**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 3821**

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**3821. Mrs D van der Walt (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

(1) With reference to her department’s Early Grade Reading Study project in 150 project schools and 80 control schools in North West, (a) how many (i) schools have been supplied with lesson plans and (ii) grade readers have been trained in the teaching and reading of Setswana, (b) what progress has been made in respect of (i) on-site support programmes to teachers from reading coaches, accompanied by scripted lesson plans and graded reading materials and (ii) packages designed to improve parental involvement in monitoring learning to read;

(2) when will the specified programme be rolled out to other provinces? NW4566E

**RESPONSE**

There are three separate interventions, each occurring in a group of 50 schools. Group 1 receives centralized teacher training (2 times 2-day workshops per year), lesson plans and graded readers. All 50 schools received the lesson plans and graded readers. Teacher attendance at the February training session was 60% and it was 84% in July. Group 2 receives the same package of lesson plans and graded readers but instead of centralized training, this group receives on-site coaching and afternoon cluster training sessions held by the coach together with teachers from a small number of nearby schools. All 50 schools have been given the lesson plans and graded readers and have received coaching visits to the school. Teacher attendance rates at the cluster sessions were 100% in Term 2, 82% in Term 3 and 93% in Term 4. The third group of 50 schools receives the parent involvement intervention. In these schools Community Reading Coaches (CRCs) have been recruited and trained to run weekly afternoon sessions open to all grade 1 parents. A total of 30 sessions is scheduled for each year covering a total of 10 topics per year. Each topic has 3 sessions where the topic is the same but the activities of the session differ. Thus a parent can attend roughly 1 in 3 sessions and still be exposed to all topics, while parents who attend more regularly can still enjoy fresh activities. Parent attendance has been a challenge in these schools with attendance rates dropping from 35% for the orientation sessions and Topic 1 to 18% for Topic 4. Creative ways to encourage greater attendance in 2016 will need to be considered.

(2) when will the specified programme be rolled out to the other provinces?NW4566E

After the impact evaluation of the Early Grade Reading Study interventions conclusions will be drawn about the cost-effectiveness of each intervention. The Research Team will then make specific recommendations based on the findings. The final evaluation will be concluded by mid-2017. If one (or perhaps two) of the interventions are found to be cost-effective ways to improve the acquisition of home language reading the DBE will then investigate ways to expand the most cost-effective programme or elements of it in 2018 and/or beyond. This will depend on resource availability, including at provincial education departments who will have to take primary responsibility for implementation.