

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 1152.

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1152. Mr B B Nodada (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:

What (a) tracking and tracing processes, procedures and/or plans are in place to track learners who have not returned to school, (b) retention plans have been put in place to ensure learners stay in school and (c) other government departments does her department work with in order to implement such strategies?

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Response

(a) South African Schools Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS) provides an electronic and automated platform to enable the following functionalities to record and manage attendance, identify learners with poor attendance and track learners who have dropped out.

1. Learner attendance is marked daily, and the school must capture reasons for learners that are absent.
2. Learners absent for 10 days consecutively with “no reason” are flagged for attention by the school, as per the 10-day Attendance Policy.
3. The number of days absent is also indicated on the quarterly schedule as well as promotion schedules, that are submitted to the district for approval.
4. Class lists with attendance summaries are available for monitoring, showing the number of days absent, per reason.
5. Monthly and Quarterly Attendance reports are generated from SA-SAMS for reporting and monitoring by the district.

This allows for effective record keeping and enables efficient practices by converting manual processes to automated functions to track learners who do not return to schools.

(b) retention plans have been put in place to ensure learners stay in school

- Schools are guided by the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Policy which prescribes that learners be screened and supported for barriers to learning.

- Educators have been trained to identify academic, behavioral and social barriers and they continue to identify and support at school level by the teacher, or School Based Support Team. Should a referral be required it usually involves the Department of Social Development.

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- In addition, the Department of Basic Education has trained Learner Support Agents (LSAs) that are placed in some schools to identify learners with psychosocial needs.

The LSAs undertake a home visit to identify issues at home that prevent children from attending school. When it is identified that the concern is at home, the LSAs undertake a home visit.

(c) other government departments does her department work with in order to implement such strategies?

- In the case of child abuse, neglect, and children living on the streets, the Department of Social Development takes over to involve the children's court.

- If at school level impacting schooling.

_ - In the case where parents are struggling financially, they are assisted through the various provisions at the DSD.