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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 13/2021**

**1289. Mrs D van der Walt (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

(1)       Whether she has found that the current criteria used to determine the quintile of a school reflect the true circumstances; if so, what are the relevant details; if not,

(2)       whether her department will revise the criteria for each quintile; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

**Response**

1. Whether she has found that the current criteria used to determine the quintile of a school reflect the true circumstances, if so, what are the relevant details?

The Department has, since 2011, been in the process of reviewing the use of the quintile system, as it relates to the funding of public schools, inclusive of no-fee schools.  A study in 2009 has revealed that there are a noteworthy number of quintile 4 and 5 school principals, who are interested in their school becoming no-fee schools.  This study also revealed that, if public funding, through the school allocation and fee revenue are added, then a large number of quintile 4 and quintile 5 experiences a level of funding that is below the no-fee threshold.  This confirms the reality of a group of schools that is not regarded to be poor enough to attract the higher level of public funding; but on the other hand, is not rich enough to fill the gap with sufficient fee revenue.  Inappropriate quintile classification may be a contributing factor to this situation.  These schools are under constant fiscal pressure, since it has all the financial and administrative obligations of other schools (no-fee as well as fee paying) but are not able to attract the necessary level of funding.

1. Whether her department will revise the criteria for each quintile; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

The following activities were achieved to give effect to the proposed review of the use of the quintile system, and the ultimate phasing out the use of quintiles in relation to the school allocation are the following:

1. Collapsing of Quintiles 1, 2 and 3; i.e., all no fee schools to be funded at the same (Q1) level.
2. A choice to fee charging schools (Quintiles 4 and 5) to be voluntarily reclassified as no-fee schools.  This would effectively result in there being only two categories of schools for allocation purposes; i.e., no-fee schools and fee charging schools.

In terms of voluntary reclassification of quintiles 4 and 5 schools, as no-fee schools (2. above); up to now no additional funding could be secured.  Some provinces (GP and WC) have however, to a limited degree, and from their existing funding, offered a choice to selected schools in quintiles 4 and 5 to be voluntarily declared no-fee schools.  Given the current fiscal environment, the proposed voluntary reclassification of Quintile 4 and 5 schools as no fee will, in the absence of securing additional funding, be difficult to implement nationally.

In order to address the challenge, some of the measures implemented by Provincial Education Departments are:

(a)    All Provincial Education Departments are accommodating more learners in no-fee schools than have been provided for by the policy. In 2021, approximately 87% of all schools have been declared as no fee schools, accommodating approximately 82% of all learners nationally; and

(b)  Some Provincial Education Departments are currently providing a funding allocation, which is above that, which is prescribed by the funding policy, to some of their quintiles 4 and 5 schools.

In the absence of additional funding, schools should use the normal communication channels to apply for re-classification to another quintile or to become no fee in line with paragraph 106 of the National Norms and Standards for School Funding.  The Head of Department considers each case on its merits, and provides a formal response.  Schools in Quintiles 4 and 5 can apply in writing to the Head of Department to challenge the quintile allocation.  The continued application of these measures however, depends on the available budget within the Provincial Education Department.

The school will be required to submit an appeal in writing on a school letterhead, signed by the principal and SGB chairperson to their relevant district office.  The appeal should clearly indicate the purpose of their appeal; i.e., no-fee status and/or quintile status.  The appeal should be well-motivated including the factors that are placing the school in financial difficulties.  Furthermore, detail must also be provided on the action that has been taken by the school to address these factors.  The application should be sent to the relevant Circuit Manager at the District office.