**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 2968**

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**2968. Ms H S Boshoff (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

(1) (a) Which directorate within her department authorises a certain company (name furnished) to develop the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) curriculum books into braille and large print, (b) when is this authorisation given and (c) when does an authorisation go out to the specified company to update the CAPS curriculum books in braille and large print in the event of curriculum changes;

(2) which was the last year that each visually impaired or blind learner received a book in braille or large print in each subject and in each grade in his or her language since the inception of the CAPS curriculum in the 2012-13 financial year;

(3) does her department carry any costs with regard to the funding of key positions at the specified company to allow for the sustainability of the development of CAPS curriculum in braille and large print in the event of alterations to the curriculum; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details? NW3287E

**Responses:**

1. (a)The Learning and the Teaching Support Material (LTSM) Directorate contracted Pioneer Printers as a sole provider to print and deliver braille workbook for visually impaired learners in the 22 schools for the blind. The same company developed braille and Large Print textbooks for Western Cape Education Department schools and took the initiative to braille other textbooks on the National Braille catalogue. Provinces were advised to procure such materials from them.

(b) The authorisation for Braille workbooks has been renewed since 2012.

(c) No changes have been effected in the curriculum that affects the Braille books.

1. The national Catalogue for Braille and Large Print was developed in 2012 and 2013. Provinces incrementally started procuring since the catalogue was developed. This was based on the availability of the finalised material by Pioneer Printers. Yearly, provinces procure top-ups, where applicable and print content using braille embossing machines available at schools. An Information Communication and Technology (ICT) solution has been employed at other schools where textbooks are loaded on braille readers.
2. The National Department does not fund any post at Pioneer Printers. The Western Cape Education Department funds 24 posts at the institution for the development of Braille and Large Print. The Department is engaging with Pioneer Printers, publishers and other stakeholders to find a long term solution to the lack of capacity in the country to develop and print materials in Braille in addition to finding alternative solutions through the use of ICT.