



17 October 2012

MEDIA STATEMENT

It's all systems go for grade 12 exams in the Free State

On Monday 22 October 2012 a total of 24 771 full-time candidates will sit for the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination in the province.

To assess our state of readiness, on 23 August 2012 we held a meeting with district senior officials and all districts have committed to obtaining an 80% pass rate.

To achieve our 80% pass rate we intend to improve the performance in the so-called 'killer subjects': In Mathematics we envisage an increase in the pass rate from 53.94% in the 2011 NSC results to 65%. In Physical Science we intend to improve our performance from 55.21% to 65% and in Accounting we hope to increase the performance from 60.3% in 2011 to 70% in 2012.

We are particularly pleased that there were no major disruptions of learning and teaching in our schools this year.

The successful implementation of the Provincial Strategy on Learner Attainment (PSLA) in 2012 gives us confidence that we will indeed reach our target of 80% matric pass rate. The PSLA is an intervention developed by the department to improve Grade 12 results by phenomenally reducing the number of under-performing schools and subjects.

Our intervention included *inter alia* the development of School Academic Performance Improvement Plans (SAPIPs) in all underperforming schools. Study guides for high enrolment subjects, previous examination papers and memoranda were distributed to Grade 12 learners. 'Tips for Exams' Z-folders were distributed to 10 000 learners during the provincial Grade 12 motivational road shows at the beginning of October 2012.

The Free State Department of Education partnered with Lesedi FM in the following interventions: Station Manager together with other radio personalities visited one of our grade 12 camps in Thaba Nchu College.

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During the month of October 2012, about 503 learners drawn from the following towns, Thaba Nchu, Botshabelo, Ladybrand, Weppener and Excelsior were motivated by these radio personalities and 324 learners from Seemahale Secondary School were also motivated by the same radio crew. More than 3000 learners gathered for the annual matric prayer service at the Central University of Technology in September.

Supplementary classes which are the key pillars of the PSLA were also conducted to enhance learner understanding of the content covered.

During the June holidays 13 315 learners drawn mainly from 107 under-performing schools were taught by expert tutors with proven track records of success in the schools in which they teach. This winter school programme covered subjects such as Accounting, Mathematics, Business Studies, Economics, English FAL, Geography, Life Science, Mathematical Literacy and Physical Science.

In '*raising the bar and leaving no child behind*' grade 12 learners were provided with pacesetters to promote self-regulation in respect to curriculum coverage. Learners were also exposed to Information Communication Technology (ICT) platforms (such as Mindset, Information Communication Technology in School Education (ICTISE), HeyMath) for them to access lessons in critical subjects and give them opportunity to interact with tutors.

In addition school management teams of under-performing schools and schools with big enrolments received training from the University of the Free State in the Instructional Leadership Programme. The aim of this leadership training was to ensure that these under-performing schools are properly managed to improve the performance of learners in the 2012 NSC examinations.

Furthermore, we have partnered with community radio stations for live broadcasts of lessons of various subjects. These broadcasts commenced at the beginning of September and will run until the end of October. During these broadcasts learners are able to call-in and ask questions from the subject-advisors who are deployed to these radio stations.

As a direct result of our interventions throughout the year many struggling schools have seen a remarkable improvement in their performance. In the 2011 NSC results Vulamasango Secondary School in Bloemfontein obtained 40.1% but in June exams this year, the school has improved to

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63%. Lefikeng Secondary School in Botshabelo received 47.54% in the 2011 grade 12 results. In June 2012 they have improved to an impressive 90.8%.

In Lejweleputswa District, Relekile Secondary School improved their results from 54% in the 2011 NSC results to 79% in April 2012 and to 87% in June 2012.

In Qwa- Qwa, Selelekela Secondary School, the 2011 NSC results was 29% and in June 2012 the results improved to 65%. Reahola Secondary – also in Qwa-Qwa registered a marked improvement from 56% in the NSC results to 100% in June 2012.

Fezile Dabi District had 9 schools which performed at 100% in the 2011 NSC. In June this year, 11 schools obtained 100% pass rate before Continuous Assessment (CASS) mark.

The conduct of exams is a huge logistical exercise.

The following administrative work has been done which clearly demonstrates our state of readiness for the 2012 Grade 12 NSC examinations:

- Security measures are place to ensure that the integrity of the exams is not compromised. Chief Invigilators have already been trained.
- Grade 12 learners in some schools, especially under-performing schools, have been addressed on pass requirements.
- A monitoring team from Umalusi and the National Department of Basic Education visited the province on 13-14 August to establish our state of readiness and they have expressed satisfaction with preparations done to date.

“We call upon the whole province to mobilise support for all learners, in all grades. The media is an important social partner. We urge the media to galvanise support for *‘raising the bar and leaving no child behind’* and get our stakeholders to support NSC Class of 2012. We should support our learners in their exam preparations through encouragement and helping them to create sound study habits and spaces wherever they can. We thank teachers, parents, teacher unions, governing bodies, our business partners and the broader society for the hard work and support thus far. Education is a societal issue” says Free State Education MEC, Tate Makgoe.

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