

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 5023.**

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**5023. Mr T P Mogale (EFF) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

What (a) number of township and rural schools provide Afrikaans as a second language, (b) are the reasons that her department does not encourage the adoption of other African languages as second additional languages in the specified schools and (c) amount is spent on the procurement of Afrikaans textbooks compared to other indigenous languages?

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#### Response

(a) A total of 193 township and rural schools currently provide Afrikaans as a Second Additional Language (SAL).

(b) The Department of Basic Education (DBE) does not discourage the adoption of African languages as additional languages. On the contrary, several measures are in place to elevate the status of African languages to be on par with English and Afrikaans:

- Through the Incremental Implementation of African Languages (IIAL) policy, schools are required to offer an African language, thereby enabling learners to select an African language instead of Afrikaans.
- Working with strategic partners such as Nal'ibali, the DBE provides texts that reflect authentic African culture, increasing learner interest and uptake of African languages.
- Instructional material limitations remain a challenge. Textbooks, workbooks, dictionaries, and learning aids in African languages are limited. Publishers have often been reluctant to develop such materials due to smaller learner enrolments at SAL level. To address this, the DBE has embarked on the development of state-produced African language texts to ensure that resources are authentic and available.
- The BELA Act (2024) requires school governing bodies to consider the language needs, in general, of the broader community in the education districts in which the public schools are situated, as well as considerations of equality and the right to receive education in one's mother tongue. Furthermore, the BELA Act also empowers the Head of a Provincial Education Department to direct a public school to add an additional language of instruction where this is at least:
  - practicable;
  - responsive to the language needs, in general, of the broader community in the education districts in which the public school is situated;
  - in the best interests of learners;
  - consistent with considerations of equality, equity and the right to receive mother tongue education;
  - the changing number of learners who speak the language of learning and teaching at the public school; and

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- the need for effective use of classroom space and resources of the public school.

These measures are aimed at ensuring public schools are inclusive of African language languages.

- Cultural and social preferences in some communities still favour Afrikaans as being associated with greater socioeconomic opportunities. This influences school-level language policies determined by the governing bodies of public schools. To address this, the DBE actively promotes African languages through initiatives such as the Inkosi Albert Luthuli Oral History Competition, which provides platforms for learners to express themselves in their home languages.

In addition, the DBE is progressively advancing mother tongue-based bilingual education, recognising that learning in one's home language, alongside English, improves comprehension, literacy, and overall learning outcomes. This forms part of the broader language-in-education strategy aimed at ensuring that African languages are not only taught as additional subjects but are also developed as languages of teaching and learning in the system.

(c) The DBE is responsible for developing the National Catalogue of Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) for all subjects, including Afrikaans. Provinces then use these catalogues to procure textbooks in line with their own management plans and learner enrolments.

In addition, the DBE provides workbooks for Grades R to 9 to all public schools. In preparation for the 2026 academic year, the DBE has budgeted approximately R34.86 million for the printing and delivery of Afrikaans Language Workbooks for Grades R to 6.

Specific expenditure on the procurement of Afrikaans textbooks as compared to other indigenous languages is managed at provincial level. This information can be sourced from the Provincial Education Departments as part of their annual procurement reporting.

The DBE remains committed to the progressive realisation of multilingualism in schools, recognising that language is central to equity, access and improved learning outcomes.