

NSC is of a high standard, says Motshekga

Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga says the country's National Senior Certificate (NSC) is of a high standard, with matric question papers being set at an international level.



(Image: GCIS)

Motshekga, who was briefing media the day before her Budget Vote in Parliament, said that the NSC pass requirements were higher than the old Senior Certificate, which required only six subjects with four subjects passed at 40% and two at 33.3%.

"In the case of the NSC, admission to bachelor studies requires a pass in four subjects at 50% and the remaining subjects at 30%, provided the home language is passed at 40% and the language of learning and teaching at 30%," said the minister.

Further to this, NSC required a candidate to have seven subjects, while the old Senior Certificate required only six subjects.

Motshekga said this year, the department had extended the National Workbook Programme to cover Grades 7, 8 and 9, with an allocation of R811m for expanding distribution of workbooks to Grade 9 learners for the 2012/13 financial year.

"In 2012, we are providing 54 million books to learners at no cost to the parent or learner. This is history in the making. In line with our commitment to inclusive education, workbooks for Grades 1 to 6 were adapted and are currently being [published in Braille]. Grade 7 to 9 workbooks are also being adapted for Braille," Motshekga said.

The book issue

The department is attending to the matter of packaging, delivery and quantity of textbooks and its ultimate objective is to ensure that every learner has a textbook for every subject.

"Provinces are expected to ensure that we centralise no-fee schools purchase of textbooks to increase textbook coverage and to ensure value for money. We are also investigating the possibility of the state printing textbooks to ensure that we increase textbook coverage from 45% to at least 85% by 2014," she said.

Through the Accelerated School Infrastructure Delivery Initiative (ASIDI), the department will continue to do more to fast-track the provision and improvement of school infrastructure. The programme has been given a further boost by being included in the work of the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Committee.

Following the completion of the 2012 supplementary exams and the release of results, Motshekga announced that the overall pass rate, combining the November 2011 and March 2012, examinations was now 72.7%, noting that in November 2011, the department had surpassed 70%.

However, she raised concern at the poor quality of passes in Maths and Science, adding that the focus would now fall on these subjects as well as technology.

"To improve both the quality and quantity of passes in Maths and Science, we are implementing a new national strategy for mathematics, science and technology education. It reinforces the Dinaledi Schools programme, which has received a conditional grant of R99.7m for 2012/13," Motshekga said.

The department will in June convene a Maths and Science Indaba, with key education stakeholders involved in the teaching of these subjects.

The second round of Annual National Assessments will be written in September, said the minister.

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