**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 231**

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**231. Mr X Ngwezi (IFP) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

Whether, with reference to the President’s announcement in his state of the nation address of major technological overhaul for the South African education system which included rolling out tablets to all schools, her department is ready for this move in terms of the (a) budget, (b) teacher training and (c) provision of security at schools? NW241E

Response

1. Readiness in terms of budget

The plan will be operationalised starting 2019 with a preparatory phase, followed by three roll out phases focusing on the provision of gadgets with pre-loaded content including, but not limited to, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) Workbooks. The three phases target firstly learners in multi-grade and rural farm schools secondly learners in quintile 1 to 3 schools, and lastly learners in quintile 4 and 5 schools. The source of funds for the rolling out of tablets to all schools will utilise money previously allocated to the following:

1. Printing of Workbooks and textbooks since workbooks and textbooks are being digitised and will be pre-loaded into gadgets. Currently the workbooks are printed for a single use. Through converting the books to a downloadable, interactive electronic format, the longevity of the books would be increased as they could be used multiple times. In addition, loading workbooks onto electronic gadgets would have the added benefit of decreasing the dating and marking workload for teachers (as this could be done electronically) and minor edits could be made to the electronic versions without having to reprint and distribute, which would be much more cost effective than re-printing and distributing the books annually.
2. Grant money (e.g Operation Phakisa, Maths Science and Technology (MST) School Funding and other grants) will also be used for this purpose.
3. Money will also be drawn from the Provincial Education Equitable share funding to fund the plan.
4. The Private Sector will also be approached to beef up any short fall.
5. Readiness in terms of teacher training.

The DBE is on a trajectory towards the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and recognises that it is crucial to onboard key stakeholders like teacher unions, and to provide effective change management, training and support, not only to teachers but also for subject advisors and curriculum developers. Since 2005 province wide programmes on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) integration training for both teachers and subject advisors have been running. Training is classified into three levels: Basic Skills, Intermediate Skills and Advanced Skills. In some provinces such as Gauteng where there has been a rollout of SMART boards in the classroom, subject advisors and coordinators were trained on the use of interactive boards and tablets. In October 2016 the Directorate Curriculum Innovation and e-Learning had already developed three online platforms to train teachers on the use of technology to deliver the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum. The three platforms are:

1. The DBE MOODLE PLATFORM available at : <https://dbemoodle.dedicated.co.za>, the platform is a Learning Management System (LMS) (paperless) to deliver lessons with daily content and self marking learner classroom activities that are CAPS compliant. Hence saving time and hard work for teachers. The platform is for classroom utalisation with a teachers laptop and learner gadget to run an LMS.

2. DBE Cloud available at: <http://www.dbecloud.org.za/lms/dbe/>, the platform aggregate content and make it available online for parents, learners, teachers, subject advisors, subject coordinators and subject specialists.

3. Thutong Portal available at: <http://www.thutong.doe.gov.za/>, the platform is an online learning space managed by subject specialists at the DBE.

Training of teachers, subject advisers, subject coordinators and subject specialists at the DBE is ongoing, utilising the three platforms to integrate ICTs into teaching and learning. These trainings are coordinated and guided by the Professional Development Framework for Digital Learning which was approved by Council of Education ministers (CEM) in September 2017.

1. Readiness in terms of provision of security at school.

There is readiness in terms of security at school, conceptualised based on the categories as indicated below:

**Computer Labs**

Schools have to comply to very stringent security measures before a computer lab can be installed in that school. This will include among others the visibility of the lab to the surrounding community so that the community can report on matters that may put the security of the lab at risk. This go hand in hand with allowing communities to co-own these labs with schools so that communities can also benefit in using these labs. The specifications also include that the labs must be in the first floor to avoid roof entry, they must have safe iron doors and there should be only small horizontal windows with strong burglar bars to prevent entry. Other security measures include a dedicated alarm system, strict management protocols by schools regarding access to the lab and keys control.

**Classroom tablets / cellphones**

Suppliers of Classroom tablets/cellphones are required to adhere to strict supply specifications in terms of security of these gadgets. These include that these gadgets must be a trolley that is secured and can be locked while in the classroom. The trolley should have wheels to ensure that after use the gadgets can be transported from the classroom for safe keeping in the school safe made of brick and with an iron door. There should be a strict protocol approved by district and provinces from the school regarding the issuing and collection of these gadgets after lessons.

**Take home gadgets**

In other provinces such as Gauteng learners and teachers are allowed to take these gadgets home to keep them secured. In the next gadget delivery to teachers and learners, the DBE plans to design gadgets that are community unfriendly and only friendly for educational use only, without compromising the quality of the gadget.