

MATRIC LEARNERS VISIT PARLIAMENT

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Education is key ... MEC Mamiki Qabathe watched the state of the nation address with matriculants in Virginia

The department organised for children to visit Robben Island and Table Mountain

Five matriculants from schools in Virginia and Ventersburg received a send-off from the MEC for economic development, tourism and environmental affairs, Mamiki Qabathe, when they left for their parliament educational tour this week.

Four of the learners attend the Mamello, Maremothlou, Reatlehile, and Harmony High School's in Virginia respectively, while the fifth learner attends the Matsirepe High School in Ventersburg.

The learners, along with one teacher from each school, will spend one week in Cape Town, during which they will sit in on Parliamentary proceedings, and visit some of the historic places of the Cape Town.

"Last year these children were invited by the premier of the Free State, Ace Magashule, to sit in on the legislature's session during its sitting in Bloemfontein. When he realised the need for these children to broaden their horizon, explore and feel part of their government, he invited them to parliament this year," said Qabathe.

Members of Parliament (MP's) debated last week's state of the nation address on Tuesday and Wednesday this week, with President Jacob Zuma responding on Thursday. The debate and the pertinent media briefings helped shed more light on most of the key issues raised in the address.

Qabathe also set up a big screen at Harmony High School in Virginia, where she watched and explained various factors of the state of the nation address by the president last week Thursday.

"We tend to take these things for granted and assume that children know or understand the ins and outs of important occasions like the state of the nation address, what happens in parliament or who is who. If these children are to become our future leaders, than we must give them the appropriate tools to lead us," she said.

For most of these children, this is their first visit to Cape Town. The department has organised for them to visit Robben Island and Table Mountain.

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“I am very excited and happy to be a part of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I believe this experience will bring a lot of positive change in our lives and shape our future as matriculants,” said Lesibe Moahlodi of Maremothlou High School.

He said that he will make the most of this opportunity and not let his parents, school or hometown down.

The parliament educational tour will not only be fun and games for the learners. Each learner is required to make notes during the state of the nation address, their experience of the parliament debate and write a two page letter to the premier about what they thought was important and how they think things could have been done differently.

“We believe that this exercise will inspire patriotism in each learner and make them realise the importance of being part of the processes of their government,” added Qabathe.

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