Is it correct that foundation phase learners now have to have their mother tongue as their LOLT and one additional language? Do schools have to offer more than two languages?

- The minimum number of subjects to be offered in the Foundation Phase is 3 in Grade R (Home Language, Mathematics and Life Skills) and 4 in Grades 1 to 3 (Home Language, First Additional Language, Mathematics and Life Skills). Time allocations for these subjects are given in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS).

- There is no time specified for the offering of 3 languages in the Foundation Phase. Where schools choose to offer a third , the extension of the compulsory number of hours to include a third language is done after application to, and with approval from, the respective provincial department of education.

- ***Ideally,*** a learner's mother tongue is the same as the Home Language of the school, and is also the LoLT of the school but this is **NOT** so in many South African schools.

- The LoLT is the medium of instruction chosen by the school, and may not be the Mother tongue of the learner. Home Language and First Additional Language are the levels at which the Language is taught ***as a subject*.**

- Learners who are taught in their mother tongue perform better than those learners for whom the LoLT is a second or foreign language. At the same time learners learn English as a subject to develop basic language competence in English and so increase it's utility as a LoLT later on (from Grade 4).

What happens if a pupil, whose mother tongue is an African language, is enrolled at a school where only English and Afrikaans are offered? Do schools have to offer an African language?

- In this case it is the choice of the parents to register their learner in that school. Section 6 of the South African Schools Act (SASA) (RSA, 1996b) prescribes several preconditions in relation to the determination of language policy in public schools. Of great importance is the power that the Act confers on school governing bodies (SGBs) to determine the language policy of a school, albeit subject to the Constitution, SASA and any applicable provincial law. The determination therefore of what a school offers in terms of the official languages is a SGB competence. Neither the Department of Basic Education (DBE) nor the provincial departments of education can force a school to offer any specific language offering.

- To promote the use of African Languages in schools, the DBE is currently developing a policy on the introduction of African languages in all schools. This policy will encourage the offering of an African language in schools that currently only offer English and Afrikaans as languages. This policy will go through the normal procedures of public consultation before promulgation.