

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY QUESTION 16

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Mr GG Boinamo to ask the Minister of Education:

(1) Whether any steps will be taken against any employees of her department, including education officials, teachers or school principals, for the poor results achieved in numeracy and literacy tests given to grade six learners, if not, why not, if so, what steps;

(2) Whether she intends introducing any change in the direction of education policies as a consequence of these test results; if not, why not; if so what specified changes?

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REPLY:

(1) No. The numeracy and literacy tests given to grade 6 learners in the systemic evaluation study were not intended to identify any learner or employee of the Department for disciplinary action. By their design, these tests are not meant to serve that purpose. The systemic evaluation tests are based on a representative random sample of learners and schools and are designed to give a broad overview of the state of learner performance at the national and provincial levels.

The tests provide useful empirical data that the Department is using to strengthen current intervention initiatives.

(2) Any changes will impact on education practice and not necessarily on education policy. We are attending to interventions that require specific strategies, resources, and education development support. As a first step I intend to promote reading in all our schools from this year and thousands of primary schools will receive at least 100 reading books as the beginning of our reading strategy. Further professional support will be given to primary school teachers to assist them in teaching these foundation skills. I have also encouraged provinces to provide additional teacher support through appointing part-time teaching assistants for foundation grades in primary schools.

Finally, I intend to intensify action directed at providing mother-tongue instruction in the early phases of schooling, alongside the introduction of a second language.