**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 3497**

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**3497. Ms A T Lovemore (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

(1) With reference to her reply to question 2550 on 31 July 2015, for each secondary school in the Graaff-Reinet education district, (a)(i) how many and (ii) what percentage of (aa) Grade 10, (bb) Grade 11 and (cc) Grade 12 learners are enrolled to study mathematics, (b) what are the reasons for the low uptake of mathematics in the specified district, (c) what action has been and/or will be taken to ensure that the specified district, in particular, improves the uptake of mathematics in its secondary schools and (d)(i) has and (ii) will the specified action include ensuring that each further education and training phase mathematics class is taught by a suitably qualified teacher;

(2) with reference to her reply to question 310 on 13 March 2015, have the 174 mathematics teacher posts that were vacant at the time of her reply been filled; if not, (a) why not, (b) what progress has been made toward filling the specified posts and (c) when will the specified vacant posts be filled? NW4159E

**Response:**

1. (a)(i) (ii) (aa) (bb) (cc) There are 1,696 Grade 10 learners taking Mathematics in Graaff-Reinet district, 1, 177 in Grade 11 and 896 learners in Grade 12 respectively. In terms of percentages, there are 80% learners in Grade 10, 73,3% in Grade 11 and 66,7% in Grade 12 respectively.

(b) The most common reasons for the schools not offering Mathematics in the specified district are:

* The unavailability of suitably qualified teachers;
* A perception by learners that Mathematical Literacy is an easier option than Mathematics;
* The perception by learners that Mathematics and Mathematical Literacy are the same;
* The inadequacy of career counselling and guidance Senior Phase;
* The move by principals to have more learners in Mathematical Literacy in order to improve the pass rate; and
* Schools in remote areas have greater difficulty than urban and peri-urban schools in terms of attracting appropriately qualified Mathematics teachers.

(c) The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has taken the following actions to ensure that the specified district, in particular, improves the uptake of Mathematics in its secondary schools:

* Circular S13 of 2014 was approved by the Council of Education Ministers (CEM), wherein it directed that schools not previously offering Mathematics were to reintroduce this subject to a Grade 10 level class in 2015, and sequentially to Grade 11 and 12 in 2016 and 2017 respectively;
* In late 2014, the DBE developed a plan, and began implementing it through the Reintroduction of Mathematics Project in 2015. The focus is on those schools that had stopped offering Mathematics;
* In Service Training has been provided to Grade 10 teachers from affected schools, covering topics that have been identified as being poorly taught, or not taught at all, because of teachers’ inadequate Mathematics content knowledge; and
* Additional (Learner Teacher Support Material) LTSM and physical resources such as textbooks, geometry sets and scientific calculators have been, and are being delivered to the identified schools needing such support.

(d) (i) Yes.

(ii) Yes. Posts will be profiled and advertised according to the established procedures.

(2) (a) The Eastern Cape Provincial Education Department has been working with the Provincial Treasury to secure additional funding to fill identified critical posts, hence the delay in the filling of posts.

(b) A total of 551 Deputy Principal and Heads of Department; and 308 Post Level 1 posts were advertised in an Open Bulletin in June and August 2015, respectively; and

(c) The Eastern Cape Provincial Education Department indicated that it is expected that the all the advertised posts will be filled on 01 November 2015.