

# Mild relief as ECDoE records a slight but positive improvement in 2009 Matric Results

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The Eastern Cape Department of Education recorded a slight improvement of 0.4% for the 2009 Grade 12 results.

Announcing the results during a media briefing in East London on 7 January 2010, provincial Education MEC Mahlubandile Qwase noted approvingly the increase from 2008's 50.6% to 51.1% in 2009. He, however, said that more needed to be done to maintain and simultaneously raise the pass rate scale of the provincial education results to achieve past the expected national average.

"It is heartening that we can at least reflect on positive developments in the Department that seem to suggest that the tide is gradually turning and that we are finally grappling with these requisite areas that will enable us to realise the key pillars of the Learner Attainment and Improvement Strategy (LAIS)"- said MEC Qwase.

Although not counted among the provinces that did well in their overall grade 12 pass rate, Qwase said that the Eastern Cape Education Department's increase, even if marginal, should be congratulated for the efforts that went into ensuring a successful examination.

Encouragingly and with optimism, he said-"Whilst we may not have made the required national average, it is an achievement that we did not come out last, [and]I want to send a special word of gratitude to all committed educators in our province who have gone the extra mile in the realisation of the education enterprise".

With regards to learner intervention strategies, which tended to focus mainly of grade twelve learners in the past, Qwase said that was to change from this year.

He said provision would be made to expand focus with regards to learner intervention strategies to include grades 9, 10 and 11 "so they can be better prepared [of what is expected of them] when they reach grade 12".

With a total of 68 129 candidates having sat for the matriculation examinations last year, the total number of learners who obtained a Bachelor's qualification increased from 8 662 in 2008 to 9 492 for 2009.

The Diploma qualification recorded an increase from an 11 166 to 13 883, whilst Higher Certificate qualification also recorded an 11 240 from the previous year's 10 648.

As 2009 provincial results reflected a 14.8% drop in key subject areas such as Accounting, Mathematics and Science, outgoing ECDoE Head of Department, Professor Harry Nengwekhulu said retired but skilled educators in these subjects were still greatly required.

"With some of our retired educators being currently absorbed back into the system in some particular areas of teaching, the gap in getting retired but skilled educators specialising in the killer subjects, namely Maths and Physical Science and Accounting is still too wide"- he said.

Citing another challenge faced by the education sector with adverse impact on the provincial results, particularly for learners heading to tertiary institutions, Professor Nengwekhulu said that an effort would be put in place to explore a balanced mother tongue based bilingual education.

"A bilingual instructor should be able to cross between the mother tongue and English (if it is the medium of instruction) and the harmonisation of such transition should be such that learners from grade R are able to understand what they are being taught when they reach higher grades"- he added.

Taking into consideration the EC province's vastly rural habitat and learners' first language use being Nguni, MEC Qwase said a resolution for the mother tongue instruction issue was in sight.

"We have identified the issue of mother tongue based education as a major problem and a promotion of bilingual teaching method will be followed in order to improve deeper understanding of concepts amongst learners"- he reaffirmed.

He said educators would be undergoing training to this regard within the first half of the year.

"As the department, we have set out a clear master plan that charts a concise way forward for us in response to our results"- he said.

Highlighting some of the department's activities pertaining to the Quality Teaching and Learning Campaign (QTLC), Qwase said the programme will continue to "compel and commit all individuals and stakeholders" to play their expected roles in improving the province's quality of education.

Not mincing his words, Qwase declared his stand against all negligence of duty by departmental officials.

"I am not going to tolerate any more acts of dereliction of duty, perpetual underperformance or callous disregard of basic terms of employment by anyone in the employ of the department [and] I fully expect that the performance management regime of the

department will enable everyone in a supervisory capacity to exercise all due process including constant appraisal, monitoring and evaluation of performance"- he cautioned.

In conclusion he added- "No excuses will be tolerated for management lapses and failure to exercise oversight".

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**Source:** Eastern Cape Department of Education

**Web:** <http://www.ecdoe.gov.za/>