**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION 2892**

**CONVERTED FROM ORAL REPLY 285**

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**🟊285. Ms N Gina (ANC) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

With regard to the visit of the National Assembly’s Portfolio Committee on Basic Education to Limpopo and Mpumalanga, during which the specified committee discovered a dire need for professional staff like nurses, psychologists and therapists in the farm schools and special needs schools, what plans has her department put in place to attend to the need of the specified schools regarding professional staff such as nurses, psychologists and therapists? NO3243E

**RESPONSE:**

With regard to the provision of specialised human resources to service special needs schools, the Department of Basic Education is in the process of developing integrated norms for funding, staffing and infrastructure. These norms are aimed at ensuring an equitable distribution of these scarce resources in each district to serve the needs of learners with specialised needs in ordinary, full-service and special schools. The norms will further be in line with the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (2014) which acknowledges that learners with high needs who are admitted to special schools should have access to specialist professional support staff such as therapists, psychologists and nurses on a high frequency basis. Proposals are also being developed to introduce a cadre of mid-level workers such as therapy assistants and counsellors to provide services at special schools on a day-to day basis. The Department plans to complete the norms by March 2016 for incremental implementation up to 2019. Priority will be given to special schools in disadvantaged areas that have been under-resourced to date.