**BASIC EDUCATION COMMITTEE COMMENDS DEPARTMENT FOR GETTING MATRICS READY FOR EXAMS NEXT WEEK**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 27 October 2020**– The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education today expressed its gratitude and thanks for the commendable work done thus far to ensure that Grade 12 learners are ready for the upcoming National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination under the difficult circumstances of the Covid-19 regulations.

The NSC is due to commence on 5 November 2020 and run until 15 December 2020. Results are expected to be released on 23 February 2021.

Committee Chairperson Ms Bongiwe Mbinqo-Gigaba said a lot of work was done in the background to ensure Grade 12 are ready to sit for the final examinations. “We further note that 1 058 699 candidates have registered for the exams. This includes full-time and part-time candidates, as well as those candidates who were supposed to have written examinations in June this year, which were cancelled due to the outbreak of Covid-19. This is a mammoth task.”

Ms Mbinqo-Gigaba said the committee was assured by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi) that the class of 2020 covered the full spectrum of the curriculum. “This means that this class will be just as equipped to enter the world after school as any other Grade 12 before them.”

The committee has however raised concerns regarding the dwindling number of candidates registering for mathematics, opting instead for mathematical literacy. “It
looks like our learners are running away from this. However, it then becomes difficult when they want to register for certain programmes at institutions of higher learning,” said Ms Mbinqo-Gigaba. The DBE said in response that the introduction of technical mathematics and technical physical science has contributed to lower registration rates for pure mathematics.

The committee heard that most provincial education departments (PEDs) have employed additional markers and invigilators and acquired extra marking centres in an attempt to cope with the higher number of candidates sitting for the examinations.

Umalusi informed the meeting that it has evaluated the DBE’s and PEDs’ states of readiness. Umalusi was able to engage with the reports and evidence presented by the DBE and PEDs. “Extreme effort was made by the DBE and the PEDs in relation to the restrictions brought up by the Covid-19 outbreak. Acceptable levels of readiness and related measures in place to ensure conduct of credible examinations by the DBE and PEDs were noted and this is appreciated. Based on our observation and the reports on the state of readiness, Umalusi is satisfied that the DBE through the nine PEDs is ready to conduct the merged June and November 2020 examinations,” Umalusi assured the committee.

Ms Mbinqo-Gigaba said the committee will closely monitor the examinations. “We cannot but comment the DBE, PEDs and the education sector for the hard work they have done during extremely difficult times.”

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION, MS BONGIWE MBINQO-GIGABA.**