

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 58.

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58. . Ms N R Mashabela (EFF) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:

- (1) What are the full relevant details of any measures that have been put in place by her department recently to prevent acts of violence in schools;
- (2) whether there is any cogent policy in place that deals with the issue of safety and security in schools; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

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Response

EFF Parliamentary Question 2024 - Safety in Education

1. What are the full relevant details of any measures that have been put in place by her department recently to prevent acts of violence in schools?

A. Safety and Security at schools

Provincial Education Departments have taken the following measures in strengthening the security services at schools, as means to curb violence in schools:

I. Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) has collaborated with the Department of Community Safety, in implementing the School Patrollers project which provides security services in No-Fee paying schools. GDE has further deployed armed security guards at 75 “hotspot schools”.

II. The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) collaborated with the City of Cape Town and established the School Resource Officer Initiative. The WCED has deployed 64 School Resource Officers to 32 schools located in the Cape Town metro.

III. The Free State Department has funded the appointment of security guards at ten SMART schools.

IV. The Eastern Cape Department of Education has appointed 120 school safety patrollers and 120 Security Assistants that have been deployed across the province through the EPWP Social Sector Grant. The Nelson Mandela Metro received 30 School Safety Patrollers in 30 Schools and 262 Security Assistants in 131 Schools.

V. The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education partnered with the Department of Community Safety and appointed 2758 School Safety Volunteers distributed across the twelve (12) districts.

VI. The North-West Department of Education has appointed security guards in all special schools and some technical schools.

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VII. The Mpumalanga Department of Education has provided funding for security services to some schools within the provinces.

VIII. The Limpopo Department of Education has appointed security guards in 93 schools throughout the province.

B. School Safety District Support Intervention in Gauteng: Sedibeng East & West

The DBE in collaboration with Gauteng Department of Education implemented the School Safety District Support Intervention in Gauteng, Sedibeng East and West Districts from the 3rd to the 5th of June 2024. The intervention comprised of a Local Stakeholder engagement meeting comprising of partner departments, local municipality and civil society organisations, which was convened on the 3rd of June 2024. A total of 52 people participated in the meeting and stakeholders agreed to plan and implement school safety related programmes jointly in Sedibeng schools.

On 4th-5th June 2024, the DBE convened a workshop at Quest Conference Estate in Vanderbijlpark, which covered the National School Safety Framework (NSSF), the Protocol on the Reporting and Management of Sexual Abuse and Harassment in Schools, the Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy, The Prevention and Management of Bullying in Schools, including cyberbullying, Psychosocial Support Programme, as well as the Procedures of Learner Discipline in schools and Disaster Risk Management. On day one, a total of 184 people (School principals, SGB members and School Safety Officers) attended the workshop, and on day two, a total of 188 people (School principals, SGB members and School Safety Officers) people from 52 schools and partner departments also attended the workshop.

C. Partnership Protocol between the Department of Basic Education and the South African Police Service

The Department has an established Protocol with SAPS to address crime and violence in schools. The Protocol has enabled all schools to be linked to their local police stations, SAPS to conduct searches and seizures in schools and conduct crime awareness campaigns in schools. Regularly, schools work with SAPS and local community police forums and social workers to address violent incidents such as gangsterism, bullying, drug abuse and the carrying of dangerous weapons in schools in schools.

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Constantly, searches and seizures of illegal drugs and dangerous weapons are done in schools. However, these searches and seizures are only done if there is reasonable suspicion of violence in the school.

This protocol is currently being reviewed and updated.

D. District Monitoring of School Safety Programmes

The DBE monitored the implementation of the NSSF and other school safety programmes in 20 districts across five provinces: Eastern Cape, Western Cape, Gauteng, Limpopo, and KwaZulu-Natal within the first two quarters of the financial year, April to June and July to September 2024.

The table below indicates the districts monitored per province:

Quarter 1 2024:

Province	District Name	Dates
Eastern Cape	Amathole West	20 May 2024
	Amathole East	21 May 2024
	OR Tambo Coastal	22 May 2024
	Joe Gqabi	24 May 2024
Gauteng	Tshwane South	30 May 2024
	Tshwane North	30 May 2024
	Tshwane West	31 May 2024
Western Cape	Eden & Central Karoo	10 June 2024
	Overberg	12 June 2024
	Cape Winelands	13 June 2024

Quarter 2 2024:

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Province	District Name	Dates
Limpopo	Mopani East	4 September 2024
	Mopani West	30 July 2024
	Capricorn North	31 July 2024
Gauteng	Johannesburg South	31 July 2024
	Johannesburg Central	01 August 2024
	Johannesburg East	02 August 2024
Kwa-Zulu Natal	Ilembe	20 August 2024
	Umgungundlovu	21 August 2024
	Zululand	22 August 2024
	King Cetshwayo	23 August 2024

E. **Integrated Online Safety Programme**

The DBE has partnered with the United Nations' Children's Fund, the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies, Department of Social Development, Google and AGAPE Youth Movement in rolling out the Integrated Online Safety Programme in schools. The programme is made up of content emanating from the Cyber-Safety Toolkit, Online Safety Curriculum Guideline from grade 8-12, Online Child Protection Toolkit and the Standard Operating Procedures for Child Online Safety. The main purpose of the programme is to empower officials, educators, learners and school governing bodies on the understanding of the scope and extent of online child safety and cyberbullying, as well as inform them on the mitigating programmes against online abuse or harms, and various reporting channels for online abuse.

In 2024, the DBE has trained provincial and district officials, as well as educators from 22 schools in the North-West Province on the Online Safety Integrated Programme. Furthermore, the DBE partnered with the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies, as well as the Provincial Education Departments in Limpopo and

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Gauteng conducted awareness sessions on cyber-safety and cyberbullying in schools. These awareness sessions took place at Wordsworth High School, Gauteng Province on the 10th of April 2024, and also at Bela-Bela Secondary School and Mapoe Secondary School Limpopo Province on the 18th of April 2024. The awareness sessions were anchored around the Cyber-Safety Awareness Toolkit. A total of 300 learners were reached throughout the awareness sessions.

F. DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT – SPECIAL SCHOOLS ASSESSMENT

In June 2024, the team comprising of DBE, National Disaster Risk Management Centre and SANTAM with the Northern Cape Education Department assessed the eight public special schools in the province. Upon completion of the assessments, SANTAM Insurance donated Fire Systems and extinguishers in the schools including upgrade of the hydrants in some schools.

G. PROVINCIAL INITIATIVES

- Gauteng Education Department has deployed 5387 school patrollers and security guards to 75 schools.
- The Western Cape Education Department has deployed 90 School Resource Officers to 45 schools
- Eastern Cape has deployed 262 Security Assistances in 131 schools in Nelson Mandela Bay, 156 Security Guards in Buffalo City, OR Tambo Inland-262 Security Guards in 131 schools.
- The North-West Education Department had deployed security guards in 32 special schools, 11 Mega fam schools and 04 technical schools
- KZN Circular 53 of 2024 was issued encouraging schools to re-establish School Safety Committees and to link all of them with Police Stations post the completion of SGB Elections.

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2. **Whether there is any cogent policy in place that deals with the issue of safety and security in schools; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?**

A. **Regulations for Safety Measures at all Public Schools 2001**

The Department has the Regulations for Safety Measures at all Public Schools 2001 in place as means to ensure that schools are safe learning environments. The regulations have declared that all schools are alcohol and drug free zones, thus no persons may enter school premises under the influence of alcohol and illicit drugs , or in possession of dangerous weapons. In addition, the Regulations also allow principals, police officers and delegated officers to conduct searches and seizures of illicit drugs and dangerous weapons, if there is reasonable suspicion.

B. **Policy Framework for the Regulations of Drug Abuse by learners in Public Schools and Public Further Education and Training Institutions 2002**

In supporting the regulations on safety measures , the Department further introduced the Policy Framework for the Regulations of Drug Abuse by learners in Public Schools and Public Further Education and Training Institutions 2002, which advocates for preventative methods on alcohol and drug abuse to be implemented through the introduction of Life Orientation Curriculum, and also for support and care to be provided to addicted learners so that they can be rehabilitated. The policy framework further makes provision for drug testing in schools to be conducted in schools, but only if there is reasonable suspicion.

C. **National School Safety Framework (NSSF)**

The DBE has also developed the NSSF which is a guiding framework in addressing all forms of violent incidences in schools. The NSSF empowers **schools to identify and manage all safety threats in schools, establish school safety committees comprising of stakeholders such as teachers**, police officers, school governing body members and learner representative council members. Furthermore, The NSSF

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also empowers schools to **develop incident reporting mechanisms**, establish collaborations with external stakeholders such as the South African Police Service (SAPS), the Department of Social Development and civil society organisations, develop school safety plans and policies to respond to safety challenges of drug abuse in schools.

Through the implementation of the NSSF, access control measures in schools are strengthened and awareness programmes on social ills by partner departments and civil society organisations are implemented in schools.

The DBE together with its partner the Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute further developed an NSSF digital training course for school communities, to enable them to access the training anywhere in the country. The course has been accredited by the South African Council of Educators. As a result, educators receive 15 Professional Development Points (PDP) for successfully completing the course.

From April 2023 to March 2024, **80 700** people completed the course (officials, school safety officers, School Governing Body Members).