

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY QUESTION 1827

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Mrs C Dudley to ask the Minister of Education:

Whether her department has been informed of the public's growing concern and dissatisfaction with regard to schooling for the disabled; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what (a) budget has been allocated to address situations where special schools have stopped functioning and disabled learners are unable to gain access to mainstream schools and (b) plan does the Government have to adequately accommodate disabled children.

N2486E

REPLY:

The Department is aware of the public concern (see also answer to question 1809).

- (a) The Department is not aware of special schools that have stopped functioning. In all cases where standards have not been maintained, provincial departments of education have intervened to address the issues. The Department visited special schools in all provinces in September and compiled a report for the Minister on all instances of abuse and neglect. The average per capita spending in special schools is R19,000. There are only 384 special schools and these accommodate about 84,000 children. The majority of these special schools are in urban areas, leaving children in rural and disadvantaged areas without access to special schools.
- (b) The new inclusive education system will spread the funding available for support more equitably throughout the system. Provinces are all proactive in mobilizing learners with disabilities who are out of school and are putting in place measures to support them in ordinary schools. The Department is working with various interest groups to give effect to this commitment.

The provinces have also started implementing their own plans for the improvement of the schools that have been identified in the audit report and follow-up audits conducted by the provinces themselves.