

Press Statement-Release of the 2019 Matric Results

MEC Mac Jack

Wednesday, 8 January 2020

NC Premier, Dr Zamani Saul;

Head of the Department, Mr GT Pharasi;

Representatives of our Teacher Unions;

Senior Management of the Department;

Members of the Media;

Most importantly, our top three learners and their parents;

We are gathered here today, at the beginning of a new year, renewed with hope and optimism about the future of our children. This annual occasion provides us with the opportunity to reflect and do an introspection on 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 towards their prosperous future.

Allow me to take this opportunity to thank the Honourable Premier, Dr. Zamani Saul and the liberation movement I belong to, the African National Congress (ANC) whom its man and women waged selfless sacrifice shown us the path of freedom for having entrusted me with the most important portfolio, namely Education.

In the words of the father of our nation, Nelson Mandela, he said and I quote: “A good head and good heart are always a formidable combination. But when you add to that a literate tongue and a pen, then you have something very special.”

Honourable Premier and Distinguished Guests,

Today, we are also celebrating the 108th Anniversary of ANC. In 1955, men and women with a vision converged in a small town known as Kliptown and drafted what became the rallying cry for all freedom loving South Africans and our international community throughout the struggle period. I am talking about the Congress of the People that met on that winter day of 26th of June 1955 and produced the Freedom Charter.

It proclaims that “The Doors of Learning and Culture shall be opened! The government shall discover, develop and encourage national talent for the enhancement of our cultural life; the aim of education shall be to teach the youth to love their people and their culture, to honour human brotherhood, liberty and peace; Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children.” During the apartheid years, up and until the 1994 democratic breakthrough, our education system was fragmented and discriminated against black people in general and rural blacks in particular.

It was only in 1996 that the new ANC-led government managed to successfully launch a single and integrated education system for the whole country. Our new system of education inculcates the ethos of non-racialism, non-sexism and inclusiveness. Our end goal as dictated by the Freedom Charter is to offer universal free and compulsory primary and secondary education.

The National Development Plan

The importance of Basic Education also finds expression in the government developmental blueprint, the National Development Plan (NDP).

Our immediate plan, the NDP stipulates that free education must be introduced up to undergraduate level. It says we shall continue to test grade 3, 6, and 9 learners each year to measure improvement and identify problems. It enjoins us to ensure that educators are in class on time, teaching at least seven hours a day and that all schools must have all required teaching aids including workbooks and textbooks.

Equally, we expect learners to be attentive in class, learning and respecting the learning environment including school property and educators. The NDP commits this government to ensure a conducive environment for quality learning and teaching through the provision of infrastructure, water, sanitation and electricity; irrespective of where they find themselves in this country.

Examination Administration

Let me illustrate the extent of the magnitude of managerial expertise required by the department to succeed.

A total of 169 019 answer scripts were marked by 774 Markers, 157 Senior Markers, 22 Deputy Chief Markers, 65 Chief Markers and 65 Internal Moderators. Administrative duties were also be dealt with by 150 Examination Assistants.

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 and having been conducted with integrity.

Analysis of the NSC Results

The Northern Cape registered 11 459 full time candidates for the National Senior Certificate Examination in 2019. This is a smaller cohort of candidates compared to the 12 157 of 2018.

The decrease in candidate numbers is across all provinces and is evident of a smaller intake at entry level.

A total of 9 138 candidates wrote all subjects in the 2019 NSC examination, 6 990 candidates successfully completed their final examination, bringing the overall pass rate of the Northern Cape to 76.5%. The pass rate for this year has considerably increased with 3.2% from 73.3% to 76.5%.

Ladies and Gentleman,

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 76.5%, which **includes** the progressed learners. Our performance, **excluding** the progressed learners is 77.6%.

A total of 568 progressed learners completed the 2019 NSC Examinations of which 341 candidates passed. We will continue with our interventions to further improve the pass rate of progressed learners. Some of these intervention measures will be outlined later on.

However, there is a noticeable improvement in the pass rate of progressed learners from 40.2% in 2018 to 60% in 2019.

2 019 progressed learners opted to make use of the Multiple Examination Opportunity (MEO) and will complete their examination during the May/June examination in 2020. A total of 302 candidates could not complete the examination due to valid reasons e.g. ill health, death in the immediate family, etc. and will be afforded the opportunity to complete the National Senior Certificate during the May/June 2020 Examination.

11 schools in the Province have obtained a 100% pass rate compared to the 4 schools in 2018.

Ladies and gentlemen, comrades and friends; of the 9 138 full time candidates that wrote the NSC Examination, 1 633 (17,9%) candidates obtained distinctions, which is an increase of 2,1% compared to 2018 and 2 769 (30,3%) candidates obtained access to Bachelor's degree university entrance, an increase of 4.2%. This is the best performance in the last 5 years in both distinctions and Bachelor passes achieved.

The performance of learners in Mathematics has decreased with 2.4%, whilst Physical Science improved with 2.2%.

We will place more focus and attention on these subjects for 2020 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;

- The Namakwa District has recorded the highest pass percentage of 89.9% with an increase of 6.2%;
 - The John Taolo Gaetsewe District recorded a pass percentage of 77.8%, an increase of 4.6%;
 - The ZFM Mgcawu District has recorded a pass percentage of 75.6% with an increase of 1%;
 - The Frances Baard District follows with a pass percentage of 74.5% with an increase of 3.1% and;
 - The Pixley Ka Seme District recorded a 72.3% pass percentage with an increase of 2.1%;
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It is worth noting that all Districts performed above 70% and it shows that every District contributed to the increase in the provincial pass rate.

Ladies and gentlemen,

For 2019, we have managed to reduce the underperforming schools in our Province from 32 to 20 schools, which have recorded a pass rate below 60%.

In our efforts to improve the weaknesses and poor performance in the 2019 National Senior Certificate results and to respond to Action Plan 2019: Towards Realisation of Schooling 2030 and the National Development Plan, 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 in literature, specifically in Afrikaans Home Language.

In addition, our province is unique in the sense that schools are suffering from high teacher and learner absenteeism rate and poor learner discipline as illustrated in the 2019 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) Report.

The data used to compile this plan is drawn from diagnostic analysis reports, impact studies, NSC Technical Reports and Examiners and Moderators Reports.

As per the request of the Premier, Dr. Zamani Saul, we have allocated 14 underperforming High Schools to Members of the Executive Council in 2019. I am pleased to announce, that the 10 out of the 14 schools have achieved a pass rate above 60%. I commend the Premier and Members of the Executive Council for turning the situation around in such a short space of time.

The adoptions of schools by Members of the Executive will continue in 2020 to ensure that we have all schools performing above 60%.

We have allocated 2 underperforming High Schools per Member of the Executive Council and their work will commence as soon as schools reopen on the 15th of January 2020.

Ladies and Gentleman,

We have reason to celebrate today.

Allow me to acknowledge the presence of the top three candidates in the Province, Tlotlo Lekgoba, Silje Fredericks and Rudi Venter.

Our top candidate in the Province hails from Baitiredi Technical High School. Congratulations to Tlotlo Lekgoba. You have proven that hard work and dedication pays off. This must be celebrated as she comes from a public ordinary school and a previously disadvantaged community.

Today, we also celebrate excellent achievements in specific subjects. Candidates obtained level 7's in subjects such as Accounting, Home languages, Business studies, Life Sciences, Mathematics, Physical Sciences, History, Geography, Economics and Technical subjects.

These candidates will be named and honoured by the Premier later today.

Hopetown High School in the Pixley Ka Seme District is our top performing school in our Province, followed by Kimberley Girls High and Diamantveld High School.

Duineveld High School is the top Mathematics school and Kimberley Girls High School is the top Physical Science School in the Province.

Moshaweng High School in the John Toalo Gaetsewe District showed the best improvement in the Province with a pass rate of 95.8% an increase of 45.9%.

Finally, we will support all candidates that have not made it through these exams. We will assist them in the subjects not achieved, to ensure that they complete the requirements for passing.

Where learners need to re-write the exams in 2020, we request these learners to contact the nearest district office for assistance in getting placement in a centre.

Allow me to take this opportunity to thank the Head of the Department, Mr GT Pharasi 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.

A special word of thanks to the South African Police Services for their annual support and cooperation when we conduct the final matric examinations.

Furthermore, the police in all areas were on high alert during the writing of the examinations to ensure that no candidate was disadvantaged by any form of community unrest and assisted and intervened where problems occurred.

I thank all the 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 take this opportunity once again to extend my sincere thanks to the collective leadership of the ruling party, the ANC, for the necessary guidance and for providing the much needed direction. The Premier of this Province, Dr. Zamani Saul for his leadership, and all my political colleagues for the support and invaluable inputs made since I took office.

I also wish to thank the opposition parties in serving as critiques of wrong doing that will continue to strengthen us. The Legislature and its committees have continued to assert their oversight role and I thank them for constructive engagements.

I also want to thank my family for all their unconditional support, without which I would not be able to manage this important portfolio.

My best wishes to all, especially the Class of 2019 for all your future endeavours. You have made yourself and us, as Province very proud.

To the Class of 2020, receive the baton, and all learners in the Province, I want to call on everyone to re-dedicate them to the strenuous tasks that lie ahead of us in 2020.

I thank you!
