

**NATIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 82.**

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**82. Mr K Ceza (Mpumalanga: EFF) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

***Refurbishment of School infrastructure***

(a) When will refurbishment of the dilapidated infrastructure at LD Moetanalo Secondary School in Extension 06 in Mhluzi township in Steve Tshwete Local Municipality in the Nkangala District Municipality in Mpumalanga be done, (b) when will her department build Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDs) in each ward to ensure (i) the formalised capacitation, (ii) security and (iii) qualifications of individuals who operate informal ECDs across different townships and/or rural areas in the country and (c) what are the specific time frames for such undertakings?

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### **QUESTION 82.**

#### **Response**

(a) and (c)

In terms of the South African Schools Act, read with the Government Immovable Asset Management Act, provinces are responsible for the provisioning, management and maintenance of public school infrastructure.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) is responsible for setting norms and standards for public school infrastructure. The DBE provides support and oversight to PEDs and, in some instances, implements projects through programmes such as the Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative (ASIDI) and Sanitation Appropriate for Education (SAFE) initiative.

As MECs for Education and their respective Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) are responsible for the provisioning of public school infrastructure in their respective provinces but do not report directly to the Minister and Deputy Minister of Basic Education or the DBE, heightened collaboration and oversight between the national and provincial education departments is required to ensure that national priorities are effectively implemented at the provincial level. PEDs should not be returning funds to the National Treasury while public school infrastructure backlogs persist.

The question therefore falls under the executive authority of the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Education in Mpumalanga. The Honourable Member is kindly requested to refer the question to the MEC for Education in Mpumalanga as per section 92(3)(b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 and Rule 134 (5)(b) of the National Assembly Rules.

(b) and (c)

The provision of infrastructure to ECD centres is a provincial competency, However, the DBE has developed an ECD strategy with a view of achieving universal access by 2030.

The immediate priority will be to support existing Early Learning Programmes (ELPs), by maintaining and upgrading community-based centres.

In the medium term, the strategy involves coordination with other government and non-government partners to identify, repurpose and lease unused/underutilised government facilities. It also identifies integrating new ELP infrastructure into plans for new schools and identifying schools with sufficient land or additional space on their premises, which can be repurposed or refurbished to accommodate children below 5 years of age.

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The long-term strategy is to increase the construction of purpose-built ELPs and forming partnerships with civil society and the private sector. The DBE will also be at the forefront of ensuring coordination around a clear ELP infrastructure vision for achieving equitable access and universal coverage. This will include fostering collaboration with key national departments such as COGTA, DHS, National Department of Public Works, Department of Rural Development and Land Reform and Department of Health, and engaging local municipalities through COGTA and SALGA on how local government can fulfil their mandate regarding the provision of ECD infrastructure.

The Children's Act currently specifies that the minimum qualification requirement of an individual operating an ECD programme is skills training in early childhood development. Given this, the 2021 ECD Census indicated that more than half of ECD practitioners in ECD programmes do not yet have an NQF Level 4 qualification (equivalent to the completion of secondary education). The ECD Human Resource Development Task Team is in the process of developing a strategy to support the articulation of flexible pathways for ECD practitioners to improve the quality of their teaching through contextually relevant training and upskilling programmes. The Strategy will be published later this year, along with a costed implementation plan.