**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION564**

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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER:11/2020**

**564. Mrs N I Tarabella Marchesi (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

(1)       (a) By what date is it envisaged that schools will resume the 2020 academic programme following the national lockdown to curb the spread of COVID-19 and (b) what are the full details of the steps her department intends to take to mitigate the teaching time lost due to the specified lockdown;

(2)       whether the 2020 cohort of Grade 12 is likely to write the National Senior Certificate examinations by the end of 2020, given the suspension of the academic programme for an extended period during the national lockdown; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details?

**RESPONSE**

1. (a) In terms of the announcement made by the Minister on 30 April 2020, the intention is to phase in the resumption of schooling, which will be determined by the readiness of the schools to ensure that learners, teachers and support staff are not exposed to any risk of infection. Hence, the planned date is 1 June 2020 for learners in Grade 12 and Grade 7; and 18 May 2020 for all teachers. The resumption of schooling will be subject to all safety precautionary measures implemented in schools. The other grades will be systematically phased-in, depending on the readiness of the schools.

(b)       The time lost will be recovered by resorting to the following measures -

* The June vacation will be reduced to a week;
* The September holiday will reduced to a long weekend;
* The December holidays will be reduced by a week;
* The June examination will be scrapped to allow for more teaching and learning time; and
* If necessary the school day will be extended for the Intermediate Phase (30min); Senior Phase (1 hour) and Grade 12 (2hours).

In addition to the above, the Department has already commenced with the trimming and re-organisation of the school curriculum to ensure that the core content areas are covered in preparation for the next grade. This will also alleviate the pressure on both learners and teachers.

1. In terms of the writing of the National Senior Certificate examination, if the Grade 12 learners resume schooling on 1 June 2020, the National Senior Certificate examination will take place as scheduled extending into December 2020. The time lost will be recovered as outlined in (1)(b) above. The processing and standardisation of the results will be delayed until January 2021 and the results would be released by the middle of January 2021.