

STATEMENT BY MINISTER DEBBIE SCHÄFER

WESTERN CAPE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

Date: 8 December 2020

TIMSS 2019 confirms Western Cape delivers the best education in Mathematics and Science

The results of the 2019 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) were released today, and have confirmed that the Western Cape is the country's top-performing province in Mathematics and Science.

The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) conducts the study every four years with a nationally-representative sample of Grade 5 and Grade 9 learners.

For Grade 5 learners, the Western Cape was the best performing province in South Africa in both Mathematics and Science. Our province achieved a score of 441 for Mathematics, 67 points above the national average and 31 points above Gauteng in second place. For Science, the score was 415, which is an incredible 91 points above the national average and 36 points above Gauteng.

Grade 5	Mathematics	Science
South Africa	374	324
Western Cape	441	415
Gauteng	410	379

Grade 9 Western Cape learners also performed the best in the country. For Mathematics, we achieved a score of 441 (52 points higher than national average and 20 points clear of Gauteng), while in Science we scored 439 (69 points higher than national average and 17 points above Gauteng).

Grade 9	Mathematics	Science
South Africa	389	370

Western Cape	441	439
Gauteng	421	422

In the 2019 round, the Western Cape joined 6 other cities and regional entities across the world (including Gauteng) as benchmarking participants at the Grade 9 level. This allows our results to be ranked separately in addition to the national result, in order to have a more accurate measurement of achievement. This requires a much larger sample of schools, and 150 of our schools participated in the round.

As a result, the Western Cape ranks 8 places higher than South Africa as a whole on the international ranking for Mathematics, and 6 places ahead for Science. The HSRC will further unpack the provincial results in detail at our provincial presentation on Friday 11 December 2020.

By far the most pleasing result is the increase in Grade 9 scores since the 2011 round – we have achieved a 37-point increase in Mathematics and 18-point increase in Science. This is a testament to the excellent work that the Department and our schools have done to continuously improve education standards across the province.

We now set our sights on achieving the TIMSS centre point score of 500. I have no doubt that the incredible officials, school staff and learners across our province can achieve this!

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