**MEDIA STATEMENT**  
   
**BASIC EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARS THAT CLASS OF 2020 COULD HAVE OUTPERFORMED PREDECESSORS HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR COVID-19**  
   
**Parliament, Tuesday, 2 March 2021 –**The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education today heard that despite the drop rate in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) pass rate for last year, the class of 2020 exceeded expectations.  
   
Committee Chairperson, Ms Bongiwe Mbinqo-Gigaba, said: “This is truly a case of quality in the mist of adversity.” Ms Mbinqo-Gigaba was referring to the disruptions, several times, during the 2020 academic year due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus.  
   
The committee today received a briefing from the Department of Basic Education (DBE) on the 2020 NSC examination outcomes.  
   
The committee also heard that all indications from the analyses by the DBE point to the fact that the Class of 2020 would have outperformed the Class of 2019 had it been a normal academic year. Analyses were done with the Grade 10 and Grade 11 results of both cohorts. The DBE told the meeting that the Class of 2020 will enter the annals of history as the class that displayed total resilience and utter determination to achieve.  
   
According to the presentation, the Grade 12 Class of 2020 outperformed its predecessor – the Class of 2019 – during their Grade 10 and Grade 11 years in subjects like home language, accounting, physical sciences, geography, history, tourism, life sciences, mathematical literacy, and mathematics.  
   
The DBE said it attempted to insulate the Grade 12 learners, and this has produced a very encouraging outcome. However, loss of teaching and learning cannot be fully recovered. A total of 1 054 321 candidates registered for the 2020 NSC examinations, making it the largest the country has ever undertaken. This comes as the Class of 2020 received an overall National Senior Certificate (NSC) pass rate of 76.2%, a drop of 5.1% from that of 2019.  The number of bachelor passes, which qualify entry into universities, were slightly down for the 2020 cohort at 36.4%, compared to the 2019 cohort of 36.9%.  
   
“We are grateful that the DBE, the provincial education departments, our learners and the sector as whole pulled through under difficult circumstances,” said Ms Mbinqo-Gigaba.  
   
**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION, MS BONGIWE MBINQO-GIGABA.**