



basic education

Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## Keynote Address by the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga, MP, delivered during the Release of 2022 National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examination Results

19 January 2023

Programme Director;  
Honourable Deputy Minister;  
Honourable Chairpersons and Honourable Members of the Portfolio and Select Committees, responsible for Basic Education;  
Honourable MECs;  
CEOs & Top Management from the Private Sector, who have partnered with us, especially MTN – our main sponsor;  
Director-General of the DBE; HoDs of Provincial Education Departments, and Senior Management from the DBE and PEDs;  
Chairpersons, Board Members, CEOs and Senior Management of Umalusi, SACE, and the NECT;  
Leadership or organised labour and national SGB associations;  
Ladies and gentlemen!

Today, we are gathered here to announce the 2022 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination results. We are announcing the 2022 NSC exam results mindful of the reality that, at the heart of any development within the Basic Education Sector, must obviously be **what learners learn**. This point is clearly articulated in our *Action Plan 2019 – Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2030*; the *National Development Plan (NDP), Vision 2030*; the *Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA, 2024) on the African Agenda 2063*; and the *UNESCO Sustainable Development Goal, Number 4 (SDG4)*.

It continues to be of great significance for South Africa's development that **learning outcomes**, according to reliable standardised testing programmes, such as the *Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality* (SEACMEQ), the *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study* (PIRLS), the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS), have **improved progressively over the years**. But equally, the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on teaching and learning since March 2020, continue to be a cause for great concern.

We must concede upfront that prior to the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, the trajectory of improvement, as demonstrated through the SAECMEQ, PIRLS and the TIMSS, has undoubtedly been interrupted by the pandemic. As Government, especially the Department of Basic Education, together with the Provincial Education Departments and our strategic partners within the Basic Education Sector, we have placed the highest priority on regaining the lost ground; and return the schooling system to its earlier improvement trajectory.

We are also announcing the 2022 NSC exam results fully cognisant of the context that the NDP enjoins us to observe; namely –

*“By 2030, South Africans should have access to education and training of the highest quality, leading to significantly improved learners’ outcomes. The performance of South African learners in international standardised tests, should be comparable to the performance of learners from countries at a similar level of development, and with similar levels of access”.*

### **Scope and size of the 2022 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations**

Programme Director, at the outset, we wish to share with the South African public the **scope and size of the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations**. The NSC exams are viewed by many, as the second largest enterprise to the National General Elections in South Africa. There are lobbyists though, who continue

to contest this assertion, in preference of the elections of school governing bodies.

We wish to inform South Africans that in addition to managing the NSC exams for **more than nine hundred and twenty (920) thousand candidates**, who enrolled the 2022 NSC examinations –

- we had set **one hundred and sixty two (162)** question papers;
- we printed **ten point four (10.4) million** question papers;
- we produced **nine point eight (9.8) million** scripts;
- which were delivered countrywide to **six thousand, nine hundred and four (6 904)** secure examination centres;
- in which **seventy three thousand (73 000)** invigilators were on duty;
- **fifty two thousand (52 000)** markers were appointed; and
- in **one hundred and eighty seven (187)** secure marking centres.

Some of the other features of the 2022 NSC exams included **a high degree of stability in the system**, albeit the irregularities reported in a few provinces. There was much improved **data collection, data analysis, and data feedback processes** within the DBE; and more importantly, the Class of 2022 showed the **greatest determination and fortitude ever** – a good sign of **a maturing and resilient Basic Education system on the rise**.

### **Umalusi declares on the credibility and integrity of the 2022 NSC examinations**

Programme Director, Ladies and Gentlemen, we are happy to inform the nation that on Monday, 16 January 2023, Umalusi, our Quality Council in General and Further Education and Training, declared that –

*“The examinations were administered largely in accordance with the Regulations Pertaining to the Conduct, Administration and Management of the NSC.*

*The irregularities identified during the writing and marking of the examinations, were not systemic, and therefore, did not compromise the overall credibility and integrity of the November 2022 NSC examinations administered by the DBE. The Executive Committee of Council therefore, approved the release of the DBE November 2022 NSC examination results ...”*

During the standardisation process of the 2022 NSC exams, the DBE presented **sixty six** (66) subjects to Umalusi. It is indeed gratifying to note that Umalusi –

- had accepted the **raw marks of forty seven** (47) subjects – this is equivalent to **71.2%** – compared to 35 subjects standardised in 2021;
- had adjusted **sixteen** (16) **subjects upwards** – this is equivalent to **24.2%** – compared to 28 subjects standardised in 2021; and
- had adjusted **three** (3) **subjects downwards** – this is equivalent to **4.5%** – compared to four subjects standardised in 2021.

Umalusi commended the DBE for conducting such a successful examination on such a large scale,

### **The unique profile of the Matric Class of 2022**

Programme Director, Ladies and Gentlemen, facts show that the Class of 2022 is the **fifteenth cohort of learners** to sit for the National Senior Certificate examinations; and the **ninth cohort** to be exposed to the CAPS curriculum. Most poignantly, **86% of the full-time candidates**, and **27.1% of the part-time candidates** were **16-20 years of age** when they enrolled for the 2022 NSC examinations. It is gratifying to note that the girl learners in the Class of 2022, were **more age appropriate** than their boy counterparts.

The Class of 2022 were part of the ECD programme in 2010, and formally entered schooling in Grade 1 in 2011. The foundations for lifelong learning these young people were exposed to in Grade R, included *language, motor skills, perceptual skills, problem-solving, basic numeracy, self-regulation, executive functioning and the love*

for learning. Coincidentally, 2010 was *two (2) years* after the introduction of the *National Senior Certificate examinations*.

Also of importance to note, are the facts that the Class of 2022 was the ***fifth cohort*** to be introduced to ***twelve (12) new subject offerings***, comprising the *South African Sign Language (Home Language)*, written by ***two hundred and ten (210)***; and *Civil Technologies, Mechanical Technologies, and Electrical Technologies* – each with ***three (3) subjects***; as well as *Technical Mathematics and Technical Science*, written by ***fifty four thousand and ninety five (54 095)***.

The exact total number of candidates, who registered for the 2022 NSC exams was ***nine hundred and twenty thousand, six hundred and thirty four (920 634)*** – an increase of ***2.6%*** from 2021. Of these candidates, ***seven hundred and fifty two thousand, and three (752 003)*** were full-time candidates – an increase of ***2.6%*** from 2021; while ***one hundred and sixty eight thousand, six hundred and thirty one (168 631)*** were part-time candidates – an increase of ***2.9%*** from 2021.

A total of ***eight hundred and thirty four thousand, five hundred and sixty five (834 565)*** candidates (both full- and part-time) sat for the 2022 NSC examinations – an ***increase of 4.3%*** from 2021. ***Seven hundred and twenty five thousand, one hundred and forty six (725 146)*** of these, were full-time candidates – an ***increase of 3.0%*** from 2021; while ***one hundred and nine thousand, four hundred and nineteen (109 419)*** were part-time candidates – an ***increase of 14.3%*** from 2021, wrote the 2022 NSC exams.

The Class of 2022 was impacted by Policy changes. They were the ***ninth cohort*** to be exposed to changes in the *Policy on Progression*; the *discontinuation of the Policy on Multiple Examination Opportunity (MEO)*; the *offering of two (2) question papers in Accounting and Business Studies*; the *offering of a third paper for all Second Additional Languages*; the *addition of new subjects, such as Dramatic Arts, Music, Marine Sciences, and a Practical Assessment Task (PAT) for Technical Mathematics*; as well as *changes in the structure and duration of some question papers*.

In 2020 and 2021 this cohort's resilience to sustain rising academic levels, was severely tested with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. This Class was exposed to the pandemic for **two (2) consecutive years**, when they were in Grade 10 in 2020, and Grade 11 in 2021. The Class of 2022 is the **first cohort** to write the NSC exams, post the pandemic. Exacerbating the devastation caused by the pandemic, this Class was subjected to the challenges of enervating loadshedding, and sporadic service delivery protests.

Their success in overcoming those extremely difficult academic and psycho-emotional draining years, is the manifestation of their fortitude and burning desire to improve their future prospects. No wonder that the Class of 2022 is the largest ever cohort of learners to sit for the NSC exams.

It is important to note that the performance tracking conducted by the DBE on the Class of 2022 in the earlier years, showed that this Class was performing at **78.4%** in Grade 10 in 2020; at **80.0%** in Grade 11 in 2021; and at **78.8%** in the Grade 12 – Term 1 of 2022. The performance of this cohort remained relatively high, despite the devastating challenges outlined earlier.

### **Distinct features for learner support programmes**

Clearly, the support programmes and interventions introduced by the DBE – both for learners and educators; the policy shifts introduced to mitigate the deleterious effects of COVID-19; the strengthening of the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum and assessment practices; the resilience of this cohort; the stability and the maturity of a system on a rise; the involvement of all communities of trust within the Basic Education Sector in our schools; the psycho-social support and counselling provided to our learners; parental involvement to ensure the safety of learners at school during extra tuition; the strengthening of school governance imperatives; as well as the support programmes introduced by the private sector and NGOs, to mention a few, have surely borne “good fruit”!!

For this Class of 2022, the Basic Education Sector deployed a dedicated and customised support programme, to ensure that all learners are provided with optimum opportunities to achieve a National Senior Certificate (NSC). The details of learner support

programme, with its distinct features, that supported the Class of 2022 can be found in the comprehensive version of this Speech in the DBE website.

## **Context of the National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examinations – the Results of the Class of 2022**

Programme Director, Ladies and Gentlemen, there are some unique schooling characteristics, associated with the Class of 2022, that foreground the results of the 2022 NSC examinations.

This cohort of learners started schooling in the same year as when the **Annual National Assessments** (ANAs) were launched in 2011. As a system, we were able to track the performance of these learners at regular intervals, to provide the necessary and sufficient support right from their onset of their schooling. They participated in the 2012 ANA, while they were in Grade 2; and did so again in Grades 3 and 4, in 2013 and 2014, respectively.

In 2015 a sample of this cohort participated in the TIMSS in Grade 5; and four (4) years later, in 2019, the same cohort was tested in TIMSS at the Grade 9 level. Their participation in these standardised assessment studies was premised on the principle that *effective testing, will afford this cohort the opportunity to demonstrate relevant skills and understanding, and also assist in diagnosing learner shortcomings.*

In 2013, the ANA results in Mathematics and Home Language, pointed towards an *upward trend in most grades, and these learners found themselves at the Grade 3 in a system of rising learner performance.* Early in their schooling, they were given specific support to strengthen and improve performance in Language and Mathematics.

Key strategic interventions, such as the **National Reading Remedial Plan** and the **Mathematics Intervention Project** were put in place in 2013, to push *performance levels from 50% competency levels, to a more desirable 60%.* The focus of the DBE in strengthening basic skills at the Foundation Phase, and targeted interventions in the Intermediate Phase, had a positive impact on raising levels of learner performance. When this cohort was in Grade

3 in 2013, *almost 60% of them had achieved at least 50% of the Mathematics marks*, which was a significant improvement from the previous Grade cohort.

The Class of 2022 were also the first cohort of learners to participate in TIMSS at the Grade 5 level in 2016, and their achievement scores represented South Africa's baseline at this level. In 2019, these learners raised South Africa's TIMMS trend performance by **17 points** scoring in Mathematics, just **11 points below the international benchmark of 400 points**.

Programme Director, Ladies and Gentlemen, with this background on the Class of 2022, let's now explore the NSC exam results of this cohort of learners, starting the performance of progressed learners.

### **Performance of the progressed learners**

South Africans will recall that we introduced the Policy on Progression to unclog the system, as lots of learners were unnecessarily repeating the same Grade and/or Phase for more than once. The Policy of Progression therefore, directed that no learner should repeat a Phase more than once. We strongly believed that learners, with focused and strategic support and intervention programmes, can succeed in their educational endeavours. The Policy on Progression, and the Second Chance Matric Programme, were introduced to reduce the number of young people, who were not in employment, nor in education and training – the NEETs.

In the 2022 NSC examinations, we saw **fifty two thousand, nine hundred and sixty one** (52 961) progressed learners, enrolled. **Forty eight thousand, three hundred and sixty one** (48 361) of the progressed learners actually wrote the requisite **seven** (7) **subjects** during the 2022 NSC exams.

**Twenty thousand, nine hundred and seventy five** (20 975) progressed learners passed the 2022 NSC examinations. This represents **2.9%** of these learners, who wrote **all seven** (7) **subjects** during the 2022 NSC examinations; and **3.6%** of the 2022 passes. **Three thousand, two hundred and thirty five** (3 235) of these learners, obtained Bachelor; **eight thousand, one hundred and forty one** (8 141) obtained Diploma passes; **nine thousand, five**

**hundred and seventy** (9 570), and **thirteen** (13), obtained Higher Certificate and NSC passes, respectively.

A total of **One thousand, three hundred and seventy eight** (1 378) distinctions were attained by progressed learners, including distinctions in critical subjects, such as Accounting, Business Studies, Economics, Mathematics and Physical Science.

The significance of these achievements, is that the **twenty thousand, nine hundred and seventy five** (20 975) progressed learners, who passed the 2022 NSC examinations – *the would-be-high-school repeaters and dropouts, had they not been progressed*, now have an opportunity to access either higher education, TVET, and other skills development institutions. What a great story!!

### **Learners with Special Education Needs**

We strongly believe that an **Inclusive Education system** makes an immense contribution towards an **inclusive economy**, to serve an **inclusive society**. Providing learners with special education needs **access** to quality basic education programmes, is an imperative, based on the Constitutional social justice principles of **equity, inclusivity** and **redress**, among others. We have for the past few years included the learners with special education needs in tracking learner performance in the NSC examinations.

**One thousand, one hundred and thirty two** (1 132) learners with special education needs, enrolled for the 2022 NSC examinations – a **decrease of 53.0%** in 2021. **One thousand and ninety two** (1 092) of them, actually wrote to 2022 NSC exams – a decrease of **36.0%** in 2021. The decline in the numbers of the learners with special education, cannot be separated from the devastation caused by the pandemic. While the system was able to retain learners in ordinary public and independent schools; we were unable to do so for learners in special schools. In the main, the inhibitors to regular attendance could be associated with comorbidities, and the reluctance of parents to return their children with special education needs back to school.

It is quite interesting to observe that some of the learners with special education needs, are now choosing to write the full compliment of

**seven (7) subjects**, instead of the **five (5) subjects** they have a concession to write. This is a positive development, which we will keenly observe and analyse in the future.

**Eight hundred and ninety three (893)** learners with special education needs passed the exams – this is equivalent to **76.3%**. **Four hundred and thirty nine (439)** – equivalent to **42.1%**; and **two hundred and sixty four (264)** – equivalent to **21.5%** of these learners achieved Bachelor and Diploma passes, respectively.

**One hundred and eight (108)** of learners with special education needs obtained Higher Certificate – equivalent to **7.8%**. **None** of the learners with special education needs, who wrote the 2022 NSC exams attain an NSC pass. These learners managed to achieve a total of **four hundred and sixty eight (468)** distinctions – which is equivalent to **two in ten (0.2%)** of the total number of distinctions attained by the Class of 2022.

### **The benefits of the “pro-poor” policies of Government on the 2022 NSC exam results**

The 2022 NSC passes for quintiles 1 to 3 (“no fee”) schools combined, stand at **three hundred and eighty seven thousand, four hundred and one (387 401)** – an **increase of 9.2%** from 2021. The Bachelor passes achieved by learners in “no fee” schools, stand at **one hundred and sixty three thousand, nine hundred and three (169 903)** – an **increase of 13.4%** from 2021.

The poignancy of this increase lies in what research tells us, that in 2005, **sixty percent (60%)** of the Bachelor passes, came from the best performing **twenty percent (20%)** of the schooling system. However, with the **introduction of Government’s “pro-poor” policies in the education system, in 2015**, “no fee” schools, produced **51%** of the Bachelor passes, which increased to **58%** in 2020, a further increase to **62%** in 2021, and another increase to **64%** during the 2022 NSC examinations.

Programme Director, Ladies and Gentlemen, the significance of this enormous and unequalled achievement, is that the gap between the Bachelor passes produced by “no fee” schools versus those produced by fee paying schools has significantly and progressively

increased from **2%** in 2015, to **16%** in 2020, to **24%** in 2021 and **25%** in 2022. This is indeed remarkable; hence His Excellency, President Ramaphosa calls it the “***silent revolution***”!!

We are the first to concede that, whilst from 2015 to date, greater ***equity*** and ***redress*** imperatives have been systematically addressed, inequalities still remain in the system. Government must however, be applauded for its “pro-poor” policies, which in the Basic Education arena, alleviate poverty through the “pro-poor” funding of ordinary public schools; the provision of nutritious meals and scholar transport to deserving learners on a daily basis.

These interventions, which are called the “*social wage*” by the Stats SA, have definitely improved ***access*** and ***retention*** of learners in schools; thus simultaneously, improving ***redress***, ***equity*** and ***inclusivity***, and to a lesser extent, ***efficiency*** of the system. ***Quality*** is a social justice principle that was also enhanced by high numbers of quality passes with Bachelor, Diploma and distinctions.

### **Internal efficiency of the Basic Education system**

Programme Director, Ladies and Gentlemen, in October 2013, two years after the Class of 2022 had entered formal schooling in Grade 1 in 2011, the DBE published a report, entitled “*The Internal Efficiency of the School System – A Report of Selected Aspects of Access to Education, Grade Repetition and Learner Performance*”, which aptly explains the concept of “***internal efficiency***”, by amongst others, exposing the causes and effects of internal system inefficiencies to the quality of the Basic Education system versus the resourcing of the system.

We have calculated the internal efficiencies of the Basic Education system, using the tracking data of the Class of 2022, and included the resulting ratios in the comprehensive version of this Speech, which we posted in the DBE website. Traditionally, the standard is that, an ***internal efficiency value equal to one (1)***, ***signals the most internally efficient education system***. Therefore, any internal efficiency value that is ***much lower or much higher than one (1)***, signal ***internal system inefficiencies*** of varied proportions.

We can report that the calculated internal efficiencies for primary schooling, using the tracking data of the Class of 2022, confirm **universal access** into our Basic Education system, as the calculated **internal efficiency values are between 0.91 and 0.98**. The most undesirable internal efficiency value calculated, is that for Grades 10 and 9 – of **one point two** (1.2), which is attributable to high **failure rates**, or “**culling**”, or what the DBE report calls the “**queuing phenomenon**”, resulting in a high **repetition rate** in Grade 10.

The calculated internal efficiencies for the FET Band, do not raise alarm bells for the system; as the values are between **0.86** and **0.81** for Grades 11 and 10, as well as Grades 12 and 11, respectively. We should recall that prior to 1994, the throughput ratios between Grades were much low. For a number of years after 1994, the throughputs ratios resulted in the numbers of Grade 12 learners increasing to an average of **five** (500) **hundred thousand**, from inputs of **more than 1 million** learners who were in Grade 1, twelve (12) years earlier.

In the recent past, the numbers of learners reaching Grade 12, have been increasing progressively. It is therefore, not coincidental that **seven hundred and seventy five** (775) **thousand** of the cohort of learners from the Class of 2022 reached Grade 12, from about **one point one eight** (1.18) **million** learners, who entered formal schooling in 2011. More impressive, is the fact that **96%** of these learners, wrote the 2022 NSC examinations.

We, therefore, can confidently conclude that, over the years, we are incrementally improving **learner retention** in the system. It is therefore, no wonder that the internal efficiency for the Class of 2022 has improved – a signal that the Basic Education system is incrementally addressing the concerns related to **dropout** and **repetition rates**, amplified in the **National Development Plan, Vision 2030**.

### **Candidates who are recipients of social grants**

Programme Director, Ladies and Gentlemen, we must indicate that we had young people who are recipients of social grants, who wrote the 2022 NSC exams. In summary, **five hundred and ninety six**

**thousand, two hundred and thirty six** (596 236) social grant recipients, wrote the 2022 NSC exams – an **increase of four in ten** (0.4%) social grant recipients from 2021

There were **one hundred and thirty eight thousand, three hundred and seventy five** (138 375) **active social grant recipients**, who received social grants at the time they sat for the 2022 NSC exams; and **four hundred and fifty seven thousand, seven hundred and forty** (457 740) **inactive social grant recipients**, who did not receive social grants when they wrote the same exams.

**Four hundred and forty seven thousand, five hundred and forty three** (447 543) social grant recipients, passed the 2022 NSC exams – an **improvement of 9.0%** from 2021. This is equivalent to **71.4%** passes. **One hundred and ninety seven thousand, three hundred and eighty eight** (197 388) social grant recipients, obtained Bachelor passes – an **improvement of 11.2%** from 2021.

**One hundred and fifty seven thousand, four hundred and thirty seven** (157 437), obtained Diploma passes – an **improvement of 9.2%** from 2021; **ninety two thousand, five hundred and fifty two** (92 552), obtained passes with Higher Certificate – an **improvement of 4.3%** from 2021; and **fifty eight** (58), obtained NSC passes. **Thirty nine thousand, seven hundred and twenty four** (39 724) social grant recipients passed with distinctions, including distinctions in critical subjects such as Accounting, Business Studies, Economics, Mathematics, and Physical Science,

### **Candidates in correctional facilities who sat for the 2022 NSC exams**

Equally impressive, we had **one hundred and seventy one** (171) young people in correctional facilities, who wrote the 2022 NSC exams as full-time candidates; and **one hundred and two** (102), who wrote the same exams as part-time candidates. **One hundred and sixty four** (164) full-time candidates, and **thirty eight** (38) part-time candidates, passed the 2022 NSC exams.

**One hundred and five** (105) of the full-time candidates, and **seventeen** (17) of the part-time candidates, obtained Bachelor

passes; **forty three** (43) of the full-time candidates, and **thirteen** (13) of the part-time candidates, obtained Diploma passes; and **sixteen** (16) of the full-time candidates, as well as **eight** (8) part-time candidates, obtained Higher Certificate passes.

Therefore, **95.9%** of the full-time candidates, and **37.3%** part-time candidates in correctional facilities, who wrote the 2022 NSC exams, passed. **One hundred and forty two** (142) young people in correctional facilities passed with distinctions.

These are the young people, who unfortunately found themselves on the wrong side of the law, who in their future lives, could be judges – the same profession that gave them jail sentences, doctors, and other critical professionals needed by our country. Honourable Ministers Lindiwe Zulu and Ronald Lamola will surely speak about the impact of **social grants** and **restorative justice** on the beneficiaries of these progressive programmes, who were part of the Class of 2022. What a great story to tell!!

### **Aggregation according to gender**

There were **ninety two thousand, nine hundred and fifty one** (92 951) more girls than boys, who enrolled for the 2022 NSC examinations – improvement of **20.3%** from 2021; and there were **eighty nine thousand, three hundred and thirty four** (89 334) – an improvement of **20.3%** from 2021 more girls than boys, who actually wrote the 2022 NSC examinations.

Overall, there were **three hundred and twenty six thousand, eight hundred and ninety four** (326 894) girls – an improvement of **10%** from 2021; and **two hundred and fifty three thousand, six hundred and sixty one** (253 661) boys – an improvement of **5.4%** from 2021, who passed the 2022 NSC examinations. When translated into percentages, this represents **80.2%** girls, and **79.8%** boys, who passed the 2022 NSC examinations.

There were **one hundred and sixty one thousand, two hundred and thirty five** (161 235) female candidates, who obtained Bachelor passes – an improvement of **10.3%** from 2021; while **one hundred and seventeen thousand, five hundred and seventy nine** (117

579) male candidates, who obtained Bachelor passes – an improvement of **7.0%** from 2021.

Some **one hundred and four thousand, six hundred and ninety nine** (104 699) female candidates – an improvement of **11.5%** from 2021, obtained Diploma passes; while **eighty eight thousand, six hundred and fifty eight** (88 658) male candidates, obtained Diploma passes – an improvement of **5.9%** from 2021.

**Sixty thousand, eight hundred and ninety eight** (60 898 ) female candidates, obtained Higher Certificate passes – an improvement of **6.7%** from 2021; while **forty seven thousand, two hundred and sixty one** (47 261) male candidates, obtained Higher Certificate passes – an improvement of **1%** from 2021. **Twenty nine** (29) female candidates, obtained NSC passes – an improvement of **28%** from 2021; while **eighty eight** (88) male candidates, obtained NSC passes – an improvement of **7.2%** from 2021.

Therefore, there were **fifty nine thousand, six hundred and ninety seven** (59 697) more female candidates, who achieved Bachelor and Diploma passes, than their male counterparts, who are eligible for studies at higher education institutions – an improvement of **64.5%** from 2021.

**65%** of the **two hundred and nineteen thousand, five hundred and ninety seven** (219 597) distinctions, were attained by female candidates, including passes with distinction in critical subjects such as Accounting, Business Studies, Economics, Mathematics, and Physical Science. This means that we are systematically addressing all imperatives related to the social justice principles, especially **equity** and **redress**.

Programme Director, Ladies and Gentlemen, the account we have given in the four categories of progressed learners, learners with special education needs, Government’s “pro poor” policies, and the aggregation by gender, clearly shows that we are systematically and successfully addressing the cardinal social justice principles of **access, equity, redress, equity, inclusivity, efficiency** and **quality** within Basic Education system.

## Overall national performance

This brings us to the overall results of the 2022 NSC examinations. Programme Director, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is important to remind the nation that for the **past ten years**, the NSC pass rate has consistently been going up from **60%** in 2009 to above **70%** pass rates in recent years. The Matric Class of 2022 must be commended for maintaining this trend despite the astronomical challenges they faced – challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, ESKOM's loadshedding, and the sporadic service delivery protests.

**The 2022 NSC overall pass rate has reached the 80.1%**, (compared with 76.4% in 2021) – an improvement of **3.7%** from the pass rate achieved by the Class of 2021. This, represents a record of **five hundred and eighty thousand, five hundred and fifty five** (580 555) candidates, who passed the 2022 NSC examinations – an improvement of **7.9%** passes by number, achieved by the Class of 2021.

It should be noted that, while **the pass rate in number** of the Class of 2022 **is the highest** in the history of the National Senior Certificate examinations, when **the pass rate is expressed as a percentage**, that of the Class of 2019, which attained **81.3% pass rate, stands out as the highest** so far.

Further analysis of the 2022 NSC exam results, show that –

- The number of candidates qualifying for admission to Bachelor studies at universities, is **two hundred and seventy eight thousand, eight hundred and fourteen** (278 814) – an improvement of **8.9%** from 2021. This represents **38.4%** of the total number of candidates, who wrote the 2022 NSC examinations. By the way, the 2022 Bachelor passes in number, are the highest attained in the entire history of the NSC examinations; but the second highest to that attained in 2021, when expressed as a percentage.
- We must state that KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng contributed the most Bachelor passes, with **sixty nine thousand, eight hundred and forty nine** (69 849) – an increase of **12.9%** from 2021; and **fifty eight thousand, one hundred and nineteen**

(58 119) – an increase of **4.1%** from 2021, respectively. When combined, KZN and Gauteng contributed **one hundred and twenty seven thousand, nine hundred and sixty eight** (127 968) Bachelor passes – an improvement of **8.7%** from 2021, and **45.9%** of the overall Bachelor passes nationally.

- The number of candidates, who passed with a Diploma, is **one hundred and ninety three thousand, three hundred and fifty seven** (193 357) – an improvement of **8.9%** from 2021; which represents **26.7%** of the total number of candidates, who wrote the 2022 NSC examinations.
- The number of candidates, who passed with Higher Certificates is **one hundred and eight thousand, one hundred and fifty nine** (108 159) – an improvement of **4.1%** from 2021; and represents **14.9%** of the total number of candidates, who wrote the 2022 NSC combined examinations.
- The number of candidates, who passed with a National Senior Certificate (NSC) is **one hundred and seventeen** (117) – an improvement **13.6%** from 2021; which represents **one in a hundred** (0.01%) of total number of candidates, who wrote the 2021 NSC examinations.
- In a nutshell –
  - of the **one hundred and ninety eight thousand, and thirty four** (198 034) candidates from **fee-paying schools**, who enrolled for the 2022 NSC examinations, **one hundred and seventy thousand, and eighty** (170 080) of them passed the examinations. This represents an **85.9% pass rate**;
  - of the **five hundred and one thousand, seven hundred and fifty eight** (501 758) candidates from “**no fee**” schools, who enrolled for the 2022 NSC examinations, **three hundred and eighty seven thousand, four hundred and one** (387 401) of them passed the exams. This represents **77.2% pass rate**; and
  - of the **twenty four thousand, two hundred and thirty five** (24 235) candidates from **independent schools**, who wrote

the DBE managed 2022 NSC exams, **twenty two thousand, one hundred and sixty four** (22 164) of them passed the examinations. This represents **91.5% pass rate**. We wish to congratulate the independent schools that wrote the DBE-coordinated NSC exams, as well as those that wrote the NSC examinations under the IEB and SACAI.

It is important to note that a total of **four hundred and seventy two thousand, one hundred and seventy one** (472 171) candidates – which is equivalent to **65.1%**, who achieved Bachelor and Diploma passes, are now eligible for studies at higher education institutions. The **one hundred and eight thousand, one hundred and fifty nine** (108 159) candidates – which is equivalent to **14.9%**, who obtained Higher Certificate passes, may register at TVET Colleges and other skills training institutions.

It is noteworthy that between 2008 and 2022, the Basic Education system has produced a total of about **two point four eight** (2.48) **million** Bachelor passes. In order for us to meet the skills demands projected by the NDP, as a country, it may be necessary to track the whereabouts of these young people, and check on their current skills and employability profiles.

In 2022, a total of **two hundred and eighteen thousand, seven hundred and thirty** (218 730) distinctions were achieved – an increase of **3.3%** from 2021. The main contributors towards passes with distinctions, were KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Limpopo and Mpumalanga. Combined, the contribution of the **six** (6) provinces towards passes with distinction, is **two hundred thousand, three hundred and thirty five** (200 335) distinctions – which is equivalent to **91.6%**..

It is remarkable to note that the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo – the **three most rural provinces in the country**, produced a combined total of **one hundred and thirty seven thousand, seven hundred and one** (137 701) Bachelor passes, which is equivalent to **63.0%** of the total Bachelor passes; and an improvement of **13.5%** from the 2021 total Bachelor passes. In addition, these three most rural provinces, produced **one hundred and seventeen thousand, four hundred and fifty one** (117 451)

passes with distinction, which is equivalent to **53.7%** of the total passes with distinction; – an improvement of **13.1%** from the 2021.

It is also noteworthy that the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo were also able to produce a combined total **ninety five thousand, three hundred and ninety three** (95 393) Diploma passes; which is equivalent to **49.3%** of the total Diploma passes nationally; and an improvement of **8.3%** from the 2021 total passes with Diploma. Therefore, this kind of consistent and improved performance by our three most rural provinces, dispels the myth that quality education, is a character of urban provinces. The performance of these three rural provinces during the 2022 NSC exams, confirms the outcomes of the longitudinal study conducted in Chile, that with the proper inputs, support as well as focused monitoring and evaluation oversight, the “**equality and equity of access, outputs, and outcomes**” for all learners in a country, irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds and their geographical locations, are achievable.

### **Provincial level performance**

The achievements by province, are as follows –

- The Free State is the leading province at **88.5%**, an increase of **2.8%** from 2021.
- Gauteng achieved at **84.4%**, an increase of **1.6%** from 2021.
- KwaZulu-Natal, the best improved province, achieved **83.0%**, an increase of **6.2%** from 2021.
- Western Cape achieved **81.4%**, an increase of **0.2%** from 2021.
- North West achieved at **79.8%**, an increase of **1.6%** from 2021.
- The third best improved province, is the Eastern Cape, with an achievement of **77.3%**, an increase of **4.2%** from 2021.
- Mpumalanga achieved at **76.8%**, a **2.9%** increase from 2021.
- Northern Cape achieved at **74.2%**, a **2.7%** increase from 2021.

- The second best improved province, is Limpopo, with an achievement of **72.1%**, a **5.3%** increase from 2021.

Programme Director, we should state that **none** of the provinces performed below the **70% pass rate**; and **none** had a decline when their 2022 results are compared with those of the previous year. **Five** provinces performed above the **70% pass rate**; and **four** provinces performed above the **80% pass rate**. The provinces with the highest improvements in their performances are **KwaZulu-Natal with 6.2%; Limpopo with 5.3%; and the Eastern Cape with 4.2%**. Again, the great work done in these three most rural provinces, must be applauded!!!

### District level performance

The NDP recognises *districts as a crucial interface of the Basic Education Sector in identifying best practice, sharing information, and providing support to schools*. The continued growth in the performance of districts, is closely monitored and evaluated by both the provincial and national Basic Education departments. From the monitoring oversight, analyses of the performance of all schools, be they fee-paying, “no fee” or Government-subsidised independent schools, whose learners write the NSC examinations, special schools, and schools of skills, will be done and made available to districts. This will assist and enable districts to reprioritise their support and intervention programmes.

In the 2022 NSC examinations –

- **None** of the 75 districts attained pass rates **lower than 60%**;
- **Four** (4) districts – **three** (3) in Limpopo, and **one** (1) in the Northern Cape, performed at **60% and 69.9%**;
- **Twenty nine** (29) districts – **nine** (9) in Eastern Cape, **one** (1) in KwaZulu-Natl, **seven** (7) in Limpopo, **four** (4) in Mpumalanga, **two** (2) in the North West, **two** (2) in the Northern Cape, and **four** (4) in the Western Cape, performed between **70% and 79%**; and
- **Forty two** (42) districts – **three** (3) in the Eastern Cape, **five** (5) in the Free State, **fifteen** in Gauteng, **eleven** (11) in KwaZulu-

Natal, **two** (2) in the North West, **two** (2) in the Northern Cape, and **four** (4) in the Western Cape, performed at **80% and above**.

The **top ten** (10) district level performances in the country in the descending order, are –

- **First**, is Motheo in the Free State, with **90.8%**.
- **Second**, is Fezile Dabi in the Free State, with **90.4%**.
- **Third**, is Johannesburg West in Gauteng, with **89.7%**.
- **Fourth**, is Tshwane South in Gauteng, with **89.0**.
- **Fifth**, is Gauteng North in Gauteng, with **87.7%**.
- **Sixth**, is Xhariep in the Free State, with **87.5%**.
- **Seventh**, is Thabo Mafutsanyana in the Free State, with **87.3%**.
- **Eighth**, is Ugu in KwaZulu-Natal, with **87.2%**.
- **Nineth**, is Umkhanyakude in KwaZulu-Natal, with **86.3%**.
- **Tenth**, is Johannesburg North in Gauteng, with **86.2%**.

It is important to observe that among the 75 education districts in our country, the **top ten** districts are in **three** (3) provinces. More impressively, **all of the top ten** districts, performed **above 86%**. Notably, out of the **top ten** districts in the country, **four** are from the Free State; another **four** are in Gauteng; and **two** are in KwaZulu-Natal.

The **top district level performances** in the respective provinces, are as follows –

- In the Eastern Cape, the leading district is Alfred Nzo West at **82.7%**; and is ranked **29<sup>th</sup>** nationally. Siyabulela tat' uMbangeni.
- In the Free State, the leading district is Motheo at **90.8%**; and is ranked **1<sup>st</sup>** nationally. Ntate Moloi, kea leboga.
- In Gauteng, Johannesburg West is the leading district at **89.7%**; and is also ranked **3<sup>rd</sup>** nationally. Mr Ramokhoase, thank you.

- Ugu, is the leading district in KwaZulu-Natal, with **87.2%**; and is ranked **8<sup>th</sup>** nationally. Bab' uSibiya, Siyabonga.
- Mogalakwena is the leading district in Limpopo at **78.3%**; and is ranked **50<sup>th</sup>** nationally. Rre Mangala, re ya leboha.
- Bohlabele is the leading district in Mpumalanga, with **79.3%**; and is ranked **45<sup>th</sup>** nationally. Mame uGoba, Siyabonga.
- Bojanala Platinum, is the leading district in the North West, with **81.4%**; and is ranked **37<sup>th</sup>** nationally. Mme Paledi, thank you;
- ZF Mgcwawu, is the leading district in the Northern Cape, with **83.8%**; and is ranked **21<sup>st</sup>** nationally. Mr March, many thanks.
- In the Western Cape, the Metro North, is the leading district, with **85.9%**; and is ranked **11<sup>th</sup>** nationally. Ms Horn, congratulations.

Programme Director, Ladies and Gentlemen, we must observe that there are districts that are not performing optimally. We urge our Provincial Education Departments to pay a particular attention to these districts, and assist them to the extent necessary. The fact that none of our districts are performing below 60%, is a clear indication that all our districts, with an extra nudge, support and intervention, can cross the Rubicon, and perform above 70%. I am looking forward to our next district meeting sessions, where we share experiences and best practices.

## Conclusion

Programme Director, Ladies and Gentlemen in conclusion, there is no doubt that the Basic Education system has begun to reach the desired stability; which is healthy for a large and important system as ours. The unquestionable resilience our school community has shown, against such a devastating pandemic; and other challenges, such as the persistent loadshedding, and sporadic service delivery protests, cannot go by unnoticed.

Clearly, the system cannot survive without the direct involvement of all communities of trust, not only those who are part of the Sector, but everyone. The Class of 2022 has clearly demonstrated that with all requisite support and intervention programmes, we can make it.

We must prioritise our interventions on teaching and learning losses. Support and intervention programmes must be implemented across the system. ECD is with us now; therefore, the foundations of learning must be strengthened from ECD, right through the system. With our concerted efforts, we can make and reach new performance heights in national, continental and international assessment studies.

Steadily but surely, we are improving the throughput as well as the retention rates within our system. The fact that we have broken what appeared to be a glass ceiling around five (500) thousand learners proceeding to Grade 12 over the years, is a clear sign of a maturing system on the rise. More than seven hundred and seventy five (775) thousand of the Class of 2022, survived through the system, and 96% of the Class of 2022, actually sat for the 2022 NSC exams.

An analysis of the internal system efficiency also demonstrates that we are not only improving the retention rates, by reducing dropout and repetition rates; but we are improving the quality and equality of teaching and learning outcomes. The performance of the three most rural provinces in the country, cannot go by unnoticed. We wish to congratulate the executive and management leaders, the teachers, the parents, the learners and other communities of trust who have made the improvements in our three most rural provinces possible.

We wish to recognise the confidence our communities have in our public education system. The fact that we had more than nine hundred and twenty (920) thousand full-time and part-time candidates, enrolling for the 2022 NSC exams; and the fact that we witnessed the number of candidates from Government subsidised independent schools, writing the DBE-managed NSC exams, shows the confidence communities have in our systems. We cannot let these communities down; we must repay them with good and quality teaching and learning outcomes. If we continue to do so, everyone will progressively be convinced that the public education system, is efficient and qualitative. We surely have a good story to tell, and many South Africans are beginning to want to listen to our story.

The high quality passes we have achieved this year, especially the record number of Bachelor and Diploma passes, as well as passes

with distinction; the fact that none of our provinces are performing at pass rates lower than seventy percent (70%); the fact that none of our districts are performing below sixty percent (60%); the fact that our “no fee” schools have contributed sixty four percent (64%) of our Bachelor passes; the fact that the majority of our schools are performing at and above eighty percent (80%), are an indisputable testament that ours, is indeed a system on the rise.

With the undivided focus on foundations of learning, with the support and intervention programmes rolled-out in our schools, with the teacher development programmes delivered to all our teachers, with strengthened and structured monitoring and evaluation oversight, we will surely turn the learning losses unceremoniously brought to us by the pandemic, the incessant loadshedding, and the service delivery protests, into fortunes that we can all be proud of.

Programme Director, Ladies and Gentlemen, as a Sector, we must continue to expend our energies on our Sector priorities. We must continue with the *consolidation of programmes for ECD; we must ramp-up the performance in all the four Phases of our schooling system; we must continue to improve the reading proficiency and numeracy of our learners; we must work harder but smarter with all our partners to consolidate the gains we have made in the Skills Revolution through the Three-Stream Curriculum Model and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, amongst others; we must continue to strengthen the assessment regime in all four Phases of the system; we must do whatever it takes to sustain the labour peace we have enjoyed for such a period of time.*

In celebrating the great achievements of the Class of 2022, we must thank the principals, teachers, support staff, and parents for the work they continue to do. Schools are at the coalface of Basic Education delivery. What you do at the school level, is what matters the most. The future of our learners, and the prosperity of our nation, is in your hands. We applaud you for the great work you continue to do on a daily basis.

I must thank His Excellency, President Cyril Ramaphosa and Cabinet; the Portfolio and Select Committees responsible for Basic Education; my partner in crime, the Honourable Deputy Minister – Dr

Reginah Mhaule; the Honourable MECs responsible for Basic Education and their respective Heads of Departments for their stewardship, their leadership and their continued advice and support. I must thank the Director-General and his team of selfless officials for the hard work they continue to do.

Lastly, but certainly not the least, I wish to thank our strategic partners – teacher unions; school governing body associations; our business partners working directly with us or through the NECT; the NECT; our statutory bodies – Umalusi and SACE; researchers, whose work we cannot do without; our sister departments; South Africans, who together with us, have made the stability and the improvement of our Sector their responsibility. We also single out and thank MTN for sponsoring this event. Let me thank our partners from the private sector, who have contributed meaningfully for the success of this event.

Once again, let me conclude by thanking the Class of 2022 in all our ordinary public schools, and in all our independent schools. Your future is in the palm of your hands; make the correct life choices. Those candidates who sat for the 2022 NSC exams, and earlier exams, who did not do well, do not despair. There are lots of life chances available. For instance, those who wish to improve their results, should consider enrolling for the Second Chance Matric Programme. Registration into the Programme is already open; and will close on 08 February 2023. You will definitely receive support from the DBE and our partners; you won't be left to your vices. I wish you all the best in your youthful lives!!

Programme Director, Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to end by saying, the Governing Party was correct in declaring education a societal matter. All hands must be on deck!!!

I thank you