

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 32.

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32. Mr M A Maimane (BOSA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:

What (a) is the status of the roll-out of Coding and Robotics as mandatory subjects for Grades 1 to 9 and (b) progress has been made in this regard to date?

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Response

Given the costs of rolling out Coding and Robotics as a subject (including the high costs for educator development and training and information technology infrastructure equipment and related maintenance), Coding and Robotics cannot for the foreseeable future be rolled out as a mandatory subject for all learners. Therefore, the roll-out of Coding and Robotics as a subject must be progressively realised in line with available resources and the readiness of our schooling system.

While Coding and Robotics is an important subject to allow learners to acquire knowledge and skills regarding coding and autonomous systems, the key focus of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) is currently on improving literacy and numeracy in the Foundation Phase. If learners are unable to read for meaning and count by the time they reach Grade 4, they will face significant barriers when taking Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics-related subjects, including Coding and Robotics. It is therefore important that the limited resources available to our schooling system are first focused on improving learning outcomes in the Foundation Phase before we can expand the roll-out of Coding and Robotics as a subject.

To ensure that Coding and Robotics can be offered as a subject where there is capacity to do so, the following progress has been made to date:

- Approval of the curriculum: Based on Umalusi inputs and public comments, and following the initial draft Coding and Robotics Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), a reference/review team, including DBE and provincial officials, as well as experts from Higher Education Institutions, reviewed the curriculum from November 2022 to December 2023 and identified several issues, including misalignment between grades and phases, misconceptions about coding and robotics, and content overload. The reference/review team addressed these concerns, focusing on conceptual and theoretical underpinnings, alignment with literature, alignment and progression across phases, affordability of resources, and articulation with related subjects and qualifications. The final reviewed and reconceptualised curriculum was resubmitted to Umalusi for appraisal and was approved by Umalusi after which it was gazetted and published on the DBE website in June 2024.
- Implementation in primary schools: Coding and Robotics will be made available for implementation in primary schools (where there is capacity to do so) on a grade-by-grade basis from 2026. This structured approach ensures that no learning gaps occur while also allowing for the gradual and sustainable resourcing of schools, particularly in respect of the provision of digital devices for learners from Grade 4 onwards. The orientation of Foundation Phase

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(Grades R-3) provincial and district officials was completed in May 2024. In October 2024, the DBE trained a core group of Foundation Phase subject advisors from all provinces to form a National Training Team. The training of Foundation Phase subject advisors commenced in January 2025, beginning with Gauteng and the Eastern Cape, and will continue until March 2025, covering all nine provinces. Once the provincial training has been completed, subject advisors will be available to train educators from April 2025 onwards.

- **Versioning of Foundation Phase CAPS Documents:** The versioning process has started and is an ongoing process until the CAPS document is available in all official languages. This will cater for Mother Tongue-based Bilingual Education (MTbBE).
- **Development of Lesson Plans for Grades R-3:** This is at an advanced stage and will be finalised in the new financial year. These lesson plans serve as exemplars to be used in classrooms but should be adapted based on the specific context of the learners. These lesson plans will also be versioned into all official languages.
- **Development of Learning and Teaching Support Materials:** In November 2024, publishers submitted Foundation Phase Coding and Robotics Learner Books and Teacher Guides for screening and quality assurance. Approved books will be catalogued for purchase by the schools. The screening process is at an advanced stage of finalisation and the catalogue should be available in the 2025/2026 financial year for schools to place their orders.