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**1066.  Mrs D van der Walt (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

1. What is the current status of the Incremental Introduction of African Languages initiative in public schools and (b) how does her department intend to ensure that everyone’s right to receive education in the official languages and/or languages of their choice in public schools are realised?

**Response**

(a) The Incremental Introduction of African Languages (IIAL) continues to target schools that did not offer a previously marginalised official African language (2 584) and is currently being implemented in 2 144 (83%) schools. There is thus a shortfall of 440 schools. The IIAL strategy has been implemented in Grades 1-3, and it was supposed to move to Grade 4 in 2021.  However, its implementation has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; and the Department of Basic Education's (DBE) primary focus has been and continues to be on fundamentals, which is the Home Language and the First Additional Language levels (reading and writing).  It is worth noting that there are schools that are already implementing the IIAL strategy up to Grade 7, as evidenced through the 2021 Annual Performance Plan monitoring report.

(b) All the language related legislation, policies, programmes and strategies that are developed, adopted and used by the DBE advocate for learners to primarily learn through their home languages.  Section 29(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa provides that "everyone has the right to **receive education** in the **official language** or **languages** of their **choice** in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable."  This Bill of Rights is further echoed by the National Education Policy Act (1996), the South African Schools Act (1996), and the Language in Education Policy (1997). The National Development Plan is also very explicit and recommends that learners' Home Language be used as a language of learning and teaching for longer.

The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 supports mother tongue education, particularly in the Foundation Phase where learners learn the critical foundational skills of reading, writing and counting.  Consequently, African languages are mainly used as languages of learning and teaching in the Foundation Phase.

The DBE developed the Language Framework document, which aims to support the utilisation of African languages as languages of learning and teaching in the early grades and beyond.

Provinces continue to support and extend the use of mother tongue education. The Eastern Cape, forexample, initiated the Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Education, wherein 2 024 schools are using IsiXhosa and Sesotho for learning and teaching beyond the Foundation Phase.  Learners in these schools are **taught Mathematics, Natural Science and Technology** in their **Home Languages** of IsiXhosa and Sesotho.  The 2020 Grade 12 learners, for the first time in the history of the NCS, had access to preliminary examination question papers in their Home Languages (IsiXhosa and Sesotho).