



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Ms Nomalungelo Gina

Chairperson: Portfolio Committee on Basic Education

By email: lbrown@parliament.gov.za

Dear Ms Gina,

NSC: Minister Motshekga must appear before the Portfolio Committee

Over the past few weeks, the Democratic Alliance has uncovered a number of deeply troubling issues arising from the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination results for 2016.

Firstly, the pass rates for each province obscure alarming dropout rates from Grade 10 to matric. The Northern Cape, North West and Free State have dropout rates of over 50%, meaning that over half of the Grade 10s in 2014 had either fallen out of the system or remain stuck in Grade 10 and 11. More disturbingly, there are allegations that the high dropout may be due to the 'culling' of pupils from the system to improve matric results. The Minister must undertake an urgent investigation into these allegations.

Secondly, it is unacceptable that there are 38 schools across three provinces that have not managed to attain a 40% pass rate in the past five years. Section 58B of the Schools Act clearly spells out the need for the Minister to ensure that the MECs for Education in these provinces address the problems at these schools, and report to her on their actions taken within three months of the end of the school year. Five years of underperformance is simply inexcusable.

Finally, the confusion regarding the Umalusi standardisation process must be addressed. Any questions about average marks being raised across so many subjects have been met with hostility and secrecy – the Minister must assure us that there is nothing to hide. Our matriculants deserve to know how and why their marks were adjusted, so that they can be assured of the integrity of the qualification.

As part of our oversight role, it is imperative that we hold Minister Motshekga to account for this situation, and to be presented with her action plan to address these serious concerns. I request that you summon the Minister to attend the meeting on 7 February 2017, at which the Department of Basic Education will be making a presentation regarding the NSC 2016 exams.

I look forward to hearing from you on this matter.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Gavin Davis MP