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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER:28/2020**

**1648.  Dr S S Thembekwayo (EFF) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

Whether, with regard to many schools across the Republic having had to close intermittently when there were positive cases of Covid-19 confirmed in those schools, she has found that it is possible to have any meaningful teaching and learning in an environment of fear where both teachers and learners know they can be infected anytime; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the further relevant details?

**Response**

The reality of COVID-19 is unacceptable to all concerned but, recommendations to Cabinet on the opening of schools was made based on the advice provided by the Scientists in this field. The reality of COVID-19, is that there is no vaccine available in the short-term, and therefore the options available is to close schools indefinitely and live with the consequences of long term learning losses across the education system or follow the best advice on how we could co-exist with the virus. We are doing the best we can to ensure the safety of our learners and teachers and we will continue to be advised by the Department of Health, with its group of expert scientists. The current environment is not the most conducive to teaching and learning, but reports that we receive on an ongoing basis indicate that teaching and learning is taking place and we will closely monitor the situation in our schools and act appropriately, which will always be in the best interest of our learners and teachers.