

**STATEMENT BY THE KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR EDUCATION, MR SIPHO E. HLOMUKA,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE MEDIA BRIEFING ON THE 2025 NATIONAL SENIOR
CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS STATE OF READINESS
HELD ON 14 OCTOBER 2025**

Programme Director,
Head of Department, Mr Nkosinathi Ngcobo,
Members of Top Management, and Members of the Media,

Good morning.

I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to members of the media for honouring our invitation and joining us for this important briefing. Your continued partnership plays a vital role in keeping the public informed and in promoting transparency within our education system. Through your platforms, we are able to reach communities across KwaZulu-Natal and ensure that this important information is received by the public, especially to parents, learners, and teachers to ensure a smooth and credible examination process.

As the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, we are pleased to announce that the province is fully prepared to commence the 2025 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations.

This year, 179,751 full-time and 16,148 part-time candidates, making a total of 195,899 learners, will sit for their final examinations across various examination centres throughout the province. This marks a 3% increase compared to the 190,452 candidates who wrote in 2024, reflecting the continued growth and commitment of the KwaZulu-Natal education system in ensuring that every eligible learner is afforded the opportunity to complete their schooling journey.

This upward trend is a clear reflection of the Department's sustained efforts to **improve learner retention, reduce drop-out rates, and expand access to quality education**. It also demonstrates the growing confidence of learners and parents in the public education system.

We celebrate this growth as a positive indicator of progress in our collective mission to ensure that every child in KwaZulu-Natal has the opportunity to complete their schooling and transition successfully to post-school education, training, or employment.

The Department has worked tirelessly to ensure that all logistical, administrative, and security arrangements are in place to guarantee the smooth and credible administration of the examinations.

Our Province runs the largest examination system in the country, supported by 6,450 invigilators overseeing 6,712 examination rooms across 1,705 public centres and 61 private examination centres.

Examination materials will be distributed through 13 storage points and 103 distribution and collection centres. KwaZulu-Natal will print 113 question papers, totalling 35,192,785 printouts, to be written across 27 morning and 27 afternoon sessions.

Academic Performance and Preparation

We began the 2025 academic year buoyed by the outstanding results of the Class of 2024. While we celebrated those achievements, we recognised that our real challenge lay ahead — to surpass our own success.

We therefore developed a 2025 Academic Improvement Plan, aimed at improving our pass rate from 89.5% to a minimum of 95%, with the ultimate goal of reaching 100%.

All twelve districts crafted district-specific improvement plans aligned to the provincial strategy. We immediately set these plans into motion to ensure that implementation was felt across all schools.

Our provincial vision remains clear: every learner who sits for the final examination must pass. We know that external factors sometimes make a 100% pass rate difficult, but we are determined not to fall below 95%. This would still represent significant growth from 2024.

Learner Support Programmes

To ensure learners were adequately prepared, we rolled out Winter Programmes and Spring Classes across the Province of KwaZulu-Natal.

Our Winter Tuition Programme, which ran from 27 June to 21 July 2025, focused on ensuring full curriculum coverage and intensive learner preparation before the end of August. Its key objectives included:

- Providing opportunities for learners to revise and engage with past exam papers.
- Clustering schools of similar performance levels to address common challenges.
- Introducing effective study methods during camp sessions.
- Familiarising learners with NSC exam-style questioning.

We adopted a hybrid model — combining overnight learner camps, cluster walk-in centres, and school-based sessions — allowing flexibility and inclusivity.

Our Winter Camps accommodated over 4,380 learners, while the Spring Boot Camps provided additional academic support in key and challenging subject areas.

The Spring Boot Camps, held successfully across all 11 districts from 05 to 12 October 2025, benefited over 4,380 learners. The table below illustrates how the Spring Classes Programme was spread:

SPRING CAMPS 2025				
No	Districts	Venue	Date	Numbers

1	Harry Gwala	Vulekani Special School Daniel Mzamo Special School	05-10 October 2025	50 200
2	ILembe	Our Lady of the Rosery Sec Sch	05-10 October 2025	320
3	King Cetshwayo	Dlangezwa High School	05-10 October 2025	600
4	Pinetown	Uminathi Christian College	05-10 October 2025	350
5	Ugu	Hoerskool Suid-Natal H. St Martins De Poetess School	05-10 October 2025	145 105
6	Umgungundlovu	Haythorn Secondary School Riverwood College	05-10 October 2025	190 160
7	Umkhanyakude	Kingdom Christian College Khulani Special School	07-12 October 2025	250 150
8	Umlazi	Umlazi Comtech Bright Future Special School	05-10 October 2025	200 250

		Adams College		100
9	Umzinyathi	Sihayo High School	05-10 October 2025	200
		Ukukhanyakomsinga Special School		200
10	Uthukela	Estcourt High School	05-10 October 2025	300
11	Zululand	Vryheid Comprehensive SS	05-10 October 2025	600

Examination Administration and Integrity

The Department has also prioritised exam integrity and credibility.

We conducted advocacy and training sessions for Chief Invigilators and Invigilators and employed additional monitors to safeguard examination processes. District core teams trained staff to ensure irregularity-free examinations.

A total of 7,889 markers have been appointed, with appointment letters to be issued by end of October 2025.

Marking sessions will run from 2 to 12 December 2025 across 32 marking centres. The Department is pleased to confirm that all arrangements are in place to ensure that **examination markers and all related personnel are paid on time**. We recognise the vital role that markers play in maintaining the integrity and credibility of the examination process. To this end, the Department has strengthened its administrative systems and coordinated closely with the Provincial Treasury to guarantee that all payments are processed efficiently and without delay.

All systems are in place to manage potential challenges, including inclement weather. We are working closely with the *Joint Operations and Communication Committee (JOCOM)*

to ensure examinations proceed safely, securely, and credibly. All schools and marking centres have been advised on emergency procedures to ensure exams proceed without interruption.

Groundbreaking Online School Admission Launch 2026

In demonstrating our continued commitment to innovation and efficiency, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education has launched a ground-breaking Online Admissions Programme. This initiative represents another milestone in showcasing the province's state of readiness to deliver a modern, technology-driven education system.

The rollout of the Online Admissions Programme commenced on 01 October 2025 and will conclude on 31 October 2025. It is being rolled out through two newly established Focus Schools, the Maritime School of Excellence in Umlazi District and the Mbuso Kubheka ICT and Engineering School of Excellence in Amajuba District.

Acknowledgements

The Department is confident that the Class of 2025 is ready.

We express our deepest gratitude to our educators for their tireless commitment under challenging conditions, and to organised labour for its constructive partnership in supporting both teachers and learners.

We thank the KZN Legislature, under the leadership of the Speaker, and the Portfolio Committee on Education, for their robust oversight and continued dedication to education excellence. Their School Functionality Monitoring Visits remain instrumental in sustaining school performance.

Our appreciation also extends to the media for their consistent interest and positive coverage of education in the province. We call on parents and communities to continue supporting the Class of 2025 as they approach their final exams.

Closing

Our readiness today is the result of collaboration, collective effort, and shared commitment from all stakeholders.

Together, we continue to strengthen the foundation of education in KwaZulu-Natal — ensuring that every learner has the opportunity to succeed.

I Thank You.