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THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION



NEWSLETTER

Minister Motshekga updates the Education Sector on the 2020 Matric countdown



The countdown to the matric examinations has begun, and the writing of the 2020 National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examinations will commence on 5 November and conclude on 15 December 2020. The Basic Education Department (DBE) rescheduled the examinations to accommodate the disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Minister was speaking at a briefing in Pretoria to update South Africans on key developments in the Sector relating to the Covid-19 level 1 restrictions. Minister Motshekga expressed concern about learners who have not returned to school yet, despite schools operating at full capacity under alert level 1 of the lockdown, and called on parents and communities to support their children as they return to school under the new normal ushered in by Covid-19. "All examination centres, both public and independent have been audited in preparation for the 2020 combined examination. In addition, a protocol, to ensure compliance with Covid-19 rules, has been developed and distributed to guide all the chief invigilators, invigilators and all other officials involved in the management of the conduct and administration of the examination.

Provinces put in a place a whole range of measures to support learners, including Saturday and Sunday classes. In addition to the extra classes provided at schools, the department also launched Woza Matrics, in collaboration with the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT). This is an initiative designed to provide additional support to the Matric Class of 2020, as they prepare for the 2020 NSC Examination. Schools will reopen on 25 January 2021. "We are grateful for the commitment, dedication and sacrifice demonstrated by our educators in all provinces," concluded the Minister.

Teacher Appreciation Month launched



The quality of our teaching and our teachers, is one of the most important determinants affecting education performance. For this reason, Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie Motshekga launched Teacher Appreciation Month on 1 October 2020 in Pretoria.

South Africa's teachers are responsible for laying the foundations for the future of the country. Although the Covid-19 pandemic brought about additional and extraordinary challenges for our teachers, they have persevered professionally and efficiently, continuing with the coverage of the curriculum for the current academic year, through blended learning approaches. Teachers are currently involved in various intervention programmes at schools across the country to ensure that the Class of 2020 is adequately prepared for the National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examinations. October is annually commemorated as Teacher Appreciation Month, and the DBE will be celebrating the role and contribution of our teachers, whilst honouring those who succumbed during the Covid-19 period.

The commemoration forms part of the support programmes under the banner of the Teacher Appreciation and Support Programme (TASP), which is led by the DBE and the South African Council for Educators (SACE). TASP is supported by the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT), the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC), the ETDP-SETA, Teacher Unions and School Governing Body Associations. The aim of the TASP is to support the Education 2030 Framework for Action, by developing and celebrating South African teachers throughout the year, and not only on World Teachers' Day in October of each year. The Programme enhances the DBE's efforts of teacher development and support, which is one of the major focus areas under the motto: "The teacher, the heartbeat of the nation".

Acknowledging our teachers' commitment in the face of adversity



The DBE will be showing its appreciation for these dedicated teachers during Teacher Appreciation Month in October in various ways. On 1 October 2020, Teacher Appreciation Month was launched under the theme: “*Working in solidarity with teachers during the Covid-19 pandemic*”. The celebration of global World Teachers Day on 5 October will be taking place under the theme: “*Teachers: leading in crisis, reimagining the future*” at Mamelodi Teachers’ Centre in Pretoria, to commemorate the anniversary of the adoption of the 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the status of teachers.

The activities for the month of October will be inclusive of all stakeholders as part of TASP, and will, amongst others, include the following: On 5 October, the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga will pay homage to the dedicated teachers who succumbed during the period per province. Learners will also have an opportunity to give complimentary messages in all languages to teachers that touch their lives. Messages of support from all MECs in provinces will also be delivered on the day. National Teaching Award (NTA) winners will further share their expertise in the subjects that they excel in with other teachers in SA schools.

Ms Mokhudu Machaba from the Limpopo Province, who was one of the previous NTA winners, will share her experience in reaching the Top 10 finalist of the Global Teacher Prize, to encourage teachers that their dedication towards education in our context is recognised, and is on a par with the rest of the world. It is also envisaged to have a Fourth Industrial Revolution specialist to address teachers on different innovations in preparing learners for the future in preparation for occupations that do not currently exist. As the DBE, we also submit the names of organisations that work with us for the UNESCO-Hamdan bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Prize, and we are delighted to announce that the Sasol Foundation has been recognised as a top ten finalist for the 6th Edition of the UNESCO-Hamdan bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Prize for Outstanding Practice and Performance in Enhancing the Effectiveness of Teachers.

A Facebook page was created where teachers can express their fears and anxieties that impact on their daily lives. The month will draw to a close on 30 October 2020, with a virtual dialogue with ambassadors, who are experts in various fields and will respond to the issues raised on the Facebook page and recommend programmes that the sector can embark on to assist teachers and ensure their well-being. It is anticipated that President Cyril Ramaphosa will be delivering a message to teachers on the day.

Andreas Schleicher of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) stresses that, “the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers”. It is the quality of our teacher education and our training interventions and the way we teach that has an impact on student performance.

Embassy of Portugal donates laptops and face masks to the Basic Education Sector



Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie Motshekga, joined by the Ambassador of Portugal, His Excellency Mr Manuel Carvalho, officially handed over 25 laptops and 2,000 face masks to Protea Glen Secondary School on 28 September 2020. The laptops were given to top performing learners enrolled for the Portuguese Language as Second Additional Language.

The DBE and the Government of Portugal entered into a bilateral relationship in 2002 when the Memorandum of Consultations came into effect. During the 2019 consultations, Portugal expressed an interest in supporting the DBE to offer Portuguese as a Second Additional Language in South African schools, focusing on Grades R to 12. Portuguese will also be taught as a Home Language in Grade 10 to 12. The Government of Portugal is also supporting nineteen South African Portuguese language teachers, teaching 2,400 students. It is envisaged that these teachers will be used in training South African citizens who are willing to become Portuguese teachers, once the processes of introducing the Portuguese Language as a Second Additional Language are completed. Ambassador Carvalho stated that, “given the challenges caused by Covid-19 in schools, the Embassy found it befitting to donate the masks and laptops to protect and to assist learners in accessing digital content”.

Minister Motshekga said that the Basic Education Sector is in dire need of additional resources to protect learners against Covid-19 challenges. “I commend the Government of Portugal for the contribution. We will work with the Embassy to fast-track the introduction of the Portuguese Language in our schools so that it is fully integrated with the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS)”. In closing, the minister called on other education stakeholders to come on board and assist the DBE in improving quality education in schools.



DBE and PEDs go the extra mile to improve learning outcomes in schools



Senior Managers from the Department of Basic Education (DBE) have been using various forms of engagement platforms to reach out to schools to provide urgent support where needed, ahead of the National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examinations. These interventions also included school visits conducted by Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie Motshekga, Deputy Minister, Dr Regina Mhaule, and Director-General Mr Hubert Mathanzima Mveli.

School visits and monitoring programmes are essential because they provide the Department with a broad picture of the situation faced by the sector to identify best practices and challenges from which intervention strategies can be developed to provide support to schools. The Director for Education Management and Governance Development, Mr James Ndlebe, indicated that Covid-19 posed challenges to every education stakeholder within the Basic Education Sector. He applauded the role played by School Governing Bodies (SGBs), parents, School Management Teams (SMTs) and school principals in ensuring that the phased approach of opening schools, difficult as it was, was successful.

“As the governance of schools is vested in its SGB in terms of section 16(1) of the *South African Schools Act 84 of 1996* (SASA), as amended, SGBs must promote the best interest of the school and support school staff and SMTs to perform their duties. During the advent of Covid-19, we saw SGBs becoming a link between the school and communities, leading to the safe return of learners to school and ensuring that there was social distancing; wearing of face masks; and adherence to hygiene protocols, including the availability of meals for all returning grades,” explained Mr Ndlebe.

“Quality education cannot be achieved unless communities are involved in determining the nature, character and the direction that schools must take. The role of parents in supporting their school-going children cannot be over emphasised. It makes a huge difference in the outcome of learner performance. The establishment of SGBs is the way in which we, in the sector, formalise the interaction between schools and parents. This was evident in the many consultation meetings held between the Department and SGBs throughout the lockdown period,” he concluded.

Minister Motshekga visits four schools in Tembisa as part of her Oversight and Monitoring Programme



Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie Motshekga, undertook an oversight visit to four schools in Tembisa in the Gauteng Province from 28 to 29 September 2020. The visit was aimed at monitoring progress made since the beginning of level 1 of the lockdown restriction. The schools visited were Protea Glen High School, Itemogele Primary School, Tembisa High School and Endulwini Primary School.

Minister Motshekga said that, although the DBE is trying its best to sustain schooling in 2020, the majority of schools will need additional support to address challenges posed by Covid-19. “I am glad that school principals and SMTs continue in their efforts to equip teachers and learners for the adoption of a new normal”.

The principal of Protea Glen High School, Mr Thabani Sokhela, indicated that, although Covid-19 disrupted most of his initiatives aimed at sustaining school performance, the SMT members are working hard to ensure that Grade 12 learners are fully supported. “Due to the requirements of social distancing, we have opted for a rotation system whereby learners across grades attend school once a week; however, Grade 12 learners are expected to attend school daily as curriculum coverage remains a concern. Educators had to make sacrifices and organise extra weekend classes. The Preliminary Examinations also assist with intensive revision for the Grade 12 learners as it becomes easier to address identified challenges encountered in various subjects during October after the school holidays. In addition, Grade 12 learners will use the holidays to attend walk-in camps organised by the Department.”

Mr Mhlantshwayo, the principal of Itemogele Primary School, explained that parents and SGBs played a crucial role in encouraging learners to attend classes. “In terms of the rotation system, we have been using what we call Scenario 03, a concept provided by the Gauteng Department of Education. Through this initiative, a class is divided into three groups. The first group attends class for two days in a row, then stay home for four days to give the other groups a chance to attend. That is applicable to Grades R to 7. We are also implementing Continuous Assessment and Assessment Tasks provided by the District, which will play a crucial role in the effective assessment of learners this year.”



DG Mweli continues with School Monitoring Programme



Provinces and districts are optimistic that schools will be well-equipped as they prepare for the 2020 NSC Examinations owing to the support from both the Provincial Education Department (PEDs) and the DBE. Director-General, Mr Hubert Mathanzima Mweli, undertook oversight visits to 25 schools in the North-West and Mpumalanga Provinces during the past weekend to motivate the Grade 12 learners.

The visits were used to monitor the provincial intervention support programmes aimed at assisting the Class of 2020 to navigate through the challenges presented by Covid-19. During briefing sessions between the Director-General and SMTs, it was evident that schools were aware of what they needed to do to sustain the overall provincial performance.

Education District Officials confirmed that Education Specialists and Subject Advisors have been deployed to schools for the strengthening of curriculum coverage. Mr Mweli expressed his gratitude to teachers for having made sacrifices to facilitate additional weekend classes on Saturdays and Sundays. Mr Mweli said: “My role model has always been a teacher. I am who I am today because of a teacher. I plead with you to respect your teachers, and follow all the instructions given in class, for the sake of your academic success. I am impressed by your attendance. Seemingly, you are committed to achieve excellent results in the final year examinations this year.” He further extended his gratitude to parents and members of the public for their continued support in ensuring that schools are safe environments for learners to acquire quality education. Mr Mweli called on various education stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society, to collaborate with the DBE in improving quality education, saying that, “It is only through our collective efforts that our schools can deliver quality education to our communities”.



Sharing best practice at district level ahead of the 2020 NSC Examinations

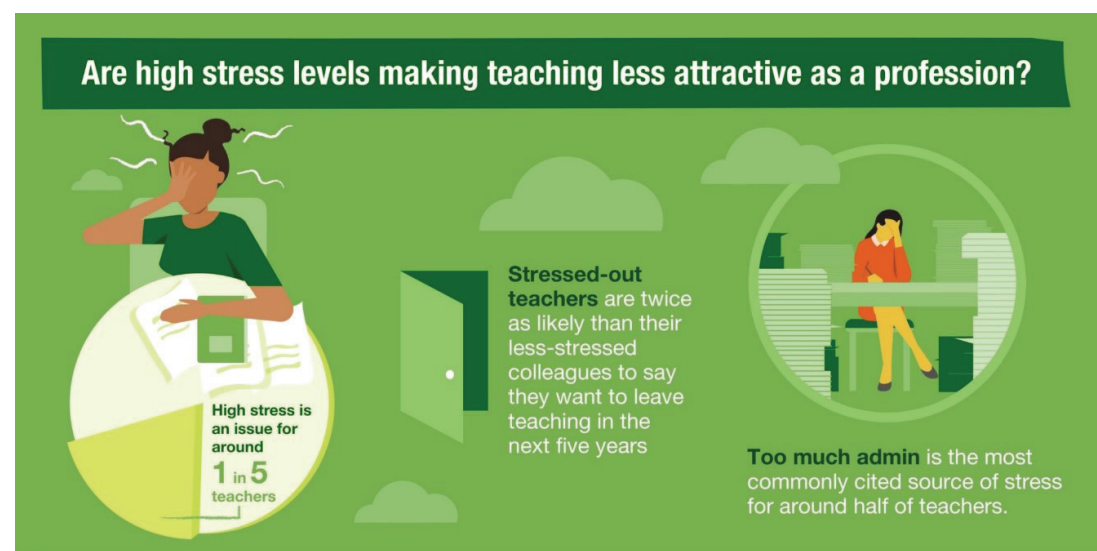
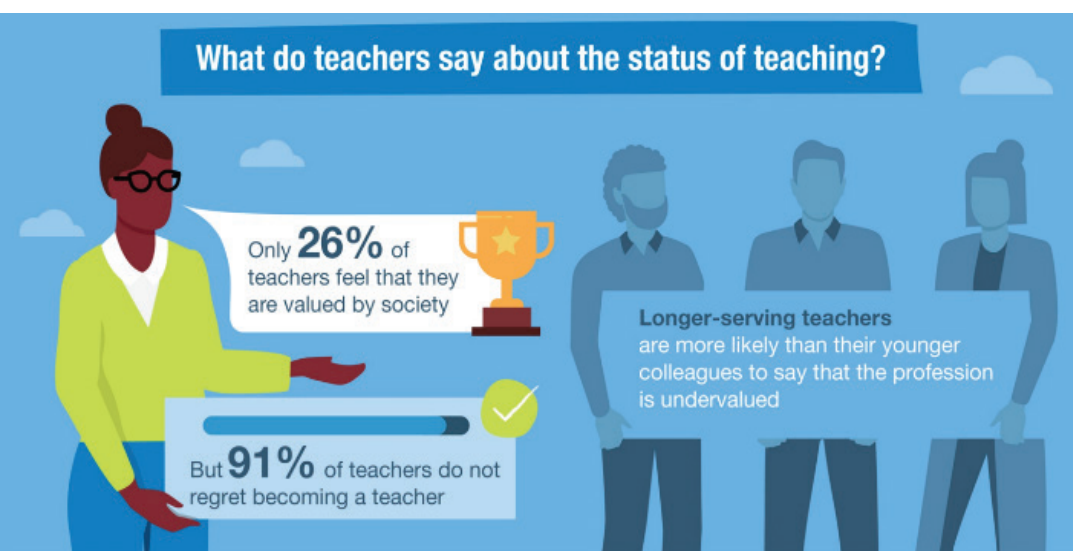


The benefit of the school monitoring and oversight visits conducted by Basic Education Director-General, Mr Hubert Mathanzima Mweli in provinces, has been acknowledged by education officials at district level.

Education District Directors describe the visits as an additional support system to assist learners to focus on their studies. Ms Lindiwe Mabaso, District Director for Thabo Mofutsanyana in the Free State Province, outlines the work that her district has done in support of schools. “After the official reopening of schools was announced, my district came up with ways to improve curriculum coverage through Saturday and Sunday classes. As part of this initiative, teachers have more time to assist struggling, progressed, as well as learners at risk whilst accelerating the performance of high performers. This approach helps learners to increase their content knowledge and guides teachers in revising the work covered in the previous terms. The district has ensured that all additional classes are conducted under the supervision of SMTs. We have also considered a direct learner support approach conducted by Subject Advisors to address content challenges by teachers.”

“To achieve our performance targets, learners are prepared using Examination Guidelines, Diagnostic and Moderators’ Reports and CAPS documents as part of our intervention support programmes. Teachers are advised to find ways to indicate common mistakes made in answering questions. Learners are then showed how to avoid such mistakes. We also insisted on coaching learners to use information sheets in subjects like Mathematics and Physical Sciences; and to encourage schools to use revision booklets supplied by the Department. SMTs are expected to submit a moderated quality School Based Assessment (SBA), which will be used during the 2020 Examination Standardisation process. The SMTs and teachers will have one-on-one discussions with borderline learners and their parents to improve learning outcomes, whilst last-push activities and District Oversight Visits to schools, led by the District Director are also underway,” concluded Ms Mabaso.

TALIS voices the working conditions and perspectives of teachers and principals



South Africa was the only African country participating in the 2018 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) undertaken by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). This global study, involving 260,000 teachers in 15,000 schools representing more than 8 million teachers across 48 countries, provides South African policy makers and researchers with data on relevant variables and indices on local and international contexts of teaching. TALIS foregrounds the teacher perspective on working conditions; professional knowledge; and instructional quality to re-engineer the education system to achieve the best possible outcomes.

In Volume 1, the TALIS results indicated that many teachers have a high self-efficacy and are motivated to influence the development of learners. In Volume 2, under the broad theme of *Teachers and School Leaders as Valued Professionals in South Africa*, the results focus on societal respect for teachers; stress load; the attractiveness of the profession; job satisfaction; and proficiency on using technology and innovation.

The findings also indicate that teachers have embraced a mindset of lifelong learning. Secondly, the study shows that there is value in supporting professional autonomy, collegiality and collaboration to encourage innovative practices among teachers. This should be strengthened since teachers who use professional collaboration are more likely to implement innovative teaching practices in class, increasing overall satisfaction with their work. Thirdly, the use and impact of feedback and appraisal systems should be maximised. Although South African schools often lack autonomy over the consequences of appraisals, the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) is an institutionalised programme designed to support and develop teachers within their working environments and professional support groups. IQMS should be strengthened for teachers to see the tangible benefits of participating in the programme. Professional Learning Communities, and the development of professional standards for teachers and principals are an effort to build and enhance the teaching profession.

The importance of TALIS lies in the important teacher dimensions the study reveals for better understanding the extent to which learners are taught by qualified, professionally-trained, motivated and well-supported teachers.

Click on the below link for the full report:

<https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/TALIS%202018%20COUNTRY%20NOTE%20VOLUME%202%20-%20SOUTH%20AFRICA.pdf>

Provincial Round-up

Gauteng Province



Gauteng Education MEC Panyaza Lesufi informed parents that the online placement period for Grades 1 and 8 admissions commenced on 1 October and will end on 30 November 2020. The Gauteng Education Department said that parents who have used its online school admissions portal to apply for the placement of their children, will be given seven days to accept or decline the offer. MEC Lesufi further added that more than 157,000 Grade 1 and 8 learners have used the portal to secure a spot for the 2021 academic year. “The spaces that we have, and the number of applications don’t match, and there are more applications than available spaces; unfortunately, not everyone will be placed at their preferred school,” MEC Lesufi said.

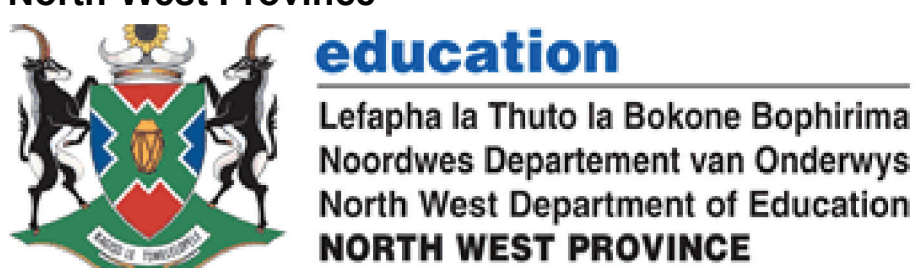
Limpopo Province



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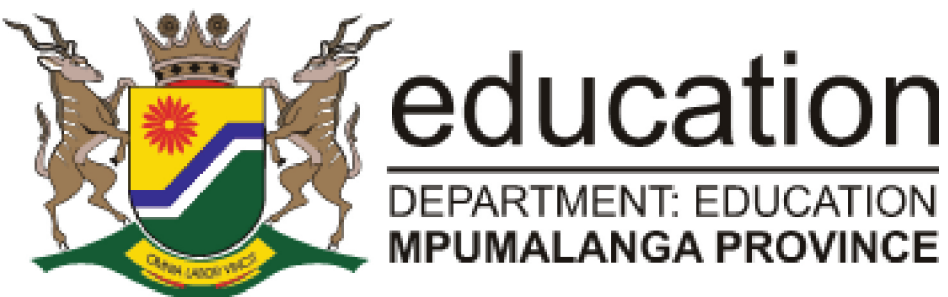
Limpopo Education MEC, Polly Boshielo, held a webinar with provincial learners to discuss the role of culture to prevent violence and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in schools and communities. Deputy Minister, Dr Reginah Mhaule, also participated in the webinar which took place on 29 September 2020. In respect of GBV, Bohlale Mphahlele, a Grade 11 learner from SJ van der Merwe Technical High School in Lebogakgomo Circuit, Capricorn South District, has invented an “Alerting Ear Piece”, which can track victims of human trafficking and gender based violence. The device was recently showcased at the Eskom Expo for Young Scientists, in the category for Engineering-electronics and embedded systems. Commenting on the device’s potential to combat GBV, MEC Polly Boshielo said: “We are always looking for answers and ways to protect our children, and this invention by our learner gives me hope that we shall overcome. I am a firm believer in technology and its capacity to address some of the challenges we encounter. It is a proud moment to see that all our efforts towards improving technical schools in the province are yielding results”.

North-West Province



The MTN SA Foundation, in partnership with Huawei and the North-West Department of Education, recently handed over tablets to a no-fee paying school in a drive to increase access to eLearning. This partnership saw Grade 10, 11 and 12 pupils studying Computer Applied Technology (CAT) and Information Technology (IT) at Mampho Secondary School in Migdol, Schweizer-Reneke, each receiving a Huawei tablet. In addition, all Grade 12 pupils at the school also received Huawei tablets to harness the power of technology in preparation for the NSC Examinations. The hand-over forms part of a broader eLearning initiative with MTN handing over two state-of-the-art multimedia centres in Gauteng, each equipped with hardware and software to the value of R1.2 million. Huawei will be contributing a total of 700 tablets, valued at R2 million, to selected schools in Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Gauteng and the North-West Province, as part of this Public-Private Partnership. Education MEC, Mmaphefo Matsemela, said, “Through the MTN SA Foundation, our schools have been equipped with countless multimedia centres over the years. This includes the contribution of a fully-fledged computer lab at Mampho Secondary School in 2017. The multimedia centres from MTN have boosted the department’s efforts in moving towards digital education, which is very much in line with what the Fourth Industrial Revolution is calling for”.

Mpumalanga Province



The Mpumalanga Department of Education has extended the due date for admission of learners for the 2021 school year to 30 October 2020. This extension is intended to provide ample opportunity to parents who were unable to register their children due to the Covid-19 pandemic and other unforeseen reasons. No learner can be refused admission on the basis that his/her parents are unable to pay school fees. Should a parent experience a problem regarding the registration of a child at a school, he/she should request a written explanation from the principal of the school concerned, or contact the nearest circuit office for assistance. Parents can also call the departmental toll-free line at 0800 203 116 for assistance in this regard during office hours. Education MEC, Mr Bonakele Majuba, urged parents to register their children in schools in their vicinity to avoid learners from travelling long distances, to make it easier for parents to attend to school-related activities and to enable learners to participate in their school curriculum enrichment programmes.

Western Cape Province



Western Cape Education MEC, Debbie Schäfer, whilst wishing the Class of 2020 well during their trial examinations over the next weeks, encouraged learners to register on www.committotofinish.co.za to access online resources that will assist them to adequately prepare for the NSC Examinations. MEC Schäfer said that, whilst Grade 12 attendance has improved significantly, there were still many learners who had not come back to class. She appealed to parents to ensure that their children return to class. Scholars were impacted significantly over the past few months because of the Covid-19 lockdown, which has forced them to stay home for a considerable amount of time, resulting in them losing out on school time.

Upcoming Events

- October 2020: Teacher Appreciation Month will be celebrated in the Education Sector
- October 2020: Transport Month will be commemorated
- 05 October 2020: World Teachers' Day will be celebrated at Mamelodi Teachers' Centre in Pretoria, Gauteng Province
- 09 – 15 October 2020: National Nutrition Week will be celebrated
- 15 October 2020: Global Handwashing Day will be observed
- 15 – 19 October 2020: National Obesity Week will be commemorated
- 30 October 2020: Closure of October Teachers' Month
- 05 November – 15 December 2020: Grade 12 learners will be writing their NSC Examinations

Enquiries:

Editor: Mr Elijah Mhlanga

Chief Director: Media Liaison - National and Provincial Communication

Tel. No: 012 357 3773