

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 5694

DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 10/10/2025

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 40/2025

5694. Ms P P Mngadi (MK) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:

With reference to the debacle of non-payment of teacher assistants, what (a) are the (i) names of the officials and (ii) divisions responsible for the failure to comply with the funding agreement and (b) immediate disciplinary or corrective measures has she taken to ensure this catastrophic communication and administrative failure is not repeated in the next payment cycle?

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 5694

Response

(a)(i)–(ii) Responsibility for the recently reported delays in stipend disbursement lies with the administrative divisions within the Department of Basic Education (DBE) responsible for the management, verification and submission of attendance data required for payment authorisation under the Basic Education Employment Initiative (BEEI).

The failure to upload and verify attendance registers within the prescribed timeframe directly affected the ability of the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) to approve payments to the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), which serves as the implementing agent for stipend disbursement. This administrative lapse disrupted the payment process and caused significant delays for Education Assistants and General School Assistants across the country.

As internal consequence management proceedings are currently underway, the DBE is not in a position to release the names of specific officials at this stage until the internal investigation has been completed. The necessary internal investigations are actively in progress to determine individual accountability. This approach ensures that disciplinary action proceeds in a manner consistent with the *Public Service Regulations* and the principles of procedural fairness.

(b) Following extensive engagements between the DBE, the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL), UIF and IDC, an urgent resolution was reached to enable the release of funds. The parties agreed on alternative verification methods that complied with *Public Finance Management Act (PFMA)* requirements. Payments to Education Assistants commenced at 10h00 on 8 October 2025, as announced by the Minister. Beneficiaries using Capitec and FNB received payments the same day, while others received theirs within standard interbank clearing timeframes.

In the immediate term, several corrective measures were implemented to restore functionality and prevent recurrence:

- A joint technical task team comprising representatives from the DBE, DEL and IDC was established to fast-track data verification processes;
- Enhancements to the electronic payment system are underway to improve accessibility, data accuracy and real-time compliance tracking;
- The UIF is reviewing its operational framework to strengthen proactive compliance monitoring;

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 5694

- The DBE has undertaken to submit all compliance documentation, including verified attendance registers ahead of stipulated deadlines; and
- Provinces are encouraged to retain PERSAL and school-based stipend payment mechanisms, which have proven more reliable under provincial control.

In addition to these immediate interventions, the DBE has instituted structural reforms to embed accountability and oversight going forward:

- The BEEI has been added as a standing item in senior management meetings at national and provincial levels to ensure continuous monitoring and escalation of risks;
- A Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the DBE and IDC is being finalised to formalise deliverables, timelines and accountability protocols;
- The BEEI Steering Committee, comprising the DBE, DEL, UIF, IDC and the Presidency, will meet regularly to review progress and ensure compliance with all financial and operational requirements; and
- Automated system reminders will alert schools and provincial offices ahead of reporting deadlines to mitigate late submissions.

Where schools or officials fail to comply with established procedures, consequence management will be enforced decisively in accordance with applicable legal prescripts.

The DBE acknowledges that the delays caused distress and financial hardship to Education Assistants and General School Assistants. The Minister has made it clear that such failures are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Going forward, the DBE remains committed to ensuring that the BEEI operates with efficiency, transparency and compassion, balancing fiscal accountability with the moral imperative to support vulnerable young people whose livelihoods depend on this initiative.

As the Minister has emphasised, *“Accountability must be matched by action. We have taken the necessary corrective steps, and we will continue to strengthen governance to ensure that this never happens again.”*