

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 1347

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1347. Ms H S Boshoff (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:

Has the SA Council of Educators requested access to the (a) Child Protection Register and/or (b) National Register for Sex Offenders for the purpose of vetting educators in the past two years; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? NW1448E

SACE RESPONSE

SACE wrote a letter to the Director General in the Department of Basic Education in 2017, to request assistance in engaging the Director Generals in the Departments of Social Development and Justice and Constitutional Development, with regard to accessing both the National Child Protection Register and the National Register of Sexual Offences for purposes of determining fitness-to-practice prior to awarding the provisional or full registration status to the teachers.

This move was taken due to the limitations of access to the National Child Protection Register that only permits employers, concerned individuals, and designated child protection organisations to access this register. Similarly, the DBE DG would have facilitated the process of accessing the National Register of Sexual Offences on behalf of SACE as well.

Subsequent to the request a joint meeting between the Department of Basic Education and Social Development and SACE was held to discuss access to the Child Protection Register. The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development was not available to attend due to competing priorities.

Progress has been made with regard to the National Child Protection Register in terms of developing a protocol and Memorandum of Understanding between these three institutions (SACE, DBE and DSD) so that SACE can access the register through the Department of Basic Education for purposes of assess to educators' fitness-to-practice prior to confirming the professional registration status. This will also include an improved process of SACE submitting to the National Child Protection Register finalised educator misconduct cases that involve children under the age of 18 years.

Additionally, the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act now allows access to the National Register of Sexual Offences, amongst others, by amongst others licensing authorities, a parallel process has been initiated by SACE. SACE has written directly to the DG in the Department of Justice requesting access to the National Registers.