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**229.  Mr M G E Hendricks (Al-Jama-ah) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

Whether, in order to continue with the curriculum during the COVID-19 pandemic, she will consider (a) that the Republic switches over to home schooling so that teachers remain at schools and have an appointment system for learners during the current COVID-19 pandemic, (b) investigating alternative teaching methods such as (i) developing a public broadcaster model utilising the SA Broadcasting Corporation television and radio stations and (ii) developing applications for smartphones to supplement home schooling; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

**Response**

(a) **Switching Schooling Model during the current COVID-19 pandemic.**

The current schooling model under  the recently amended Directions issued in terms of Regulation 4(3) of the Regulations made under the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002) regarding the dates for the re-opening of schools, to provide for the 2021 academic year, and for measures to address, prevent and combat the spread of COVID-19 in the national Department of Basic Education, all Provincial Departments of Education, all education district offices and all schools in the Republic of South Africa, as published under *Government Notice No. 343, in Government Gazette No. 43465 of 23 June 2020*, as amended, **is adequate to ensure sufficient curriculum coverage under the prevailing level of COVID-19 infections**.  Therefore, there is no need for the Republic to switch over to home schooling alone.

(b) **Alternative Teaching Methods**

**(i) Educational Broadcasting (TV & Radio):**

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) in collaboration with the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) and various partners have since April 2020 adopted the use of online and broadcast platforms under the theme "Woza Matric Catchup Programme 2020".  Planning is currently underway to expand the online and broadcast learning support intervention to cover all grades (Grade R - 12) under the "Remote Learning Programme 2021".  This includes the following:

(aa) TV Educational Broadcasting:

* **OVHD Channel 122 (DBE TV Channel):**eMedia Investments in partnership with the DBE are broadcasting educational support material for learners and teachers on the Openview HD (OVHD) platform – channel 122. The channel is currently available for free to homes with OVHD decoders.
* **Telematics**: The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) in partnership with the University of Stellenbosch are broadcasting via the Telematics platform that uses satellite technology to broadcast lessons in 9 subjects from the University of Stellenbosch. The subjects include Mathematics, Physical Science, Life Sciences, Accounting, Business Studies, History, Geography, English FAL and Afrikaans HL. These lessons are planned by WCED subject specialists and presented by expert teachers.
* **Mindset Network**: Mindset is a digital satellite television free-to air channel. The Network broadcasts educational support material for learners and teachers on both Openview HD (OVHD) platform – channel 134 and DSTV - channel 319.
* **SABC TV** in partnership with the DBE broadcasted educational support material for learners and teachers on the SABC TV Channel 2 in 2020. Plans are underway to request the broadcaster to provide similar support in 2021 under the DBE/NECT Remote Learning Programme.

(bb) Radio Educational Broadcasting:

The SABC and private community radio stations in collaboration with Provincial Education Departments broadcasted Covid-19 Curriculum Support Programmes to parents and Grade R – 12 learners in 2020. Plans are underway to request the broadcasters to offer similar services in 2021 under the DBE/NECT Remote Learning Programme. This will include the following:

* Limpopo Province: Munghana Lo Nene FM;  Thobela FM and Phalapala FM Radio Stations.
* Mpumalanga Province: Ikwekwezi FM; Pulpit FM; Ligwalagwala FM, Radio Laeveld; Radio Kragbron; Community Radio Stations; and Rise FM Radio Stations.
* Eastern Cape Province: Umhlobo Wenene FM Radio Station.
* North West community radio stations.

**ii) Applications for smartphones**

There is already a proliferation of free educational smartphone applications available to users, ranging from content access, communicator, learning management systems and assessment Apps. Many of which are already being used by schools, teachers and learners to support remote learning.

There is also a multitude of local online educational content portals and learning support platforms, some of which as zero-rated and accessible free of charge to support remote learning. Many of these platforms are augmented by smartphone applications.

The DBE website at [**https://www.education.gov.za/covid19supportpackage.aspx**](https://www.education.gov.za/covid19supportpackage.aspx)

provides links for accessing online content resources for parents, caregivers and learners to support learning on its landing page.

 Some of the main online platforms and portals include:

* **DBE and Bhelela partnership online portal** at [http://dbecontent.bhelela.com](http://dbecontent.bhelela.com/),   which provides access to free state-owned content resources such as electronic e-textbooks, teacher guides, study guides, e-workbooks in PDF, ePub and HTML formats as well as other Open Education Resources (OER) such as PhET simulations, Apps, storybooks, encyclopaedia, and Khan Academy videos etc.
* **Provincial Education Department e-Learning Portals and Platforms** provide learners with free access to educational content resources such as video lessons, Apps, eBooks, interactive revision material, Assessment, ATPs. These included:
  + WCED ePortal at <https://wcedeportal.co.za/>
  + GDE eContent platform at <https://gdecontent.co.za/>
  + KZN DoE e-learning solution at <http://kznfunda.kzndoe.gov.za/>
  + ECDOE Curriculum portal at <https://www.eccurriculum.co.za/>
* Many other private sector educational portals
  + Siyavula - <https://www.siyavula.com/>
  + Africa Teen Geeks - <https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=africa+teen+geeks>
  + 2Enable - https://www.2enable.org/
  + Vodacom e-Classroom - <http://www.digitalclassroom.co.za/digitalclassroom/>
  + Vodacom e-School <https://www.vodacom.co.za/vodacom/services/vodacom-e-school>
  + Interactive Simulations for Science and Math (PhET Simulations): PhET provides fun, free, interactive, research-based science and mathematics simulations: <https://phet.colorado.edu/>
  + African Storybooks: Provides Open access to picture storybooks in the languages of Africa: <https://www.africanstorybook.org/>
  + Khan Academy Math Videos: <https://www.khanacademy.org/math>
  + Khan Academy You Tube Videos: <https://www.youtube.com/user/khanacademy>
  + Khan Academy: Free Learning App: [ttps://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.khanacademy.android&hl=en\_ZA](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.khanacademy.android&hl=en_ZA)