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 **Memorandum from the Parliamentary Office**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 719**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 11/03/2016**

**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER 8 OF 2016)**

**Ms D Carter (Cope) to ask the Minister of Higher Education and Training:**

Whether the goal of the National Development Plan to bolster teacher training has been implemented across the country in a manner that was fully equipping new teachers with (a) accurate and detailed subject knowledge, (b) innovative methodology and modern classroom practice techniques, (c) evolving philosophy on education and modern principles of education, (d) psychological insights in dealing with learners and (e) scientific methods of assessing and testing learners; if not, why not; if so, what (i) are the relevant details of how teacher training is being thoroughly bolstered and (ii) outcomes are being achieved as a result thereof?

**NW834E**

**REPLY:**

Yes, the goal of the National Development Plan to bolster teacher education is being implemented as follows:

1. In 2011, I published the policy on Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ) in the government gazette for implementation, which was updated in 2015 in alignment with the revised Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework.

The MRTEQ replaced the Norms and Standards for Educators (2000) and its main purpose is to refocus teacher education programmes to unambiguously focus on the development of teacher knowledge and practice.

The MRTEQ requires that initial teacher education programmes develop teacher knowledge and practice in five key areas of learning:

* Disciplinary learning refers to disciplinary or subject matter knowledge and it includes the study of education and its foundations, including but not limited to the philosophy, psychology, politics, economics, sociology and history of education. Secondly, it includes the study of specific specialised subject matter relevant to the academic disciplines underpinning teaching subjects or specialisations. Professional ethics and issues related to knowledge of, and relationships between the self and others are crosscutting themes that are theoretically located in the study of education and its foundations.
* Pedagogical learning includes general pedagogical knowledge, which refers to the study of the principles, practices and methods of teaching, knowledge of learners, learning, curriculum, general instructional and assessment strategies, and specialised pedagogical content knowledge, which includes knowing how to present the concepts, methods and rules of a specific discipline in order to create appropriate learning opportunities for diverse learners, as well as how to evaluate their progress. Inclusive education forms an important aspect of both general pedagogical knowledge and specialised pedagogical content knowledge.
* Practical learning involves learning from and in practice. Learning from practice includes the study of practice, using discursive resources to analyse different practices across a variety of contexts, drawing from case studies, video records, lesson observations, etc., in order to theorise practice and form a basis for learning in practice. Learning in practice involves teaching in authentic and simulated classroom environments. Work-integrated learning (WIL) takes place in the workplace (classrooms and schools) and can include aspects of learning from practice, e.g. observing and reflecting on lessons taught by others, as well as learning in practice, e.g. preparing, teaching and reflecting on lessons presented by oneself.
* Situational learning refers to knowledge of the varied learning situations, contexts and environments of education (classrooms, schools, communities, districts, regions, countries and globally), as well as to the prevailing policy, political and organisational contexts. This includes learning about the complex and differentiated nature of the South African society, learning to work in nuanced ways in confronting the diverse challenges faced by children in schools and the communities they serve, for example HIV/AIDS, poverty and the lingering effects of apartheid, dealing with diversity, promoting inclusivity and environmental sustainability.
* Fundamental learning in the context of teacher education in South Africa refers to learning, converse competently in a second official language,[[1]](#footnote-1) the ability to use Information and Communication Technologies competently and the acquisition of academic literacies, which lay the foundation for effective learning in higher education contexts.

The MRTEQ sets standards for how teacher education programmes must address development of these areas of learning through specifying levels at which learning in these areas must take place as well as number of credits that must be allocated to these areas of learning.

The MRTEQ also closely regulates the teaching practice component of teacher education programmes to strengthen this component of initial teacher education programmes. It sets standards regarding the nature of schools to be used for teaching practice, the nature of the teaching practice component within initial teacher education programmes, and the time spent in schools.

A national Teacher Education Programme Evaluation Committee (TEPEC), comprising of the Department of Basic Education, South African Council of Educators and Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority, chaired by the Department of Higher Education and Training has been set up. This Committee reviews all teacher education programmes to ensure that they meet the requirements stipulated in the policy on MRTEQ.

In addition to the above evaluation process, teacher education qualifications are also evaluated for inclusion on the Programme Qualification Mix of universities, and most importantly, evaluated for accreditation purposes by the Higher Education Qualifications Committee of the Council on Higher Education, prior to applying to the South African Qualifications Authority for registration on the National Qualifications Framework.

Together with strengthening teacher education through a focus on the quality of teacher education qualifications and programmes, the Department has put in place a number of other initiatives to bolster teacher education. They are as follows:

* Allocated ring-fenced funding to universities to develop teacher education infrastructure. In the 2012/13 - 2014/15 funding cycle, R662.4 million was invested in teacher education infrastructure.
* Provided funding and organisational support to JET Education Services to conduct a large-scale, longitudinal study into initial teacher education and identify issues that need to be addressed. The findings of the research are being taken up in the re-curriculation processes that are underway at universities.
* Supported research into the establishment of teaching and professional practice schools with a view to the research informing the development of these schools.
* Implemented the Strengthening Foundation Phase Teacher Education Programme. R141 million has been invested over the period from 2010 to 2015. As a result, the number of universities involved in Foundation Phase teacher education has grown from 13 to 21 universities. The 21 universities have been involved in a range of research, programme development and material development projects, and this has resulted in new teacher education programmes that will prepare Foundation Phase mother tongue teachers in all South African languages.

In addition to the measures that have already been put in place to strengthen teacher education, the Department is implementing a five year (2015/16 - 2019/20) Teaching and Learning Development Capacity Improvement Programme (TLDCIP) that will support universities to strengthen teacher education programmes at the level of curriculum structure and curriculum delivery.

The TLDCIP will:

* Support academic communities of practice focused on priority teaching subject specialisations (Mathematics, languages and literacy), which would have the responsibility to understand university practices across the system with respect to the specialisation, with a view towards the development of knowledge and practice standards for the teaching specialisation, and could assist to achieve greater convergence and rigour in teacher education curricula.
* Support appropriate research, programme development and material development activities that will improve the quality of initial teacher education programme delivery.
* Finalise norms and standards for professional practice schools and teaching schools and mechanisms for their establishment.
* Develop a national database of schools that will be developed as professional practice schools.
* Support universities to develop business plans for the establishment of teaching schools.
* Develop a national programme to support the professional development of school teachers that act as tutors and mentors to initial teacher education students, which can be delivered in a blended mode, with a significant online component.
* Develop an online platform/course for the teaching practice/work-integrated learning component of teacher education programmes.
1. The outcome of the implementation of the new policy regulating teacher education qualifications is that all universities have been required to redesign their teacher education programmes and submit them to the national TEPEC for review, prior to having them accredited by the Council on Higher Education. The new policy, re-curriculation process, strengthened national oversight processes and the range of concrete activities that have been undertaken to support policy implementation will result in stronger teacher education programmes producing teachers that are more strongly grounded in the knowledge and practice required to teach their subject specialisations in diverse South African classroom contexts.

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DIRECTOR – GENERAL

STATUS:

DATE:

REPLY TO QUESTION 719 APPROVED/NOT APPROVED/AMENDED

Dr BE NZIMANDE, MP

MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

STATUS:

DATE:

1. **In the case of students whose language of choice (or first language) is English or Afrikaans, this needs to be one of the nine other official languages or South African Sign Language.** [↑](#footnote-ref-1)