**BASIC EDUCATION BRIEFS PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON THE STATE OF READINESS FOR NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS**

25 Oct 2022

Basic Education Department briefs Portfolio Committee on the state of readiness for National Senior Certificate Examinations

The Department of Basic Education has today briefed the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education regarding the state of readiness for the National Senior Certificate examinations.

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 in earnest for the NSC Examinations from 31 October 2022 to 07 December 2022 in all nine provinces. Today 48 049 candidates were due to sit for the Computer Applications Technology practical exams.

The Deputy Minister of Basic Education Dr. Reginah Mhaule led the delegation which outlined in detail the plans for the 2022 NSC examination from a learner readiness to system readiness. UMALUSI also made a presentation at the meeting.

The DBE told the Committee that there been a gradual increase in the number of full- time enrolments in 2022, as compared to the previous years. The number of full-time enrolments increased from 733 198 in 2021 to 755 981 in 2022. This is an increase of 22 783 candidates and this allays the concern that there would have been a significant dropout of learners post the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of part-time learners has also increased from 163 965 in 2021 to 167 479 in 2022.

A total of 193 question papers will be administered at 6 912 examination centres.

A total of 52 811 markers are appointed for the marking of the November 2022 NSC Examinations. This marks an increase of 11 215 markers, compared to 41 596 mark- ers in 2021. The increase in markers is in keeping with the increase in the learner enrolments.

DBE Director-General Mathanzima Mweli said that despite the best efforts of the De- partment of Basic Education, “we are nonetheless aware of the negative impact of load shedding on the performance of learners writing this examination. Difficult as it is the department has given guidelines on how to deal with this and appreciate the inno- vation and creativity employed by schools”.

He said that load shedding not only affects the actual writing of the examination in the classroom, but also learner’s preparation for the examination and to a large degree their anxiety levels before the examination.

Mr. Mweli told the Committee that the Grade 12 DBE senior management had a meet- ing with the senior management of Eskom on 14 October 2022 and at this meeting the priority requirements of the Department in relations to the Grade 12 examinations was outlined to Eskom Senior Management.

In addition, the DBE has a rewrite opportunity for both Computer Applications Tech- nology (CAT) and Information Technology (IT) on 7 December 2022. This will allow learners that faced disruption during the examination and could not attempt or com- plete the examination, to be allowed a second opportunity.

“DBE is fully aware of the predicament of learners during this very important examina- tion and therefore the DBE will take all the necessary steps to ensure minimum disad- vantage to our learners,” he said.

In addition, the DBE liaises closely with all nine PEDs to identify any challenges or security risks in a timeous manner to ensure that no candidate is disadvantaged in any manner and to ensure the security of question papers. To ensure an irregularity-free examination, 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 will sign a ‘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. In view of the current situation the Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) have requested schools, where possible, to procure alternative lighting mech- anisms for our examination centres and power generators, where funds are available. 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.

Issued by the Department of Basic Education