

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 2418.**

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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 18/2025**

**2418. Ms C Jordaan (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

- (1) Whether she has been informed of a report submitted on or around 4 November 2024 by a certain person (name furnished) to the Gauteng Department of Education regarding allegations of racism at Pretoria High School for Girls; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, will she furnish Ms C Jordaan with a copy of the full report;
- (2) whether any terms of reference were published or adopted in relation to the report; if not, why not; if so, will she furnish Ms C Jordaan with a copy of such terms of reference;
- (3) whether a letter of appointment was issued to the specified person and/or any other investigator or attorney in respect of any investigation into the allegations of racism at the specified school n or around 4 November 2024; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, will she furnish the member with a copy of such letter(s) of appointment;
- (4) whether she will furnish Ms C Jordaan with copies of any minutes of meetings, records, correspondence or notes in relation to the abovementioned report or any other documentation relevant to the investigation referred to above; if not, why not; if so, on what date will such documentation be made available?

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##### **Response**

The MEC for Education in Gauteng has confirmed that the investigation into allegations of racism at Pretoria High School for Girls was initiated by him in terms of section 9 of the Gauteng School Education Act, 1995 (Act No. 6 of 1995) and Mdladlamba Attorneys Inc was appointed pursuant to a supply chain management process to conduct the investigation in terms of a written terms of reference.

Neither the Minister of Basic Education nor the Department of Basic Education participated in the investigation and decision-making related thereto.

Requests for copies of the written terms of reference, appointment letter, the investigation report and other documentation relating to the abovementioned investigation should therefore be directed to the MEC for Gauteng, as per section 92(3)(b) of the Constitution and Rule 134 (5)(b) of the National Assembly Rules.

In respect of this matter, the Minister of Basic Education has been on record to say the following:

“Schools are meant to be places of safety for both learners and staff. The ongoing reports of discrimination and racism in our schools require the partnership between the national government, provincial governments and public schools as represented by their school governing bodies (SGBs) to be strong. This also requires cool heads and impeccable leadership.

Discrimination in our schools should never be used as a political tool. Not only would this practice be dangerous, but it would also erode trust in the public schooling system.

Critically, South Africa comes from a past of racial segregation, which played itself out glaringly in the education system. Thirty years into our democracy, policymakers should ensure that race is not weaponised in places of learning. We should at all times strive to manage incidents of discrimination in our schools in a way that isn't vindictive and punitive, but rather in pursuit of lawful actions and restorative solutions.

We must choose reconciliation and support over retribution; dignity over humiliation; vulnerability over aggression; and unity over division.

Incidents concerning allegations of racism at various schools across the country over recent years – culminating more recently in the widely reported struggles between the governing body of Pretoria High School for Girls (PHSG) and the Gauteng Education Department and its MEC – offer hard but valuable lessons on how our schooling

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system should respond to allegations of discriminatory conduct by learners and educators in our schools.

Where allegations of racism arise at a school level, they need to be handled sensitively, timeously, lawfully and transparently. If these situations are allowed to play out acrimoniously in public and remain unresolved for long periods, and if public schools or provincial education departments act prematurely without proper investigation or due process, we undermine efforts to create an enabling school environment for quality teaching and learning.”