**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRJTTEN REPLY

QUESTION 2659

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2659. Ms A T Lovemore (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

(1) Whether she supports the proposed twinning of schools in Gauteng: if not, why not; if so, what rationale underpins this support;

(2) whether she is satisfied that the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996. (SASA) adequately provides for the twinning project; if not, why not; if so, what legal provisions of SASA does she rely on to allow her confidence in the legitimacy of the project;

(3) whether she intends to expand the twinning project to other provinces; if so, what are the relevant details;

(4) whether the development of social cohesion has been identities as a core function of her department and the nine provincial departments of education; if so. What has led to this position? NW3304E

 **RESPONSES:**I) I support the principle behind the twinning of schools. The rationale behind the twinning is that it is the quickest way of addressing the inequalities that exist in the sector in terms of resources and skills transfer of principals, teachers and school governors.

2) Section 588 (4)and (5) provide the Head of Department (HOD) with wide powers to deal with underperforming schools. Section 58(4) specifically provides that the HOD must take all reasonable steps to assist a school indentified in terms of subsection ( I) in addressing the underperformance. Section 58(5), although indicating which specific steps the Head of Department must consider. does not limit the steps that the HOD can take to remedy the underperfom1ance at a school. Twinning of a school is one of the options that could be considered.

3) The twinning project is at the moment still a Gauteng initiative. The Council of Education Ministers and I have not yet explored its possibilities. It is an initiative that requires research, massive stakeholder consultation and review of legislation before considering it as a possibility.

4) Yes, social cohesion. although not a core function of the department, is part of the department's delivery of Outcome 14 in the MTSF (2014-2019). It is promoted by the department through Curriculum. Teacher Development and Care and Support Branches.

Why? Schools are increasingly being recognized as a key contributor to promoting national unity and solidarity among the different social groups in a country. Given the legacy of apartheid and the high prevalence of social problems challenging our current democratic state, schooling can contribute to achieving cohesive communities that are more effective in supporting education, and achieving social and economic goals. The NDP tasks schools to promote social cohesion, constitutional values, active citizenry and appreciation of diversity.