

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 1457

DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPERS: 07/06/2013

(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 20/2013)

Mr M G P Lekota (Cope) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:

Whether her department has any measures in place to ensure that (a) school books will henceforth always be delivered on time, every time, to every government-managed school, (b) educators will have the requisite skills and expertise to teach the subjects they are responsible for, (c) schools will close during strikes and that lost time will be recovered from holiday time, (d) children in rural areas will be (i) given transport and (ii) taught in schools comparable to schools in urban areas and (e) drop-out of learners from the schooling system will be constantly interrogated to reverse the trends of the past 19 years; if not, why not; if so, (i) how will these measures apply in each case and (ii) what are the further relevant details? NW1802E

REPLY

- (a) The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has regularized and strengthened the process of the provision of textbooks to schools to ensure that they are delivered on time. The development and early release of the national catalogues was the first step in ensuring this. Following this, the DBE developed the **Basic Education Sector Plan for the Procurement and Delivery of Textbooks** and distributed it to provinces to guide the development of their provincial plans. Provinces have aligned their deadline dates with the DBE plan and report monthly on progress against the plan. This provides a business process to ensure procurement and delivery of textbooks on time, every time and to all public schools and to enable the DBE to effectively monitor provincial progress in this regard.

The plan for procurement and delivery of textbooks for the 2014 school year is on track and delivery is scheduled to be completed by 31 October 2013 with final mop ups to be completed by 15 November 2013.

- (b) The Department of Basic Education is implementing the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development which was launched by the Minister of Higher Education and Training and Minister of Basic Education in 2011. The Framework sets out a 15 year plan to address all aspects for improving teacher education and

development i.e. recruitment, initial training, induction and continuing professional development. Based on pressure points identified in the education system, targeted priorities are being focused on in the next five to ten years:

- Improving the supply of teachers with emphasis on Foundation Phase, Languages, Maths, and Science. The enrolment and graduation rates of new teachers have increased significantly since 2008. In 2008, there were 35 275 enrolments and 5 939 graduates; in 2011 there were 79 435 enrolments (125% increase) and 10 593 graduates (78% increase);
 - Expanding the capacity of the university system to enroll more trainees. Infrastructure grants to the value of R662 460 m were allocated to 17 HEIs by DHET to expand infrastructure; Siyabuswa teacher education campus launched in Mpumalanga in 2013; and there are processes underway in Eastern Cape, KZN, Limpopo and Gauteng;
 - CAPS orientation: This programme has covered approximately 100 000 FP teachers, 110 000 IP teachers. During 2013, all SP and Grade 12 teachers will be covered;
 - Priorities focus on Literacy and Numeracy teacher development in all phases and targeted at school managers (principals, subject advisors, deputy principals, classroom teachers, lead teachers, multi-grade schools, special needs). The DBE and PEDs have been focusing strongly on the use of ANA/NSC diagnostic reports for teacher support and PEDs have been dedicating up to 50% of the budgets to these two priority areas; and
 - Each province has developed a learner attainment strategy which identifies critical subjects and areas for supporting teachers and learners to improve learner performance. This includes teacher orientation and support for the implementation of CAPS, the use of Annual National Assessments (Grades 1-6 and 9 Literacy and Numeracy) and National Senior Certificate results (Grade 12), and the use of Workbooks (Literacy and Numeracy from Grades 1- 9).
- (c) There are no measures in place for my Department to ensure that schools will close during strikes and that lost time will be recovered from holiday time. There is no legal basis that allow schools to close due to strike action and that is why we are applying the “no work, no pay” principle to all officials who absent themselves from work during strikes.

It should be noted that during strike actions, teachers are not coming to school either because they have been mandated to do so by their unions or some fear of intimidation by their colleagues and as such learners feel abandoned and end up not coming to school. Parents also keep their children at home for their safety. These factors sometimes result in schools being closed temporarily. However, if the need arises, as in 2007, where teaching and learning time was lost due to the public service strike action that took almost a month, temporary measures will be put in place with the aim of assisting learners to catch up on the curriculum.

In 2007, the Department approved measures that allow Provincial Education Departments to appoint teachers in affected schools for additional classes. Affected schools were requested to develop recovery plans and my Department also assisted with extra learning materials, arranged radio talk shows by curriculum specialists and websites were also updated to

include question papers. Teachers who were taking part in the recovery plan activities were given a stipend.

- (i) Measures will depend on the circumstances, such as period of the strike action and whether teaching and learning did or did not take place in schools during the strike action.
 - (ii) There are no further relevant details.
- (d) (i) The Provincial Departments of Education have scholar transport programmes that run in collaboration with the Departments of Transport. These programmes target particularly learners in rural areas who travel long distances to schools.
- (ii) The Department has a programme of building state of the art schools in both the rural and urban areas - the Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative (ASIDI). ASIDI is an on-going programme to implement basic safety norms and standards in school infrastructure and is funded from the Schools Infrastructure Backlog Grant (SIBG). So far 22 schools have been completed through ASIDI since the beginning of 2012. 144 schools have been electrified, 188 have been provided with sanitation while 156 schools were provided with water.
- (e) (i) The Department annually interrogates information on learner dropout from schools and is concerned about the learners dropping out of schools, particularly from Grade 10 and 11.
- (ii) Several initiatives were introduced to reduce the number of children dropping out of schools. These include:
- The introduction of “**no fee school policy**”. Learners coming from poor backgrounds, particularly quintiles 1 to 3, are not expected to pay any schools fees. The purpose is to counter any unintended or perverse consequences for parents and for children’s access to meaningful learning in school.
 - The **National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP)**. This programme enables learners to receive meals at school and has the positive impact of encouraging learners to attend school.
 - **Expansion of Grade R**: The Department is expanding Grade R provisioning even further and improving the quality of Grade R provided by schools. Studies indicate that a child who attends pre-primary programmes is likely to remain longer in the education system. The provision of Grade R is therefore likely to contribute to learner retention in the education system.
 - **Provision of free Workbooks and Textbooks**: Parents whose children are in Public schools are not expected to purchase textbooks for their children, and this reduces the cost of schooling for parents. It is expected therefore that parents will have little reason for not sending their children to school.
 - **Full Service Schools** have been established to ensure that learners with disabilities have access to education.