**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 2101**

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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 21/2018**

**2101. Ms N I Tarabella Marchesi (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

(a) What is the current dropout rate of learners in each province between (i) Grade 1 and Grade 8, and (ii) Grade 1 and Grade 12, (b) how does her department measure the dropout rate, (c) what are the main reasons for learners dropping out that have been identified by her department and (d) what actions is her department taking to reduce the number of learners who drop out of school? NW2255E

1. **Drop-out rate in each province; and**
2. **The method of calculation in the Department of Basic Education**

Currently, the best source of data available for *estimating* drop-out rates is STATS SA’s General Household Survey (GHS). The most recent data is from 2016. The table below shows the drop-out rates and survival rates for 2 different age cohorts, those born during 1987-1989 (and surveyed between 2011-2013) and those born during 1990-1992 (and surveyed between 2014-2016). These two cohorts provide a justifiable comparison across time, because the individuals would have been the same age when surveyed (between 22 and 26 years old). The specific cohorts were chosen, because individuals aged 22 – 26 years old would have been old enough to have completed school at the time when the GHS data was collected, and we will therefore be able to gauge what percentage of them finished their schooling at which grades. The survival rates in the table show the percentage of individuals who reached each grade. The rate was then converted to show the number of individuals, out of a 1000 individuals who reached each grade. It was then also possible to calculate the percentage of all individuals reaching particular grades who then drop out before attaining the next grade.

Note that the data of several years have been combined for this analysis in order to ensure that there are sufficient sample sizes in each of the cells. It is also important to note that whilst this method provides the most reliable estimates of drop-out rates by grade, it does not reflect the drop-out that happened in a particular year – the data may have been collected from 22-26 year-olds between 2014-2016, but those youths may have dropped out of school in an earlier year.

**Interpretation focusing on 2014-2016**:

An estimated 0.7% of 22-26 year-olds in 2014-2016 reported to have not even completed Grade 1, whereas 51.5% of this cohort attained Grade 12. It was also calculated that 26% of those with Grade 11 (NB: not of all youths) dropped-out before attaining Grade 12. Similarly, the drop-out rates for grade 7, 8 and 9 were 3.1%, 4.6% and 9.5% respectively.

Drop-out rates for each grade are also reported by province using the same methodology in the tables below, for both the 2011-2013 combined period and the 2014-2016 combined period. It is worth noting that in general the survival rates improved in the more recent period.

**Survival rates and drop-out rates, associated with each grade**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2011-2013** | | | **2014-2016** | | |
|  | **Survival Rate** | **Survival per 1000** | **Percentage dropping out with this Grade attained** | **Survival Rate** | **Survival per 1000** | **Percentage dropping out with this Grade attained** |
| Total cohort | 100% |  |  | 100% |  |  |
| No schooling |  | 1000 | 0.7% |  | 1000 | 0.7% |
| Grade 1 | 99.3% | 993 | 0.4% | 99.3% | 993 | 0.1% |
| Grade 2 | 98.9% | 989 | 0.5% | 99.1% | 991 | 0.2% |
| Grade 3 | 98.4% | 984 | 0.4% | 98.9% | 989 | 0.5% |
| Grade 4 | 98.0% | 980 | 0.7% | 98.4% | 984 | 0.5% |
| Grade 5 | 97.3% | 973 | 1.0% | 97.9% | 979 | 0.8% |
| Grade 6 | 96.3% | 963 | 1.5% | 97.1% | 971 | 1.5% |
| Grade 7 | 94.9% | 949 | 3.1% | 95.7% | 957 | 3.1% |
| Grade 8 | 92.0% | 920 | 5.2% | 92.7% | 927 | 4.6% |
| Grade 9 | 87.2% | 872 | 9.0% | 88.5% | 885 | 9.5% |
| Grade 10 | 79.4% | 794 | 17.1% | 80.0% | 800 | 15.5% |
| Grade 11 | 65.8% | 658 | 26.0% | 67.6% | 676 | 23.8% |
| Grade 12 | 48.6% | 486 |  | 51.5% | 515 |  |

**Data Source:** General Household Survey, DBE own calculation

**Drop-out rates, associated with each grade by province 2014-2016**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **No schooling** | **Grade 1** | **Grade 2** | **Grade 3** | **Grade 4** | **Grade 5** | **Grade 6** | **Grade 7** | **Grade 8** | **Grade 9** | **Grade 10** | **Grade 11** |
| Western Cape | 1.0% | 0.1% | 0.2% | 0.4% | 0.3% | 0.3% | 0.8% | 3.1% | 4.7% | 9.9% | 16.9% | 22.3% |
| Eastern Cape | 0.9% | 0.2% | 0.4% | 1.3% | 1.1% | 1.9% | 3.0% | 5.0% | 6.9% | 13.7% | 23.8% | 35.0% |
| Northern Cape | 1.8% | 0.4% | 0.0% | 0.4% | 0.5% | 1.1% | 2.3% | 4.0% | 8.8% | 14.0% | 19.3% | 23.0% |
| Free State | 0.9% | 0.1% | 0.1% | 0.1% | 0.4% | 0.8% | 1.8% | 3.4% | 5.2% | 12.5% | 17.1% | 21.5% |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 0.7% | 0.3% | 0.4% | 0.5% | 0.6% | 0.8% | 0.8% | 2.5% | 4.1% | 7.8% | 13.3% | 25.3% |
| North West | 1.4% | 0.2% | 0.5% | 0.3% | 0.7% | 0.9% | 2.1% | 2.5% | 6.3% | 14.5% | 20.2% | 22.6% |
| Gauteng | 0.4% | 0.0% | 0.2% | 0.2% | 0.3% | 0.2% | 0.8% | 2.0% | 2.6% | 5.0% | 10.4% | 17.6% |
| Mpumalanga | 0.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.3% | 0.5% | 1.5% | 1.6% | 3.7% | 2.9% | 8.1% | 16.6% | 28.7% |
| Limpopo | 0.6% | 0.1% | 0.2% | 0.7% | 0.6% | 0.8% | 2.5% | 4.3% | 7.3% | 15.6% | 19.3% | 28.4% |

**Data Source:** General Household Survey, DBE own calculation

**Note:** data for 2014-2016 pooled together to overcome small sample errors

**Interpretation**: This means that 28.4% of 22-26 year-olds in Limpopo who completed Grade 11 dropped-out before attaining Grade 12.

**Drop-out rates, associated with each grade by province 2011-2013**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **No schooling** | **Grade 1** | **Grade 2** | **Grade 3** | **Grade 4** | **Grade 5** | **Grade 6** | **Grade 7** | **Grade 8** | **Grade 9** | **Grade 10** | **Grade 11** |
| Western Cape | 0.4% | 0.3% | 0.3% | 0.1% | 0.2% | 0.5% | 0.8% | 2.7% | 5.5% | 11.1% | 21.1% | 23.1% |
| Eastern Cape | 0.7% | 0.4% | 0.8% | 1.3% | 1.2% | 2.3% | 3.6% | 5.2% | 10.0% | 13.3% | 23.5% | 40.6% |
| Northern Cape | 1.5% | 0.1% | 0.1% | 0.6% | 1.9% | 0.8% | 1.4% | 4.6% | 10.3% | 14.1% | 20.7% | 19.4% |
| Free State | 0.3% | 0.4% | 0.2% | 0.2% | 1.0% | 0.4% | 1.9% | 2.8% | 4.9% | 12.7% | 19.1% | 20.3% |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 0.5% | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.7% | 0.8% | 0.9% | 1.1% | 2.4% | 4.0% | 7.5% | 15.2% | 23.2% |
| North West | 1.8% | 0.7% | 0.4% | 0.5% | 0.8% | 1.9% | 2.3% | 5.4% | 6.1% | 10.1% | 19.2% | 27.3% |
| Gauteng | 0.6% | 0.3% | 0.4% | 0.1% | 0.4% | 0.4% | 0.8% | 1.7% | 2.8% | 4.8% | 12.0% | 22.2% |
| Mpumalanga | 1.2% | 0.1% | 0.6% | 0.2% | 0.9% | 1.2% | 1.4% | 2.9% | 6.5% | 8.9% | 16.3% | 29.4% |
| Limpopo | 1.1% | 0.5% | 0.4% | 0.4% | 0.4% | 1.3% | 1.3% | 4.3% | 5.2% | 12.6% | 22.5% | 33.4% |

**Data Source:** General Household Survey, DBE own calculation

**Note:** data for 2011-2013 pooled together to overcome small sample errors

**Reasons for not attending an educational institution**

For children who are *not* attending school, the GHS asks: “What is the main reason why [this child] is not attending any educational institution?” Responses to this question must be interpreted in the light of research showing that the main predictor of dropping out is poor quality early education. The self-reported reasons for not attending school may act as a trigger for dropping out, but those same factors may not trigger drop out for children who are progressing well in terms of learning levels, especially if they are in a good quality school. Furthermore, it should be noted that this question was *only asked of learners who stated that they are not currently attending any educational institution*, and the severity of each reason should be interpreted as such. The figure below shows the number and percentage of children aged 7 to 15 years old who reported not attending any education institution. In 2016, 1.1% (roughly 104 000 learners) of all 7 to 15 year olds were reported to not be attending any education institution.

The table below shows that disability is the main reported reason on why children aged 7 to 15 years old are not attending any educational institution. The 28% statistic should be interpreted as 28% of the children not attending any educational institution (which is 1.1% of all 7 to 15 year olds) responded that disability was the main reason. However, as reported in the 2016 GHS: Focus on Schooling report, around 90% of learners with disabilities are currently attending an educational institution. Encouragingly, no respondents in this age group stated that marriage or lack of transport are reasons for not attending any education institution. For the 15% of 16 to 18 year olds not attending educational institutions, the main reasons were because of a lack of money for fees and that they completed their education or are satisfied with their level of education.

**7 to 15 year old children who are out of school, 2002 – 2016**

**Reasons for non-attendance of educational institutions among, 2016**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Reason** | **% of the roughly 104,000 learners aged 7 to 15 who are not in school** | **% of the roughly 466,000 learners aged 16 to 18 who are not in school** |
| No money for fees | 6.8% | 21.4% |
| Other | 15.9% | 14.8% |
| Has completed education/satisfied with my level of education/do not want to study | 5.9% | 13% |
| Education is useless or not interesting | 6.5% | 8.3% |
| Failed exams | 2.8% | 7.7% |
| Family commitment (e.g. child minding) | 2.5% | 7.4% |
| He or she is working at home or business/job | 1% | 7.3% |
| Unable to perform at school | 6.3% | 6.5% |
| Pregnancy | 2.2% | 3.3% |
| Not accepted for enrolment | 8.6% | 3% |
| Disability | 28% | 2.2% |
| Illness | 7.1% | 2% |
| Too old/young | 3.7% | 1.2% |
| Do not have time/too busy | 1.1% | 0.7% |
| Got married | 0% | 0.5% |
| Violence at school | 1.2% | 0.4% |
| Difficulties to get to school (transport) | 0% | 0.4% |
| School/education institution is too far | 0.4% | 0.1% |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

**Data Source:** General Household Survey, DBE own calculation

1. **Main reasons for learner dropping out as identified by the Department of Basic Education**

Main reasons for learner drop-out include:

* The socio-economic situation of communities such as poverty and unemployment
* Inaccessibility of services such as health services
* Teenage pregnancy
* High prevalence of gender based violence and other related developmental problems (most notably HIV infections and reproductive health).
* Institutional barriers (lack of gender budgeting, gender‐biased curriculum and pedagogy, and lack of integration in service delivery);
* Socio‐cultural barriers (poor parenting, cultural factors such as initiation schools, virginity testing & *ukuthwala*)
* Gendered burden of care in families and communities where girl children are expected to take care of sickly parents and younger siblings.

1. **Interventions and actions taken in an attempt to reduce dropout rates in schools**

* Learners who drop out of school are categorised as vulnerable learners and are targeted for support through the Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) Programme. Schools ensure that vulnerable learners receive the various pro-poor programmes implemented in schools such as fee exemption, scholar transport, school meals through the National School Nutrition Programme, and school health services through the Integrated School Health Programme.
  + The National School Nutrition Programme provides a meal to more than 9m learners every school day to address issues of hunger and food insecurity that might prevent learners from coming to and staying in school.
  + The Integrated School Health Programme provides health services to more than 1m learners per year, to ensure that learners are not prevented from coming to or staying in school due to health reasons.
  + Considering the shortage of psychosocial professionals in education, the Department of Basic Education together with Provinces are increasingly orientating educators on various psychosocial skills to enable them to support vulnerable learners, especially around trauma support to ensure that learners are not prevented from coming to or staying in school due to emotional distress.
* In addition, relevant Departments such as the Departments of Social Development, Health, Home Affairs, SASSA, non-governmental organisations and the private sector are coordinated through the CSTL framework to render the necessary support to vulnerable learners, either through integrated service delivery days coordinated by the Department of Basic Education or individual referral of learners for services by schools.
* Advocacy programmes to empower learners at risk so that they do not feel unsupported and resort to dropping out. These advocacy programmes include:
  + Speak Out Against Abuse
  + Prevent Violence and Bullying in Schools
  + GEMBEM/ Youth Leadership programme