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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 24/2020**

**1416.  Dr A Lotriet (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

(1)

 With regard to her announcement for schools to reopen after the lockdown period, how does her department ensure that on (a) 8 June 2020 and (b) 6 July 2020 (details furnished) each learner will be seated at a desk within the 1,5 meter social distancing requirements;

(2)

 how will the shortage of desks in each province be solved prior to the learners returning on (a) 8 June 2020, (b) 6 July 2020 and (c) 3 August 2020;

(3)

how will the shortages of classrooms in each province be resolved to accommodate the seating within 1,5 m social distancing requirements?

**Response**

(1). In order to address social distancing requirements when schools reopened on  8 June 2020 and the additional cohort on 6 July 2020 and subsequently on 03 August 2020, and ensuring that  each learner will be seated at a desk within the 1,5 meter social distancing requirements; the Department of Basic Education (DBE) released  the Standard Operating Procedures for the Containment and Management of COVID-19 for Childcare Facilities, Schools and School Communities which  provide guidelines for all administrators on the steps that need to be undertaken in order to prevent the spread and manage cases of COVID-19, which include social distancing. Provinces are providing mobile classrooms for additional spaces, which are provided with the requisite furniture/desks, as well  identifying additional spaces inside the school campuses and or around the school  to address any additional needs for space. Also in addressing the shortage of desks and space/classrooms, provinces are also implementing non-infrastructure solutions, which include timetabling models to address these shortages that cannot be addressed in a short pace of time. In implementing these, schools will not need additional space and desks to address social distancing. These are:

* **Weekly** **rotational** arrangement (groups/grades attending school on alternate weeks).
* Groups/Grades of learners **alternating** **classes/lessons** on **different days** of the week (e.g. alternate days);
* **Platooning/shift** arrangement (one group/grades of learners in the morning till midday and the next group/grades in the afternoon)
* **Hybrid** of the aforementioned **(Combination** of the above).

(2) Provinces, where needed and where possible, procured additional furniture to address the shortages. Schools are also repurposing double combination desks into single desks to address the challenge.  However, due to budget cuts and insufficient budgets , the models indicated above are being used to address ameliorate these challenges.

(3) As per (1) and (2) above