

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 2865.**

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**2865. Ms P P Mngadi (MK) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

**[666] [Question submitted for oral reply now placed for written reply because it is more than quota (Rule 137(8))]**

Whether it falls within the mandate of her department to ensure that Grade R educators are paid on time; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what (a) concrete systems will she implement to guarantee that such failures do not continue and (b) accountability measures will be implemented against officials who have allowed the specified crisis to persist?

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##### **Response**

The responsibility for the payment of Grade R educators employed by the state at public schools lies with the respective Provincial Education Departments (PEDs), as they are the Head of PEDs are the employers of educators in state-funded posts at public schools in terms of section 3 of the Employment of Educators Act. The national Department of Basic Education (DBE) does not employ educators at public schools and therefore does not manage payroll functions or post establishments at the provincial level.

However, the DBE has a constitutional and legislative mandate to provide oversight and support in respect of provinces in fulfilling their responsibilities. This includes monitoring provincial compliance with policies and standards.

**(a)** In response to recent payment delays, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal, the Minister of Basic Education has directed the DBE to intensify its oversight mechanisms and improve coordination between national and provincial structures. For the first time, under the Minister's leadership, the DBE has conducted a comprehensive financial analysis of all nine provinces to better understand fiscal pressures and spending patterns, including those affecting compensation of employees.

The DBE, as part of its policy formulation and monitoring mandate, will continue to monitor and ensure that any occurrences of payment delays are not a result of policy gaps or lack of compliance with existing policies.

**(b)** The Minister has taken decisive steps to address financial risks, including in KwaZulu-Natal, where she has initiated meetings with the Provincial Treasury, National Treasury, and the provincial Department of Education to stabilise the situation.

The Minister of Basic Education has made it clear that provinces must prioritise teaching and learning in the allocation of their equitable share funds. Vanity projects and administrative inefficiencies cannot come at the expense of frontline education delivery.

On 26 May 2025, the Council of Education Ministers (CEM), chaired by the Minister, convened with all MECs and Heads of Department to address these financial issues. As a result, all provinces have been requested to submit financial recovery plans for review at the next CEM meeting. The DBE will assess these plans and provide technical guidance and oversight to ensure they are credible, implementable and learner centred.

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Any matters related to accountability measures and consequence management are within the purview of the Heads of PEDs and must therefore be raised with the relevant Heads of PEDs.

The Minister of Basic Education remains committed to working with provinces to ensure that all employees in education, especially those serving in critical roles like Grade R, are supported and paid on time.