

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 394.

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394. Mr M B Blose (EFF) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:

Given the current challenges facing the education sector, including overcrowded classrooms and insufficient resources, what plans will she implement to improve school infrastructure?

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Response

Infrastructure in the sector is implemented primarily through three programmes. These are as follows:

- The **Provincial Infrastructure Programme** is implemented by **Provincial Departments of Education**. The current allocation on the programme amounts to R14b and a further R49b is allocated over the 2025/26 MTEF to address infrastructure challenges, including overcrowding and related infrastructure challenges. The Provincial Infrastructure Programme is focused on
 - New and replacement schools;
 - Maintenance;
 - Repairs and renovations; and
 - Upgrading and rehabilitation.
- In **2011**, the Department of Basic Education launched the **Accelerated School Infrastructure Delivery Initiative (ASIDI)**. This programme focused on the following:
 - Appropriate building for **schools made entirely of inappropriate materials**;
 - Appropriate water supply to schools with **no water**;
 - Appropriate sanitation at schools with **no toilets**; and
 - Appropriate electricity supply to schools with **no electricity supply**.
- In **2018**, the Department of Basic Education launched the **Sanitation Appropriate For Education (SAFE)** initiative. This programme focused on appropriate sanitation at **schools dependent on basic pit toilets**.

Both the ASIDI and SAFE programmes are funded from the School Infrastructure Backlog Grant. The ASIDI and SAFE programmes will be coming to an end at the end of the 2025/26 financial year and the provincial programme will remain the main infrastructure programme for the sector.

Further, in a bid to address the identified and still growing infrastructure backlogs, the Department of Basic Education, together with Provincial Education Departments, is working with National Treasury to access additional funding from the Budget Facility

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for Infrastructure (BFI). The BFI is a budget reform initiative established to support priority infrastructure projects through a more rigorous project planning, appraisal and selection process. The intention is to support enhanced project outcomes and improved value for money to government. To date, two provinces have been successful in accessing additional funding through the BFI, namely Gauteng and Western Cape. In 2026/27, several bid windows will be open for submissions and the sector will submit for the remaining seven provinces.

Following successful implementation of Classrooms Self-Built Programme in Gauteng, the sector consulted National Treasury for approval to transfer the Education Infrastructure Grant to public schools to fast-track the building of additional classrooms in line with guidelines issued by the Department of Basic Education. In this programme, education districts experiencing learner admission and overcrowding pressures are identified and supported.

Once the identified sanitation projects have been completed under the SAFE Initiative, the Department of Basic Education will continue working collaboratively with Provincial Education Departments to ensure that pit latrine toilets at public schools not identified under the SAFE initiative are appropriately and urgently replaced with suitable sanitation facilities.

To assist the basic education sector to eradicate pit latrine toilets in public schools not covered by the SAFE initiative, we have launched a Safe Schools app – a digital platform developed and donated by Vodacom South Africa to empower users to report unsafe toilets in schools, monitor progress on their removal and provide real-time feedback on infrastructure improvements. The Vodacom Safe Schools App is currently live and can be accessed via the following link: <https://safeschools.gov.za/>.

By enabling the public to crowd-source information about unsafe toilets not identified for the purposes of the SAFE initiative, PEDs, together with the DBE, will have access to current data necessary to inform budgeting, planning and implementation of school sanitation projects.

Finally, the sector has approved and is implementing the infrastructure 10-point plan to address planning and implementation shortcomings that were identified and improve the delivery of infrastructure. The 10-point plan includes a simplified planning regime; the use of the Education Facilities Management System (EFMS) as the main source of data; standardised concept designs, specifications and contracts; the use of framework contracts and management contractors to fast track procurement processes; the use of local subcontracting and fit for purpose contracts; monitoring of projects over the entire life cycle; and restricting defaulting service providers.

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The Department of Basic Education remains committed to working with all stakeholders to ensure that schools are well-maintained and provide a safe, conducive learning environment for all learners.