**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 20/08/2021**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 17/2021**

**1920.  Mr S L Ngcobo (IFP) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

(1)       Regarding disruption of basic education brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic since its emergence in 2020, what is the (a) Government’s long-term strategy to reduce the impact of COVID-19 disruptions on learning and (b) envisaged outcome of such a strategy;

(2)       what has the Government learnt from the COVID-19 situation that could help to reduce the impact of future disruptions on basic education teaching and learning?

**Response**

(1) (a) (b) The Department of Basic Education has put in place a three year Recovery Annual Teaching Plan for each subject in each grade, to help guide teachers focus on key concepts, content and skills to be taught per subject over the next three year period. The curriculum statement for each grade and subject was evaluated by a panel of curriculum content experts and the content was reduced so as to ensure that only the core concepts, knowledge and skills are taught for each subject and grade. It is anticipated that over the next three years, learners would have covered the core content in the subject and the curriculum statement, post the three year period, would be reviewed to take learners forward in their learning process. The three year recovery period, is tentative at this stage and may be extended if necessary based on the findings from the continuous research, monitoring and support provided by the DBE and PEDs to schools

The DBE has developed guidelines for teachers on fundamental content that must be prioritised and the guidelines will be used on an annual basis, as they are aligned to the curriculum. In terms of this strategy, and given the variation in teaching time across the schools, there is now a higher dependence on the teachers professional judgment. Teachers are provided with a Planner and Tracker, which lists the reduced content to be covered in the week, and teachers must record coverage so as to ensure that every teacher has a record of curriculum coverage, per grade, which will be transferred to the next teacher. This will ensure continuity from one grade to the next. The new strategy also moves the focus to Assessment for Learning (formative assessment) as a teaching strategy.  This implies that the teacher not only assesses at the end of the learning process to make judgment on the learning gains but assess the learner on a continuous basis during the learning process to support the learning process. Assessment weightings in Grades 4-11 have also been adjusted to ensure that optimal time is used for teaching and learning.

The key tenet of the strategy is to reduce the curriculum to focus on key concepts, skills and knowledge that are essential for deeper learning and the development of cognitive skills that will promote creative thinking, problem solving and effective communication.

(2) The DBE has learnt that plans that are put in place to reduce the impact of future disruptions must be agile and must take into consideration the various school contexts. In accommodating the various school contexts, much is left to the teacher's professional judgment and expertise. Hence, teacher development, training and support is now more crucial in capacitating the teacher to manage his/her classroom context. The DBE has also learnt  that the continuous monitoring of teaching and learning in the classroom is important as the data gathered from such monitoring will help adjust the intervention strategy and the long term plan to recover the teaching losses. The ongoing monitoring will inform the additional support programmes , such as TV and Radio broadcast lessons, that are aligned to the Annual Teaching Plans. Collaboration with stakeholders such as Teacher Unions, School Governing body Associations, Professional Bodies and research institutions is vital as to ensure buy-in, support and input on latest developments as the situation unfolds.