**Memorandum from the Parliamentary Office**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 3245**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 28/08/2015**

**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER 34 OF 2015)**

**Ms A T Lovemore (DA) to ask the Minister of Higher Education and Training:**

With reference to the summary report entitled An Examination of Aspects of Initial Teacher Education Curricula at Five Higher Education Institutions in The Initial Teacher Education Research Project, compiled by JET Education Services and issued in August 2014, for each of the key findings, what are the details of the action which (a) has already been taken and (b) will be taken to rectify the shortcomings in the university education of intermediate phase teachers identified in each of the key findings?

**NW3846E**

**REPLY:**

The Initial Teacher Education Research Project (ITERP) that is currently being conducted by JET Education Services is a partnership project between JET, the Education Deans Forum and Departments of Basic Education, and Higher Education and Training. It is a longitudinal project, which is investigating initial teacher education programme delivery at a selected sample of universities. It is also tracking new teacher graduates as they take up posts in schools in an attempt to understand their readiness as beginning teachers and their ability to make the transition from teacher education into teaching.

The ITERP was conceptualised and is being implemented as part of efforts to strengthen teacher education and is not separate from this. The project findings are fed directly back to universities through engagements with individual universities and regular reporting on findings at the quarterly meetings of the Education Deans Forum.

It must be noted that the ITERP is researching the initial teacher education programmes that were designed and implemented in line with the former teacher education qualifications policy, i.e. the Norms and Standards for Educators in Schooling of 2000. All teacher education programmes have to be redesigned to align with the new standards set by the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework of 2007, revised in 2013 and the Policy on Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ) of 2011, revised in 2015. One of the main purposes of the ITERP is to inform the design of new teacher education programmes.

The MRTEQ sets standards for teacher education at the programme level. Initial teacher education programmes have to meet the standards set for teaching specialisations in terms of knowledge mix, credits and levels. This will assist to respond to one of the key findings that emerged from the ITERP and the degree of variation between programmes offered by different universities.

The MRTEQ also, more closely, regulates the teaching practice component of teacher education programmes to strengthen this component of initial teacher education programmes. It sets standards regarding the nature of schools to be used for teaching practice, the nature of the teaching practice component within initial teacher education programmes, and the time spent in schools.

A national Teacher Education Programme Evaluation Committee (TEPEC) has been set up, chaired by the Department of Higher Education and Training, involving the participation of the Department of Basic Education, South African Council of Educators and Education and the Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA). This committee reviews all teacher education programmes to ensure that they meet the requirements stipulated in the Policy on Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications.

In addition to the policy measures that have been put in place to strengthen teacher education, the Department of Higher Education and Training is implementing a 5 year (2015/16 – 2019/20) Teaching and Learning Development Capacity Improvement Programme (TLDCIP) that will support universities to strengthen teacher education programmes at the level of curriculum structure and curriculum delivery.

A specific project in the TLDCIP will focus on strengthening university capacity for primary teacher education. It will involve the implementation of a range of activities to strengthen the capacity and capability of universities for the delivery of quality primary school teacher education programmes, including the following:

* Establish new initial teacher education programmes at universities where specific specialisations are not yet offered but which are needed and which the university is interested to offer;
* Develop and roll-out a national advocacy campaign for teaching generally, specifically Foundation Phase teaching as a viable and attractive career choice;
* Support academic communities of practice focused on priority teaching subject specialisations (Mathematics, Languages, Science and Technology), which would have the responsibility to understand university practices across the system with respect to the specialisation, with a view towards the development of knowledge and practice standards for the teaching specialisation, which could assist to achieve greater convergence and rigour in teacher education curricula;
* Support appropriate research, programme development and material development activities that will improve the quality of initial teacher education programme delivery;
* Finalise norms and standards for professional practice and teaching schools as well as mechanisms for their establishment;
* Develop a national database of schools that will be developed as professional practice schools;
* Support universities to develop business plans for the establishment of teaching schools;
* Develop a national programme to support the professional development of school teachers that act as tutors and mentors to initial teacher education students, which can be delivered in a blended mode, with a significant online component; and
* Develop an online platform/course for the teaching practice/work-integrated learning component of teacher education programmes.

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STATUS:

DATE:

REPLY TO QUESTION 3245 APPROVED/NOT APPROVED/AMENDED

Dr BE NZIMANDE, MP

MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

STATUS:

DATE: