

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 2828.

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INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 29/2022

2828. Mr S L Ngcobo (IFP) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:

In view of the finding by Statistics South Africa that 29,3% of 18-year olds who participated in the General Household Survey had dropped out of school, what are the reasons that absenteeism and dropout rates do not form part of the key performance indicators defined by her department?

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Response

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

In view of the finding by Statistics South Africa that 29,3% of 18-year-olds who participated in the General Household Survey had dropped out of school, what are the reasons that absenteeism and dropout rates do not form part of the key performance indicators defined by her department?

Response:

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) plans for learner participation until they pass the National Senior Certificate-Grade 12. Goals 12 to 13 of the Action Plan to 2024 Towards the realisation of Schooling 2030 respond to improving grade attainment. Goal 12: Improve the grade promotion of learners through Grades 1 to 9 and Goal 13: Improve the access of the youth to Further Education and Training (FET) beyond Grade 9. The DBE has developed policies as per SASA to guide Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) and Districts on learner attendance. The sector has also monitored learner absenteeism through the standardised indicator (Learner absenteeism rate) in the PED Annual Performance Plans (APPs) until 2019.

Furthermore, DBE has assessed the system and identified that learner attendance and dropout is collected through South African School Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS) quarterly. However, it was found that the information is not always completed accurately and also not verified or monitored by policy owners at the circuit and district level. In order to improve this process, the DBE requested provinces to enforce, verify and quality assure the attendance and dropout information as captured and reported on SA-SAMS and also start using SA-SAMS to track and monitor learner attendance and dropout. The DBE also advised provinces to work closely with HoDs from other government departments such as Department of Public Works (DPW) and Department of Social Development to trace learners who dropped-out of the schooling system. For instance, DPW can use workers under Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) to visit homes of those learners that have dropped out of the system. Lastly, the data on learner attendance and dropout will be now collected with learner enrolment statistics which is signed-off by HoDs.

The DBE also conducts extensive analysis of household survey data to monitor long-term trends in dropout rates, and conversely completion rates of various levels of education. In particular, the DBE regularly produces a report that re-analyses each year's General Household Survey, which is administered by Statistics SA. This report measures the numbers and percentages of school-aged children who are not attending school as well as the percentages of youths completing grade 7, grade 9 and grade 12. This report gets published on the DBE website. Household survey data

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is extremely valuable because it contains information about all children, not only those enrolled in the school system. One limitation of household, however, is that there is a time lag between when the survey is administered and when the data is released for analysis.