Basic Education briefs Portfolio Committee on state of readiness for Final 2019 NSC Examinations

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Basic Education Department briefs Portfolio Committee on the state of readiness for the Final NSC Examinations

The Department of Basic Education has this morning briefed Parliament on the state of readiness to administer the 2019 Final National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examinations.

A total of 790 405 candidates will commence their final NSC Exams from 15 October to 28 November across 7416 examination centers nationwide. A further 212 learners entered will write from correctional facilities.

Basic Education Director General, Mr Mathanzima Mweli told members of the portfolio committee that the Department, together with Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) continue to ensure that the Class of 2019 is supported in all areas that warrant attention.

“The National Senior Certificate signifies the culmination of twelve years of teaching and learning. It is the central indicator of the performance of the schooling system and serves a number of purposes, which include entry into institutions of Higher Education, preparation of learners for the world of work and the development learners for citizenry,” says Mr Mweli.

The DG said that DBE was confident that the examination systems were ready to administer a successful NSC examination.

”Every learner must be afforded the best possible opportunity to achieve a National Senior Certificate. In addition, this is the second year that learners will write the South African Sign Language,” said DG Mweli.

Appropriate measures have been put in place in the likelihood that community protests cause disruption that lead to exams not being written due to candidates not being able to access exam venues. The DBE has engaged security and law enforcement aagencies to be on standby for any eventuality that might require their intervention.

**Monitoring and Support for Candidates**

DG Mweli also informed members of the portfolio committee that the department had employed several strategies to ensure the optimal preparedness of learners to sit for their examination.

“As part of ongoing monitoring and support for learners, teachers and officials, the DBE, including the Minister and Deputy Minister visited vacation, winter and spring schools. The Director-General visited 112 winter schools whilst DBE subject specialists monitored 135 winter schools across 9 provinces. In total, the DBE visited 247 winter schools in all provinces,” said the DG.

Vacation schools target progressed learners, learners at risk, moderate and high achievers, learners from under-performing schools, serial under-performing schools, schools with new Grade 12 teachers and first time new grade 12 schools.

Academic learner support in South African schools is not a new phenomenon, it comprises a broad collection of educational strategies, including extra tutoring sessions, supplementary material, vacation classes, after-school programmes, teacher training, volunteer teachers such as university students, as well as alternative (differentiated) ways of grouping, and instructing learners.

Previous Question papers and additional learning resources were provided to learners for revision and extra classes, which were offered in the afternoons, Saturdays and/or during winter holidays. Learners have access to the prescribed literature after hours by using the schools’ laptops and computers.

Provinces ensured that all the schools for the Deaf procured and received the necessary equipment for the South African Sign Language (SASL) HL. A total of 15 schools for the Deaf offer Grade 12 in 2019.

The following resources are available online, on our website ([www.education.gov.za/Informationfor/Learners.aspx](http://www.education.gov.za/Informationfor/Learners.aspx)) for learners and teachers:

* Previous question papers from November 2008 to June 2019.
* Mind the Gap Study Guides.
* Tips for Examination preparation.
* Frequently asked questions for examinations

**System Readiness**

The DBE as the public assessment body must ensure that the examinations are credible to ensure currency of the certificate.

In order to ensure that marks are captured accurately and capably processed in the allocated time prior to the system closure, all PEDs have adequate capturers in place and have planned appropriately to manage the capture in the limited time available. Moreover, all PEDs have the requisite staff capability to manage the processing and to ensure the accurate release of results. The DBE and Umalusi are conducting an audit of marker appointments.

The quality of marking has improved by the implementation of the tolerance range, marker authorisation and stringent control measures by senior markers, deputy chief markers, chief markers and internal moderators. This is a pyramidal structure of quality assurance.

Markers are trained using copies of “live scripts” to ensure consistency across marking of scripts. Training of all invigilators is conducted based on a national manual, and training is conducted by a competent provincial and district team. Invigilator training is in progress and being monitored.

Markers are appointed based on a strict criteria as stipulated in the Personnel Administration Measure (PAM), which provides guidance on how teachers, principals and markers should be appointed. The panel is constituted by the head of exams, while the Unions observe the process to ensure there is compliance to the criteria. Unions are not involved in appointment decisions.

PEDs have audited all their storage and nodal points. The DBE conducted a sample verification audit of storage and nodal points across all PEDS. Storage and nodal points are audited using a set of predetermined criteria and only storage points that complied largely to the security standards were endorsed for storage of question papers.

Enquiries:​