**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 3041**

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**3041. Ms A T Lovemore (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

(1) Whether she intends to introduce mechanisms to link the measurement of the performance of foundation phase teachers directly to learner performance; if not, (a) why not, (b) who will be held accountable for foundation phase learner outcomes and (c) how will accountability mechanisms operate; if so, what are the relevant details;

(2) whether she will utilise the annual national assessment results (a) as a measure of individual learner progress during a grade or a phase and (b) as a tool to measure the efficacy of teachers; if not, in each case, (i) why not and (ii) how will she hold individual teachers accountable for their learners’ outcomes; if so, what are the relevant details in each case? NW3581E

**RESPONSE:**

1. The performance of educators includes, inter alia, the performance of learners.
2. The performance measurement of educators has always included, amongst others, learners’ performance as one of the important proxies. This is in view of the fact that there are many factors at play determining learners’ performance. Factors which influence learning include the learner’s background, school conditions and context, and the teaching quality and processes. International research overwhelmingly points to the learner’s socio-economic status as being a major determinant of learning achievement. The measurement of the performance of all educators is a condition of service as agreed to in the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC). Currently, all educators, including teachers in the Foundation Phase, are appraised in terms of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS). Performance Standard 4 of the IQMS instrument measures Learner Assessment/Achievement.
3. Accountability for learner outcomes rests primarily with the Head of the school. In instances where there is under-performance of learners in the Foundation Phase, the Head of Department as well as the responsible teachers are co-accountable. According to the section 16 E of the South African Schools Act, the Principal of the school has to put in place a plan that would address any under-performance of learners at the school. The implementation of this plan will be monitored by the District and Provincial Department of Education, who report on the progress to the Head of Department in the province.
4. Not applicable.
5. (a) The purpose of Annual National Assessment (ANA) is to diagnose learning challenges and monitor the “health” of the education system. ANA is currently administered in only two subjects, language and mathematics, and on all learners at a particular period in a year. For that reason, individual teachers can use ANA results to measure progress of individual learners in their classes but that is not the primary purpose of ANA.

Through the introduction of the Annual National Assessments, known as ANA, the Department have focussed all officials, schools, teachers, and parents on learning and teaching performance in our country. The Department have utilised the diagnostic function of ANA in classrooms so that the Department have a means to assess performance of learners within our classrooms in relation to learners in the district and province. The Department have only just introduced the ANAs in the system in 2011, and like other countries, the Department recognise that the Department need to strengthen formative (school-based) assessment in our schools and how it can be used to improve learning and teaching in our classrooms. However, the Department do know that more can be done through improved school performance, and oversight of the curriculum in schools – especially in those schools which cater for children from poor households.

The Department has started work on refining the systemic assessment function of the ANA so as to accurately compare results across years and better monitor progress in the system. This process of strengthening systemic performance monitoring has taken over a decade in many countries and has required a dedicated effort and capacity from specialists, researchers and academics in the country and abroad. The National Development Plan (NDP) identifies this as a key issue to be resolved – and our Basic Education sector plan, *Action Plan 2019: Towards the realisation of Schooling 2025* prioritises the ability to track performance, through an objective tool, as a priority. The Department will, of course, learn from provincial and international assessments such as the Systemic Assessments in the Western Cape and the Department’s participation in regional and international assessments.

The Department are also strengthening the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) administration so as to improve the performance management of teachers in schools and more carefully reflect the reality of what is going on at school level.

(b) (i)The efficacy of teachers is not specifically linked to performance of learners in the Annual National Assessment (ANA) results. The efficacy of all educators is measured in terms of the instrument in the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) as agreed to in the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC). Performance Standard 4 of the IQMS instrument measures Learner Assessment/Achievement.

(ii) Accountability for learner outcomes rests primarily with the Principal of the school. In instances where there is under-performance of learners in the ANA results, the Head of Department as well as the responsible teachers are co-accountable. According to the section 16 E of the South African Schools Act, the Principal of the school has to put in place a plan that would address any under-performance of learners based on the ANA diagnostic report of the school. The implementation of this plan will be monitored by the District and Provincial Department of Education, who report on the progress to the Head of Department in the province.