

**Draft Address by the Premier of the Northern Cape during the release of the
2020 Matric Results**

Tuesday, 23 February 2021

Protea Hotel, Big Hole, Kimberley

Programme Director

Members of the Executive Council;

Members of the Provincial Legislature;

Acting Head of the Department, Mr Sandile Beuzana;

Representatives of our Teacher Unions;

**Stakeholders in Education: MTN Foundation, Vodacom, Standard Bank, Fundi,
South African Institute of Charter Accountants (SAICA)**

Senior Management of the Department;

Members of the Media;

Most importantly, our top 10 learners and their parents;

Everyone would be in agreement with us that the 2020 school academic year was indeed a very challenging and difficult year. The COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lock-down has disrupted the lives of learners in different ways, not only on a personal level, but also the extent to which they have completed the curriculum.

The schooling system had to adapt to the “new normal” to curb the spread of the Coronavirus and to protect the lives of educators, learners and support staff at schools. The Department of Education has had various interventions with the sole aim of ensuring that our schools and learners get the maximum support with a strong emphasis on progressed and borderline learners.

Ladies and gentlemen, today we stand here at the end of a partnership that spanned over about twelve years because the matric exams not only impacts on the registered candidates but it is a partnership between Government, the parents, family and the community as a whole. This annual release of the National Senior Certificate Examination provides us with an opportunity to reflect and do introspection on that partnership as well as the education system we need now and for the future.

It also allows us to give recognition to our top achievers who have excelled academically in the 2020 National Senior Certificate Examination.

As stated earlier, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the lives of many South Africans and disrupted the school academic year. We however know that our learners were not alone and we wish to thank all the Departmental officials, educators and school communities who have supported the Class of 2020.

Examination Administration

Ladies and gentlemen, administering the National Senior Certificate is no easy feat and I wish to illustrate briefly the magnitude of managerial expertise required by the department to administer this Examination.

In the Province, a total of 231 661 answer scripts were marked by 759 Markers, 166 Senior Markers, 22 Deputy Chief Markers, 47 Chief Markers and 47 Internal Moderators. We thank all markers as well as their families for the selfless sacrifice made towards the future of our Province.

Analysis of the NSC Results

For the 2020 Senior Certificate Examinations, the Northern Cape registered 12 021 full time candidates; this is an increase of 562 full-time candidates compared to the 11 459 in 2019.

A total of 11 608 full time candidates successfully completed the 2020 National Senior Certificate Examinations and wrote all subjects in the examination. The Province recorded 7 665 full-time candidates that passed, bringing the overall pass rate in the Province to 66%, a decrease of 10, 5% in comparison to 2019.

It is important to note, that for the first time progressed learners were not allowed the Multiple Examination Opportunity (MEO), which significantly impacted on our Province. The Department registered 2 427 progressed learners of which only 24, 5% passed. We also note the concerted efforts by the Department to specifically support this catchment of learners during the extended Spring Camps ahead of the 2020 NSC Examinations.

Ladies and Gentleman, without offering any excuses, it is important that we clarify the pass rate with the members of the media and the public at large. The Northern

Cape has achieved an overall pass rate 66%, which **includes** the progressed learners. Our performance, **excluding** the progressed learners is 76.1%.

A total of 2 265 progressed learners successfully completed the 2020 National Senior Certificate Examinations of which only 554 or 24, 5% passed. We will continue with our interventions to further improve the pass rate of progressed learners.

Although the overall pass rate in the Province has dropped considerably, 675 more candidates have passed compared to those in 2019. The actual number of distinctions has also increased by 268 and the number of candidates achieving at a Bachelor's level has increased by 527.

Only 4 schools in the Province have obtained a 100% pass rate which will be mentioned later on.

Ladies and gentlemen, the analysis also reveals a drop of 1, 3% in the performance in Mathematics. Out of 2 708 candidates who wrote Mathematics, 1 498 candidates passed (55.3%) in 2020 compared to 56.6% in 2019.

Of the 2 186 candidates who wrote Physical Sciences, 1 167 candidates passed which constitutes a pass rate of 53, 4%, registering a decrease of 15, 8% in 2020 compared to 69, 2% in 2019.

We will place more focus and attention on these subjects for 2021 to ensure improved performance, which will broaden the landscape of possibilities for our learners.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The pass rates for our five Districts are as follows:

- Namakwa achieved a pass rate of 78,6% in 2020 a decrease of 11,2% compared to 89,9% in 2019
- ZF Mgcawu achieved a pass rate of 71, 3% in 2020 compared to 75, 6% in 2019 – a decrease of 4, 4%.
- Pixley ka Seme achieved a pass rate of 67, 3% in 2020 compared to 72, 3% in 2019 – a decrease of 5, 0%.
- Frances Baard achieved a pass rate of 65, 0% in 2020 a decrease of 9, 5% compared to 74, 5% in 2019.

- John Taolo Gaetsewe achieved a pass rate of 60, 0% in 2020 compared to 77, 8% in 2019 – a decrease of 17, 8%.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have already directed that no stone be left unturned in our efforts to improve on the weaknesses and poor performance in the 2020 National Senior Certificate Examination results. To this end, the Department has indicated that the Provincial Improvement Plan will include, amongst others, a myriad of programmes with a specific focus on underperforming schools, novice teachers, progressed learners, learner performance, leadership and management and most importantly consequence management.

I also wish to highlight the fact that our Province was greatly affected by the availability of Educators due to age and comorbidities. A total of 2 758 educators (above 60 and registered a comorbidity) who applied to work from home, 353 grade 12 educators were granted approval offering various subjects. We are not underestimating the impact it had on our learners and the instability it created in schools.

Another concerning matter, is the number of learners who did not return to school following the National Lockdown. An estimated 23% of learners did not return to school after the hard lockdown, which translates into an average of 2 766 candidates.

I mention these because although COVID-19 was not unique to our Province but it left us with a trail of unique challenges that we had to confront.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me now turn my focus to the candidates of the Matric Class of 2020 that have joined us today. They are our top 10 candidates in the Province and I want to congratulate them for their excellent achievements. Today, we will also celebrate excellent achievements in specific subjects, where candidates obtained level 7's. These candidates will be announced and acknowledged later in the programme.

As I conclude, I want to give the assurance that we will support all candidates that have not made it through these exams. We will assist and encourage them in the subjects not achieved, to ensure that they complete the requirements for passing.

Allow me to take this opportunity to thank the MEC for Education, Mr Zolile Monakali, Acting Head of the Department, Mr Sandile Beuzana and all Senior and Middle Managers for their administrative leadership.

All District and Circuit officials, Curriculum Chief Directorate, Curriculum Coordinators and all Subject Advisors need special mentioning and have to be acknowledge for the role they have played.

A word of appreciation to the Examination Chief Directorate as well as the District Examination officials for their commitment, involvement and outstanding manner in which they conduct examinations in our Province.

I thank all the teacher unions that operate in this sector and all our dedicated teachers for their outstanding role in assisting the Northern Cape Department of Education into taking our combined efforts to greater heights.

I sincerely trust that this cooperation will continue. Please remember that these learners are our children who need our assistance and support at all times.

In conclusion, I would want to say to the Class of 2021 that you have an enormous task ahead of you. I want to call on everyone to re-dedicate and commit yourself to the Education of our children. It starts with being actively involved in your child's Education. The ninth School Governing Body Elections will be taking place from 1 March – 30 April 2021. Please avail yourself for nomination as another means of supporting quality learning and teaching to our children

I thank you.