NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 1218.

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1218. . Ms D C Christians (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:

(1) Given the significant budget cuts that have impacted the basic education sector across the provinces, what were the key outcomes of the special meetings of the Council of Education Ministers that took place in September 2024 to address the budget cuts;

(2) what (a) implications will the specified budget cuts have on teacher posts across the Republic, (b) total number of teacher posts will be cut in each province as a result of these budgetary constraints and (c) measures will her department implement to address the overpopulation of learners in affected schools;

(3) how does her department plan to support school governing bodies, particularly those in disadvantaged schools, who now face the challenge of having to supplement funding in order to retain teachers?

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Response

(1) The Minister, through the Council of Education Ministers (CEM), has resolved to approach the National Treasury to discuss the impact of budget cuts on the provision of quality education. This aims to present a proposal to request additional funding urgently to address the immediate crisis and to make long-term proposals regarding the funding of basic education, including ways to insulate education budgets from the negative effects of austerity measures.

(2) (a) As at the time of this response, only the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) had implemented the reduction of the educator post basket. Six other Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) who had also finalised their post-declaration processes elected to retain the post baskets (same number of posts declared in 2024) for 2025. The last two, which have yet to finalise their consultation processes, the Eastern Cape and the Northern Cape, have also proposed the retention of the post baskets declared in 2024 for 2025.

(b) Only 2 407 posts will not be filled, all in the WCED.

(c) The WCED is working to minimise the impact of educator post cuts, particularly in poorer schools that cannot raise additional funds to augment the posts allocated by the State. The focus will be on the efficient and optimal use of allocated resources to improve aspects such as timetabling, teaching time allocation, and the utilisation of classroom space. The provisioning of additional support to teachers, such as administrative support, will also release more time for teachers to focus on teaching.

(3) As indicated above, the Minister will, in addition to broader sectoral efforts to secure additional funding, support efforts as implemented in each of the PEDs to support schools to mitigate the impact of educator post cuts, especially the WCED. This will mainly focus on the efficient and optimal utilisation of the allocated posts. Some of the measures will include the efficient management of the placement of educators declared, the efficient management of leave and, in particular, short-term and long-term incapacity leave, and the timeous filling of allocated posts that become vacant.