

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

ORAL REPLY

QUESTION 444.

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444. Mrs D van der Walt (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education to ask the Minister of Basic Education:

Whether, with reference to the 58 instances of rape and 15 murders committed on school premises in the period 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2022, as reported in the latest crime statistics by the SA Police Service, her department has taken any steps to combat such crimes in schools; if not, in each case, why not; if so, what are the relevant details in each case?

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Response

Matters of rape and murder are criminal matters and are dealt with by the South African Police Services (SAPS). Therefore, details about each case of rape and murder happening at schools can be provided by the SAPS.

As the Department of Basic Education we reiterate that unsafe learning environments and exposure to violence reduces the quality of education for all learners. Affected learners may avoid or participate less in class or dropout of school altogether. Learners and educators, including support staff who are exposed to violence are at increased risks of anxiety, psychological stress, and depression. To this end, Department of Basic Education undertakes a quarterly district monitoring exercise on all Safety in Education, Sport & Enrichment in Education and Social Cohesion & Equity in Education programmes. This monitoring exercise is reflected in the Annual Performance Plan (APP), Indicator 5.1.3: Number of districts monitored in the implementation of the National School Safety Framework (NSSF), Social Cohesion, Sport and Enrichment Programmes. In terms of the APP, this indicator is scheduled for monitoring quarterly, targeting the **75** districts per financial year.

The NSSF remains our primary strategic response to school violence. It is a comprehensive approach that coordinates and consolidates all school safety interventions in the sector. The NSSF is based on a social ecological systems model which locates the school within its broader community. It relies on collaboration and partnerships for a more coordinated approach to responding to school violence. The NSSF provides the framework within which:

- All schools have active **school safety committees** and school **safety plans** based on an audit of needs are in place and are reviewed frequently.
- **School perimeter is secured** (fenced) and access controls (guard and/or surveillance) are in place and managed. Infrastructure plans for 2018/19 are informed by the Audit of the Districts' school fencing coverage which highlights the schools that need to be prioritised.
- **School codes of conduct are aligned with the Constitution of South Africa and child-protection legislation**; and is communicated and adopted/ agreed to by all school stakeholders.
- **Corporal punishment is prohibited by law and alternatives on positive discipline** are implemented in all schools.

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- **Protocols are in place to enforce consequence management** timeously and is consistently applied when responding to contraventions that put the learning environment at risk.
- Schools have **systems in place to report** violent incidences and criminal behaviour at local police station, to district and provincial office bearers and SACE.
- Schools have **established relationships with their intergovernmental counterparts:** Departments of Social Development; Health and Justice, to progressively ensure services such as counselling services (SBSTs); medical examinations and access to justice are effective and in the best interest of the child.

For the reporting period 2022/2023, the DBE in conducting monitoring and support in seventy-five (75) districts on the implementation of the NSSF. This includes the functionality of School Safety Committees. Provinces and districts have committed to rolling out training to all schools to ensure that all School Safety Committees are trained, including all school personnel (educators and support staff).