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Mr. Bobby Soobrayan
Director-General of Basic Education
Private Bag X9023, Cape Town,
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Department of Basic Education
120 Plein Street,
Cape Town,
8000
Tel: 012 313 5911
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Request for Information Relating to *National Norms and Standards for School Infrastructure, National Policy for Equitable School Physical Teaching and Learning Environment and a National Policy on School Libraries*

Dear Mr. Soobryan

1. I am writing on behalf of Equal Education. Equal Education is a movement of learners, parents, teachers and community members striving for quality education and equality in education in South Africa.
2. Equal Education has embarked on a campaign for school libraries, which calls for a national policy that will provide every school in South Africa with a library, and a librarian. Currently, only about 8% of schools have functional libraries in the country; Functional in that they meet all 3 criteria: 1. There is a structure set aside for a library; 2. The library is appropriately stocked (at least 3 books per learner); 3. That there is a full-time Librarian on staff.
3. The Department of Education has acknowledged the inequalities in our schooling system and the need for provision of school libraries and basic infrastructure in schools. Research shows that access to functional libraries will increase learner outcomes by up to 25%. The education department has also accepted, through its draft policy documents, that there is a correlation between learner outcomes and access to basic infrastructure such as libraries, laboratories and textbooks, in its draft policy documents.
4. The Department of Education made progress by drafting these following documents: draft policy on access to equitable physical school environment, and draft regulations on school infrastructure. However, the Department of Education has made six draft policies on school libraries and still no policy exist.

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5. Equal Education acknowledges that the Department of Education has gone through a transition. It is now headed by a new Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga and has divided the old Department of Education into two departments, Basic Education and Higher Education. However, we feel that the issue of providing functioning libraries to the majority of working class children has moved at a slow pace and the policy and regulatory framework for school infrastructure needs to be finalised.

6. We kindly request information from the Department of Basic Education on the following issues:

6.1. What is the status of the *National Norms and Standards for School Infrastructure, National Policy for Equitable School Physical Teaching and Learning Environment* and when will the Minister of Basic Education pass these draft regulations and a policy document?

6.2. What plans does the Department of Education for providing functioning libraries to all public schools?

6.3. What resources does the Department expect to allocate for school libraries in this financial year and in the future? In short, does the Department of Basic Education's budget account for the policy changes in school infrastructure?

7. We would like the department of Basic Education to support Equal Education's campaign for school libraries and hope that we can work together in enhancing the quality of and equality in education for all South Africans in a substantive and progressive way.

Thank You for considering our requests.

Sincerely,



Yoliswa Dwane
Equal Education



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