

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 1888.

DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 19/05/2023

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 18/2023

1888.. Mr S L Ngcobo (IFP) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:

(1) Whether she can give an update on the status of the National Reading Plan (NRP) that was announced by the President of the Republic, Mr M C Ramaphosa during his State of the Nation Address in 2019, which aimed to ensure that every 10-year-old will be able to read for meaning, in light of the fact that four years later provincial education departments' progress reports for 2022-23 indicate that poor planning from the national department coupled with random, uncoordinated reading interventions by some of the provincial education departments and disorganised monitoring and evaluation of the interventions are all drivers of the country's reading crisis; if not, why not; if so,

(2) whether there is a set minimum standard budget for all the nine provinces to ensure that the NRP is a province-wide campaign and that it is not only concentrated in some parts of the province which might lead to uncoordinated activities; if not; what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details of the budget?

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 1888.

Response

(1) The Department of Basic Education, in collaboration with a team of reading experts from civil society organisations, academia, Provincial Education Departments (PEDs), and schools - developed the Integrated National Reading Sector Plan, whose aim was to contribute to the improvement of reading outcomes, especially for learners in primary schools. The Sector Plan was premised on the understanding that sustainable improvements in reading require a comprehensive response, which involves more than just classroom interventions. It was therefore, developed to provide a framework that would allow the Sector to implement comprehensive reading promotion activities. From this plan, provinces went on to develop and implement their contextualised plans, informed by the integrated National Reading Sector Plan.

In its quest to strengthen reading literacy, particularly in the face of the evidence of learning losses, the Department decided to review the Sector Plan as part of bolstering up its response to the current challenges. Further to the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the DBE carried out the *Thrive by Five Index* in Early Childhood Development (ECD), which revealed that a number of children start school not on track with their developmental outcomes; and thereby, not school ready. The review of the strategy therefore, takes into account that when the Sector Plan was conceptualised, ECD was still part of the Department of Social Development. The revised strategy will therefore, give a sharpened focus to improving the teaching and learning of *African Home Languages reading literacy on a large scale, in both the emergent and early grade phases (ECD and Foundation Phase)*.

(2) On the matter pertaining to provincial budgets, the Honourable Member is requested to direct his question to the Members of Executive Council (MECs) as this matter rests within their purview.