**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES**

**THURSDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2021**

***PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES***

The Council met at 14:02.

The House Chairperson: International Relations and Members Support took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayers or meditation.

The House Chairperson: International Relations and Members Support announced that the hybrid sitting constituted a Sitting of the National Council of Provinces.

**QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS CLUSTER 2A - SOCIAL SERVICES**

Question 186:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND

INNOVATION: Thank you, House Chairperson. This is Deputy Minister, Buti Manamela. If it is okay with you I am standing in for the Minister. Is it fine if I can proceed with my

questions? I am also requested the Table to allow me to keep my video off because my network connectivity is not fine. With your permission, Chairperson?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms W Ngwenya): Go ahead, Deputy Minister. You can go ahead.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND

INNOVATION: Okay. Thank you. Just one second. Chairperson, I am trying to navigate through the questions. We were informed that you are going to be starting with Basic Education. Just one second.

*Sepedi:*

MODULASETULO WA NTLO (Moh W Ngwenya): Aowa, Ntate. Kganthe o be o se o itokiši?

*English:*

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND

INNOVATION: I was ready, Chair. But we were just informed that we are going to start with Basic Education. I am trying to navigate through all these questions. This is question 178?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms W NGWENYA): Question 186.

The DEPUY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND

INNOVATION: Okay. That’s fine. Let’s me just get to question

186. Apologies for this, House Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms W Ngwenya): Okay. Continue. Chief Whip can you assist. How long must I wait for the ... [Inaudible?] ...

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE NCOP: Thank you very much, House Chair. Hon Deputy Minister Manamela indicated that he received conflicting messages. In this instance I will suggest that we start with Basic Education, Dr Mhaule, who has been in the House. So, I will suggest that. If Dr Mhaule, Deputy Minister, if she can’t start with Basic Education that will be in order to make that change, House Chair. Thank you, Chair.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION: Hon

House Chair, is Minister Nzimande here. My apologies to you. Maybe with the Deputy Minister, we have thought we are going to share these questions because I was going to arrive a bit late. I am happy to start with the first question and then if you don’t mind we will actually be able to share with the Deputy Minister. On question 186 with your permission can I go ahead.

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE NCOP: House, Chair?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms W Ngwenya): Yes, Chief Whip.

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE NCOP: Yes. The Minister is here and ready, and we can proceed. I think I will no longer stick to earlier suggestion. Thanks.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms W Ngwenya): Okay. Thanks very much, Chief Whip. Hon Minister, the question you are going to answer is question number 186 asked by hon A D Maleka. And your time is five minutes to respond. And I have been informed that hon Maleka will stand in for hon Ngwezi for the last follow up question. Hon Maleka as a follow up question, she is going to be having two minutes. And hon Minister, please respond for four minutes on the question that has been asked by hon Maleka.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION:

Thank you very much, hon House Chair. In the cases of incidences of violence in the universities, I want to say I reported and registered with relevant offices of universities and the SA Police Service. As a matter of fact, the crime statistics that are released by the Minister of Police, they

also include statistics about our universities as well as our Tvet colleges.

Universities in particular have a duty to protect their students and staff as well as our Tvet colleges. And in 2020, I am pleased to say that the Department of Higher Education and Training publishes its public framework to address gender- based violence in the post-school education and training and system. The framework is intended to amongst other things compel institutions to create an enabling environment to ensure the effective implementation of the policy framework actions and programmes, promote the safety of all students and staff by putting in place comprehensive prevention programmes and provide for or refer gender-based violence, GBV, victims to comprehensive specialised support and other assistance.

Universities and Tvet colleges were requested to submit to the department their policies relating to sexual harassment and gender-based violence that harm their institutions. Amongst others to establish whether their institution is adequately resourced dealing with GBV cases reported and unreported whether they were to pick up, also to deal with the safety of students and staff and also reports on the extent of support

they are giving in such instances as well as psychosocial support to survivors of GBV.

I would also like to say, Chair, very quickly that as the Department of Higher Education and Training, we have our own institution called Higher Health, which act as support in promoting health and wellness in all of our institutions.

That’s a matter of fact; we now even have “Maha hamba nge ndlwane” who are actually going from place to places, especially in the rural areas to provide support to health and wellness. I also want to indicate that Higher Health has also been capacitated to be able to respond effectively to incidences of gender-based violence.

And as a matter of fact, despite the economic geographic programme by the work of Higher Health has been so well recognised even outside the country such that even for instance in the rest of the continent, we are being approached by the Higher Education sector as to assist them in establishing a similar mechanism. And on our side as a department as I have said, we do request at all times that we are provided with updates on the extent to which this framework to deal with GBV in particularly is being implemented. Thank you very much, House Chairperson.

Ms A D MALEKA: Thank you, House Chair. Hon Minister, is there any plan on consideration by the department in collaboration with the university management and the Department of Police to undertake a comprehensive audit on the state of security and safety on our universities? Thanks, Chair.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION: Hon

House Chair, I do wish to say that, the department always engages with the SA Police Service in so far as this matters are concerned. But in particular, we encourage our individual institutions to actually do this. But I am also very pleased in answering this question to also indicate that, I have actually asked the University of Zululand to conduct a sector wide, university wide research project to establish the situation which relate to safety and security on our campuses and what are the threats to the safety and security such that that research also I am hope would be able to identify systemic issues and weaknesses that are there and also to identify best practice in terms of some institutions on how we are actually dealing with this matter.

I am hoping that by the middle of next year we will be at least be having a preliminary report so that we can get a comprehensive picture over and above because the information

we are getting now from institutions on how they are implementing this policy. Thanks for that question from hon member.

Mr M NHANHA: Thanks very much, hon Chair. And good afternoon, Minister. Well Minister, I do take your point that as the department you have put in place mechanisms such as Higher Health but you have also made it a requirement to varsities that from time to time they should submit reports to you as to what they are doing about this scourge. Its commendable, Minister, I must say. And as you will know that our young women continue to enjoy an onslaught of gender-based violence in our campuses and this is especially true in Higher Education institutions.

Campus crime is undeniable a serious issue of concern for all current university students, parents of prospective students like myself, campus law enforcement personnel and the community the campus community as a whole. I am sure you will agree with me, Minister, that the biggest problem faced in these campuses is underreporting of these serious crimes and this is a big problem.

Now you will recall in my initial opening remarks I said, I take your point about the mechanisms that you have put in place as the department and what is required of universities. But I am sure you will agree with me, Minister, some of these plans are very good on paper and the biggest challenge becomes the transmitting or communicating of these plans to the end users. In other words, are there any awareness programmes to ensure the ease of reporting of these violence crime on campuses as well as to ensure that all the students ... [Inaudible] ... Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms W Ngwenya): Hon member, remember what I have said, that how many minutes do you have. Hon Minister, can you respond.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION: Yes.

Thank you very much, House Chair. And thanks for that question although the member compressed the question towards the end of his input. I would like to say that, firstly, we need to understand this that what we are dealing with in our institutions is actually part of a wider societal problem. I think it is important that we actually understand that.

Universities and Tvet colleges and other institutions are not islands. They are part of communities that are often infested with crime. That is why one of things that we encourage our institutions to do is to develop relationship with local communities in which their campuses are located because that goes a long way in actually assisting and also to ensure that institutions also are part of as much as is possible in some respect servicing the communities.

The most recent example is that a number of universities, for instance, have been producing their own sanitizers and they have been distributing surplus of these to communities just as part of building the relationship if we are to actually deal with this particular problem.

Also, the other measures that we are implementing is actually to push and invest more in student accommodation. I am still going to be making much more announcement, for instance, on partnership between government and the private sectors to increase student’s accommodation so that we can be able to ensure also that our students are in accommodation that is safe and they are not actually victims of crime.

Apart from the fact that the framework for dealing with gender-based violence in particular, also includes issues of general safety and security awareness in our campus. And if you look at our policy we expect all our institutions to be guided by they do actually emphasised this matter and we do ask for report now and again on such matters. Thanks very much, hon House Chair.

Mr S ZANDAMELA: Thanks, House Chair. Minister, incidents of violence turn to be more prevalent among females than the males’ students in institutions of higher learning even with stronger agenda policies and programmes in place, which method will be taken to ensure that the policies pertaining to the safety and security of female students are actually implemented? Thank you, House Chair.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION: Let

me just say that the way I am understanding the question from the hon member from the EFF has got more to do with what the police are doing. On our side as the department, we actually encourage our institutions to have relations with local police stations as well as police command where they actually have campuses. And all our institutions are doing that.

But also, all our institutions by the way, they have got private security because it is not always possible to be able to get the police as soon as you want them. And then also a relationship is built between that private security as well as with SAPS in order to be able to manage incidents of crime in our institutions. That’s how I can actually say but in so far as what the police are doing generally about this this is a matter that us and the Minister of Police generally. On our side as a government, we work and we seek to build relations together with the police. As a matter of fact, by the way now and again we meet with the top police brass in Tshwane as at headquarters to actually discuss how do we actually had in issues of crime, including gender-based violence in our sector. That’s one of the things that as a Minister, we actually do at least once every year in terms of interacting with the police to look at how we deal with these matters generally at the level of a framework and a strategy. Thank you very much, hon House Chair.

Ms A D MALEKA: Thank you, Chair. And thank hon Minister for your response to the question. Hon Minister, I noticed that there are some universities that have not undertaken safety audit. What is your department doing to assist these universities? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION:

Thank you very much for the question, hon member. I would really appreciate that in instances where the hon member may be aware of, where certain institutions have actually not been able to do what they are supposed do that let those be drawn to my attention.

In so far as we are concerned and the reports that we have all our institutions and even by the way in interacting with University South Africa, which represents the University Vice Chancellors as well as the College Principals Organisation, which represent our Tvet Principals, we do interact with them and get reports that all of them actually do have a framework and strategies to translate our security strategy as well as safety and security measures that needs to be taken in our own campuses. And hon members, if they have got particular institutions they are concern with I invite them to actually approach my office and we will be able to take those matters up. Otherwise thank you very much for the follow up question, hon member.

Question 178:

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION:

Thank you very much, House Chair, and thanks to hon Christians

for the question. I am aware that, unfortunately, the report of the Ministerial Task Team on reviewing of University of South Africa, Unisa, was leaked. I do wish to say, by the way, that I strongly condemn this because I think that was very reckless and irresponsible for whoever leaked that report to do so, because it does not assist us in terms of the normal processes that we normally follow. However, what I wish to say is that much as I cannot be able to respond right now, in terms of some of the issues that may be asked in public about the report, I am studying the report as of now.

Therefore, once I’ve finished studying the report, hon House Chair and hon member, I will then be able, the first step, to engage the University of South Africa, its council in particular around the findings of that report and its recommendations after which, of course, I will also be more than happy to come to the NCOP and present such a report. The aim, by the way, of the review wants look at the operating model of Unisa as an institution, and to review some of the challenges that it is facing. One of the things I’m concerned about, for instance, is the pass rate of the university which is very low. Those are some of the things that I have asked the Ministerial Task Team ... [Inaudible.] ... However, I’m

studying the report, hon House Chair, and I will respond once

I’ve finished studying the report. Thank you very much.

Mr M R BARA: Thank you, House Chairperson. Minister, we understand the fact that the report must be studied and that you then have to follow whatever you think should be the way forward out of it. However, the report in whatever way that it came out it has fundamental issues that it highlights. Now, would you consider an intervention like it’s mentioned in the report, if not, why? But also look at the task team that would investigate and review the Unisa structure as contained in the leaked report. Thank you, House Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION:

Thank you, House Chair and thanks to hon member for the follow-up question. As I have indicated that at this point in time I am not in a position to respond to any specific issues that are being raised in the report of the Ministerial Task Team as I am comprehensively studying the report and I also want that to comprehensively respond to it and be able to actually engage Unisa ... [Inaudible.] ... by the way into saying that. For the benefit of the House and for the benefits of the hon member we don’t just deal with these issues of

governance and other challenges in universities, only when problems arise.

As from 2015, my department has actually set up a system of monitoring university governance through what we call council self-assessment and the annual reports so that we are not caught unaware as much as is possible. And these self- assessment reports that get ... [Inaudible.] ... to us as well as the annual report also give us a sense of being able to get intelligence ahead of time to assess if there any threats to governance and stability to institutions that we actually have. Thank you very much, hon House Chair.

Ms N NDONGENI: Thank you, House Chairperson. Thank you, Minister for your elaboration response. I’m sure the Minister will ... [Inaudible.] ... that whether this leaked report is true or not it has caused the reputational damage to not only the University of South Africa, but also entire higher education sector in South Africa. This, therefore, brings into sharp focus a question, is there any structured an ongoing monitoring of the governance quality of teaching and standard of qualification of the higher education sector by the department and its relevant agencies, if not why not, if so what are the relevant details? Thank you, House Chair.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION:

Thank you very much, House Chair, and thanks for the follow-up question. As I have said that it is very unfortunate that this report has been leaked, but I wouldn’t go to the extent of saying that this has caused reputational damage because in the first instance, it is us, it is myself as the Minister in seeing some of the problems that the institution that I actually commissioned the report, may be there would have been reputational damage if there were leaks about things that are going on there that we were not looking into, but we are looking into. I initiated this particular report. I don’t also think that it is giving any reputational damage necessarily to the sector as whole.

Secondly, as I have said in the answer before we do have ongoing mechanisms that we put in place from 2015, for ongoing monitoring of governance in our own institutions, and also the law, by the way, allows me where there are problems to be able to appoint an independent assessor to investigate and even to put institutions under administration where I feel that things are really getting out of hands ... [Inaudible.] ... quality assurance all our universities, all our universities their programmes are accredited by the council for Higher Education Department, which is an independent body that I have set up

which reports to the Minister, but also engages with institutions, but independently is able to evaluate and assess the quality of the programmes that are offered and registers those programmes in all the universities. Therefore, I am fairly happy with the work that the Council for Higher Education is doing in order to ensure that our universities are offering properly quality-assured programmes. Thank you very much, hon House Chair.

Mr M A P DE BRUYN: Thank you, hon House Chair. Minister, regarding the reputational damage that the previous speaker has mentioned just now, after the leaked report Unisa was branded as a degree factory under the corrupt network of employees and officials. Therefore, in that regard, were there similar investigations of other institutions of higher education to prevent this. And what measures will your report put in place to ensure that this type of fraud will not happen at the other universities now and in the future? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION: Hon

De Bruyn, as I have said that I am studying the report. I am glad that the report has been finished. Of course, unfortunately it has been leaked. I am going to be responding to all the issues that are raised in the report including the

allegations of that Unisa is just becoming a degree factory and so on. I am however aware that senior management and some other academics at Unisa have been responding already to some of these and questioning whether such allegations are fair or not. However, I am not into that as the Minister and I am going to look carefully at the report and there is not a single issue that I will turn a blind eye on to able that to comprehensively respond to the Ministerial Task Team and also to study its recommendations as to what it has been done.

As I have said that the moment I have finished studying the report rather than reviewing it I will then my first step will be to go and engage the university council at Unisa. Thank you very much.

Mr A ARNOLDS: House Chairperson, member Mokause is sick, therefore, I’m here to ask the follow-up question. Is it fine with you?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms W Ngwenya): Yes, continue, hon member, but in future you must report on time.

Mr A ARNOLDS: No, we did.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms W Ngwenya): It was reported, but what I have on my table is Mokause.

Mr A ARNOLDS: No, it was reported that I will take the question.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms W Ngwenya): Continue.

Mr A ARNOLDS: Thank you, hon House Chairperson. Minister, you have mentioned now that you are busy studying the report, but just also you have mentioned about monitoring system that was implemented in 2015. What did your monitoring system review about the quality of qualifications at Unisa? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION:

Thank you very much, hon House Chair. I think House Chair, this is a new question which will actually require me to go back and look at what previous reports have specifically said about Unisa. My answer for now is the one that I have already given that I’ve been concerned about a number of things at Unisa, some of which have come from reports and some of which have been drawn to my attention by various stakeholders regarding Unisa. The one issue that I have said, for instance, is the very low pass rate at Unisa which was part of my ...

[Inaudible.] ... problem and also Unisa is a distance education institution, but the ... [Inaudible.] ... is something also that I said that it actually needs to be looked into in order to assess whether Unisa is still be in within its mandate of being a distance education institution.

And also my concern, of course, has been that Unisa is our single largest university, 35% of our university students are at Unisa. Therefore, any challenges, for instance, in relation to a low pass rate it means, therefore, we are not producing the number of graduates that we need to be producing as a country. Those were some of the concerns, but if you are asking me specifically around specific, and those reports by the way about Unisa are ... [Inaudible.] ... reports and so on, the hon member is free to go and look into them because they are public documents, they are not private documents.

Thank you very much.

Question 187:

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION: Hon

House Chair if you permit me, can I request the Deputy Minister to take over this question. Thank you very much.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND

INNOVATION: Thank you Minister and House Chair. It is important to note that the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, Nsfas faced a lot of challenges in 2021 due to the significant growth in demand of funding and the constrained budget, as well as the budget cuts from 2021 confirmed by National Treasury. This resulted in the delay of the finalisation of the 2021 guidelines for the Department of Higher Education and Training, DHET bursary scheme for university students by 31 December 2020.

Therefore, given the uncertainties around the demand for funding and the available budget as well as the possibility that a substantive policy change would be required, the bursary guidelines could only be finalised in March 2021 when government approved the reprioritisation of funding from the department’s budget, which contributed to a delay in responses to eligible Nsfas students specifically affecting first time entry students at some institutions.

Therefore, measures to address the Nsfas challenges are as follows: Firstly, a submission through the Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement to the National Treasury outlining the funding requirements through the Medium-Term Expenditure

Framework, MTEF. Secondly, Nsfas has developed a first draft of the guidelines for university and TVET college students for the 2022 academic year, and has undertaken extensive consultations with the Minister, department and the universities in South Africa, TVET colleges principals, the South African students and also students’ representative councils. The guidelines will be finalised following the conclusion of all consultations with various stakeholders.

Thirdly, for the 2022 application cycle, the Nsfas developed an application process and systems that will provide real time funding eligibility decisions to students. One of the areas that Nsfas has reviewed extensively, are the processes and enabling technology system centred around its ability to assess, confirm and communicate eligibility decisions to students.

Finally, the Ministerial Committee of Enquiry submitted this report to the Minister into the ...[Inaudible] ... process and capacity of the Nsfas on 11 March 2021 and it was represented to Cabinet. Therefore, the board has been requested to provide a formal response and an indication of areas of work already underway. I thank you House Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms W M NGWENYA): Thank you Deputy Minister. Before I call the follow up question, the member that must do the follow up question, I want to remind all the members including yourself Ministers and Deputy Ministers that, your photo must be on the screen if you are on virtual because you are on live and people want to see you and know who is the Deputy Minister of Higher Education. Can we do that please. The next follow up question is going to be asked by Mr M E Nchabeleng. Hon Nchabeleng!

Mr M E NCHABELENG: Thank you House Chair and also thanks to the Deputy Minister for answering my question on the process and funding of students by Nsfas. Hon Deputy Minister, your consultation with key stakeholders will go a long way in finding common solutions to the challenges in the higher education sector. In light of your response, are there specific commonly agreed timeframes to conclude the consultation process in order to allow the smooth registration and opening of institutions of higher learning next year in 2022? Thank you very much House Chair.

*IsiXhosa*:

USIHLALO WENDLU (Nksz W Ngwenya): Vula, vula asikuva Sekela Mphathiswa.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND

INNOVATION: I think I had asked to switch off my video due to the network, but let’s see how this goes. The consultations for these engagements hon Nchabeleng are expected to be concluded by 15 December this year. The Nsfas is also completing engagements with other stakeholders. We thus far are expecting draft guidelines that will be submitted to the Minister by 15 December 2021, following the board approval of the Nsfas.

Ms A D MALEKA: Thank you House Chair and thank you hon Deputy Minister for your response. Deputy Minister, one of the major complaints by the students in the past has been a poor communication from the side of Nsfas. What measures have been put in place to improve communication? Thank you Chair.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND

INNOVATION: I think as we indicated that, there is communication that is taking place between the different stakeholders. In fact, I think it will be unfortunate if any of the stakeholders could indicate that, they have not been consulted. The consultations for these guidelines have actually been quite extensive especially including students’ representative councils, SRSc from the universities and SRCs

from TVET colleges. So, we have strengthened consultations in this regard. Thank you.

Ms B MATHEVULA: Thank you very much House Chair. I am going to take that one on behalf of hon Luthuli, she is sick. Deputy Minister, what is the department’s position on the clearance of student debts? Thank you very much House Chair.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND

INNOVATION: I think the question is not clear. What student debt are we talking about? Are we talking about student debt that is held by students with universities which we have made it very explicit that, those need to be dealt with between universities and students firstly? Secondly, we have continuously encouraged those students who have been recipients of the Nsfas student loan in the past to continue paying for their debt.

Thirdly, this is also important, that we have continuously contributed towards relieving both universities and students of the debt that is held by students towards universities particularly those self-paying students. I think if there are more details that the member needs, we can always provide what

sort of interventions we have made in the past as it relates to student debt. Thank you.

Ms C LABUSCHAGNE: Thank you House Chair. Deputy Minister, you have already alluded to some of the things that I would like to ask you in your previous answer. But, in light of the challenges in ... [Inaudible] ... payouts and the nonpayouts, of some of the bursaries and so on. Can you clarify, what is the current criteria for a student to obtain the Nsfas funding and for them to keep it for the time period of their studies? You mentioned in the first answer that you are busy finalising the guidelines for a new system. Can you give us an indication of what will be the date or the timeframe for the finalisation of that? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND

INNOVATION: Thank you hon member for that follow up question. As I indicated, the deadline is 15 December upon which Nsfas is expected to conclude their engagements with the different stakeholders, and submit the final draft of guidelines to the Minister for consideration before 15 December.

Secondly, for a student to qualify based on the existing guidelines, they have to have a combined household income of

less than R350 000 which is major. They have to be accepted by a university or a TVET college. As it currently exists, they have to pass at least 50% of their modules for them to continue to get Nsfas funding. However, some of these provisions are under consultation based on the draft guidelines that have been submitted and are under consultation.

Question 174:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms W NGWENYA): Thanks, Deputy Minister.

*IsiZulu:*

Siyaqhuba!

*English:*

And the Question 174 that has been asked by the hon Arnolds. Minister?

*IsiZulu*:

Nithe niyabelana, angazi ukuthi kuzoba nguwe noma uNgqongqoshe u-Blade, oyedwa phakathi kwenu nobabili, nithe niyabelana.

*English:*

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION: The

Deputy Minister continues, House Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms W Ngwenya): Okay! Thanks very much, Minister.

*IsiZulu:*

Qhuba-ke

*English:*

174!

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND

INNOVATION: Chairperson, the department’s highest priority is to strengthen and expand the public TVET college systems and turn them into institutions for school leavers. [Inaudible.]

... significant mismatch between the skills needed in the economy and the skills available in the labour market and this has necessitated the design and implementation of strategies to co-ordinate economic planning and skills development.

Current enrolment patrons highlight that most students enroll in programmes that may not lead to meaningful opportunities. An analysis shows that enrolment is slightly unresponsive to

regional economies, for example there are low or no enrolments in the tourism and hospitality programmes in regions that have strong tourism sectors and the highest enrolments in the colleges are from human resource management and Business Studies. Amongst the strategies has been the review of the courses offered by colleges and the introduction of new ones.

Our department has designed and implemented the Centres of Specialisation programme, COS, in the TVET college sector. The Centres of Specialisation programme entails the establishment of a dedicated department known as the Centre of Specialisation within a host of TVET colleges, which serves as an anchor, working closely with employers to deliver a dual system-based apprenticeship programme.

In 2019, we rolled out the COS programme in 19 public TVET colleges across the country. Thirteen priority artisan trades were selected, with each trade offered at two sites.

Considerable progress has been made in designing and implementing this new approach to apprenticeship training in our country, both to increase the number of artisans produced in line with the demand and to improve the quality of artisans produced by public TVET colleges.

We can share the list of those programmes and colleges that are offering them, which is quite extensive with the members and the areas where the TVET colleges are, just to save time.

Due to industry participation and demand, the sites have been increased from 26 in 2019 to 33 in 2021. These sites have also been developed with trade test centres for occupational programmes. The department is also transforming colleges into hubs of innovation and entrepreneurship, which enables students, not only to look for employment but also to create employment for themselves and others. Thank you.

Mr A ARNOLDS: House Chairperson, Deputy Minister, the provision of quality, technical and vocational education and training plays a vital role in promoting both economic and socioeconomic development. My question is: What efforts are being made to foster and grow partnerships between TVET colleges and industry to enhance work-related skills? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND

INNOVATION: Hon Chair, hon member, the very intention of our centres of specialisation is to foster the relationship between industry and our TVET colleges. For instance, all the

programmes that are offered through our centres of specialisation, which yields thousands of artisan and apprenticeship, are in association with industries such as Safesa, the Plumbing Industry Registration Board, PIRB, the Retail Motor Industry, RMI, and all of those and the intention is to ensure that the industry is involved.

One of the things that we are also encouraging and which we are seeing in most of the colleges is colleges taking the initiative to collaborate with industries directly and therefore placing students in workplace-integrated learning, for them to acquire the required experience in order to join the labour market.

So, the emphasis is on partnerships between TVET colleges and industries for relevance in terms of programmes and to ensure employability or the ability to pursue entrepreneurship upon completion by students from the different colleges. Thank you.

Mr T J BRAUTESETH: Hon House Chair, hon Deputy Minister, in 2013, the Department of Higher Education and Training said that the review of subjects was initiated by the Quality Council for Trades and Industry, QCTI. Support teams had undertaken 38 subject reviews from N1 to N6. Thirty of these

subjects were submitted to the QCTI for quality assurance and were approved in 2020 for implementation in 2021. This review was to ensure that they responded to industry needs and enable graduates to find employment. Not all of these revised subjects have been implemented at TVET colleges, as envisaged by the DHET and neither have lecturers been trained sufficiently. Some colleges across the country are phasing out the courses, yet the DHET is reviewing these courses. Can we get clarity on which courses will be kept and which will be phased out? I thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND

INNOVATION: Hon House Chair, hon member, I think, upon completion of the review of the National qualifications, Nated, courses, we will be able to advise all colleges in terms of what needs to happen in that regard. I note and think I want to engage with specifics in terms of those colleges that the hon member suggests that have already begun the phasing out.

Our intention is to ensure that this programme is nationally co-ordinated and it is quite intentional in what it wants to achieve, as it relates to phasing out of any of our programmes

in our TVET colleges, particularly Nated programmes. Thank you.

Ms M N GILLION: Hon House Chair, hon Deputy Minister, the TVET sector has been underfunded in the past. In the light of your response, is there any regular review of the country’s labour- market demands by the department, in collaboration with the key stakeholders to inform policy changes in the curriculum content of TVET colleges? If not, why not, and if so, what are relevant details? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND

INNOVATION: Hon member, we have an important role to play in identifying both the skills and occupations, which will support interventions to grow the economy, and in improving the responsiveness of the post-school education and training system, to the skills needs of the labour market. The list of occupations in high demand is one of the several mechanisms through which our department fulfills this role. Information about occupations in high demand provides useful insight into the skills needs of the economy and society, especially in the context where the South African labour market is characterised by high levels of unemployment on the one hand and skills shortages on the other.

We have gazetted the final list of the occupations in high demand and subsequently, two more lists were gazetted in 2016 and 2018 respectively. The November 2020 list was the fourth and latest iteration produced and this gazette provides a list of occupations that have been identified as being in high in demand at national level. It is intended to inform decision- making in relation to a wide range of issues pertaining to inter alia education and training, not only in the TVET but also in the entire ... [Inaudible.] ... system.

The professional qualifications that are currently offered at the centres of specialisation was identified through the ... [Inaudible.] ... process and the list is reviewed every two years. Representatives from a number of organisations were consulted in the process of verifying the list and I can mention those organisations. The list goes on, which includes business, government and all of that.

We are quite committed to this process and the consultation and the continuous review of the list of the occupations in high demand. Thank you.

Mr S F DU TOIT: Chair, Deputy Minister, it is evident that there is already a wide range of courses available at TVET

colleges. Would you agree that more stringent qualification criteria must be set for individuals that are interested to enroll at TVET colleges, to prevent unnecessary dropouts. As you know, the dropout level at TVET colleges is sky high at this stage. Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND

INNOVATION: Hon member, yes, there is a challenge in terms of dropouts. It is something that we are obviously looking at, as to whether it is a question of programmes that student take up or whether it is issues around psychosocial support, which we are continuously working hard on.

The question remains and we remain worried about the high dropout and it also is one of the indicators that have been set to the managers in our TVET colleges, to ensure that we improve the rate of output, pass rate at TVET colleges. We are willing to consider suggestions that will help us to improve the pass rate at TVET colleges. Thank you.

Question 179:

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION:

Thank you very much, hon House Chair and thanks for the question from hon Christians. My answer to this question is

that, in terms of the Higher Education Act of 1997, universities in South Africa determine their own official language policies and without the involvement of government. Of course, they do this subject to the language policy for higher education as set out by me. Otherwise, within that framework that I said, institutions set up their own individual language policies.

In this regard, Stellenbosch University followed the prescripts of the Act - as I have said - to determine and adopt its language policy. The council of the university makes the final determination of the circumstances and any changes that may be required on the institutions policies. Thank you very much, hon House Chair.

Mr C LABUSCHAGNE: Thank you, House Chair. Hon Minister, I just want to know who gave you the right to unilaterally support policies that in effect circumvent or amend the founding provisions of the supreme law in our country which is the Constitution as set out in paragraph 6.1 where Afrikaans is being listed as one of the official languages of our country? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION: I

must say that I am quite shocked and surprised, hon Chair, at the comment and the nature of the question by hon Labuschagne. I don’t know when did I change the status of Afrikaans as an official language. Afrikaans still remains one of the 11 official languages in South Africa and it is being treated like that within the context of our language policies.

Of course, what we will not tolerate is an agenda by some of Afrikaner right wingers who want to use Afrikaans as a means of excluding, especially, black non-Afrikaans speakers from their institutions. Otherwise, Afrikaans is respected and I’m committed to protect Afrikaans in our language policy. That is what it does as the official Afrikaans language. The other thing though - which I must say - is that much as we have 11 official languages, the fact of the matter is that there are nine – if you like, Bantu languages - including the Khoi and the San languages which were deliberately underdeveloped by the apartheid regime and colonial in general.

What I am committed to doing as the Minister, is to put the additional resources to raise these languages to become languages of science and academia like English and Afrikaans. So, I went to dismiss the whole idea that I’m changing the

Constitution. I urge hon Labuschagne, to go and read section

29 of the Constitution - which by the way I am very proud - I was I was one of the drafters of that clause in 1996, towards finalising our Constitution. Thank you, hon House Chair.

Ms A D MALEKA: Thank you, House Chair. Hon Minister, the Constitution of South Africa recognise all the languages as equal. There is a general recognition that indigenous African languages are the most underdeveloped in underfunded in our entire education system. Can the hon Minister therefore, elaborate on the specific intervention of the language policy of the department to develop the African indigenous languages which were excluded and marginalised by the apartheid system of the white minority domination? Thank you, Chair.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION:

Thank you very much for the comments as well as the question from the hon member. What I would just like to highlight is that - I think it was around 2013, I’m sorry hon House Chair, if I can’t remember the exact year - I appointed a ministerial task team to look at how can we assist and how we can appropriate interventions to make sure that all those languages that were not developed under apartheid, the African

indigenous languages, are actually upgraded to become languages ... [Inaudible.] ...

Mr A ARNOLDS: Thank you, hon Chairperson. Minister, in light of the linkage between race and language in the context of South Africa’s history, will the 11 official languages ... [Inaudible.] ... do you agree that kiSwahili will also be included as a medium of instruction at Stellenbosch University. Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION:

Sorry, hon House Chair, I didn’t understand which language the

member was saying will be included at Stellenbosch.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms W Ngwenya): Swahili, Minister.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION:

Swahili?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms W Ngwenya): Yes.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION: Oh!

okay, I didn’t understand that. No, there is no plan as of yet

to actually include kiSwahili. Of course, it’s something that

personally for myself, I think that’s something that should be considered in future. However, as things stands now, the single biggest problem we have in languages in South Africa is that the overwhelming majority of our kids, for instance, as they’re writing matric now, they’re writing in languages other than their own mother tongue. That is the biggest injustice that we still have.

In fact, the resources that we have we need to be putting them all of them just to ensure that we do actually attend to the underdevelopment of South African indigenous languages of African origin in order to be able to balance. Even the fact that, you know, the languages that are spoken as second or third languages by many South Africans do not cover these African indigenous languages in South Africa. That is a task that we still have just to promote multilingualism apart from addressing the underdevelopment of some of the languages, but to promote multilingualism and using our institutions of higher learning to actually promote multilingualism. That is where the priority for this government is at this point in time. Thank you very much, hon House Chair.

Mr M E NCHABELENG: Thank you, House chair. I forgot to congratulate the Minister on getting clean audits for the

divisions that reports in his office. Hon Minister, I am sure you will acknowledge that language has been used as a barrier to access of the historically marginalised into the Department of Higher Education and Training sector and secondly as a tool to entrench white supremacy and marginalisation of indigenous languages.

In the light of your response, hon Minister, firstly, what scope does the Higher Education Act provides for the ministerial intervention to ensure language parity the higher education sector? Secondly, has the Minister made any intervention in accordance with the Act to ensure parity?

Thanks, House Chair.

The MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION:

Thank you very much, hon House Chair. Thank you very much hon chairperson of the select committee, hon Nchabeleng. I think that ... [Inaudible.] ... As I have said is inequality ... [Inaudible.] ... and support to languages. Also, to ensure that no section of South African society is able to take ... [Inaudible.] ... use language as a means to ... [Inaudible.]

... language like what apartheid regime did in 1976 in trying to impose Afrikaans on everyone. We must never ever allow that to happen. We want to remind, by the way, some of the hon

members who were part of supporting those policies are the ones who are crying foul today when they should be looking at themselves on the problems they caused for the language policies that we are trying to address today.

Now, in terms of intervention, the language policy for higher education is one method of intervention. That is why I have

... [Inaudible.] ... to be debated. After it was finalised and

... [Inaudible.] ... I will take it to Cabinet and also bring Parliament for finalisation. Indeed, after the report that I got from the task team on the promotion of languages in particular those that have been ... [Inaudible.] ... We have been working with this ... [Inaudible.] ... in terms of working towards provision of additional resources such that languages are being used.

I must say some of the universities are doing very well. For instance, the University of KwaZulu-Natal, UKZN, has been experimenting about writing certain subjects in IsiZulu. For instance, I know that the University of Cape Town, UCT, is requiring every student who is training as a medical practitioner to at least be competent in spoken IsiXhosa. So, there are number of other initiatives that we are supporting that the universities are embarking upon to try and address

this historical injustice of the suppression almost of total destruction of the African languages that are indigenous to this country. That was done by the apartheid regime. That for me is the priority question hon ... [Inaudible.] ... as I have said before. Thank you very much.

Question 188:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND

INNOVATION: The department has not seen any media reports regarding the existing fraudulent private TVET colleges nor has such reports been brought to the attention of our department. Should anyone come across such media reports, they must bring them to the attention of the department. We do not tolerate any existence and operational unregistered private TVET institutions unless they offer N4, N5 and N6 in business studies or engineering studies.

Nevertheless, such private TVET colleges must have been accredited by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations to offer these programmes legally. The department has from time to time embarked on aggressive campaigns across the province to monitor and ensure that all private institutions are either registered with the department where applicable or

accredited by the QTCO, Quality Council for Trades and Occupations, to operate.

These campaigns also seek to raise awareness to the public, parents and students about the registration and accreditation of private institutions and what they should look out for should they decide to enrol at private institutions. In some instances, these campaigns include participating radio and television programme slots to address the issue of registration and accreditation of private institutions.

The registrar of private colleges is updated and published on the website of the department on a regular basis to ensure that as soon as a private college gets registered, its name is entered into the registrar and published for the benefit of the public, parents and students. Therefore, an updated registrar of the private colleges can be accessed from our department’s website which is [www.dhet.gov.za](http://www.dhet.gov.za/). Thank you

Chair.

Mr I NTSUBE: Thank you very much hon House Chairperson, Minister and Deputy Minister. Let me crocodile my question. I think the Deputy Minister has succinctly answered the question. Thank you very much House Chairperson.

Mr M S MOLETSANE: Thank you Chairperson of the session. Deputy Minister, I heard your response to the question and my follow up question was going to be based on those students who have been victims of those unregistered colleges that because of their poor background, they’ve lost a lot of money that their parents have sweat for.

What I wanted to know is, whether there are those parents who have lost money to those fly by night colleges? What is your department’s assistance in order to assist those parents in order to recover that money that they have lost? Thank you Chairperson.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND

INNOVATION: Thank you very much hon member for the follow up question. Unfortunately, as the department we are unable to intervene in post facto if students or parents have already registered with an illegal college.

We therefore want to advise all parents, students even communities to check with any private institutions that claim to be registered even if that college has been registered, also check if the programmes that, that college is providing

are registered and therefore report those colleges or programmes to the department.

So, all that we can do is and which we continue to do is to engage into a massive operation to alert communities about the colleges and programmes and colleges that have been accredited. We encourage parents and students to ensure that they check those institutions against the registrar that I have spoken about earlier which is the registrar of private colleges which can be accessed on our website.

Mr M A P DE BRUYN: Thank you Chair. Hon deputy Minister, with regard to the fraudulent private TVET colleges, is there a registrar publicly available on none fraudulent institutions and if not, will it be considered and what measures will the department put in place to ensure public awareness on these fraudulent institutions? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND

INNOVATION: Thank you Chairperson. The answer is yes, the registrar is available to the public and is continuously updated. Secondly as I said we are involved, I have personally gone to different communities to alert them of the dangers of

registering at private institution that is not recognised by our department.

We will continue doing that. We have had instances where we closed some of these colleges and this has led to the prosecution of some of the people who have been fraudulently registering colleges in order to illegally benefit from unsuspecting parents and students. Thank you.

Mr W A S AUCUMP: Thank you Chairperson. Hon Deputy Minister, according to reports published on your department’s website which you quoted earlier, there are still 40 bogus colleges in the country. Are these colleges still in operation and if not what steps were taken against these colleges? Furthermore, how is your department assisting private institutions to achieve full registration status? Thank you hon Deputy Minister.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND

INNOVATION: Thank you Chair and hon member. I can’t emphasize this more, what we have in instances where colleges register as colleges and then in some instances offer programmes which have not yet been to the department and I think this distinction is important.

So, a college may be registered with the department through our section that deals with registration at private institutions and then continue to offer programmes which are not necessarily registered to be provided by that institution.

So, if one goes to a college, they must not only check whether that college has been registered but also check if the programme that they want to register for has been registered or not and as far as we are concerned, none of the colleges which have not been registered should be operating and so should those colleges offering programmes which have not been registered and those programmes should not be provided.

We continuously receive information on these type of colleges and we attend to those instances and what we want to see is zero tolerance towards fraudulently registered fly by night colleges and we continue to work hard towards that objective.

Secondly our department works around the clock with private colleges that intend to register and provide education in our country, help them with legislation that they should follow and also the quality of the programmes provided and the accreditation processes that are required for those programmes in order for them to be legible.

There is no excuse for any institution to fraudulently present themselves as a college when they are not registered with our department. We want to encourage those who want to provide education through private institutions, to approach the department. Our department is there to help you so that we are able to ensure that you provide education legally and not through means such as fly by night colleges. Thank you Chair and hon member for the question.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr A J NYAMBI): Thank you hon Deputy Minister Manamela. Hon members, we have come to the end of our questions to the Minister and Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Minister Nzimande and Deputy Minister Manamela for availing themselves to take questions in the NCOP. Thank you Deputy Minister and Minister.

Question 182:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you, Chair and greetings to members. I heard an echo. When I speak there is always an echo.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr A J Nyambi): I was worried that you are not safe where you are when you looked at the back. I thought somebody is ... [Ianudible.]

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: I am looking around to see if there is any television or what. That is why I am a bit worried. Chairperson, let me respond to Question 182 by hon Ndongeni. I don’t know whether to read the question: Whether her department has considered the impact of load shedding on the readiness of the National Senior Certificate Examinations; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details. “Whether the current load shedding has impacted on the (a) preparation of learners for their examinations, (b) smooth running of schools and (c) her department to manage examinations, including the security of the papers and their marking; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details?

My response to this question is that the Department of Basic Education, as part of the state of readiness for National Senior Certificate Examination has considered the impact of load shedding. There has been constant communication between senior managers of Eskom and the senior managers of the department to prevent load shedding on certain critical days

during the conduct of examinations. Especially, those that are dependent on electricity.

In addition, the heads of provincial examinations units have been liaising with the provincial heads of Eskom co-ordinators to try and manage the load shedding. Load shedding has certainly impacted on learners’ preparations for examinations. When doing their final revision, like we know that every night before the exam, learners would want to study, so if there is during load shedding, obviously they are not going to study.

In terms of the running of schools, there would have been minor impact of load shedding in schools where computers are required for some of their administrative processes. It may have also had some impact on normal teaching and learning in classrooms, given that not all classrooms are designed to allow for maximum illumination. So, load shedding also impacts on the writing of the 2021 National Senior Certificate Examination, given the poor lighting in some of the classrooms.

However, electricity dependant question papers, like your Computer Application Technology, CAT, and IT were successfully administered in October and that includes the South African

Sign Languages that was written on 11 November 2021. So, Paper two of sign language has been written the day before yesterday. Paper three will be written on the

30 November 2021. This is sign language. Then, in terms of the current discussion with Eskom, the South African Sign Language home centres will be protected from load shedding. Which means that even on the 30 where there is load shedding, but where sign language is a home language for those candidates, they won’t be affected.

In rare cases where load shedding affected CAT, another date has been set for the 7 December because you find that you get a report after that. In this area, because the country is too big, Computer Application Technology and IT were not written, that’s why we have given room for that to be written on the

7 December. Thank you, Chair.

Ms N NDONGENI: Thank you, hon Deputy Minister for the elaborative response to the question. It is encouraging to hear about the communication and joint planning between Eskom and your department. Also very encouraging is to forward planning by your department to minimise the effect of load shedding.

Hon Deputy Minister, the only difficulty I have is; how in future we are going to assist those learners whose preparation for examination are affected because of the non-availability of alternative energy resource caused by their economic conditions? Thank you, Chair.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Chair, as I indicated that we are in discussion with Eskom and we will continue with engagements with Eskom so that load shedding is minimised during the examination period. We are not only engaging Eskom, but we are also engaging municipalities because there are some municipalities that when it is time to write examinations, they put the electricity bill up and they switch off for the schools. So, we are continuing to that and we are encouraging our schools to look at the alternative energy for schools, but not all schools will afford that, but we will be working with provinces to make sure that some of the schools in rural areas we can also put these mechanisms of putting alternative energy. Thank you, Chair.

Mr M R BARA: Deputy Minister, widespread rolling blackouts have destabilized the national grid since 2007 and with no end in sight as the woes of Eskom continues to wreak havoc in the country and its economy. Additionally, it appears that load

shedding will be with us for a very long time to come yet. What steps has the Department of Basic Education taken to ensure that the future of education of the country is not disrupted by future blackouts? Thank you, Chair.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Chair, that question to me sounds like a question that should be asked to hon Mantashe. But, we are responsible for the schools and schools are in the community. So when the entire community is affected, it’s difficult for Department of Basic Education to supply electricity for the entire community. But we are saying that for our schools, where we will be affected by load shedding, we will try to provide solar panels in our schools. We have started in many schools in the country. But remember, it does not only affect the schools, it affects the learner at home.

So, some of the parents at home do not have backup like other parents would have. So, in that instance, we as the Department of Basic Education will try by all means to push the curriculum. That, by the at least the end of June we are done with the curriculum and then we support them from July on the revision of the work, and, that will not disturb them in their studies. Thank you, Chair.

Ms A D MALEKA: Hon Deputy Minister, we certainly agree that the security of examination papers is the key to the integrity of our examination system and the quality of our education system. In this regard, what extra measures have been put in place to tighten the security of the exam papers based on the lessons of the past? Thank you, Chair.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Chair, we did come to the House to present the readiness and the risks that are attached to the writing of the examinations. I know that the risks emanate as weaknesses in the security of the papers. But we are working with the security cluster to make sure that our papers are secured.

We don’t only do this function alone as Department of Basic Education, we work with SAPS, we work with some other members of the security cluster to protect the papers and will continue to strengthen our partnership with them and make sure that we don’t only put electronic security, but also physical security and make sure that when we put physical security, that security goes with accountability. Unlike when there is physical security and then they say they don’t know. That is why in some provinces we put one person who opens the door with a thumb and not a code because a code you will be able to

exchange. Even a computer that has papers before they are printed is opened through a thumb of a person who will be accountable. Thank you, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr A J Nyambi): Thank you, Deputy Minister Mohaule. The fourth follow up question will be from hon Apleni who is on the virtual platform.

Mr M S MOLETSANE: Chairperson of the session, there is a problem with hon Apleni. Can I assist him?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr A J NYAMBI): No problem, you can assist.

Mr M S MOLETSANE: Thank you, Chair. Deputy Minister, the ongoing load shedding impacts negatively to pupils’ exams preparations in the evenings during their studies, as well as in the morning due to traffic caused by load shedding that makes learners to arrive late. Are there any plans in place to assist learners who arrives late in the exam rooms due to traffic caused by load shedding? Thank you, Chair.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: House Chairperson, situations are not the same. That is why we know that there

are times when there is load shedding in the morning, learners and candidates - this time - would be late for the exams. So, we give an allowance because management starts at school level. We give allowance per rules that if you came, I know that we would come when learners are still writing and we would be given that opportunity to write because you will enter the exam room before they finish. It is not something that we can we have a plan in future because it’s not only load shedding that causes traffic. It can be caused by accidents and it can be caused by any other thing. So, if a reason is valid and clear – always - candid are given an opportunity to write. Even if the paper starts at 9’oclock, you know that you must be there 15 minutes before the paper starts, but if maybe you arrive after an hour for a three-hour paper after writing, you are given an opportunity to write because the reason is valid. So there is no way where our children will be disadvantaged from writing examinations.

Thank you, Chair.

Question 176:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you, House

Chairperson, my answer will start with yes, but the question is whether her department has any plans to intervene or assist schools by providing a safe physical environment that is

conducive to teaching and learning. The answer is yes, section 3(4) (N and O) of National Education Policy Act, 1996, empowers the Minister to support provinces in ensuring physical, safe and conducive environment to teaching and learning, with a culture of discipline free from all forms of violence.

The department has developed The National School Safety Framework, among other guidelines, the regulation to strengthen safe environment, for the entire education sector. The framework provides an important instrument through which minimum standards for safety at school can be established implemented and monitored. And for which school’s districts and provinces can be held accountable. House Chair, the framework is premise on the assumption that each person in the school experiences safety in different ways, and has different safety needs and it provides schools with tools to identify what these experiences are and the steps that need to be taken to address the individual needs. At the same time the framework provides a systematic approach to ensure that each member in the school community plays their role in increasing and maintaining safe school spaces. The framework is just one step that the department affirms its commitment to rights the right of all children in South Africa and to all those in the

school community to realize the vision set out in the National Development Plan, ensuring safe and equitable access to quality education for children throughout South Africa.

Finally, House Chair the framework includes some series addendums. Those addendums offer discreet, standalone training manuals and materials that cover specific aspects of school safety. And these are school anti bullying, homophobia and xenophobia anti bullying and gangsterism awareness material, that have been developed for school governing bodies and school management team. Thank you, House Chair.

Mr M R BARA: thank you, hon House Chairperson, Deputy Minister, DM, recently in Alexandra, the grade eight learner was stabbed to death on school grounds. In the Free State Province, a 19-year-old was stabbed and killed by a fellow student. And a 13-year old in Senzile Combined Primary School was stabbed in front of learners and teachers. A grade 11 learner died after allegedly being hit on the head with a brick by another learner at Sikhukhusa Senior Secondary School in Mpumalanga. Comprehensive plans are in place to address violence in South African Schools, especially with the reference to the Moral Regeneration Movement that was presented to the select committee in 2015. With focus on their

vision to work with youth in order to promote good values, dialogue on drugs, teenage pregnancy, violence and gangsterism. In spite of these plans, safety in school appears to have become worse. What were the consequences for the relevant deputy director general, DDG, who has implemented your projects, effectively? Thank you, House Chairperson.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you, House

Chair. In this case we cannot accuse one individual. I always say when I am in the House that, this a collective work of all members of the society. Because, what happens in schools is exactly what is happening in the community where the school is. So our appeal is for all school communities to work together to make sure that our children are safe. I spoke here of the National School Safety Framework and that National School Safety Framework, the DDG is responsible for the implementation of the framework and is working with the provinces and the districts, circuits and schools. So, we are monitoring, we are working with other members of the civil society within the community.

So, we are aware that there will all these social ills, due to the moral decay of any society. That’s why it’s not everywhere that you will have gangsterism, you will have this and that.

We know that it is other places and we are able to address that place together with other sister departments. That’s what we are doing, we are working alone as a Department of Basic Education, we are working with your South African Police Service, SAPS, Communication, Culture, Sports and Recreation, Social Development and all these. And they are so highly cooparative, these departments. Thank you House Chair.

Mr M A P DE BRUYN: House Chair, I will be asking the question on behalf of hon Du Toit, he has got connectivity issues.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr A J Nyambi): No problem you can continue with the question.

Mr M A P DE BRUYN: Okay, thank you House Chair, Deputy Minister, will you and your department support the FF Plus as Private Member’s Bill that prohibit public gatherings near educational premises or other institutions where minors are present, if they would again in the interest of a safe school environment? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: House Chair, the

member was very fast. I am trying to follow. Can he repeat the question, please? He was very fast.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr A J Nyambi): Hon De Bruyn, try to be a little bit slow. Hon De Bruyn

Mr M A P DE BRUYN: It’s fine House Chair, and I said Minister, will you and your department support the FF Plus as Private Member’s Bill that prohibits public gatherings near educational premises or other institutions where minors are present, if they would again in the interest of a safe school environment? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank so much House Chair, I wouldn’t say I will support or not support, but to me it sounds good. Remember, today the Cabinet approved the Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill, BELAB Bill, so that which protects school from the community social ills is part of the Bill. So, and today it has been approved, it’s moving to Parliament and it will be coming to the House. We believe that we will all participate in and make sure that all what we think will protect our children is being encapsulated in the Bill. And all of us ... I am calling upon members that let’s support the Bill when it comes to Parliament and make sure that we effect all what we think that our children will be protected. Thank you.

Mr A ARNOLDS: Thank you, House Chairperson, Deputy Minister, one of the shortcomings of Department National School Safety Framework, is a lack of effective monitoring and evaluation, on how schools across South Africa are implementing this framework. Why is your government not implementing key legislation which is ... [Inaudible.] in ensuring the right of the learners and educators’ freedom from all forms of violence? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: House Chair, it’s just unfortunate that it is the department which must make this to happen. The social ills are not only at schools. The social ills are in the communities and as a department, we cannot say will alone protect teachers and learners against the social ills. I said even earlier on, we are working with other sister departments; I mentioned them. We are working with communities; we are working with all the civil structures of communities, including religious leaders and all forms of religious leaders. We are working with them and traditional leaders in the rural areas. So, if together with the members of the committee, we can work and make sure that all the civil society participate in this, our schools will be free and our teachers will be safe, all the time and our learners.

But, we are working as I said, we have a structure House Chair, that we call QLTCC, Quality Learning Teaching Campaign Committees. This structure is a national structure, which has their replicas at provincial level, district, circuit and a school level. So, they are working with other community structures. So, they make sure that our schools become safe zones for the learners. And, if we can make sure that we get good people to work in the structures it will help. And in the SGBs we have the subcommittee, House Chair, that is called School Safety Committee and now that we have just elected our SGBs, we are training them on all the committees that must work with the SGB and that must be elected by the SGB to make it sure that our schools are safe. Thank you, House Chair.

Mr I NTSUBE: Thank you very much hon House Chairperson, hon Deputy Minister, are there any specific programmes that are targeting schools that are affected by gangsterism in the communities, where they are located. Thank you very much.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you House

Chairperson. House Chairperson, gangsterism is a social phenomenon that spills over to a school. We always say that a school is a microcosm of a community. So, as such the department through the protocol agreements that we have with

South African Police Services, collaborates and contributes to the SAPS’s anti gangsterism strategy. And that strategy has pillars, pillar number one, is human development strategy which seeks to address the socioeconomic drivers and social impact of gang related activities, to foster social cohesion, human security and development. The interventions are directed, House Chair, at community level and schools. We believe that since we are working together with SAPS, Department of Social Development we will be able to win this fight. Thank you.

Question 183:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: House Chair, the

question seeks know whether government has been mobilising key stakeholders in promoting a safe learning environment for quality education and galvanising constructive community involvement in schools to curb incidents of bullying and violence, if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? But the answer to the question is yes, the Department of Basic Education is mobilising stakeholders in ensuring that safe learning environments are created for teaching and learning. Communities and stakeholder involvement through the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign, QLTC, that I mentioned earlier on is at the centre of the Department of Basic

Education programme delivery. The Department of Basic Education conceptualised the Schools Safety - Violence and Bullying Prevention Initiative. The initiative is a response to incidents of bullying and violence by learners in and out of school. The programme has been rolled out as a multisectoral intergovernmental initiative.

I indicated earlier on, Chair, that we are working with the SA Police Service, the SAPS; we are working with the Department of Social Development, the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, Home Affairs, Health as well as Sports and Culture. The initiative also involves the school governing bodies, SGBs, school management teams and school- based support teams. We also have in high school the learner representative councils and other learner formations that are operating within the schools - and other school-based stakeholders such as teacher unions, faith-based organisations, traditional leaders and traditional healers.

Thank you, Chair.

Ms M N GILLION: Thank you House Chairperson, and thank you hon Deputy Minister for the response to my question. Now, hon Deputy Minister, are there any examples of successes that can be attributed to the school safety, violence and bullying

prevention initiative that the Deputy Minister can share in this House. Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you, Chair. It

is difficult to come up with a clear example, but I will just say what we are doing which I believe form part of addressing this. Remember that the President has given us a number to employ young people. So, in response to that Presidential Youth Employment Initiative, which is mandatory for all education assistants and general school assistants to complete the digital training on the National School Safety Framework and the management and reporting of sexual abuse protocol, we have trained these young people and a total of 220 youth and educators have completed the digital training on the National School Safety Framework and protocol for the management and reporting of sexual abuse and harassment in schools.

This digital training has enabled schools to be more responsive in addressing safety threats and contribute to supporting the work of the Schools Safety Committee which I’ve just spoken about now. The Department of Basic Education has rolled out bullying prevention campaign which is led by the Department of Basic Education working with other Deputy Ministers from the departments that I have mentioned earlier

on. What I can say is that they are co-operative – the Deputy Ministers and their department. They are very co-operative and we don’t only work with Deputy Ministers alone.

We also include learners and learners’ formations, formations of parents, traditional leaders, teacher unions and the campaign was rolled out in three provinces for now. So, in the remaining provinces in the 2021-22 financial year before we conclude the year, we would be visiting other provinces. Where we were, I am telling you the results show that it has subsided. Thank you, Chair.

Ms A D MALEKA: Thank you, House Chair. Hon Deputy Minister, is there any plan or policy by the department to identify hotspots for potential criminality among our schools so that proactive security measures are taken to ensure a safe learning environment, if not, why not and if so, what are the relevant details? Thank you, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr A J Nyambi): Thank you, hon Maleka, you will be getting some bonus from the hon Ngwezi. Hon Deputy Minister, respond to that question.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: House Chair, I

indicated that we are working with other departments and the response that we get from those departments is amazing. So, I don’t know – that is what I said when you ask me to give examples, I have a problem of giving examples. But there is a plan, we are fighting all social ills within a school and we can see that working alone as Basic Education, we will never win the battle. That is why we are involving all the other stakeholders which are highly co-operative.

And another plan that we have is the training of the school safety committees. Because now we are just coming from local government elections and we don’t have councillors, when we had councillors before, we also had ward committees. Among other things that they have is safety in the communities and they work with community policing forums, CPFs. So, I believe that now that we are done with local government elections and the CPFs will be restored, and as they are being restored, they will work with the School Safety Committees by the SGBs and all these things will be limited. Thank you, Chair.

Mr A ARNOLDS: Thank you House Chairperson. Deputy Minister, school violence in the form of bullying remains a major challenge in pour schools as it occurs in the classroom,

generally in the absence of a teacher and at times it is also perpetrated by teachers themselves as was the case this week at Bisho High School in the Eastern Cape where a sixteen-year- old pupil committed suicide allegedly after being called a witch by a teacher and three other peers. So, how is your department dealing in terms of the aftereffects of children that are being bullied at school. Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: It is just unfortunate that we are giving an example of a family that is now in the water, the Lathitha family. I wanted to start with paying our condolences to the family who lost their Grade 10 learner at Bisho High School. What I can say maybe in reporting about this is that the alleged teachers have been put on special leave and the investigation has started as to what led to that.

The psychosocial support has been sent to the entire school. We are not only doing it to Bisho High School, if such incidents, like the one that happened in Limpopo occur, we will offer support. We visited the family, we provided psychosocial support to the school because the leaners who were there are affected in a way or another. In this case, we have sent psychosocial support service to the school and our

department in the Eastern Cape is taking responsibility. It is working with the families. Even tomorrow there is a memorial service which the department is attending and they will also attend the funeral which is on Saturday.

We are not condoning what has happened and we don’t want learners to be bullied or discriminated against their religion. That is why every child must feel free at school, no matter what religion they belong to. Action will be taken after the investigation, if it is discovered that the teachers perpetrated this situation. That is my respond to this question. Like I said we are not only doing it at this school, we support all schools and we condemn this with all the contempt it deserves. Thank you.

Ms C VISSER: Thank you, hon House Chair. The implementation of the School Safety programme is guided by the School Safety Protocol which was entered into by the SAPS and the Department of Basic Education in 2011. To realise the objectives of the protocol, the SAPS is to link schools to local police stations and to raise awareness among children and young learners regarding crime and violence as well as its impact on individuals, families and education.

Hon Deputy Minister, there are roughly around 22 000 schools in South Africa, of which some have seen a rise in crime and violence. Before that, I would like to be informed of the number of schools that have implemented this programme and whether they have seen an improvement. Furthermore, regarding those schools that have not implemented this programme and have a high rate of crime and violence, will the department intervene? Will you indicate to this House by when will these schools be subjected to enforce this programme to offer all learners education free from crime and violence? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: House Chair, I welcome this follow-up question. I just an answer before. Hon member says we have plus or minus 26 000 schools, and in the country we have plus or minus 1500 police stations. You can see that

26 000 and 1 000 in the country, it will be impossible that we can say that we deploy one cop per school. But as I was saying we have an Adopt-a-Cop programme. So, when we adopt a cop, it’s impossible that we can have one cop per school. We are linking a police station to about a number of schools, then the police station will assign one maybe cop into five schools. That is how we do it – that is how we work with the Department of Police. So, issues of crime and all the social ills are of course with the Department of Police.

The Department of Basic Education is affected because what is happening in the community is translated into schools, that is why we work together with them and make sure that the protocols are adhered to. That is why we have these School Safety Framework. When you read through it or implement it, it tells you that we have to work with the Department of Police. There is no way where we can do that alone. But, our working relation is perfect, we have a memorandum of understating, MOU, which we work together with. They have a leeway together with the Department of Social Development when they implement their National Drug Master Plan, because some of this issues are influenced by drugs. On the implementation of that National Drug Master Plan with the Department of Social Development, we work with the Department of Police that when they go to a school, we will go with them. Sometimes we take even the learners to the juvenile courts so that they can see what is happening there so that they must not wish to go there as they see their peers at the correctional centre. Thank you, House Chair.

Question 169:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you, Chair. This question is about the 5% that we gave to learners in 2020, as a result of not having covered the entire curricula. The

allowance for 5% upward adjustments, in a maximum of three subjects, place no strain on educators, because the question that has been asked is, how much strain it gave to educators? It did not place any strain to educators or learners in 2020 nor 2021, as this was an appropriate compensatory mechanism to address the loss of learning time due to COVID-19 related school closures and disrupted academic year.

Chairperson, the 5% adjustments was only applied to learners who are borderline. It was not given to learners that have drastically failed because, had they been given the 5%, they would not pass. There are learners who were just in the borderline, then they were given that 5%, not in all subjects, of course, but in only three subjects, then they were able to make it. The next question was, are we going to do it in 2021? The year 2020 and 2021 in the Department of Basic Education is taken as the same year, because the same instruction of 2020 overlaps to 2021.

If the teachers and learners did not cover the entire curriculum in 2020, and now they are in 2021, they are expected to cover the entire curricula and the work they have not covered in the previous year. This would be very difficult. That’s why we are saying, even this year, that 5%

upward adjustments will still be applicable, but on the borderline learners and the three subjects. Thank you, Chair.

Mr S F DU TOIT: Thank you, hon Chair. Hon Minister, would you agree that your policy of automatic progression will need to be revisited and taken off the table, since it is evident that the current school dropout rate is very high, and that is, in spite of the automatic progression policy, and also, this dropout rate in tertiary institutions like Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Tvet, colleges, are escalating, and that this can be partially attributed to this automatic progression initiative? Thank you, Chair.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Chair, there is no policy called automatic progression in the Department of Basic Education. The progression policy has got guidelines as to how is it implemented. Remember, we cannot allow a learner to repeat every grade because, there are years allocated per grade, and for some of the learners, to be honest, Chair, we presented to the House that, we only see their progression when they are progressed to Grade 12. Of the progressed learners, when they are writing all the subjects, they get distinctions and they pass with bachelors.

This tells that, have they been kept at the previous grade, that would have led the learner to become a dropout.

Therefore, the progression policy addresses the issue of dropouts. Learners become frustrated when their peers have moved to another grade, especially phase. So, it is not applicable to any grade, it is applicable to a phase. We have four phases in the Department of Basic Education, so, we have a number of years for a learner to be in a particular phase. Hence, we progress the learner to be in a particular phase.

So, this does not lead to dropout, instead, it leads to encouraging learners, and it comes with guidelines. It is only administered to learners who comes to school every day, do their homework and everything, but when it’s time to write their exams, then they find themselves not passing, and yet, during the school-based assessment they pass, but on the final examination they don’t. So, at a particular time when they finish their phase, they are moved to a particular level. This helps big time. Those who were in Grade 12 and passed because of this process, they thank the department every day. Thank you, Chair.

Ms S B LEHIHI: Thank you, Chair. The department has got promotion and progressive policy.

*Setswana:*

A mme go oketsa maduo ka 5% go tlisa go kgapela molawana ona kwa thoko, kgotsa 5% e tsengwa mo godimo ga molawana o o setseng o le teng wa go tsweletsa baithuti kwa pele? Ke a leboga.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you, Chair. I

have just explained now that the progression policy works in a phase, and that we only implement the 5% for two years if next year things will change, but if things remain the same, we will sit down and review the 5%. It is not a policy, but a decision taken by the department for the learners that could have an opportunity to pass, but learners could not make it due to the curricula not have been covered as a whole. Since then they are short of minor percentages, then they get added 5% to their marks.

Therefore, the progression policy is applicable to a phase. It is just a policy and it has not yet been reviewed because as things stand, we see that this policy works through the phase that the learner has been promoted to and the final phase of Further Education and Training, FET, where they pass with distinction. So, what has been reviewed as something that leads to learners becoming dropouts, was as a result of the

Multiple Examination Opportunity, MEO, which we dealt away with because schools were not following the policy properly, they made it to be, pass one, pass all.

That system would then catch up with the learner at Grade 12. We then said, if the learners write three subjects, we are going to help them the following year. But some schools don’t help those learners, and we therefore felt that for the schools to be able to implement the policy in a strict manner, let us opt for Multiple Examination Opportunity, but that has been replaced by [Qedibanga] or the second chance that has been opened for all the learners who have not completed their matric. Thank you, Chair.

Ms C LABUSCHAGNE: Thank you very much, hon House Chair. Hon Deputy Minister, I sincerely heard that this added 5% to three subjects does not reply 25% pass rate in the end. Minister, what I would like to know is, do you have proof that the domino effect of such a practice will not bring negative on class sizes and you should find it hard enough as it is to catch up with the teaching time due to a lack of internet and or technology? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Chair, currently as the department, we don’t assess our learners based on internet or technology. In South Africa, we live in two worlds. So, we treat our learners as if we live in one world. We believe in what teachers taught the children in class, whether there are those that will benefit from whatever because they are living in an affluent or unaffluent areas and schools, we don’t just say, one size fits all. We believe in a teacher covering the entire curriculum in front of the learners, teaching the learners and the learners pass.

So, we work also on the recommendations of the teacher because he recommended that, by right the particular learner is supposed to have passed, I don’t know what happened, it can maybe because we didn’t have sufficient time to do revision because of the time that was consumed by COVID-19 lockdown, especially the hard lockdown of from March 2020 which has affected learning and teaching. So, we are not saying that there will be those who got an opportunity to be taught.

Yes, as the department we are striving, but we are also working with the Department of Communications and other stakeholders or partners that are working with us from the telecommunications industry to make sure that all our schools

get connectivity. But if the connectivity is at school, and it is not at home, still, those learners in townships and rural villages will still be disadvantaged. That’s why we believe in what the teacher has taught the learner. So, the 5% as things stand, Chair, does not disadvantage, make the learners to drop out or to get an unnecessary or undue gains, but we feel that they are being given what they deserve after lost time of learning and teaching. Thank you, Chair.

Ms A D MALEKA: Thank you, hon Deputy Minister, does the department have an idea how big this pool of learners who benefited from this adjustment was, in relation to the number of students that have passed?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you, Chair. The

Department of Basic Education, as it is known that we operate nationally, currently, we may not have the statistics that indicates the extent of the benefits across all schools and learners in the country, given that this adjustment is recently introduced and the school administration system that we call South African School Administration and Management System, SA-SAMS, has not been programmed to capture such information because, like I indicated that, it is not a policy.

It a decision that we took in order to curb the high failure rate. Therefore, the system could not capture that adjustment. It is only the adjusted mark that will be captured in SA-SAMS. Chair, for 2022, if we continue living with COVID-19*,* SA-SAMS will be programmed to capture both original mark obtained by the learner and the adjusted mark. The Department of Basic Education will then be in a position to report on a number of learners who benefited from this adjustment, Chairperson.

Thank you.

Question 177:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: The Department of Basic Education, DBE, and provincial departments are thus in the process of engaging with the Department of Co-operative governance and Traditional Affairs, Cogta, we cannot talk with all the municipalities at the same time, we talk with municipalities through Cogta to make sure... Like I indicated earlier when I responded to the other question that some municipalities take advantage that now they know that we are at our weakest point then they switch off the lights for the department to pay.

The electricity dependent question papers, as I indicated earlier on, like computer applications technology, CAT,

information technology, IT, have been successfully administered including the sign language I mentioned, as well as the dates that I had given earlier on that paper two of sign language has been written as home language on 23 November and paper three will be written on 30 November. But generally, the CAT paper was written on 19 and 20 October as I indicated earlier on. At that time load shedding was not rife. But we know that there may have been other instances that might have disturbed – due to electricity of course some learners. So, papers for CAT and IT have been set aside to be written on 7 December. The DBE will continue to do its best to ensure that the candidates write the examination under the most conducive conditions by engaging with Cogta, South African Local Government Association, SALGA, and Eskom. Thank you, Chair.

Ms C LABUSCHAGNE: Thank you very Deputy Minister for your response. We really had a lot of questions on the issue of load shedding and schools. I understand that you are a little bit frustrated in saying that different schools are in different municipalities and all that ...

The fact of the matter is that some of the learners will have to learn or study using a candles and so on. We also know that in 2019, matric exams were interrupted by load shedding and

learners had to rewrite. We also know that the qualifications regulator in uMlazi has recently also urged the department to speak to Eskom to come up with alternative measures to avoid any impact on the matric exams.

Deputy Minister, what I really would like to know is that you gave a lot of reasons, situations and circumstances, that makes it difficult. You have mentioned one solution on 7 December. I would like to know in the talks that you have heard with all the people that you have mentioned, what are the solutions? Are there any more solutions than the one you already mentioned of 7 December? Thousands of young pupils’ future is at risk every year at the end of the year during matric exams. I am sure Eskom can come with a solution not to have load shedding at that time.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Chair, the solution that the department has is to engage Eskom. I think the issues of Eskom are the country’s issues and there is a political history behind those issues and I don’t want to enter into that space. I would not want to make myself a scientist or a researcher ... Remember if you were to count from 1994, only two major power stations were built by Eskom Kusile Power Station and the other one. But when you look at the 75% to 80%

of South Africans who did not have connectivity before 1992, it tells that the system does not have enough capacity to cater for all the people. We must give Eskom a chance to study and get to know exactly what it is doing.

The President is speaking in Parliament today and he will also be speaking about alternative energy. I think that is exactly what is going to help the country. I said earlier on that we will encourage our schools and provinces to get an alternative electricity for schools. We know what we have in the country though it is expensive, we have limited resources and, we may not afford. What we can do best for now is to be stewards of all our schools. That when our learners are writing Eskom should give them a chance. Our learners are writing in every village like hon Labuschagne said.

It is true, in every village, every township, every town and city we have learners that are living there. So, we cannot say now spare this community. If Eskom has to spar, it has to spare the entire country. Let us all help Eskom. This is not Eskom’s problem alone, it is also the country’s problem. Just imagine if the whole country was to experience a blackout ... As we point fingers to Eskom now it will also be good to come up with solutions as to how best we can help Eskom. Because if

we keep on criticising without solutions we will find ourselves in the dark one day.

As basic education, we depend on Cogta, Eskom, municipalities to make sure that all our children ... – It’s us who studied using a candle and we don’t want our children to have that horrible experience of studying with a candle. Chairperson, you also did not even use a candle but firewood to study. We don’t want to subject our children to that. We are trying our best as the basic education and we will make sure that we continue engaging Eskom.

Ms M N GILION: Chairperson, I want to thank the hon Deputy Minister for the way she is handling these questions on load shedding. As you you know Deputy Minister, load shedding affects all the learners especially our matric learners during this period of the year when they are busy with exams. It is largely the poor and those learners living in rural areas who have no or any other means of mitigating against the disruptive nature of load shedding.

I don’t have a question to ask because my question has already been answered. However, let me also take this opportunity and upload the department for taking all the steps to engage with

Eskom and other stakeholders to make sure that our learners get all the opportunity to write their exams under extremely difficult circumstances. Thank you, Chairperson.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr A J NYAMBI): Thank you, hon Gillion. Hon Deputy Minister, the hon member was just commending the good work you are doing as a department. I don’t know if you would like to comment?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Thank you, Chair. I

really do appreciate it when some members understand that it is not a departmental problem but a societal problem. I did say that schools can have generators but our children will not take those generators home. If the school’s lights are on because of a generator, and when the learners leave school at eleven o clock at night going back to the village, it will be dark and they will be subjected to other social ills which will be worse than having darkness at home. Thank you, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr A J NYAMBI): The next follow up question if from hon Maleka who is standing in for hon Ngwezi.

Ms A D MALEKA: House Chair, Deputy Minister, are there alternative plans to provide the second opportunity for

students in case the impact of load shedding become completely disruptive in some communities especially in the rural areas. If not, why not and if so, what are the further details?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Chair, I expected hon Maleka to say this question has been answered because all my interaction were answering that question. That in the event a learner arrives late because of load shedding, the learner will be given an opportunity to write exams.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr A J NYAMBI): Hon Deputy Minister, I

hope it’s not your cell phone that is ringing there.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: ... There can be no

instance where a child will be disadvantaged especially if the cause is due to load shedding by Eskom, and all the other thing that are affecting the community. We will not disadvantage learners, they will be given a second chance.

Let’s say you miss the entire paper because you were delayed, you will be given an opportunity to write that paper. If you miss the entire examination you will be given an opportunity to write the examination. If you came late you will be given additional hours to complete your examination.

Mr A ARNOLDS: Deputy Minister, the Class of 2021 shall have to deal with a double blow of covid-19 disruptions as well as Eskom’s rolling blackouts. Which will also have an impact on learner’s exam preparations. Although you have made mention that there will be minor impact, but what are the systems, if there ever was, that are being provided for students whose exam preparations at home are affected as most parents do not have the means to have generators at home? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Chair, in this

particular instance they may be affected by failing the examination. They will surely be given a second chance by May/June. Those that will be affected will write in May/June examination period. We will analyse the subjects as we mark and after the marking process we will also analyse the results before we issue them.

If we can compare the results from 2019, we said 2019 was the best year for Grade 12 learners. In 2020, we expected them to go down but instead the quality improved drastically. Now we know how to compare. In 2020, they were affected by covid-19 alone. In 2021, it is covid-19 and load shedding. Then now, as we analyse the result it will tell that okay, now the results dropped because of this then we will see. We know the days

when there was lockdown and we recorded those days. We will then analyse the results and see the learners that were affected. They will be given a second chance. But I am not saying that they will write in December of January, they will write in the May/June examination period. We will find a way to with the provinces to support them to prepare for the exams.

Our communication with Eskom, SALGA and Cogta will not stop. At the same time, we will assist schools to buy generators so that there is no time where there is no electricity at the school. We will continue with that. But it cannot be done in one day, and it will be a process. Thank you, Chair.

Question 184:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Hon Chair the question is whether in light of the fact that the main objective of the Accelerated School Infrastructure Delivery Initiative, Asidi, is to eradicate Basic Safety Norms backlog, has this programme achieved its objective, if not, firstly, what are the challenges that are currently being experienced and secondly, if so, what are the further relevant details?

Hon Chair, the answer is yes. The Accelerated School Infrastructure Delivery Initiative has made major progress towards meeting objectives. The subprogramme focusing on the replacement of inappropriate structures has already completed almost 80% of the schools. The remaining schools are scheduled to be completed by 2023.

The initial need for the replacement of inappropriate structures was 510 schools at the time due to rationalisation whereby they say the school is not in good condition, then where the school needs to build it is said no that school has only 30 learners it needs to be amalgamated.

So due to that amalgamation the number of the schools reduced to 341. As at 30 October 2021, a total of 274 of these schools have been replaced, resulting in only 67 remaining.

The subprogramme focusing on water supply to schools has already completed a project at 88%. The remaining projects also will be taken into the next financial year.

The initial need for water supply was for 1 117 schools. This need increased to 1 272 schools.

As at 30 October, the water supply project has been completed at 1 116 schools, resulting in only 156 schools remaining.

Another subprogramme is sanitation. Remember it is a school replacement, water and sanitation. So, in this, the initial need was 701 schools and then the need increased to 1 028 schools that needed sanitation. As 30 October 2021, the sanitation project has been completed at 915 schools.

Resulting in only 113 that are remaining.

Hon Chair, remember, I am speaking only with regard to Asidi programmes not on other programmes on sanitation.

The challenges that are there is that some schools which were initially on the Asidi programme are in the process of closing down, Chair. We build a state-of-the-art school, now the number of the learners do not increase because these schools were in the deep rural areas. Now people are moving from those deep rural areas not because of service delivery or what, but because of the economic activity. As they move to towns, they now leave those schools as white elephants, yet money has been spent. That is one of our major challenge.

Some additional schools were identified that were in need of water supply and sanitation, when you think that it has been addressed, it is a moving target, now other schools are coming up with no water. For if the community has no water, then more target schools will have no water.

Another challenge Chair is the poor performance by the service providers. They affect the target which is there to complete the project and eradicate backlog.

The interaction of construction work by the business forums. So, the measures that the department has taken that the Department of Basic Education cancelled projects on the Asidi list on receipt of written requests from the province as and when the information is received and ongoing monitoring and contract administration to effect the contractual provision. This includes the application of penalties or even the termination of contracts. Regular engagements with the business forums and the communities where the schools are being build. Thank you very much, hon Chairperson.

Mr M A P DE BRUYN: Hon Chair and hon Minister, regarding the Basic Safety Norms backlog, do you realise that there are still hundreds of asbestos school buildings across South

Africa and especially in the Free State? Seeing that this poses a serious health risk for pupils and teachers, will this be investigated and will the eradication of these asbestos buildings be prioritised to ensure the safety of teachers and learners? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Hon Chair, I am saying the issue of school infrastructure is a moving target. You think you have addressed it this side, it erupts on the other side. Even the eradication of the not safe structures, when you take all your resources that you have, to try and address the not safe, those that you have just implemented because you might not have sufficient resources to maintain, then it becomes a problem. By the time you are there, then erupts another problem of the schools you have just built which you did not have money to maintain, then you must go back and renovate them which is a challenge.

However, the solution to this is that we assigned all the provinces to come up with a conditioned assessment of all their schools. As we know the conditioned of assessed schools we will be in a position at which level is this province so that when we come in as the basic education, we know where to intervene.

Even the provinces with their budget of infrastructure grants, they will know exactly what schools must be attended first.

What we are not compromising Chair, is the basic services. As we have resources let us start with basic services.

Electricity, water and sanitation. That is why we have a programme of sanitation and eradication of all not safe sanitation projects that are there in schools. Fencing and electrifying of schools and putting water, digging boreholes at schools. Though again it has its own challenges. If the community does not have water and a borehole is digged at a school, then the community will come and source water from the school. Thank you, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr A J Nyambi) The next supplementary question is from the hon Smit, who is on the virtual platform. He taught me yesterday to take out the “H” from his surname.

So I am making sure that the “H” is out. Hon Smit. [Laughter.]

Mr C F B SMIT: Hon House Chair you are a fast learner.

Hon Deputy, Minister everyone is aware that your national Asidi, has failed to reach any of your initial three-year targets in the last eight years. Could you today in this House

and the public out there: What will be done differently to ensure plan pit toilets as well as asbestos classrooms are eradicated as we see year-after-year your department’s ambition to increase Asidi’s initial targets, yet your ability to meet these targets are dismal? Thank you, Chair.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Hon Chair, as I was

responding I thought I have covered that. The school infrastructure is a moving target. Even the eradication of the not safe schools is a moving target. That is why there will be a change on Asidi of every province because what was a priority yesterday, changes to be priority number two because a new priority shall have emanated.

Yes, we have asbestos classrooms. Initially, even when we came up with the Asidi programme, we were looking at the not safe structures. However, that was taken by mud schools. As the programmes focusses on mud schools, in other provinces where some schools are not necessarily mud schools, but are not safe structures for the learners and some were schools built by communities not following any structural or engineering work performed by any professionals and now those schools pose a danger to our children. That is why I say our target keeps moving forward and backward. However, conducting of

conditioned assessment of all the schools by provinces Chair, that is a solution.

As I speak the provinces have started with the conditioned assessment of the schools. Now we will know that we have certain category of schools. Then which ones we must start with. However, remember as we wish to start with a particular school, another community is erupting somewhere.

As they erupt, they either demand scholar transport that must come from the same resources. Either they demand a school, it comes from the same resources which is a challenge. It does not need some of us to say yes, as the Department of Basic Education, what are you doing? It means we must come together as a collective as a family of South Africa to say this is how we feel and these could be addressed like this.

With regard to pit latrine toilets, we have the safe programme that we are implementing addressing the pit latrine toilets and we believe that by 2023 we shall have eradicated all the pit latrine toilets. However, the challenge is, as we think that we address it, then another need arises. Thank you, Chair.

Ms B T MATHEVULA: Hon Nyambi and hon Deputy Minister, more than 3 000 learners from six provinces in the country, risk falling in the pit latrine toilets every day. While others from at least 253 schools are without water and 248 schools have no sanitation at all: Which steps have you taken to eradicate pit latrine toilets, in the Limpopo province? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION: Hon Chair, I know this number 300 came from the media. We went back to our provinces to check where exactly where does this 300 come from, because initially hon members will remember, when we launched the programme of safe, we were given 3 000 schools. When we went to the provinces now to implement the numbers reduced. You come to a province and you find that no, there are toilets at the school or the province says we are going to carry out these project. Then the number went down bit to about 200.

However, we went back to provinces after we have seen the article on television that there are 3 000 that have pit latrine toilets and there are about 200 that have zero. We went back to provinces. We are working with provinces to correct the numbers. For the process of building new and

proper sanitation for schools is ongoing by the Department of Basic Education and the provinces are building.

Remember when you build new schools now we do not have to build an additional sanitation programme because they are covered in the schools. So, we are visiting the old schools that is where we are focusing now. That programme is continuing. We have a very good story to tell. We will come to the House to present all the sanitation projects that we have built. For what was lacking Chair, was monitoring.

Ever since we starting working together with the implementing agents to monitor from the Department of Basic Education and which is led by the director-general, DG, himself, now we are producing massive numbers of sanitation projects in our schools. By 2023, I think this will be history. Thank you, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr A J Nyambi): Hon delegates, that brings us to the end of this Question session. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Deputy Minister, Dr Mhaule, for availing herself to take questions in the NCOP. I would also want to thank the MECs from the Limpopo province, special

delegates on the virtual platform and all of you, hon members for your conduct in focusing on this important subject matter.

One announcement, after adjournment, busses for those using them, in 10 minutes will be living. Hon delegates, that concludes the business of the day. This House is adjourned. Thank you. [Applause.]

The Council adjourned at 17:05.