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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 16/2021**

**1685. Dr M M Gondwe (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

(1)       (a) What are the reasons that the Kretzenhoop Primary School in Blanco, George, is categorised as a quintile 4 school and (b) on what grounds was the application of the specified school to be re-categorised as a quintile 2 school rejected;

(2)       whether she has been informed that the parents of the majority of the learners at the school occupy low income positions at the affluent Fancourt Golf Estate; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details;

(3)       whether her department has put any plans in place to review the categorisation of the school as a quintile 4 school; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details?

**Response**

1.

***(a) What are the reasons that the Kretzenhoop PS in Blanco, George, is categorized as a quintile 4 school, and***

The South African Schools Act (SASA), 1996 (Act 84 of 1996), as amended, and the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF) (Government Gazette 29178, dated 31 August 2006) were amended to allow for the re-ranking of schools in terms of poverty. All schools of the WCED were re-ranked in terms of paragraph 101 of the NNSSF.

In terms of the amended NNSSF, the Western Cape (WC) schools are ranked within national quintiles (NQs) based on the poverty index of the community surrounding the school.

As from 2007, Kretzenhoop PS was classified as a NQ4 school in accordance with the amended NNSSF.  The school’s allocated poverty score was ranked 87th out of 357 schools within its Quintile, ranking the school within the top 24% of least poor schools in the Quintile.

***(b) On what grounds was the application of the specified school to be re-categorized as a quintile 2 school rejected?***

Kretzenhoop PS submitted an appeal in 2019 through the relevant District Office, to challenge the quintile classification as per the requirements stipulated in Circular 0027/2019.

The school cited the following reasons, inter alia, in support of the national quintile change:

1. The school is central to a rural setting,
2. The community has high levels of unemployment,
3. A large proportion of learners are from single-headed households, and
4. Most of the learners’ families are recipients of the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) and are unable to support fundraising functions.

           In terms of the SASA and the amended NNSSF, the National Minister declared all NQ 1-3 to be no fee schools. Furthermore, all departments may also offer no-fee status to Quintile 4 and 5 schools subject to available funding and after taking all no-fee related programmes into consideration.

During October 2013 approval was granted to invite schools on a voluntary basis to apply for no-fee status due to the current economic situation in the country, and taking into consideration the high unemployment rate within the Western  Cape. Kretzenhoop PS accepted the invitation to be declared voluntary no-fee as from 1 January 2014. In terms of the NNSSF, any school may appeal against its quintile or fee status, and the school first exercised this right in 2017. The  WCED appeal process was enhanced to ensure all factors of schools are considered (see below description of the appeal process followed) and the application was considered in 2019 using the WCED appeal process indicators to ensure a balanced view was presented for consideration. The school’s application to change the quintile was however declined in January 2020 by the provincial Member of the Executive Council (MEC) of Education based on the following reasons:

1. Financially, the school will not benefit from a quintile change as it already receives the maximum benefit from the department by way of Norms and Standards;
2. The request to move from NQ4 to NQ2 is not feasible as the current provincial quota for NQ2 is fully subscribed; and
3. The school is currently ranked within the top 24% in the poverty rating within its quintile. There are poorer schools within NQ4 that would have to be considered ahead of Kretzenhoop PS, should a change in quintile be considered.

***(2) Whether she has been informed that the parents of the majority of the learners at the school occupy low income positions at the affluent Fancourt Golf Estate, if not, what is the position in this regard: if so what are the relevant details;***

No mention was made of the affluent Fancourt Golf Estate in the application received from the school. This factor was also not a consideration and therefore did not affect the decision one way or the other.

The following reasons were cited by the school in the appeal submitted:

1. The school is situated in a rural community.
2. Most parents are from a low-income group.
3. Most of the learner’s families are recipients of the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) grants and are unable to support fundraising functions.
4. The community has high levels of unemployment.
5. A percentage of parents work as domestic workers and farmworkers.
6. Poor socio-economic situation of community.

***(3) Whether her department has put any plans in place to review the categorization of the school as a quintile 4 school.***

In terms of the NNSSF all Provincial Education Departments (PED’s) must have a fair process in place to deal with disputes regarding Quintile classification or Fee status. The Western Cape Education Department’s (WCED) appeal process allows for all schools to participate in this process. All appeal applications are dealt with on an individual basis when received. There is currently no appeal application in process for Kretzenhoop PS in particular, other than the application concluded in January 2020.

The WCED has the following processes in place for quintile and fee-status allocations:

**(a) Resource Targeting list**

The resource targeting list as per the NNSSF is reviewed every year and forms the basis of the pro-poor distribution of the school allocation budget and informs the quintile classification of each school.

**(b) Voluntary reclassification of certain Quintile 4 and 5 schools as no fee**

In terms of section 39(7) of the SASA, the National Minister of Basic Education determined that all learners in Quintiles 1 to 3 (60% of the public ordinary school learners nationally) are to be in no fee schools. The WC is still regarded as one of the least poor provinces, resulting in the WC poverty distribution providing for the allocation of 40.3% of its learners to Quintiles 1-3, compared to the 60% target for public ordinary school learners nationally. Currently the provincial % for Quintile 1-3 is 40.2%, 0.1% less than the national target.

The pro-poor policy has partially addressed the pressure with the voluntary declaration of no-fee schools in quintiles 4 and 5, allowing for better alignment between the WCED school classification and the national indicator of 60% of learners to be treated as poor learners.

The table below illustrates the current fee-status for all Western Cape public schools:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **WCED Pro-poor policy** | **No-fee (Q1-5)** | **Fees** |
| 60% | 40% |

          **(c) Appeal process against quintile/fee status classification**

Any school may apply for a deviation to the MEC if the school believes that it warrants special consideration, such as poor socio-economic situations, unemployment rate, financial position of the school, declining school fee collection, high number of social grants recipients, increasing poverty changes, learners from impoverished communities attending the school, etc.  The MEC considers each case on its merits and provides a formal response. Furthermore, it should be noted that schools are not limited to the number of applications they may submit as it is acknowledged that any school’s situation remains fluid and could warrant a new consideration subsequent to one appeal having been processed. All appeals processes are subject to the availability of funding.