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**3295.. Mr S L Ngcobo (IFP) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

(1)       With reference to the National School Safety Framework (NSSF) and the systems in place to combat violence in schools, how does her department deem such measures as being effective to deal with the violence;

(2)       whether any improvements have been made to the NSSF since it was first published in 2015, to proactively counter the (a) heightened violence levels in schools recently and (b) changing nature of the violence in schools; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details;

(3)       (a) how will her department ensure that schools in the rural areas, which are mostly always marginalised and neglected, also benefit fully from such systems and (b) what are the relevant details of the support that will be provided to (i) learners and (ii) teachers who experience the violence first hand?

**Response**

1. The NSSF remains our primary strategic response to school violence. It is a comprehensive approach that coordinates and consolidates all school safety interventions in the sector.  The NSSF is based on a social ecological systems model which locates the school within its broader community.  It relies on collaboration and partnerships for a more coordinated approach to responding to school violence. The NSSF provides the framework within which:

1. All schools have active **school safety committees** and school **safety plans** based on an audit of needs are in place and are reviewed frequently.
2. **School perimeter is secured** (fenced) and access controls (guard and/or surveillance) are in place and managed. Infrastructure plans for 2018/19 are informed by the Audit of the Districts’ school fencing coverage which highlights the schools that need to be prioritised.
3. **School codes of conduct are aligned with the Constitution of South Africa and child-protection legislation**; and is communicated and adopted/ agreed to by all school stakeholders.
4. **Corporal punishment is prohibited by law and alternatives on positive discipline** are implemented in all schools.
5. **Protocols are in place to inforce consequence management** timeously and is consistently applied when responding to contraventions that put the learning environment at risk.
6. Schools have **systems in place to report** violent incidences and criminal behaviour at local police station, to district and provincial office bearers and SACE.
7. Schools have **established relationships with their intergovernmental counterparts**: Departments of Social Development; Health and Justice, to progressively ensure services such as counselling services (SBSTs); medical examinations and access to justice are effective and in the best interest of the child.
8. (a)Since its inception in 2015, no formal review of the NSSF has been undertaken.  However, through the annual district monitoring process some challenges have been identified.  A major challenge includes the functionality of School Safety Committees.   To this end, measures have been undertaken to ensure that all School Safety Committees are trained, including all school personnel (educators and support staff).  There have also been additional Protocols developed to facilitates the implementation of the NSSF.  These include the Protocol to Deal with Incidences of Corporal Punishment in Schools and Positive Discipline; and the Protocol for the Management and Reporting of Sexual Abuse and Harassment in Schools. (b)The DBE intends to commission a new National School Violence Study (NSVS) which will inform the review of the NSSF.
9. (a) The DBE programmes are rolled out in ALL public schools (which includes schools in rural arears).  All seventy-five (75) districts are monitored and supported in the implementation of Safety in Education, Sport & Enrichment in Education and Social Cohesion & Equity in Education programmes.  Interventions are targeted at districts where challenges are identified and no school is left behind.  (b)  The interventions provided include training on the NSSF as well as the Protocol for the Management and Reporting of Sexual Abuse and Harassment in Schools for (i) learners (RCL) and (ii) educators.   All schools have School Based Support Teams (SBST) whose role is to ensure that there are mechanisms in place to report violence as well as ensure that support and referral systems are in place.