



CURRICULUM NEWS

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

May 2010

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basic education

Department:
Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION



Mrs Angie Motshekga, MP
*Minister of
Basic Education*



Mr Enver Surty, MP
*Deputy Minister of
Basic Education*

I have established three Committees of highly respected experts led by three able people with the requisite experience and qualifications, to enable the smooth implementation of the streamlining of the Curriculum.

- **The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements Ministerial Project Committee**
- **The Committee for the Reduction of Learning Areas in the Intermediate Phase in the GET Band; and**
- **The Learning and Teaching Support Materials Committee.**

Dear Principals and Teachers

Communication during times of change is vital. It is important that you as practitioners in the classroom are kept informed first hand of the changes and developments that are taking place in the process of curriculum reform.

I am pleased to inform you through this newsletter of the steps we have taken in 2010 since the last Curriculum News to act on the recommendations of the Ministerial Committee that was tasked with reviewing the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement in 2009.

Curriculum reform is not something that the system takes lightly. We need to work against change fatigue in order to restore confidence and enthusiasm amongst all our stakeholders. We are proceeding deliberately and decisively to effect the broad recommendations of the Ministerial Committee.

But we also need to iron out the difficulties that do exist quickly and efficiently. We have already started the process of identifying problems and have taken the necessary steps to find solutions. We have and will continue to make changes on an on-going basis where they can be made with minimal disruption.

We have taken steps to provide short-term relief to administrative overload. We have reduced the number of projects for learners, and have done away with the need for portfolio files of learner assessments. We have reduced the number of teachers' files to a single one. We have also discontinued the Common Tasks for Assessment (CTAs) for Grade 9 learners with effect from January 2010. Provinces will inform their schools about the form of assessment that will replace CTAs.



In 2010, tests for Grades 3 and 6 will be set nationally, administered by schools and a representative national sample will be externally moderated.

In this second edition of Curriculum News, you can read about the Ministerial Committees I have established and you will get updates on the national assessments in Grades 3 and 6 and clarification on the Promotion and Progression requirements for Grades 1-9.

I have established three Committees of highly respected experts led by three able people with the requisite experience and qualifications, to enable the smooth implementation of the streamlining of the Curriculum.

- **The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements Ministerial Project Committee**
- **The Committee for the Reduction of Learning Areas in the Intermediate Phase in the GET Band; and**
- **The Learning and Teaching Support Materials Committee.**

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements Ministerial Project Committee will develop a single, comprehensive and concise Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement for each grade, R-12, as recommended by the Report of the Ministerial Committee. These Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements should provide clear guidelines on what you ought to teach and assess on a grade-by-grade and subject basis.

The task of the Committee for the Reduction of Learning Areas in the Intermediate Phase in the GET Band is to plan for implementation of the recommended reduction of learning areas in the Intermediate Phase from eight to six. The Learning and Teaching Support Materials Committee's task is to consider recommendations on improving the distribution and use of Learning and Teaching Support Materials in schools.

The Department is also in the process of developing and distributing workbooks to schools in order to provide support for the curriculum.

We are also focussing on strengthening teaching and learning in Grade R by distributing learning and teaching support packs for Grade R teachers to all 13 900 schools that offer Grade R. These packs have proved very popular amongst Grade R teachers. You should use them during your teaching of literacy and numeracy to improve, enrich and build on what you are already doing.

We are also distributing Lesson Plans in Literacy and Numeracy for Grades 1-6 to teachers in the primary school, in order that you may use them to strengthen your teaching if necessary. This does not mean that teachers no longer have to plan their lessons. Planning is an essential part of teaching and all teachers should have evidence of their lesson planning in their files.

I have announced the development of a national Basic Education Action Plan. This long term plan for the basic education sector will be known as *Schooling 2025: the Department of Basic Education's Action Plan*. We hope to circulate it to all of you for your comments and contributions.



In order to keep you informed of the progress we are making, my Department will develop and distribute a quarterly edition of the Curriculum News to all teachers and principals. This is in order to ensure that you are kept informed of the developments around curriculum reform.

I trust that you will all enjoy a successful term.

With my best wishes

MRS ANGIE MOTSHEKGA, MP

MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION

MAY 2010

IMPROVING CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION: UPDATE



THE MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION MET WITH THE MINISTERIAL CURRICULUM TEAMS
AND THEIR CHAIRPERSONS IN THE DEPARTMENT'S NEW BUILDING,
222 STRUBEN STREET, PRETORIA, ON 8 APRIL 2010.

The Minister has taken immediate steps to improve curriculum implementation since the Ministerial Committee handed over the *Report on the Review of the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement* in October 2009.

In addition to reducing the administration and reporting burden on teachers, the Minister has established **three** Committees to streamline the curriculum.

The three Ministerial Committees are as follows:

- **The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements Ministerial Project Committee;**
- **The Committee for the Reduction of Learning Areas in the Intermediate Phase in the GET Band;** and
- **The Learning and Teaching Support Material Committee.**

The Minister made the announcement regarding national assessments that the Common Tasks for Assessment (CTAs) for Grade 9 will be discontinued with effect from January 2010.

1. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements Ministerial Project Committee

The primary task of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements Ministerial Project Committee is to develop a single comprehensive Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement for each grade R-12 and learning area/subject as recommended by the Report of the Ministerial Committee on the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement.

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements should provide clear guidelines on what teachers ought to teach and assess on a grade-by-grade and learning area/subject basis.

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements Ministerial Project Committee consists of the following:

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY STATEMENTS MINISTERIAL PROJECT COMMITTEE		
	Dr Cassius Lubisi	Superintendent-General KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (Chair)
	Ms Penny Vinjevold	Head: Western Cape Department of Education
	Mr Edward Mosuwe	Department of Basic Education
	Ms Tsedì Diphòlo	South African Council for Educators (SACE)
	Ms Sue Muller	NAPTOSA
	Dr Ursula Hoadley	Curriculum Specialist University of Cape Town
	Ms Elspeth Khembo	National President of the Association for Mathematics Education of South Africa
	Dr R Ramparsadh	Gauteng Department of Education
	Ms Zarene Govender	Secretariat

The task of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements Ministerial Project Committee is to:

- Oversee the development of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements;
- Appoint writing and reference teams for the development of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements;
- Ratify the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements;
- Oversee the editing of the documents;
- Provide guidance on methodologies and guidelines on textbooks; and
- Advise the Minister on any strategic matters to strengthen curriculum implementation.

The Subject Learning Area by Grade guidelines will be known as the **Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS)**. The intention is to streamline the curriculum documents into single documents for each Grade and each Subject in which content and assessment are specified.

The Minister has approved a two-year time-frame for the implementation of the CAPS, in place of the one year time-frame that the Review Committee recommended. The Committee is required to ensure that it consults widely and tests the statements with teachers.

The writing and reference teams, appointed by the Committee, will effect this task. Criteria for the appointment of writers include proven ability to write, as well as knowledge, understanding and experience of the subject and classroom.

Schools will be informed in good time when the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) are ready for implementation. The new policy, developed in consultation with all role players, will establish clear guidelines on the implementation of new progression and promotion requirements, how they will be implemented in schools and at provincial level, and how assessment practices generally will be improved.

2. The Committee for the Reduction of Learning Areas in the Intermediate Phase in the GET Band

The Review Committee recommended that learning areas in the Intermediate Phase be reduced in order to provide more time for teaching the basics required at this level. The Minister has appointed a team to plan for the implementation of the reduction of Learning Areas in the Intermediate Phase.

The Committee members are:

COMMITTEE FOR THE REDUCTION OF LEARNING AREAS IN THE INTERMEDIATE PHASE OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BAND		
	Professor John Volmink	UMALUSI (Chair)
	Professor Lebo Moletsane	HSRC
	Ms Fatima Dada	Independent Consultant
	Mr Renny Somnath	SADTU
	Ms Pumi Tloubatla	Gauteng Department of Education
	Dr Koot Myburgh	North West Education Department
	Mrs V Makhubela	School Principal
	Ms Marie-Louise Samuels	Department of Basic Education
	Dr Hersheela Narsee	Department of Basic Education
	Dr Mafu Rakometsi	UMALUSI

As the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) with its 8 Learning Areas for Intermediate Phase is the official policy in South Africa, the Learning Areas will be repackaged into 6 Learning Programmes, known as subjects.

The Committee will report by mid-2010 and its recommendations will feed into the work of the curriculum writing teams.

3. The Learning and Teaching Support Material Committee

The review of the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) highlighted the crucial role that Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) play in supporting and strengthening curriculum implementation.

Following the recommendations from the Review Task Team, **the Learning and Teaching Support Material Committee** was established on 3 February 2010. The committee members are:

THE LEARNING AND TEACHING SUPPORT MATERIAL COMMITTEE		
	Mr Garry Rosenberg	Independent Publishing Consultant (Chair)
	Prof Veronica McKay	CEO Kha ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign
	Dr Rhadika Bridgemohan	KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education
	Mr Mzamo Jacobs	Free State Department of Education
	Dr Nhlanhla Nduna-Watson	Department of Basic Education
	Mr John Tsebe	CEO National Library of South Africa
	Ms Nadine Hugo	READ Education Trust
	Ms Debbie Botha	University of Witwatersrand

The Ministerial Committee's brief is to focus on:

- Establishing guidelines for the DBE for the Development of a national catalogue of LTSMs aligned to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement;
- Recommending an optimal list size with price guidelines, allowing teacher choice, quality control and cost effectiveness; and
- Advising the DBE on strategic issues related to the provisioning of LTSM.

The Committee will make its recommendations by mid-2010.



NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

In December 2009, the Minister made the following announcements regarding national assessments from 2010:

- The Common Tasks for Assessment (CTAs) for Grade 9 will be discontinued with effect from January 2010. The Minister has delegated the responsibility of the Grade 9 assessments to each Provincial Department of Education; and
- There will be Annual National Assessments for Grades 3 in Literacy and Numeracy and Grade 6 and 9 in Languages and Mathematics on an annual basis.

Common Tasks for Assessment

The Department of Basic Education has announced by means of Circular S1 of 2010 (8 April 2010) that the Grade 9 CTAs are discontinued with immediate effect and that the provincial education departments are delegated to determine the form of assessment which will constitute the 25% external component of the Grade 9 promotion mark.

Each Provincial Education Department will advise schools on what form of assessment schools will use to replace the CTAs for Grade 9s for 2010.

To assist schools, the Department will make available quality exemplar assessment tasks in order to assist teachers in their preparations. These will be available on the DBE's website: www.thutong.gov.za.

Annual National Assessments Grades 3 and Grade 6 in 2010

Preparations are underway for the conduct of ANA in Grades 3 and 6 in November 2010. These literacy and numeracy tests for ANA will be set by the national Department of Basic Education (DBE) and will be administered by schools.

Clear targets have been set for improvement in learner achievement by 2014. The Minister has set a target of improving numeracy and literacy attainment levels of grades 3 and 6 from the current average attainment levels of between 27% and 38% to at least 60% by 2014.

The annual national assessments (ANA) will focus on the critical foundational skills of literacy and numeracy that we know are fundamental to all learning.

ANA are geared towards improving the quality of education and the results will inform many of the decisions that the Department must take regarding tracking and improving the quality of learning and teaching in the system.

Preparations are underway for the conduct of ANA in Grades 3 and 6 in November 2010. These literacy and numeracy tests for ANA will be set by the national Department of Basic Education (DBE) and will be administered by schools. In a carefully selected sample of 200 schools from each province, the tests will be administered and moderated by an independent agent to build quality, reliability and credibility into the assessment.



The Department is distributing Lesson Plans in Literacy and Numeracy for Grades 1-6 to teachers so that they may use them to strengthen their teaching if necessary.

During 2010, the distribution of workbooks for Grades R-6 will focus on literacy and numeracy. The use of these workbooks will focus largely on preparing grades R to 6 learners for the annual national assessments.

Clarification on the Promotion and Progression Requirements for Grades 1-9

The Minister has clarified the position that all schools must adopt regarding the Promotion (and Progression) Policy Requirements for Grades 1-9.

Until further notice, all schools will use the existing Assessment Policy in GET and the provisions of assessment in the National Policy on the Protocol for Assessment: Reporting and Recording.

Background

In 2008, the Director-General: Education sent a circular to all schools to introduce revised progression and promotion requirements. These were to be implemented in 2010.

However, the Report of the Ministerial Task Team on the Review of the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement has advised that there should be further changes to the progression requirements in order to strengthen assessment.

In light of this, the Director-General's Circular of 2008 to schools is withdrawn. Instead all schools must note the following:

- The changes that were introduced to schools in the Circular in 2009 will **NOT** be implemented;
- Until further notice, all schools will use the existing Assessment Policy in GET and the provisions of assessment in the National Policy on the Protocol for Assessment: Reporting and Recording.

This arrangement will continue until the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) have been developed and implemented in schools.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Since the distribution of Curriculum News 1 in December 2009/January 2010, officials in the Department of Basic Education have received many questions and comments regarding the changes that were introduced from the beginning of 2010. We have therefore decided to include a section for clarification in each Curriculum News.

In this edition we are focussing on the following:

Foundations for Learning and Teaching Pack

Q: *My school has not received a copy of the Foundations for Learning and Teaching Pack that includes lesson plans for literacy, numeracy and life skills, learners' workbooks and resource books, as well as posters and story books for the Foundation Phase. How does my school get a copy?*

A: The Learning and Teaching Pack was for Grade R in the Foundation Phase. At the moment we do not have any additional packs but are considering reprinting. The Department of Basic Education will liaise with the provincial departments of education to supply the list of schools who have not received. The documents are available on the Thutong website: www.thutong.gov.za

Q: *May my school request extra copies of the pack as we have several Foundation Phase teachers?*

A: The school must send the request to the respective provincial department of education.

Q: *How must we use the Foundations for Learning Programme materials?*

A: You should use the materials during your normal teaching time for literacy and numeracy to improve, enrich and build on what you are already doing.

Teacher's file: Recording and planning

Q: *What is the purpose of the Teacher's file?*

A: The teacher's file is where teachers keep records of their planning, including their annual work schedule and their assessment plan. It should also include formal assessment tasks and memoranda; textbooks to be used; and a record of each learner's marks per formal assessment task.

Q: *My teachers insist that they do not have to keep records of learner assessment now that they only have to keep one Teacher's file. Is this true?*

A: No. Teachers should have a mark sheet for every class.



Q: *I have far too many documents to store in a single teacher file as I teach several grades and several learning areas. Is it compulsory to have a single teacher's file?*

A: No, a teacher may have a number of teacher files if she wishes. The important point is that every teacher keeps an orderly record of planning, formal assessment tasks and memoranda, textbooks to be used and a record learner assessment. This may be in a single file or several files.

Q: *My teachers are now saying that they do not have to produce their own lesson plans as these will be provided by the Department. Is this true?*

A: Teachers may choose to use the lesson plans provided by the Department, but may also choose to construct their own lesson plans or base their own plans on those provided by the Department.

Q: *I have always developed my own lesson plans and these have always been well received by my colleagues, the principal and departmental officials. Do I have to use the ones provided by the Department?*

A: No, teachers may use lesson plans provided by the Department, but may also construct their own lesson plans.

Learners' Portfolios

Q: *Now that learners no longer have portfolios does this mean that we do not have to assess and record their assessment tasks?*

A: Teachers do not have to keep separate, formal compilations of learner assessment tasks in portfolios. But all learners' work, including assessment tasks, must be kept in the books and files that they use for ordinary classroom work. These must be at school for moderation purposes when required. Teachers must also assess tasks and keep a record of formal assessment tasks on class lists in their teacher file.

Q: *Where should learners now write and keep their assessment tasks?*

A: Learners should write and keep their assessment tasks in the books and files that they use for classwork. Alternatively, if learners have specific test books or files, assessment tasks may be kept in these.

Learners' Projects

Q: *Are there any clear guidelines for teachers on how to plan and manage school projects?*

A: The requirements for school projects will vary from subject to subject and teacher to teacher. It is best for teachers to learn from and share information with one another in a school or cluster and teacher unions and/or associations on projects.

Q: *How can I get hold of good exemplars for projects that will guide me and my learners?*

A: The Department will post exemplars of projects for learning areas/subjects that teachers can use as a guide if they need them on the website: www.thutong.gov.za

PLEASE NOTE: If you have any questions regarding the implementation of the Curriculum, please send them to the Department of Basic Education at buys.q@dbe.gov.za and we will try to answer them in future issues of Curriculum News.

ATTENTION!

Principals and teachers of Grade 12 Maths and Physical Sciences

Please ensure that you have seen Circular E10 of 2010 issued by the Department of Basic Education. The Circular has TWO annexures that set out the Amendments to the Examination Guidelines for Physical Sciences NSC 2010 and the Amendments to the Examination Guidelines for Mathematics NSC 2010.

If you have not seen Circular E10 or have any enquiries regarding the document, please contact the FOLLOWING:

THE DIRECTOR: FET EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

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