



**basic education**

Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **Statement by the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga, MP, at a media briefing on the state of readiness for National Senior Certificate Examinations for Class of 2022**

**30 October 2022**

Good Morning. We thank you for attending this briefing today.

Let me acknowledge the Deputy Minister, Dr Reginah Mhaule, the Director-General Mr. Mathanzima Mveli and his team and all the members of the media.

This media briefing comes a day before the actual commencement of the National Senior Certificate Examinations. You will recall that two practical papers were written last week, Computer Applications Technology and Information Technology. Both papers went well despite the load-shedding uncertainties last week.

This year was challenging at first we saw the return to normalcy following two tumultuous years in which we battled COVID-19. For the first time since 2020 our learners went back to school without having to wear masks or observe social distancing. From last year we prepared for a return to full-time daily time-tabling as part of the recovery plan put in place to mitigate the impact of COVID on the schooling system.

We have had to confront the challenge of over-crowding in schools which saw some not able to immediately return to daily time-tabling. We have developed a special programme to address this issue as a matter of urgency. We are working with the Minister of Finance to explore options on how to accelerate the solution.

## **The Value of the Matric Certificate: International Bench-marking**

On the 23 September Umalusi launched the most recent research report titled “International Benchmarking of the National Senior Certificate (NSC)”

The launch was attended by almost 120 delegates from almost all South African universities, officials from private higher education institutions, the three bodies that are responsible for assessing the NSC: Independent Examinations Board (IEB), South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute (SACAI) and of course DBE.

Umalusi commissioned out the study to Ecctis, formerly known as the UK NARIC. Ecctis is an internationally trusted and respected reference point for qualifications and skills standards. For that reason, the research was conducted by “a goldstandard provider of solutions and services in international education, training, and skills, and in the development and recognition of globally portable qualifications.

In the study Umalusi benchmarked the NSC against five qualifications and/or programmes: (a) the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB DP), (b) the Kenyan Certificate of Secondary Education, (c) the New South Wales (NSW) Higher School Certificate (HSC), (d) the Zimbabwean Forms 5-6 advanced level, and (e) the Cambridge Assessment International Education AS & A Levels.

The benchmarking took into account curriculum design, assessment frameworks and approaches, content, learning outcomes, knowledge and skills. The findings and recommendations were presented by Dr Thomas Colville and Ms Abigail Jones, both of whom are senior officials from Ecctis.

The overarching findings are that the NSC has demonstrable lines of comparability with upper secondary qualifications in each of the benchmark systems.

The NSC is an effectively designed upper-secondary education qualification which aims to develop higher-order thinking skills and desirable and future-focussed outcomes for students, which should prepare them for higher/further education and the world of work.

Overall, the report makes the argument that the NSC provides its holders with an internationally comparable level of education.

Ladies and gentlemen it is pleasing that the study found a greater degree of alignment between the NSC and the other qualifications in terms of design, intended curriculum and assessment methods. As a sector we welcome the report as it confirms what we have been saying that credible research studies show that our system is definitely on the rise.

### **On the State of readiness of NSC Exams**

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) and provincial education departments (PEDs) are currently preparing for the administration of the November 2022 National Senior Certificate Examinations. Grade 12 learners will be sitting for the NSC Examinations from 31 October 2022 to 07 December 2022 in all nine provinces.

There has been a gradual increase in the number of full-time enrolments in 2022, as compared to the previous years. Dr Rufus Poliah will give details in a short while regarding the technical aspects of the examinations.

What I can say however is that we have gone to great lengths to ensure that the examinations happen with no irregularities. The DBE has stepped up its security across all points in the question paper chain, based on a continuous review of all examination processes.

In addition, all learners sitting for the NSC examinations and their parents have signed 'Commitment Agreement' to maintain honesty and not to participate in irregularities during the writing of examination. The Commitment Agreement binds the learners and parents to follow the rules relating to the examination.

In line with this agreement, learners and parents are obliged to make any irregularity related information immediately available to the school principal or the DBE hotline. They are also expected to surrender cell phones and any other related device if there is an allegation of involvement in an act of dishonesty. Learners are briefed on all the rules and regulations pertaining to the examinations and on the consequences, should they be implicated in irregularities.

The DBE continues to liaise closely with Eskom, the security cluster, PEDs and other relevant stakeholders to manage the risks posed by load-shedding and other security related matters.

The DBE can confidently state that it is fully prepared to administer the November 2022 examinations based on the principles of fairness, reliability, validity and integrity.

The Deputy Minister, Dr Reginah Mhaule; the Director-General, Mathanzima Mveli and myself supported by managers in the Department have been traversing the country to monitor schools. It is clear, based on our findings, that we have a huge challenge in our hands.

In recent weeks we have had to deal with reported cases where some schools denied learners the right to sit for the NSC exams because they are pregnant.

The National Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy states expressly that barring a learner from school on the grounds of pregnancy is discriminatory. In terms of the Policy, schools are required to take all necessary steps to reasonably accommodate the learner to facilitate her continuing education.

A learner who is pregnant shall be allowed to sit for national examinations if her health condition permits. The school principal and

staff in collaboration with parents/guardians shall take all reasonable steps to accommodate the learner's learning, health and maternal needs during the examination period.

This policy came into effect as from January 2022 and we expect all our school communities to comply with and implement it accordingly.

## **Conclusion**

I want to make a special appeal to all of us to rally behind the Matric Class of 2022. I want to thank the Deputy Minister and all my colleagues, the MECs, in all the provinces for the work done this year to keep schools open with teaching and learning continuing. We are still implementing the curriculum recovery programme following the impact of COVID-19 on schooling.

I will now ask Dr Poliah to come forward and make a presentation regarding the state of readiness of the NSC exam for 2022.

I thank you