

**Address by the Premier of the Northern Cape, Dr Zamani Saul, at the Public
Announcement: Release of the 2023 Matric Results**

Mittah Seperepere Convention Centre

Friday, 19 January 2024

Programme Director

Members of the Executive Council

Speaker of the Provincial Legislature, Ms Newrene Klaaste

Members of the Provincial Legislature

Religious Leaders present

Senior Officials of Government;

Representatives of our Teacher Unions and SGB Associations

Stakeholders and Partners in the Education sector

Principals and Educators present

Members of the Media

Members of the Public

Most importantly, all learners of the Class of 2023

When we started this Sixth Administration we articulated a vision for our Province as, “Building a Modern, Growing and Successful Province.” We defined a Modern, Growing and Successful Province amongst others; as being at the cutting edge of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and one that prioritises quality education, training and retraining of the youth. Education is an important cornerstone towards the realisation of our vision.

Today we gather in a very unique manner to look back on the Matric year of 2023 and reflect and do introspection on the education system we need now and for the future. The release of the Matric results is always both an exciting and a tense time but it is a time that all those who sat for this all-important examination look forward to and we are exceptionally pleased to have you in our midst this morning. We also

want to make use of this opportunity to wish you well for your future endeavours and to appeal to you to join hands with us and embark on a career path that will help us grow our Province. Allow me thus to express our gratitude to you for honouring our invitation to attend this gathering. Later today we will give recognition to our top achievers who have excelled academically towards their prosperous future.

The Class of 2023 has done well and excelled academically against all odds. We should be mindful, that this was the Class that was in Grade 9 when the COVID pandemic created havoc in our country, but particularly in the education sector. With a massive learning backlog and very little exposure to formal assessments, with their dedication and commitment, you have shown us what can be achieved. This was of course also made possible through matric interventions and support programmes which the Department facilitated in all our schools and Districts.

This is also an indication that our education system in the Province is stabilising and we are witnessing a gradual improvement in our Matric results year on year.

Scope of the 2023 NSC Examination

Allow me to congratulate the Northern Cape Department of Education on administering a successful 2023 National Senior Certificate Examinations.

A total of one hundred eighty-three six hundred and forty-two (183 642) answer scripts needed to be marked by 930 Markers, 82 Chief Markers and 82 Internal Moderators at 4 Marking centres in our Province. The Quality Assurer, Umalusi found that we have sound systems in place and the whole examination process was conducted with integrity. So, our results have been certified by Umalusi as a direct reflection of the ability of our learners; free of irregularities.

Analysis of the NSC Results

The Northern Cape registered thirteen thousand thirty-two (13 032) full-time candidates for the 2023 National Senior Certificate Examination. This is the second biggest cohort of candidates, over the past 5 years, who have registered and completed the National Senior Certificate Examination.

A total of 12 842 candidates wrote all subjects in the 2023 NSC examination, nine thousand seven hundred forty (9 740) candidates completed their final examination,

bringing the overall pass rate of the Northern Cape to 75, 8%. The pass rate for this year has increased with 1, 6% from 74, 2% to 75, 8%.

It is worth noting, that over the past 4 years, our matric results have improved from 66, 0% to 75, 8%, an increase of 9, 8%. We recognise the steady increase, but regrettably, we fell short of the national average of 82, 9% pass rate. Evidence however is there that we are gradually improving our Matric Results.

A total of 190 candidates could not complete the National Senior Certificate examination due to reasons such as ill health and death in the immediate family and will be allowed to complete the National Senior Certificate during the May/June Examination.

Ladies and Gentleman, 9 schools in the Province recorded a 100% pass rate, whilst we managed to reduce our underperforming schools (below 60%) from 27 schools to 20 schools.

Out of the thirteen thousand and thirty-two (13 032) full-time candidates that sat for the full Examination, 1 502 (-2, 2%) candidates obtained distinctions and 3 851 (-0, 8%) candidates obtained access to Bachelor's degree university entrance.

The performance of learners in Mathematics has increased by 5, 5% (56, 9% pass rate), whilst Physical Science decreased by 2, 3% (67, 2% pass rate).

We will place more focus and attention on these subjects for 2024 to ensure improved performance, which will broaden the landscape of possibilities for our learners.

The pass rates for our five Districts are as follows:

- The Namakwa District recorded the highest pass percentage of 81,6%, an increase of 1,6%;
- The ZF Mgacwu District has recorded a pass percentage of 81,4% with a decrease of 2,4%;
- The Pixley Ka Seme District has recorded a pass percentage of 74,2% with a decrease of 4,1%;
- The Frances Baard District follows with a pass percentage of 73.9% with an increase of 1,8% and;

- The John Toalo Gaetsewe District recorded a 73,7% pass percentage with an increase of 5,7%;

Allow me to congratulate the Namakwa District as our top performing District. We would also like to congratulate the John Toalo Gaetsewe District who recorded the highest improvement in the 2023 NSC Examinations.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we go about to improve the weaknesses and poor performance in the 2023 National Senior Certificate results, 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, consequence management and strategies to improve performance.

I highlight the performance of the National Senior Certificate to give you insight into what it meant for you to sit for this examination. My cardinal message to you however today is that Education is a central, critical determinant of the economic and social success of any country. It is probably the most effective means to eradicate poverty. It is the means of future success for any individual.

Education provides the skills and competencies that will allow you to perform productive roles within the economy and society. It will enable you to achieve your own economic, social and cultural goals and you in turn will help society 'to be better protected, better served by its leaders and more equitable.

Schooling is, however, not just about knowledge and skills, but also about values, and attitudes, as well as creative and emotional development, all of which contribute to responsible, active and productive citizenship.

It is the most important element in our efforts to tackle unemployment and build an economy that meets the needs of our people. That is why we have made education one of the apex priorities of this Administration. We value education that prepares our young people for the needs of a democratic society and the modern economy.

My plea to all stakeholders is to play their part in ensuring that education is not a departmental or a government programme but a societal matter. Education is not about a classroom and a book. All role players need to join hands to ensure that this is realised and that what we have achieved thus far is sustained and improved on.

To those learners who did not succeed, there is always another tomorrow. Nelson Mandela once said, "Everyone can rise above their circumstances and achieve success if they are dedicated to and passionate about what they do." Failure is therefore not a permanent feature but a temporary inconvenience that serves as a source of experience. We want you to succeed and as a Government, we will support you to do so.

Where learners need to re-write the exams in 2024, we request these learners to contact the nearest district office for assistance in getting placement in an examination centre.

Allow me to take this opportunity to thank the MEC for Education, Mr. Zolile Monakali, the Acting Head of the Department, Mr. Gideon Oliphant and all Senior and Middle Managers for the leadership they provide to schools.

All District and Circuit officials, Curriculum Chief Directorate, Curriculum Coordinators and all Subject Advisors must be acknowledged for the role they have played.

A special 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.

We would also like to convey our appreciation to the South African Police Services for their support and cooperation when we conducted the final matric examinations.

I thank all the unions that operate within this sector and all our dedicated teachers for their outstanding role in assisting the Northern Cape Department of Education in 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.

My best wishes to all, especially the Class of 2023 in all your future endeavours. You have made yourself and us, as Province very proud. Make 2024 the year that starts your journey to achieve success in all spheres of your life, especially education.

Thank you