**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**BASIC EDUCATION COMMITTEE RECEIVES BRIEFING ON EXAMINATIONS READINESS AND WISHES CLASS OF 2022 WELL**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 25 October 2022 –** The Portfolio Committee on Basic Education today received briefings from the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi) regarding examination readiness.

The DBE told the committee that a total of 753 964 full-time candidates and 167 915 part-time candidates are registered for the upcoming matric examinations.  A total of 6307 public schools and 578 independent centres will double as exam centres as from today until 6 December 2022. The committee heard a total of 162 question papers have been set by panels of subject experts appointed and managed by the DBE.

The committee heard that all question papers have been moderated and approved by Umalusi for the November 2022 examinations and are ready for administration. The committee also heard that this is the fifth cohort that will sit for the South African Sign Language Home Language (SASLHL) examinations in November and will see a total of 23 schools in 9 provinces having candidates for the 2022 examination.  The DBE told the committee that a total of 271 candidates have been registered for SASLHL.

The DBE informed the committee that it has conducted an audit of all sites where question papers are printed, packed and stored. All PEDs were found to be fully prepared for printing.

Committee Chairperson Ms Bongiwe Mbinqo-Gigaba said the committee has noted the undertaking by the DBE that it has worked closely with the State Security Agency (SSA) to audit the sites where printing is taking place to ensure that no security breaches will take place.  She said the DBE indicated that it has a clear criteria that must be met by centres where question papers are stored and that the DBE and PEDs audited each of these storage points to ensure compliance with the criteria.

In the case of the Western Cape Education department, because question papers are stored at each of the schools, the schools had to meet the criteria relating to a storage point. In addition the province utilises a smart locking mechanism. “The committee is optimistic about this cooperation and intervention with SSA. We understand that this is all an aid to ensure credible exams and to eliminate leaking of examination papers. We commend the DBE for this effort,” said Ms Mbinqo-Gigaba.

Ms Mbinqo-Gigaba added: “We also note that all PEDs have completed the marker selection process and 53 926 markers have been selected in line with the criteria of three- year post school qualification, at least a two-year post school qualification in the subject to be marked and at least two years’ experience in the last 5 years in the subject to be marked.”

Concerns were raised about loadshedding and suspension in electricity supply, especially for technical subjects like CAT and Information Technology as candidates need to use computers in order to sit for practical examinations. The DBE assured the committee that it has established a close working relationship with Eskom to minimize loadshedding during the exam period.

The committee has noted that the person who was alleged to have leaked the two question papers in 2020 has appeared in court and the trial date has been set for 5 December 2022. “We are grateful that that matter did not just disappear. The leakage of examination papers is a serious offence. If action is not taken against the alleged individual, leakage of exam papers won’t stop,” said Ms Mbinqo-Gigaba.

The DBE also indicated that the ministerial announcement of the results will occur on 19 Jan 2023 and it will be followed by the provincial release of results a day later. Regarding the Protection of Personal Information Act, the DBE told the committee that consent must be obtained from learners and their parents regarding the publication of their NSC results in the newspapers and other media platforms. The DBE said, only candidates that have consented will have their results published.

The committee heard that Umalusi conducted the evaluation of the state of readiness of the DBE/PEDs. Furthermore, Umalusi has assured the committee that examination readiness is at acceptable levels and related measures to ensure the conduct, administration and management of credible examinations by the DBE and all the PED, are also acceptable and appreciated. Umalusi told the committee that they are satisfied that the DBE, Independent Examinations Board and the South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute, are ready to conduct the November 2022 NSC examinations.

The committee has wished the class of 2022 well in their examinations including those matric learners who have commenced their final examinations today.

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

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