**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 3391**

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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 36/2015**

**3391. Ms A T Lovemore (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

(1) How many applications by (a) educators and (b) non-teaching staff employed by each provincial department of education are still awaiting processing for (i) incapacity leave and (ii) retirement on the grounds of ill-health;

(2) with reference specifically to employees of each provincial department of education, what is the (a) average and (b) maximum time that lapses between the date of application and the date of processing the application for (i) incapacity leave and (ii) retirement on the grounds of ill-health;

(3) (a) why is there a backlog in respect of the processing of incapacity leave and applications for retirement on the grounds of ill-health, (b) what is being done to address the backlog in each province and (c) by when will the backlog be cleared;

(4) has she made the Minister of Public Service and Administration aware of the backlogs; if not, why not;

(5) has the Minister of Public Service and Administration communicated any action that he has taken in respect of the specified backlogs; if so, what are the relevant details? NW4050E

**REPLY:**

(1) **How many applications by (a) educators and (b) non-educators employed by provincial departments of education are still awaiting processing for (i) incapacity leave and (ii) ill-health retirement in each province?**

1 (a) (b) (i) and (ii)

The table below captures the number of educator and non-educator applications for i) incapacity and ii) ill health retirement per province.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Outstanding Incapacity Leave and Ill-Health Retirement Applications- Jan 2006 - May 2015** | | | | |
| ***PED*** | Educators | | Non-teaching Staff | |
| Incapacity Leave | Ill-Health Retirement | Incapacity Leave | Ill-Health Retirement |
| EC | 12 375 | 126 | 2 924 | 8 |
| FS | 1 682 | 11 | 577 | 0 |
| GP | 140 | 1 | 35 | 2 |
| KZN | 6 929 | 6 | 1 556 | 2 |
| LIM | 1 943 | 6 | 219 | 1 |
| MP | 3 198 | 96 | 498 | 5 |
| NC | 1 579 | 8 | 631 | 0 |
| NW | 873 | 5 | 191 | 4 |
| WC | 2 444 | 4 | 443 | 5 |

(2) **with reference specifically to employees of each provincial department of education, what is the (a) average and (b) maximum time that lapses between the date of application and the date of processing the application for (i) incapacity leave and (ii) retirement on the grounds of ill-health;**

Details on the turnaround times regarding the processing of applications are currently not available nor collected in the normal process of monitoring by the Department. This information will be requested from the provinces and will be provided accordingly.

(3) **(a) why is there a backlog in respect of the processing of incapacity leave and applications for retirement on the grounds of ill-health, (b) what is being done to address the backlog in each province and (c) by when will the backlog be cleared;**

(a) The processing and finalisation of an application for incapacity leave involves many steps and procedures and involves various entities, that is, the employer, the employee, the Health Risk Manager and Health Practitioners. It also involves the submission of various documentation. Delays, mainly administrative, can happen at any stage of the process thus leading to backlogs.

b) The Department of Basic Education (DBE) decided, as part of the plan to address underlying pressures that affect quality teaching and learning, that the nature and extent of backlogged PILIR cases be examined and resolved through direct involvement with Provincial Education Departments (PEDs). The DBE visited all PEDs to discuss the nature and extent of backlogged PILIR cases; discussed challenges and possible ways of resolving the blockages and formulated a management plan to resolve the backlogged PILIR cases. Subsequently, the DBE draws reports from PERSAL to monitor whether the management and administration of PILIR is improving. These reports are shared with the PEDs.

(c) The administrative and infrastructure complexities within Provinces prevent the PEDs from providing a definitive deadline as to when all backlogs will be cleared. This is a continuing process that has the commitment of all PEDs.

(4) **has she made the Minister of Public Service and Administration aware of the backlogs; if not, why not;**

The Minister of Basic Education has been communicating regularly with the Minister of Public Service and Administration (MPSA) since January 2013, informing her of the growing backlogs and their impact on the sector. This included explaining that, due to the imperative that there must be a teacher in every classroom, the PEDs have to appoint substitute teachers whilst teachers were sick for long periods, and this was exerting further pressure on already stretched compensation budgets.

(5) **has the Minister of Public Service and Administration communicated any action that he has taken in respect of the specified backlogs; if so, what are the relevant details?**

No direct response to the Minister of Basic Education has been received from the Minister of Public Service and Administration with respect to PILIR backlogs. However, the Department of Public Service and Administration communicates regularly with all government departments on PILIR matters through circulars to all Heads of Department.