

**14 MAY 2020**

**MINISTER MOTSHEKGA TO CONVENE A SPECIAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATION  
MINISTERS TO CONSIDER PROGRESS ON STATE OF READINESS FOR THE  
REOPENING OF SCHOOLS**

The Minister of Basic Education Mrs Angie Motshekga will convene a special meeting of the Council of Education Ministers (CEM) to consider progress made towards the reopening of schools.

The purpose of the meeting will be to consider the work done by provinces this week including taking deliveries of the COVID-19 Essentials required as preconditions for the reopening of schools.

In a meeting held on Monday provinces reported that they were at various stages of readiness and they requested more time as they waited for deliveries of personal protection equipment from the supplier.

“We agreed in our meeting on Monday that one week is needed to finalise outstanding. So on Monday (18 May) we will reconvene to consider progress made and then report to the public on the state of readiness. A lot of work has happened and we are happy with the progress reported in the last meeting but we need confirmation of deliveries that provinces were waiting for,” said Minister Angie Motshekga.

She said the delays in the deliverables were attributed to challenges with the supplier of PPEs which resulted in the cancellation of contracts. Various provinces had to find new suppliers to deliver the material this week. “In the meeting on Monday we will receive a full report which we can then share with the public. We will also use the meeting to table President Cyril Ramaphosa’s address which is also important for our planning purposes,” she said.

In his address to the nation last night President Cyril Ramaphosa said: “We will immediately begin a process of consultation with the relevant stakeholders on a proposal that by end of May, most of the country be placed on alert level 3, but those parts of the country with the highest rates of infection remain on level 4”.

The Director-General of the Department of Basic Education, Mathanzima Mveli, said that the implementation of the basic education sector risk-based differentiated approach in reopening schools would be assisted by the President’s address.

“We will convene a special meeting of the heads of education departments from all provinces and the minister will meet with MECs on Monday go discuss the progress made. Thereafter we will announce to public. Nobody has experience in managing a crisis of this magnitude so we follow expert advice that why we need to be extremely careful how we proceed in every step,” he said.

He said the basic education sector plan was based on three factors;

- Saving lives remain the overriding consideration.
- Saving the academic year is crucial.
- Risk assessment and mitigation as well as monitoring and evaluation are important safeguards of the plan.

“The Minister will address a media briefing after receiving full reports from all provinces on the readiness to open schools. We appeal for patience as we work to find the best way forward under the circumstances,” he said.

The Minister will address a media briefing on Monday after the meeting of the Council of Education Ministers. The exact time will be confirmed in due course.

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