

**Speech by the Premier of the Northern Cape,
Dr. Zamani Saul
On the Occasion of the Release of the 2025 National Senior Certificate
Examination Results**

Tuesday, 13 January 2026

Lighthouse (Old CRC Building), Kimberley

Programme Director,

Members of the Executive Council,

**The Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Mr. Alvin
Botes**

Members of the Provincial Legislature,

Mayors, Speakers and Councillors present,

**The Head of the Northern Cape Department of Education, Dr. Michelle Ishmael
Senior officials,**

District Directors, Principals and Educators,

School Governing Bodies,

**Our strategic partners and stakeholders, the IDC, Telkom, MTN, Vodacom, Old
Mutual, SAICA, Kumba Iron Ore and the John Taolo Gaetsewe Development
Trust**

Parents and guardians,

The Class of 2025,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today marks a historic and significant moment for the Northern Cape and the Education system in our Province. We have gathered here to present the results of the 2025 National Senior Certificate examinations, which has been a journey of 12 years for the class of 2025. For us as the Northern Cape Provincial Government, it is a journey which has been underpinned by resilience and sustained progress within our education system. With each passing year, we have been able to register significant progress.

Ladies and Gentlemen, you will recall that in 2020, we found ourselves in an unenviable position, where we recorded a 66% overall matric pass rate. Which meant

that we were the worst performing Province in the Country, at position number 9. This set in motion a deliberate intention to turn the fortunes of this Province around. We prioritised early identification of learning gaps, targeted district support and data-driven decision-making.

The improved performance of our education system since 2021 speaks to our determination and dedication to realise this turnaround. These continued improved results are the outcome of a strengthened and increasingly responsive education system. In 2021 we were at 71,4%, in 2022 we moved to 74,2%, in 2023 we saw a further improvement to 75,8% with us breaking the 80% barrier with a pass rate of 84.2%, and this year **Ladies and Gentlemen** we can proudly announce that the Province has achieved a pass rate of 87.79%. This is the highest matric pass rate we have achieved since the inception of the National Senior Certificate Examination in 2008.

What this means is that from 2020 – 2025, we have improved our Matric pass rate by over 21%. We have moved from position 9 to position 6 in the country.

The gap between the Northern Cape and the best performing Province was over 19% in 2020. Last year we narrowed the gap to 6.8% between us and the best performing Province. This year, we have managed to close the gap between the best performing province and us by 2.81%. We are also the best-improved Province in the Country.

Our improvement, has gone beyond just the numbers, the quality of passes has also improved. For the 2025 academic year, fourteen thousand and eighty-four (14 084) full time candidates sat for the National Senior Certificate Examination. Twelve thousand three hundred and sixty-five (12 365) candidates successfully completed their final examination. Out of this total, the Province obtained Two thousand three hundred and thirty two (2 323) subject distinctions, this is an increase of 0,8%. Five thousand five hundred and thirty eight (5 538) candidates obtained access to Bachelor's degree university entrance, this represents an increase of 0,7% from 2024. This is indicative that the quality of our passes is also improving, providing more young people with access to higher education institutions.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is important to note that all Districts performed above 85%. The pass rate for our five Districts are as follows:

- The Namakwa District has recorded the highest pass rate of 90,5% with an increase of 4,6%;
- The ZF Mgcawu District recorded a pass rate of 90,1%, an increase of 3,8%;
- The Pixley Ka Seme District has recorded a pass rate of 89,3% with an increase of 3,9%;
- The John Toalo Gaetsewe District follows with a pass rate of 87% with an increase of 5,6% and;
- The Frances Baard District recorded a 86,3% pass rate with an increase of 1,7%;

Allow me to congratulate all five Districts, with special recognition to the Namakwa District, which is our best performing District in the 2025 National Senior Certificate Examinations.

It is clear that our investment over the years in educator development, improved curriculum coverage, strengthened learner support programmes and enhanced monitoring and accountability mechanisms is paying off.

Programme Director, the Class of 2025 has truly defied all odds. Today, six candidates who exemplifies outstanding perseverance and resilience in the face of diverse and severe challenges have joined us at this ceremony. The circumstances they faced could have easily discouraged or derailed their progress.

Their situations created daily obstacles and yet they have demonstrated extraordinary resilience and unwavering commitment to succeed in the 2025 National Senior Certificate Examinations. They are:

Lesedi Swazi

Oratile Maruping

Sharifa Kuvula

Tshwarelo Rapelang

Gracious Maqoi

Ashaan Grobus

We further acknowledge that there are more learners that have endured hardships during this academic year, and have persevered. Your success is a powerful reminder that excellence is achievable wherever commitment, discipline and support exist. You have done the Northern Cape proud and you have inspired generations that will follow in your footsteps.

Programme Director, a total of one hundred and ninety six thousand, six hundred and forty-two (**196 642**) answer scripts were marked by 916 Markers, 186 Senior Markers, 85 Chief Markers and 85 Internal Moderators. The Quality Assurer, Umalusi found that we have sound systems in place and the whole examination process was conducted with integrity.

Our results have been certified by Umalusi as a true reflection of the academic ability of our learners and free of irregularities.

The Northern Cape registered fourteen thousand, one hundred and ninety-one (14 191) full time candidates for the 2025 National Senior Certificate Examination. This is the biggest cohort of candidates, which have registered for the National Senior Certificate Examination.

Furthermore, Ladies and Gentlemen, I extend our collective congratulations to the 11 schools in the Province that obtained a 100% pass rate. ***These schools will be announced later during the course of this prestigious ceremony.***

The performance of learners in Mathematics has decreased with 7,5% (55,3% pass rate), whilst Physical Science increased with 4,6% (71,2% pass rate). As a Province, we understand the importance of S.T.E.M (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects in driving the future economy. In this regard, we have embarked on a number of initiatives with our partners in the private sector to improve the overall pass rate in these subjects. The 2025 Mathematics results has alerted us to the fact that we need to revisit our current approach and efforts, in order to ensure that we have meaningful improvements in both subjects.

Programme Director, the outstanding results of the Class of 2025 stand as testimony to the collective effort of all stakeholders and partners. We extend our sincere appreciation to educators and school leadership for their tireless dedication and

professionalism. We thank parents and guardians for creating supportive home environments that reinforce learning.

We acknowledge the invaluable contribution of our social partners, business, labour, higher education institutions, faith-based organisations and civil society, whose involvement has strengthened our schools and motivated our learners. Your partnership affirms that education is a shared societal responsibility.

To the learners of the Class of 2025: today marks the end of one chapter and the beginning of another. As you move into higher education, training institutions, entrepreneurship or the world of work, remember that you carry with you the hopes of your families and communities. I urge you to use your future success not only to advance your own lives, but to uplift others and contribute to the development of our province and country.

Let me also caution that while today we celebrate success, we must not become complacent. To sustain and improve these results require continued hard work, focus, innovation and investment. As the Northern Cape Provincial Government, we remain committed to improve all facets of our education system and ensure that every learner has access to quality public education.

As the Northern Cape Provincial Government, we pledge our continued support to all candidates who fell short of meeting the minimum requirements to pass these examinations. We further urge parents to encourage these learners, to go back to school for the necessary support. We often realise that a number of learners who do not succeed on the first attempt, tend to give up. We therefore encourage learners who need to re-write the exams in 2026, to use the opportunities provided by Government to get their academic careers back on track.

As I conclude, allow me to take this opportunity to thank the MEC for Education, Mr. Abraham Vosloo, the Acting Head of the Department, Dr. Michelle Ishmail and her team for the leadership they have provided to schools.

A word of appreciation goes to District Directors and Circuit officials, Curriculum Chief Directorate, Curriculum Coordinators and all Subject Advisors who remain committed to improving the quality of public education in the Northern Cape.

I also extend our gratitude to the Examination Chief Directorate as well as the District Examination officials for their commitment, and sterling effort to ensure the integrity of our entire examinations process.

The Class of 2025 has proven that when leadership is decisive, when systems are responsive and when communities work together, excellence is achievable. Together we have written a powerful success story for the Northern Cape.

Once again, congratulations to our matriculants, our educators, our parents and all our partners. The future of the Northern Cape is bright, because it is built on educated, caring, capable and confident young people.

I thank you.