

## NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR ORAL REPLY  
QUESTION 338**

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**Mr A M Mpontshane to ask the Minister of Education:**

Whether the provincial tendering processes concerning the supply of learner support material has been found to be satisfactory; if not, why not; if so, why are there delays in the supply of school books to schools each year?

**N1566E**

**REPLY:**

The short answer is yes and no. The procurement and distribution of LTSM is the responsibility of the provincial departments of education. The processes and procedures differ quite substantially from one province to another. The procurement chain, from specification to delivery, is complex and depends on the timeframes attached to the screening and requisitioning processes.

The Department of Education has negotiated timeframes with the relevant stakeholders, including booksellers and publishers, for the timely delivery of learner support material to schools in 2007. The Department is monitoring the provincial education departments' processes to ensure that stipulated timeframes are complied with. Monthly progress reports in this regard are submitted to me.

The provincial departments have improved their tendering processes over the years. They have awarded their tenders for the 2007 school year. However, delays in the supply of school books do occur. Most delays are due to the late ordering of books and/or services, delivery processes and the fact that some books are not readily available on demand, specifically with top-ups that are out of print when ordered.

The Department has established a representative consultative forum to look into the procurement and distribution of learner support material across the country. All problems encountered are reported at the Forum and creative solutions are sought to remove obstacles and impediments that may hamper the process.