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

**Whether her department intends to phase out single-medium schools in future; if not, what measures has her department put in place to help address the mismatch between feeder zone requirements and the language barrier some schools have for some learners, as many learners do not understand the language used at the school closest to their community?**

**Response**

No. It is highly impossible to phase out single medium schools in South Africa. Of the 25 762 schools, more than 20 000 are single medium, with very few dual or parallel medium.

Language policy matters in schools are governed by the following legislation and policy frameworks:

1. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa

Section 29(2), under the Bill of Rights, provides that:

Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable.   In order to ensure the effective access to, and implementation of, this right, the state must consider all reasonable educational alternatives, including **single medium** institutions, taking into account-

*(a) equity;*

*(b) practicability; and*

*(c) the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices.*

 2. The South African Schools Act (SASA)

Section 6 of the SASA, on Language policy of public schools, provides the following:

* Subject to the Constitution and this Act, the Minister may, by notice in the Government Gazette, after consultation with the Council of Education Ministers, determine norms and standards for language policy in public schools;
* The governing body of a public school may determine the language policy of the school subject to the Constitution, this Act and any applicable provincial law;
* No form of racial discrimination may be practised in implementing policy determined under this section; and
* A recognised Sign Language has the status of an official language for purposes of learning at a public school.

3. The Language in Education Policy (LiEP)

The LiEP recognises that South Africa is a multilingual country and adopted the additive bi-multilingualism approach wherein learners are encouraged to learn through one language whilst learning, other additional languages as subjects. The LiEP acknowledges single, dual/parallel and multi-medium models and provides that "the language(s) of learning and teaching in a public school must be (an) official language(s)." Any of the eleven official languages and the South African Sign Language can be used as medium of instruction in public  schools.

The language medium model is primarily determined by the demography of the school. Single medium is implementable with ease in homogenous setup (wherein majority of our single medium schools are located); than in cosmopolitan areas with lots of languages. Where there are many languages in a prticular area,  schools offer dual medium.