

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 5375.**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 19/09/2025**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 39/2025**

**5375. Mr M A Maimane (BOSA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

Whether her department keeps records on the distribution of distinctions in (a) Mathematics, (b) Physical Science, (c) Economics and (d) Accounting across schools nationally; if not, why not; if so, what (i) total number of schools account for 90% of all distinctions in each specified subject achieved in the most recent Matric examinations and (ii) proportion of schools account for the remaining 10% of distinctions in each subject?

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#### Response

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has advised that it analysed the 2024 National Senior Certificate (NSC) data to provide the statistics detailed below. A total of 6933 schools appeared in the data, although it should be noted that not all schools offer each of these four subjects. The percentages calculated here are relative to the schools that offer the subject.

#### (a)(b)(c)(d) Distribution of Distinctions

<b>Subject</b>	<b>No. of schools offering the Subject</b>	<b>% Distinctions</b>	<b>No. of schools contributing to the Distinctions</b>
Mathematics	6447	3.88	2763
Physical Science	6071	2.80	2023
Economics	3944	3.33	1745
Accounting	4307	6.36	1847

#### (i) Schools Contributing to 90% of the Distinctions

<b>Subject</b>	<b>No of schools Offering the Subject</b>	<b>No of Distinctions</b>	<b>No. of schools contributing to 90% of the Distinctions</b>	<b>% of schools contributing to 90% of the distinctions</b>
Mathematics	6451	9720	1787	28
Physical Science	6074	5659	1455	24
Economics	3945	4046	1339	34
Accounting	4307	6195	1225	28

#### (ii) Schools Contributing to 90% of the Distinctions

## NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

### WRITTEN REPLY

#### QUESTION 5375.

Subject	No. of schools offering the Subject	No. of schools not offering the subject	No. of Schools offering subject but without any distinctions	No. of schools contributing to 10% of the Distinctions	% of schools contributing to 10% of the distinctions
Mathematics	6451	482	3689	975	15
Physical Science	6074	859	4052	567	9
Economics	3945	2988	2201	405	10
Accounting	4307	2622	2465	621	14

#### **The above Tabular Data Expressed in Narrative Format**

A total of 1787 schools, which is 28% of schools offering Mathematics, account for 90% of all 9720 Mathematics distinctions. A further 975 schools, which is 15% of schools offering Mathematics, contributed the remaining 10%, meaning that 3689 schools offered the subject but did not achieve any Mathematics distinctions, and 482 schools did not offer Mathematics.

The fact that a small share of schools contributes 90% of distinctions partly reflects inequalities in school performance but also partly reflects the disproportionate contribution of larger schools. The average number of candidates amongst schools contributing 90% of Mathematics distinctions is 165 whereas the average number of candidates in the remainder of schools is 84. So, school size is driving these statistics at least to some extent.

A total of 1455 schools, which is 24% of schools offering Physical Science, account for 90% of all 5659 Physical Science distinctions. A further 567 schools, which is 9% of schools offering Physical Science, contributed the remaining 10%, meaning that 4052 schools offered the subject but did not achieve any Physical Science distinctions, and 859 schools did not offer Physical Science.

A total of 1339 schools, which is 34% of schools offering Economics, account for 90% of all 4046 Economics distinctions. A further 405 schools, which is 10% of schools offering Economics, contributed the remaining 10%, meaning that 2201 schools

## **NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

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offered the subject but did not achieve any Economics distinctions, and 2988 schools did not offer Economics.

A total of 1225 schools, which is 28% of schools offering Accounting, account for 90% of all 6195 accounting distinctions. A further 621 schools, which is 14% of schools offering Accounting, contributed the remaining 10%, meaning that 2465 schools offered the subject but did not achieve any Accounting distinctions, and 2622 schools did not offer Accounting.

These statistics, amongst others, highlight the urgent need to improve foundational literacy and numeracy to ensure that our schooling system produces learners who are confident and capable enough to choose and excel in Mathematics, Physical Science, Economics and Accounting throughout their schooling career. This is why the Minister of Basic Education is leading a strategic reorientation of the basic education sector towards improving the quality of foundational learning.

While distinctions in the abovementioned subjects remain concentrated in a relatively small proportion of schools, the DBE remains committed to broadening excellence and equity in performance outcomes. Through strengthened teacher development, curriculum support and targeted interventions in historically underperforming schools, especially in rural and township areas, as well as taking deliberate and urgent steps to improve the quality of foundational learning, the DBE seeks to ensure that more learners across all provinces have equitable access to high-quality teaching in Mathematics, Physical Science, Economics and Accounting.