



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION, MRS ANGIE MOTSHEKGA ON THE PROGRESS OF THE COMBINED MATRIC EXAMINATION, PRETORIA

4 DECEMBER 2020

Good afternoon and thank you for your time!

It has once again become necessary for us to update the nation on the developments in the basic education sector. We have gone through a very difficult time this year in general due to COVID-19. The matric examination have also come with their own challenges.

Today is Day 23 of the 30-day examination and up to now 189 papers out of 216 have been written, that means 88 percent of the exam has been completed.

As you know, all was going well until we experienced the challenges with the leaked question papers of Maths Paper 2 and Physical Science Paper 2.

There were rumours of Business Studies having leaked but we moved swiftly to replace that paper. Following the initial reports of the leaks, CEM also took a decision to implement urgent steps to protect the examinations. It is for that reason that we felt we could not divulge the measures put in place to secure the exams.

It has been a costly exercise but we needed to act fast in the interest of the learners and the public in general.

You will recall that on the 18th of November we held a media briefing and we reported that some of the question papers had been leaked. We announced that an investigation was going to take place.

The Investigations Task Team was to establish the extent of the leak so as to determine if a rewrite of the Mathematics P2 and Physical Science Paper 2, is necessary.

CEM also expected the Task Team to make recommendations on restoring the credibility of the 2020 examination in the country as a whole and most of all establish the source of the leak.

The CEM convened a special meeting on Tuesday morning to consider the recommendations of the National Examinations Irregularities Committee (NEIC). The National Investigation Task Team (NITT), operating under the auspices of the NEIC, has been tasked to investigate the leakage of Mathematics P2 and Physical Science P2. The report of the NEIC was presented to CEM by the chair of the NEIC, Advocate Luvuyo Bono.

CEM considered the preliminary report focusing on the extent of the leakage so that a recommendation can be made on the remedial action to be taken to address the compromise.

Some of the key findings are that the viral spread of information on the cyber networks made it virtually impossible to accurately identify the number of learners that have had access to the leaked question papers.

We consulted key stakeholders on the matter; from school governing body associations, school principals association,

teacher unions and the quality assurance agency, UMALUSI. There was convergence on the need to protect the integrity of the examination and to expose the culprits who place the lives of our learners at risk.

The National Senior Certificate (NSC) is the flagship qualification relating to schooling. Credibility of the NSC examination is of paramount importance. Any lingering doubt relating to the credibility of the NSC examinations must be thoroughly investigated and addressed. Avoiding prior access to the question paper is what all security measures are directed towards.

Having considered all of these factors, CEM decided that a national rewrite of both Mathematics Paper 2 and Physical Sciences Paper 2 is necessary.

Mathematics Paper will be written on Tuesday 15 December 2020 at 14:00, and Physical Sciences Paper 2 will be written on Thursday 17 December 2020 at 09:00.

It was not an easy decision to take but one which is necessary under the circumstances. We need to work hard to deal with the human factor in the examination system.

It is clear that the people responsible for leaking the question papers are adults.

CEM appreciates the work being done by the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigations, The Hawks. We welcome the arrest that has been made and we hope more arrests will follow. We really need to send a strong message that tampering with national examination is a serious offence.

The DBE and the PEDs must redouble efforts to prevent leaks in future and to pursue without fear or favour anyone culpable in

these leaks or the further distribution of leaked questions or question papers.

CONCLUSION

Ladies and gentlemen the coronavirus is still with us. The President spoke strongly last night about the dangers of complacency and risks associated with non compliance with health protocols. As the year comes to an end we urge all young people not to engage in year end or the so-called pens down parties. These can be super-spreader events and can potentially endanger lives. Let us continue to adhere to the protocols; wear your mask, keep social distancing, wash your **hands and sanitise. Avoid mass gatherings as much as possible. Stay safe.**

Lastly, we wish to appreciate the sacrifice and the hard work displayed by officials in all levels of the system from DBE, PEDs, Districts, circuits and indeed schools.

Let me thank the Director-General, Mathanzima Mwel, and his team for all the work done thus far.

Thank you

Ends