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**444.   Ms L H Arries (EFF) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

What (a)(i) total number of learners entered Grade 1 in 2009 and (ii) number of the specified learners wrote final examinations for Grade 12 in 2020 and (b) happened to the rest of the learners who could not reach Grade 12?

**Response**

(a)(i) According to our national records, there were 1 106 827 learners enrolled in Grade 1 in 2009.  It needs to be noted that this figure includes learners that repeated Grade 1; and therefore, the number of learners that entered Grade 1 in 2009, will be slightly lower.

(ii) The number of full-time candidates who wrote the final examination in Grade 12  in 2020, was 578 468.

(b) The rest of the learners who did not write the final Grade 12  examination, but entered Grade 1 in 2009, are included in:

* the almost 30 000 learners who registered for the 2020 NSC examinations, but were absent for the examinations;
* a large number of learners would have failed in one of the earlier Grades; and thus, would be retained in the system as repeaters;
* a large number of learners would have left the schooling system in Grade 10, 11; and registered at the TVET Colleges;
* a significant number of learners would have entered the world of work; and
* a large number of learners would have exited the system in Grade 10 and Grade 11, or earlier; and registered to write the final NSC examinations, either in the May / June examinations, or in October / November examinations as part-time candidates.