**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 2773**

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**2773. Ms D Carter (Cope) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

Whether her department has undertaken any research to show to what extent and in what areas 21 years of education under a democratic government superseded what used to be provided under the highly discriminatory apartheid system; if not, why not; if so, (a) in which areas and to (b) what extent has the democratic government achieved greater results to the benefit of all children in South Africa? NW3205E

**Response**

The Department of Basic Education has not undertaken research to measure and compare the education under the apartheid system and democratic government. However, the achievements of the democratic government surpass the apartheid education system by far. Below are some the detailed achievements of the education system under the new democratic government.

* Since 1994, government has implemented major policy reforms to redress past inequalities in education, transforming the education system and increasing the skills and life chances of all South Africans. Nineteen different departments of education have been unified into a single education system, removing race as the basis for attending school.
* While a range of changes and initiatives introduced since 1994 are starting to result in improvements in the education system, it will take more time for the terrible legacy of apartheid education to be fully addressed and for apartheid patterns of school performance to be removed.
* Enrolment in Grade R (a pre-school year at primary school) has more than doubled, increasing from 300 000 to 813 044 between 2003 and 2014, nearly reaching the level of universal access.
* Gross secondary school enrolment improved from 51 percent in 1994 to almost 90 percent in 2014, while gross primary enrolment in 2014 was high at approximately 99 percent.
* The learner-to-teacher ratio improved from 33 to 1 in 2000 to 31 to 1 in 2014.
* As a result of improved infrastructure, a higher proportion of younger children are accessing classroom facilities.
* Overall, South Africa is achieving gender parity in school enrolment with a Gender Parity Index of 1 in 2014, and has met the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of achieving universal primary education.
* Children with disabilities: Progress has also been made in increasing access to schools for children with disabilities, with more public special schools being built. Other public ordinary schools are being converted to full service schools.
* The improvements in access have resulted from a number of interventions. The burden of school fees for poor households has been reduced by introducing no-fee schools. By 2014, 78 percent of learners (more than 8 million) in 80 percent of public schools (close to 20 000 schools) benefited from the no-fee policy.
* By providing children with meals at school, the National School Nutrition Programme has contributed to regular and punctual attendance by learners and enabled them to attend school without being hungry. By 2014, over 9 million learners in over 20 000 primary and secondary schools – virtually all the learners from poor households – were receiving a government-funded school lunch.
* Learners are using the same curriculum: the curriculum has been revised to improve the quality of learning and teaching. The National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) has been implemented from Grade R to 12 by 2014.
* To strengthen teaching and learning, CAPS was accompanied by the following measures:
  + Over 170 million workbooks and textbooks were distributed to schools between 2011 and 2014 to increase access to quality written material and help learners and teachers to understand the expected assessment standards and cover the curriculum.
  + The Annual National Assessments (ANA) system was introduced to enable the objective assessment of the education system below Grade 12. Almost 7 million learners across more than 24 000 schools participated in the third cycle of ANA in 2014.
* To strengthen the quality of education, the Funza Lushaka bursary scheme was introduced to tackle teacher shortages by encouraging more learners to study to become teachers. From 2007 to 2013 a total of 62 804 bursaries were awarded to student teachers at a cost of over R1.9 billion.
* The numbers of learners obtaining university entry qualifications each year (bachelor passes) has also increased. On average, between 2013 and 2014, 161 253 learners obtained bachelor passes, compared with 70 000 per year for the period 2000 to 2002.
* To support the improvements that are emerging in basic education, better school management and administration, with a focus on school performance, are critical. Therefore, School Management Teams have been trained on management courses.
* The percentage of the population aged 20 years and older that has had no education decreased from 19 percent in 1996 to 9 percent in 2011. The Kha Ri Gude Literacy Programme has been a success, with almost 3 million illiterate adult learners having been enrolled between 2008 and 2013. The majority of learners are female.
* A new funding model was introduced to replace the race-based, inequitable funding model of the apartheid era. Overall, the education budget increased to more than 5 percent of GDP, and changed from a race-based education budget to a pro-poor education budget. Public spending per learner increased to overt R11 000 per year by 2012. While there has been an improvement in the equity of education funding, inequalities in terms of resources available at public schools remain due to the disparity in households’ ability to supplement the funding of public schools and due to inherited school infrastructure backlogs.
* The Department of Basic Education has published detailed research, monitoring and sector reports on the achievements and challenges facing the sector on [www.education.gov.za](http://www.education.gov.za)