

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 2588.

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2588. Mr R A P Trollip (ActionSA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:

- (1) With reference to the critical conditions at a certain school (name and details furnished) in KwaZulu-Natal, where teaching and learning have been halted since 22 April 2025 due to a lack of functional ablution facilities and substandard infrastructure, what urgent steps will her department take to (a) ensure the immediate provision of clean and functional ablution facilities for learners, (b) facilitate the resumption of teaching and learning at the specified school and (c) investigate and rectify the substandard classroom renovations allegedly conducted by a contractor appointed by the provincial department;
- (2) whether she has engaged with and/or directed the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education to address the legitimate concerns of the parents and community protesting the conditions at the school; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (3) whether she will institute an investigation into the contractor appointed for infrastructure upgrades at the school; if not, why not; if so, what measures will be taken to hold them accountable if any wrongdoing is found?

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Response

(1) The Minister of Basic Education has not been formally made aware of the situation at Matiwane Primary School in KwaZulu-Natal. The Honourable Member is advised that, in terms of the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996), read with the Government Immovable Asset Management Act, 2007 (Act No. 19 of 2007), the provision, maintenance and upgrading of public school infrastructure, including ablution facilities and classroom renovations, as well as the functioning of public schools, fall under the executive authority of the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Education in KwaZulu-Natal.

That said, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) is aware of broader infrastructure challenges in the province and continues to work closely with Provincial Education Departments (PEDs), including the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZN DoE) to improve the planning, delivery and oversight of infrastructure projects. Where necessary, the DBE provides support through conditional grants such as the Education Infrastructure Grant (EIG) and the Sanitation Appropriate for Education (SAFE) initiative, within the constraints of national budget allocations and provincial implementation capacity.

(2) While the Minister of Basic Education does not have direct executive authority over infrastructure delivery in provinces, she remains committed to engaging PEDs in cases where urgent learner safety concerns are brought to her attention. In this instance, the Minister of Basic Education will formally write to the MEC for Education in KwaZulu-Natal to request a detailed update on the current situation at Matiwane Primary School, including steps being taken to restore safe and functional teaching and learning conditions. The DBE stands ready to provide support, where appropriate, to facilitate the resumption of schooling.

(3) The appointment and management of contractors for school infrastructure projects is a function of the responsible PED. Where there are allegations of substandard work or non-performance by a contractor, it is the responsibility of the relevant PED to investigate, enforce contract terms and, where necessary, refer matters for disciplinary or legal action.

Nonetheless, the DBE continues to work with provinces to strengthen accountability mechanisms for infrastructure procurement and implementation. This includes support for uniform norms and standards, improved infrastructure planning tools and more

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effective contract management. Where systemic underperformance is detected, the Minister engages provincial leadership to seek urgent corrective action.

The Minister of Basic Education and the DBE remain committed to ensuring that all learners have access to a safe and dignified learning environment. Strengthening school infrastructure, particularly in under-resourced communities, requires coordinated efforts across all levels of government. The DBE will continue to prioritise oversight, collaboration and technical support to ensure that no learner is left behind due to inadequate school infrastructure.