**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 982**

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**982. Mr T C R Walters (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

(a) How does her department calculate the national throughput rate of learners from Grade 10 to the completion of Grade 12 and (b) what was the throughput rate for each province in the (i) 2014, (ii) 2015 and (iii) 2016 academic years? NW1110E

Reply

1. This is not a statistic that is routinely calculated and reported on by the department, mainly because of the potentially misleading nature of this measure. Given that many people do not reach grade 12, the grade 10 to 12 throughput rate is sometimes thought to be a useful indicator of the overall proportion of youths who complete the NSC. However, it systematically underestimates the proportion of youths who complete the NSC, since the rate of grade repetition is particularly high in grade 10, resulting in an artificially inflated denominator for that calculation. Moreover, since learners who are counted in grade 10 migrate to TVET colleges and other educational pathways, and may well go on to achieve qualifications that are equivalent to the NSC.

The department is currently piloting an inclusive basket of indicators for national, provincial and school performance in the NSC. Amongst other indicators, the ratio of NSC passes to grade 10 enrolments is being considered as one indicator. If this indicator does become routinely reported it will be important to emphasize that it is not an accurate measure of the likelihood of youths completing grade 12.

What is official, within the Medium Term Strategic Framework and the Department of Education’s ‘Action Plan to 2019’ is the indicator titled ‘The percentage of youths who obtained a National Senior Certificate from a school’. The department has provided an in-depth methodological description of how to measure this, in the 2016 review of sector outcomes, titled ‘Report on progress in the schooling sector against key learner performance and attainment indicators’ (and available on the DBE’s website). Essentially, the indicator used in the Sector Report compares the annual number of NSC passes to an estimate of the 18-year-old population.

1. The ratios of NSC passes to grade 10 enrolments (two years prior) are provided in the table below. The 2015 value of 39.8 is substantially lower than the 2015 value for the proportion of youths who obtained an NSC, which is 56.1%. This illustrates why a simple ratio of NSC passes to grade 10 enrolments cannot be interpreted as the percentage of people who go on to complete grade 12.

***Table 1: Ratios of NSC passes to Grade 10 enrolment***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Province** | **Grade 10 Enrolment** | **Matric Pass** | **“Throughput Rate”** |
| **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** |
| EC | 149 774 | 154 920 | 160 441 | 43 777 | 49 475 | 49 168 | 29.2 | 31.9 | 30.6 |
| FS | 59 948 | 60 643 | 56 519 | 21 899 | 25 416 | 23 629 | 36.5 | 41.9 | 41.8 |
| GP | 193 130 | 201 341 | 192 492 | 84 247 | 91 327 | 88 381 | 43.6 | 45.4 | 45.9 |
| KZN | 264 774 | 268 492 | 270 086 | 97 144 | 98 761 | 98 032 | 36.7 | 36.8 | 36.3 |
| LP | 176 279 | 187 804 | 193 803 | 53 179 | 66 946 | 63 595 | 30.2 | 35.6 | 32.8 |
| MP | 93 021 | 97 117 | 95 944 | 35 615 | 43 229 | 41 801 | 38.3 | 44.5 | 43.6 |
| NC | 21 739 | 22 727 | 22 515 | 6 715 | 8 064 | 7 902 | 30.9 | 35.5 | 35.1 |
| NW | 68 394 | 70 032 | 68 745 | 22 061 | 27 118 | 26 448 | 32.3 | 38.7 | 38.5 |
| WC | 76 436 | 83 234 | 79 327 | 39 237 | 45 489 | 43 716 | 51.3 | 54.7 | 55.1 |
| **SA** | **1 103 495** | **1 146 310** | **1 139 872** | **403 874** | **455 825** | **442 672** | **36.6** | **39.8** | **38.8** |

Provincial and national values for ‘The percentage of youths who obtained a National Senior Certificate from a school’ for 2014 and 2015 appear in the table below, which is extracted from the above-mentioned Sector Review on page 64. Final figures for 2016 have not been calculated yet, but the trend would largely follow the trend for the number of NSCs seen in the official DBE report for the 2016 Grade 12 examinations (title ‘National Senior Certificate Examination Report 2016’).

***Table 2: NSCs over population for 2014 and 2015***

