

NATIONAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 426.

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**426. Ms M Dlamini (Mpumalanga: EFF) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:
to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

Learner illiteracy

What measures has she put in place to curb the learner illiteracy as a recent report from the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study stipulated that South Africa has the worst reading results?

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Response

The Department of Basic Education (DBE), in collaboration with a team of reading experts from civil society and academia, is reviewing the Integrated Sector Reading Plan. A revised National Reading Literacy Strategy is therefore being developed, and central to it is the need to improve the teaching and learning of African home languages reading literacy on a large scale, in the emergent and early grade phases (Early Childhood Development and Foundation Phase)

The recent transfer of ECD functions to DBE creates an opportunity to improve school-readiness, by helping Early Learning Programmes to become incubators of emergent and early literacy. To this end, we have sourced dedicated funding to empower over 20 000 under-resourced ECD programmes with early learning resources which will include those that foster emergent and early literacy skills.

The revised Strategy will comprise refining policy to explicitly guide the development of reading literacy, with a primary focus on Home Language literacy; Teacher training focused on Home Language reading literacy; provision of culturally relevant and age-appropriate reading resources for both ECD and Early Grades; as well as strengthening collaboration with parents, communities and partners. We will be tracking implementation through strengthening the monitoring, quality assurance, evaluation and feedback loop.

In relation to the utilisation of the data from Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), we will be:

- Initiating an extensive capacity building programme for officials and teachers, which will be facilitated by an expert Technical Advisory Group (TAG).
- The TAG has been assembled to intensively examine the data on reading literacy from PIRLS, Early Learning National Assessments (ELNA), and Systemic Evaluation (SE).
- The TAG will also assist the DBE in implementing a national capacity development programme.
- The purpose of this program is to enhance the knowledge and skills of senior decision-makers at national, provincial, and district levels.
- The ultimate goal is to enable these decision-makers to effectively use the assessment results.