

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR ORAL REPLY
QUESTION 369

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 01-11-2006 (INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 37-2006)

DATE TO REPLY IN PARLIAMENT: 09-11-2006

Adv A H Gaum to ask the Minister of Education:

Whether any new initiatives have been taken by her department and the provincial education departments in view of numerous recent incidents of an escalation of violence, crime and a lack of discipline in our schools; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

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REPLY:

The emphasis on new initiatives is important, since the matter of safety in schools has become a matter of national concern in recent months. This is not to say that the issue of safety has been ignored in the past. Various important steps have been taken. Laws, policies, frameworks and guidelines have been developed to address crime, violence, drug use and abuse in schools. The primary protection for learners in this regard is the set of Regulations for Safety Measures at Public Schools, published in terms of the South African Schools Act in Government Notice No. 22754 of 12 October 2001.

However, we have been preparing over the past year to make a systemic change to the way we prevent crime and violence in and outside our schools. The Department of Education, in partnership with the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, has piloted the *Hlayiseka* (Be Aware – Take Action) project in Limpopo, Eastern Cape and Western Cape. It is an early warning system of reporting crime and violence. A final report was submitted to me on 4 October 2006 and we are developing implementation and operational plans to make the system work in all provinces.

There has been much comment in the press about a national pilot project to tackle crime and violence at the worst-affected school in each province. Provincial education departments were requested to identify a school in their provinces, and suggest interventions that could be made to prevent crime and violence.

I can report that all provinces have submitted business plans to the Department of Education for consideration. Schools have identified interventions ranging from fences, burglar proofing, floodlights, alarm

systems, metal detectors, CCTV technology, and the appointment of safety officers.

Finally, at its last meeting on 23 October 2006, the Council of Education Ministers agreed to take the following measures to improve school safety. First, a national template for a code of conduct will be made available to all schools. Second, the 2001 Safety Regulations will be made widely available in a simplified form. Third, a national consultative forum on school safety will be convened before the end of this year.