

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 156.

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156. Dr D C Christians (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:

Given the critical impact of the mismatch between learners' home language and the Language of Learning and Teaching, particularly in Quintile 1–3 schools, (a) what specific (i) timelines and (ii) measurable outcomes has her department put in place for rolling out the Mother-Tongue Bilingual-Based Education programme and (b) how will her department (i) monitor the programme's impact on literacy and numeracy performance and (ii) ensure teachers are adequately trained to implement bilingual instruction effectively?

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Response

(a)(i) The Mother Tongue-based Bilingual Education (MTbBE) programme is being rolled out in phases, subject to the availability of resources and based on where the need for MTbBE has been identified. The MTbBE programme initially applied only to English and Afrikaans learners in the Intermediate Phase but is being extended to include all official languages of South Africa. The phased rollout has continued from January 2025.

In the 2025 school year, the DBE is undertaking the development of Learning and Teaching Support Materials for Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST) subjects for Grade 4, as well as the orientation of identified Grade 4 educators in respect of MTbBE methodologies. The DBE is also undertaking the distribution of MTbBE LTSM.

(ii) The following measurable outcomes have been put in place by the DBE for the roll-out of the MTbBE programme:

1. Subject focus and rollout scope: By the end of 2025, MTbBE pedagogy will have been implemented in Mathematics and Natural Science and Technology for identified public schools in Quintiles 1-5. The DBE is monitoring (i) the number of identified public schools that are implementing MTbBE methodologies in these subjects in Grade 4; (ii) the number of identified educators who are trained on such methodologies; and (iii) the percentage of identified public schools that receive MTbBE LTSM.
2. Data on language profiles of public schools: The DBE has used e-forms, distributed through Circular S18 of 2024 (Principal and Teacher forms), to collect data on the language profile of public schools. This data is critical for planning and implementation of the MTbBE programme.
3. Translation and legal verification of Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs): The ATPs for Grade 4 Mathematics and Natural Science and Technology have undergone translation, versioning and have been legally verified by Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB). This was completed in December 2024.
4. Translation and legal verification of workbooks: Similarly, the Grade 4 Workbooks for Mathematics and Natural Science and Technology have been translated, versioned and verified by PanSALB.
5. Upload of ATPs and workbooks: The Grade 4 Mathematics and Natural Science and Technology ATPs and Workbooks/Worksheets have been uploaded to the DBE's website for access by schools. This process will continue, with uploads scheduled for the next term.

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(b)(i) The impact of the MTbBE programme on literacy and numeracy outcomes will be monitored through a dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) programme. M&E specialists and project management experts have been contracted to support this work.

The overall monitoring of learner performance will be carried out through Subject Committees, Teacher Development and Curriculum Management (TDCM), and provincial engagements, as well as reports from the Heads of Education Departments Committee (HEDCOM) on learner performance.

(ii) A number of measures have been taken by the DBE to ensure that educators are supported to give effect to the MTbBE programme, namely:

- The curriculum for Grade 4 Mathematics and Natural Science and Technology, as stipulated in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), has remained unchanged. The same ATPs that educators have been using since 2014 are now available in all official languages, without any alterations to the content. This process ensures alignment with section 6(1) and section 29(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, which support the use of all official languages in education.
- Curriculum Specialists in Mathematics and Natural Science and Technology, who lead educator support, were responsible for the translation and versioning of the MTbBE LTSM. Educator support will continue through subject committee meetings and regular weekly sessions with District-based Curriculum Advisors.
- The pedagogy of bilingualism, which educators have been using since 2014, is now formally supported through the availability of ATPs and workbooks in all official languages. This effort is seen as a significant step in promoting language parity within the education system.
- Additionally, Mother Tongue-based Reading Literacy (MTbRL) strategies have been developed to support reading improvement in African languages.

Further to the above, the DBE is developing a teacher development programme for both pre-service and in-service educators to strengthen educators' capacity to use bi/multilingual pedagogies to promote deep, meaningful learning in the classroom.

The core objectives of the teacher development programme are to:

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- Normalise translanguaging and multilingual practices as part of everyday pedagogy;
- Introduce and embed principled multilingual pedagogies, including:
 - Learning theories and approaches to lesson planning in multilingual contexts;
 - Functional translation/versioning, dictionary use and terminology development; and
 - Bi/multilingual teaching and assessment strategies in specific learning areas; and
- Equip educators with multilingual discourse and terminology in Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST) focused subjects.