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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER:45/2020**

**2665.Mr S L Ngcobo (IFP) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

(1)       In light of the fact that her department has urged all teachers and learners in the public schooling system to download and make use of the Teacher Connect Application (App) following its recent launch, what exactly has informed the timing of the delivery of the App, given that the Matric learners will be beginning their final examination on 5 November 2020 and all the other grades are concluding their school year;

(2)       whether her department has ensured that the App service does not exclude the most indigent pockets of society who, even if they have access to cell phones, might not have the telecommunications infrastructure to reap all the benefits of the App; if not, why not; if so, in what way?

**Response**

(1)

* The TeacherConnect app was first set up in the first half of July, initially to get the platform up-and-running and for Beta testing purposes.
* HealthCheck was then integrated in late July and officially launched on the 8th of September. (Daily Covid-19 Symptom Tracker). The urgency and the timing of launching the App, related to the Covid-19 tracking health application designed to provide an early warning system so that lives could be protected and saved, and also that school closures could be prevented as much as possible, and that schools could stay open at this critical time of the year.  This need took precedence despite it being so close to Matric examinations,
* To date, we have supported just under 4 000 users on TeacherConnect.
* To support Matric learners where helpful, the Woza Matric schedule is included under the Materials section of the App.

(2)

* The first learning resources added to the TeacherConnect platform were exclusively to zero-rated websites.
* Please note that further the TeacherConnect teacher-training platform has now as of 12'th November become zero rated by every network except for Cell C, which we believe is imminent.
* The large majority of other teacher resources we link through to on the platform are still made up of zero rated websites.
* An estimated 90% of internet users (and in fact a full 38-million South Africans per day) in South Africa use WhatsApp, making it one of the most accessible digital channels for reaching even the poorest in our nation.
* Many mobile network operators offer discounted Data Vouchers exclusively for use on WhatsApp.