**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION182**

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**182. Mrs N ITarabellaMarchesi (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

**182.**(1) What is the total breakdown of the number of single-medium schools in the Republic using each of the 11 official languages to teach;  
  
(2)what plans has her department put in place to (a) build more single-medium schools around the Republic and (b) improve mother-tongue education in each province;  
  
(3)what is her department doing to address or facilitate change in the language used to teach in single-medium schools, that are situated in areas that have or are becoming racially mixed, in order to address the feeder-zone issues that learners face;

(4)in light of the fact that her department already has Life Orientation manuals used in schools such as the Achieve Careers Life Orientation manual, what are the details that the changes from these textbooks to the piloted Scripted Lesson Plans are based on?

**Response**Table 1 indicates that there were 8 096 single medium schools in South Africa. The majority of schools are English medium followed by Afrikaans with 6 483 and 1 261 respectively.

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| **Languages** | **Number of single medium schools** |
| Afrikaans | 1 261 |
| English | 6 483 |
| IsiNdebele | 85 |
| SiSwati | 7 |
| IsiXhosa | 163 |
| IsiZulu | 31 |
| SeSotho | 17 |
| Sepedi | 22 |
| Setswane | 7 |
| Tshivenda | 4 |
| Xitsonga | 3 |
| South African Sign Language | 6 |
| Other | 7 |
| Total | 8 096 |

(2)(a) The establishment/building of schools is the competence of Provincial Education Departments (PEDs).

(b) The plan to improve mother-tongue education in each province is pursued through the proposed policy position to ultimately implement Multi-lingual Mother Tongue Based Education beyond the Foundation Phase.

All pieces of legislation provide for learners to learn through language(s) of their choice for as long as it is reasonably practicable. Supreme is Section 29(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa that 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.” The Language in Education Policy further provides that "The language(s) of learning and teaching in a public school must be (an) official language(s). Any of the eleven official languages and the SA Sign Language can be used as medium of instruction in public schools.

The National Curriculum Statement encourages learners to learn through their Home Languages (Mother Tongue), particularly in lower grades where learners learn the critical foundational skills of reading, writing and numeracy. English and Afrikaans are used as Languages of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) throughout the system, although just 23% of South Africans identify English and Afrikaans as their Home Languages. African Home Languages are used as LoLT mainly in the Foundation Phase, and thereafter transit to English.

The EC DOE initiated the Mother Tongue Based Bilingual Education pilot, wherein 2 015 schools are using IsiXhosa and Sesotho as LoLT beyond Foundation Phase. Learners in these schools are taught Mathematics, Natural Science and Technology in their home languages IsiXhosa and Sesotho. This initiative was started in 72 Confimvaba schools in Grade 4 in 2012 and incrementally in subsequent grades – the cohort is in Grade 12 in 2020. The province is working with other stakeholders such as the Rhodes University, University of Fort Hare, Oxford University Press, Pearson, and PanSALB. The MTBBE learners outperformed the non-MTBBE cohort in the June Common Examinations on 17 out of 18 questions.

On 13 January 2020, the Department of Basic Education wrote a letter to Provincial Heads of Department of Education, requesting them to provide ‘A plan that shows the utilisation of African Languages as Languages of Learning and Teaching beyond the Foundation Phase.’ The plans should reach the DBE by 3 April 2020.

Furthermore, the DBE in collaboration with the UNICEF, developed Multilingual Based Mother Tongue Education Concept Paper. The DBE is intending to introduce African languages as mother tongue incrementally beyond the Foundation Phase.

(3) Please see response to question 2(b) above.

(4) The Scripted Lesson Plans (SLPs)are not textbooks but serveas a teacher resources to assist them in the delivery of the content. The SLPs guidethe teacher on how to deliver the sexuality education content of Life Skills (LS) and Life Orientation (LO)subjects and does not cover the other components of LS/LO.