

**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES**

**ORAL REPLY**

**QUESTION 111.**

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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 36/2022**

**111..Mr S F Du Toit (North West: FF Plus) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

***Increasing illiteracy among learners***

What measures are in place to address the ever-increasing illiteracy among learners, keeping in mind the (a) adjustments that were made to the syllabus during the Covid-19 period, (b) school-learning hours that were lost and (c) overcrowding in classrooms?

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##### Response

What measures are in place to address the ever-increasing illiteracy among learners, keeping in mind the (a) adjustments that were made to the syllabus during the Covid-19 period, (b) school-learning hours that were lost and (c) overcrowding in classrooms?

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) is implementing the Integrated National Reading Sector Plan across the nine Provincial Education Departments. Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) report to the DBE twice in a financial year, on progress made in implementing activities in schools that support reading. PEDs have already submitted semester 1 reports on the implementation of activities to improve literacy. PEDs have also developed reading strategies, which outline how literacy levels will be addressed and improved in the early grades of the Foundation Phase. The improvement in *reading with meaning*, is part of the DBE's Annual Performance Plan, and is monitored by DBE officials on a regular basis. The DBE, in collaboration with Languages Curriculum Officials from PEDs and Districts, has just finalised guidelines for teachers on reading methodologies.

a. The Recovery Annual Teaching Plans for Languages provide guidance on the teaching and assessment of reading. The DBE is working with the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) to prepare for the implementation of Home Languages Structured Learning Programme (SLP) in the Foundation Phase in Quintiles 1-3 schools. The SLPs consist of a variety of resources, such as readers, big books, phonics programmes which will help improve literacy.

b. With the loss of teaching time during COVID, the curriculum was trimmed to focus on core content areas. This however, did not entail trimming of any reading and writing activities, which are regarded as core skills that needed to be developed.

c. The Department is addressing the overcrowding in classrooms by building additional classrooms and appointing more teachers. But despite overcrowding, teachers continue to focus on the development of the skill of reading and writing in the Foundation Phase.