
- Ms. Agnes Mashilo – Sikhulisile Primary School
- Ms. Bukelwa Mazaka – Phumula Gardens Primary School
- Ms. Mapula Mngomezulu – West Rand School
- Ms. Rita Mollo – Mshululaze Primary School
- Mr. Thomas Ngobeni – Phakamonola Primary School
- Ms. Palesa Ramaisa – Centurion College Combined

Colleagues, please give the full PEC a warm round of applause.

Colleagues, allow me to walk us through the programme of the day—because today is carefully designed to be **practical, developmental, and energising**.

We started the morning with **registration and welcoming tea**, followed by **delegates seated**.

We then moved into the **Official Opening**, including opening formalities—**National Anthem and the Preamble**—and the opening remarks from our Programme Director, **Mr Vela Mdledle**.

And now you are with me for the **Welcome Note and Address**, as SAPA Gauteng President.

From here, colleagues, the day unfolds in four strong phases:

(a) Capacity Building: leadership learning that produces action

Immediately after this address, we begin the **Capacity Building programme**—where we learn, reflect, and sharpen our practice.

- We will be joined by Ms Sylvia Pole, Runner-up: NTA Gauteng Province (2025), Primary School Leadership.
Colleagues, listen for what can be replicated: leadership routines, school culture habits, and strategies that turn effort into results.
- Then we will engage Mr Cedric Modise, DCES Tshwane South District (DDD), on: District data for accountability and support—using evidence to strengthen teaching quality, learner performance and school improvement. Colleagues, this is important. Our work improves when we move from general statements to evidence-based decisions: what to prioritise, what to fix first, and how to track improvement.

We then have a Tea Break—and I encourage you: network intentionally, exchange ideas, and learn one good practice from someone outside your circuit.

After tea:

- Mr Cecil Ndebele will speak on Data-driven leadership that builds a healthy school culture.
Colleagues, culture is shaped by what we consistently allow, correct, support, and celebrate.
- And Ms Yvonne Lechaba (SACE) will guide us on Registrations, ethics and professional standards.
Professional standards are not “extra”—they are the foundation of credibility and trust in school leadership.

We then proceed to Lunch and Networking.

Colleagues, relationships strengthen leadership. Use lunch to build professional connections that will support you throughout the year.

In the afternoon we move into *Recognition & Closing*.

We will honour:

- SAPA Principals for achieving Outstanding Matric Results: Class of 2025 Top 20 SAPA Gauteng Schools (President and MANCO).
- NTA Gauteng Achievers (2025), led by our Deputy President, Mr Freddy Tlhavani.
- SAPA Administrators, led by the President.

We will also receive presentations by sponsors and exhibitors, followed by the vote of thanks and announcements led by the Deputy President.

Colleagues, this programme is rich. The value you receive today will match the energy and participation you bring into the room.

Colleagues, before I close, allow me to leave you with three encouragements.

First: Lead with evidence—but lead with humanity.

Data should never humiliate. Data should help—to identify need, provide support, and drive improvement.

Second: Build routines that protect learning.

A school improves when leadership routines are consistent: curriculum monitoring, assessment reflection, attendance tracking, learner support, teacher development, and parent engagement.

Third: Choose unity over isolation.

SAPA exists because leadership is heavy. And the truth is: a lone principal is a vulnerable principal. Let us stand together, share knowledge, and solve problems collectively.

As the quote reminds us:

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

Colleagues, let SAPA Gauteng be that “together” for every principal in this province.

Colleagues, thank you for your presence, your leadership, and your commitment to excellence.

Once again: welcome to the SAPA Gauteng Leadership Brunch 2026, under the theme:

“Data-driven principals: Informed decisions for accountability and school excellence.”

I thank you—and I hand back to our Programme Director, **Mr Vela Mdledle**.