

# **NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS THAT PROVIDE EDUCATION WITH A SPECIALISED FOCUS (FOCUS SCHOOLS)**

## **Preamble**

Public schools that provide education with specialised focus on talent, including sport, performing arts or creative arts (also referred to as Focus schools) are meant to be innovative centres of teaching and learning excellence that endow learners with specialised skills and competitiveness. These schools should have an advantage of connecting learning with the realities of the world of work while providing opportunities for higher education and igniting entrepreneurial skills of learners.

Flowing from and consistent with the prevailing education policies, focus schools are required to facilitate the following objectives:

1. Improved access to subjects previously not available to all learners and improved quality of performance in these subject areas at grades 10-12;
2. Enhanced participation and success rates of learners, especially previously disadvantaged learners at grades 8-12 especially at rural areas;
3. Expanded numbers of learners who qualify to enter higher education especially from poor families and have opportunities for entrepreneurship;
4. Increased production of highly skilled professionals and enhanced innovative capacity of the nation; and
5. Empowered people, equipped with scarce skills needed in the marketplace.

It is expected that focus schools are schools of excellence, at the forefront of curriculum development and best practice, with the highest concentration of quality human and material resources and equipment, utilised optimally to benefit the learners and the education system.

The establishment of Focus Schools is in line with the provisions of section 12 (3)(iii) of the South African Schools Act, 1996, as amended. This section of the Act permits the Minister to

establish a third form of schools, which caters for learners with talents. This section of the Act further permits the Minister to determine Norms and Standards for Funding, Governance and Educator Provisioning for these schools as contemplated in this document. It should however be noted that the minimum norms and standards indicated by this document do not replace any other existing norms and standards but complies with all the relevant provisions of such norms and standards.

## **Definitions**

1. In these norms and standards any word or expression to which a meaning has been assigned in the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996), has the meaning so assigned and, unless the context otherwise indicates —
  - a) **“Act”** means the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996), as amended.
  - b) **“Focus school”** means an ordinary public school that provides education with specialised focus on talent, including sport, performing arts or creative arts as contemplated by section 12(3)(a)(iii) of the Act. This school selects to offer a particular focused range of subjects, which prepare learners to have the necessary skills and attitude not only for higher education studies but entrepreneurial opportunities and for the world of work, with the following features;
    - i. physical, human and material resources to offer all the grades 10-12 subjects in a particular learning field or are able to plan towards having the resources;
    - ii. all learners in Grades 10-12 are enrolled in the focused subjects offered by the school; and
    - iii. the school offers at least two or the full complement subjects within its focus field.
  - c) **“Focus subject”** means the part of the curriculum assessment policy statements contemplated in the Act. This is the part of the curriculum, which introduces specialised and or technological content matters related to industry. This part is assessed through the demonstration of skills by the learner through the completion of practical assessment task/s or practical examination/s for reporting and promotion purposes.

- d) **“Practical component”** means the scope of a subject, which requires a learner to observe, obtain and demonstrate practical hand, motion, machine /device operating skills as part of curriculum compliance.

### **Objectives of the Norms and Standards**

2. The main objectives of the norms and standards for public schools that provide education with specialised focus (referred to as Focus Schools):
- a) determine standards for funding, governance, and educator provisioning;
  - b) develop a legal framework that ensures clarity of the roles and responsibilities of the schools; and
  - c) strengthen the curriculum differentiation to provide specific areas of focus which leads to more participation of learners in the sector.

### **Scope and Application**

3. These norms and standards apply to all public schools that provide education at grades 10-12 with a specialised focus (also called focus schools).

### **Implementation and effective date of the norms and standards**

4. These norms and standards are effective from the date of publication by the Minister.

### **Identification of subjects with a specialised focus**

5. (1) A school may choose to offer any subject within the following focus fields at Grades 10-12:
- a) **Engineering and Technology:** Electrical Technology, Mechanical Technology, Civil Technology and Engineering Graphics and Design, Technical Mathematics and Technical Science.

- b) **Agriculture:** Agricultural Sciences, Agricultural Management Practices and Agricultural Technology.
  - c) **Culture and Arts:** Dramatic Arts, Music, Dance Studies, Design, Visual Arts and Sport and Exercise Science.
  - d) **Services:** Consumer Studies, Hospitality Studies and Tourism
  - e) **Computer:** Computer Applications Technology and Information Technology.
  - f) **Maritime Studies:** Maritime Economics and Nautical Science
- (2) **Languages:** Learning in all the focus subjects is dependent upon language; as a result effective language development facilitates the learning of content subjects.
  - (3) **Mathematics and Sciences:** mathematics and science subjects are the pillars to which the focus subjects rely upon.

#### **Criteria for identification of focus schools**

- 6. (1) Schools must apply for consideration as focus schools or the provincial department may identify schools with potential to become focus schools.
- (2) Criteria for selection of focus schools include the following:
  - a) Geographical spread across the province and districts;
  - b) Schools serving disadvantaged and marginalized communities;
  - c) Accessible to previously disadvantaged learners in terms of fees and location;
  - d) Safety of the area;
  - e) Complete consensual agreement by the school community and parents;
  - f) Committed and motivated principal, staff and governing body;
  - g) Efficient school management;
  - h) Highly experienced, suitably qualified, specialist teachers in the focus field at the forefront of their profession, or a plan to obtain or develop staff;
  - i) Schools with facilities and equipment or funding to acquire these;

- j) Availability of hostel accommodation for rural schools;
- k) Urban schools must have their own bus or be on good transport routes;
- l) Appropriate languages of learning and teaching; and
- m) Must meet the requirements to qualify for Section 21 status.

(3) The following process is applicable at provincial level in the establishment of new focus schools or identification of existing schools to become focus schools:

- a) With the assistance of Chief Curriculum Advisors, Curriculum Advisors and Senior Curriculum Planners in the focus subject, nominated schools draw up and submit a detailed business plan for approval;
- b) The business plan must be submitted through the District Director to the Director: Curriculum Development for feedback and/or recommendation;
- c) The business plan must adhere to the requirements for focus school business plans as laid down by the Directorate: Curriculum Development; and
- d) Once the Director: Curriculum Development has approved the business plan; it will be submitted to the top management structure for approval.

(4) In order for the business plan to be considered the submitting school must have provided evidence of:

- a) The ability to develop an appropriate and comprehensive business plan;
- b) A comprehensive budget showing detailed allocation of all funds;
- c) The ability of the school to manage and account for the additional focus school funds as a Section 21 school;
- d) Appropriate and practical plans for developing the school into a focus school of excellence;

- e) An understanding of the particular requirements of the curriculum in the focus field;
  - f) Availability of specialised teachers in the focus field or available posts for employing specialised teachers;
  - g) Availability of suitable facilities or detailed and affordable plans for building the required facilities within the proposed budget;
  - h) Relevant plans for the effective management of the focus school;
  - i) Willingness to extend the school day where appropriate to accommodate any extended learning and teaching activities;
  - j) Strategies for marketing the focus school concept and attracting appropriate learners with potential in the focus field to the school;
  - k) Plans for bursaries or exemption of fees for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds;
  - l) Willingness to fund-raise and forge partnerships with the community, business and practitioners in the focus field;
  - m) Access to the school in terms of transport, selection of learners, hostel accommodation where necessary, bursaries and language of teaching and learning (LoLT);
  - n) Plans for on-going professional development of staff; and
  - o) Plans for ensuring quality of education.
- (5) Schools applying to be considered as focus schools should satisfy most of the criteria above and show long term plans for the eventual achievement of all the criteria.

(6) The identification of schools should, as far as possible, recognise the need for appropriate topography and location related to access and demographic realities.

(7) A school site must contain a name board which is clearly visible to the public, indicating—

- (a) the name of the school;
- (b) the contact details of the school; and
- (c) the GPS coordinates and the National Education Management and Information System (EMIS) number of the school.

#### **Requirements for school physical infrastructure for focus schools**

7. All focus schools must have the minimum education areas, education support areas and administration areas in accordance with the Regulations relating to minimum uniform Norms and Standards for Public School Infrastructure of 29 November 2013.

#### **Requirements for learning and teaching resources for the practical component of the curriculum at focus schools**

8. (1) All focus schools must have the necessary tools, apparatus and consumables, to make it possible to conduct demonstrations, experiments, scientific and other relevant investigations in accordance with the curriculum.

#### **Admission policy at focus schools**

9. (a) The admission policy for all focus schools should recognise the principle of inclusion in terms of redress, gender, race, and disability as contemplated in the Act.

- (b) The selection process must be fair, open, transparent and based on the following guidelines:
  - (i) Schools should select learners of Grade 7 for entry into Grade 8 in a focus school at specified periods for the following year;
  - (ii) A process of acceptable, fair, transparent auditions/portfolios, aptitude tests and interviews should be conducted to ensure that learners have the appropriate aptitude and talents are identified.

**Eligibility criteria for placement of learners in a focus school's hostel**

- 10. (1) Learners at a focus school must be admitted to hostel facilities where applicable in accordance with the Guidelines for the provision of boarding facilities in public ordinary schools.

**School Funding - Non-personnel non-capital funding for focus schools**

- 11. (1) All focus schools are funded for personnel and capital in accordance with the provisions of the Act.
- (2) The following considerations are made with regards to the special nature of the focus schools:
  - (i) Focus schools are declared as fee – charging schools;
  - (ii) Focus schools receive the basic norms and standards allocation on a sliding scale based on the school's effective school fee;
  - (iii) Focus schools receive an additional allocation based on the following criteria:
    - a) weighting factor assigned to the school's focus learning subjects
    - b) The allocation of the funds is based on the costs of utilisation of resources by each learner for each focus subject as listed under paragraph 5(a). The amounts are calculated based on a maximum of 60% of the highest amount paid according to the prevailing



National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF). They are not categorised by the quintile system since all the learners are taking different subjects and using different resources according to the curriculum specifications irrespective of the status of the school. The costs are also based on sustainable and affordability criteria as determined by the National Treasury from time to time.

- i. For schools that are classified as Section 20, the province should procure the resources on their behalf and those classified as Section 21, the funds may be transferred to schools for procurement and payment on their own.
- ii. The allocations may increase in line with the inflationary related rates in line with the allocations for the prevailing National Norms and Standards for School Funding and may not exceed the 60% of the highest amount determined by the Norms.
- iii. Based on the learner enrolments and the NNSSF rates of the respective year, the schools may be funded as follows:

<b>Focus Subject</b>	<b>Illustrative Rates per learner</b>
Agricultural Management Practices	590
Agricultural Sciences	590
Agricultural Technology	590
Civil Technology	606
Computer Applications Technology	550
Consumer Studies	520
Dance Studies	505
Design	505
Dramatic Arts	505
Electrical Technology	606
Engineering Graphics and Design	550
Hospitality Studies	520
Information Technology	550
Maritime Economics	550
Mechanical Technology	606
Music	505
Nautical Science	550
Sport and Exercise Science	505

<b>Focus Subject</b>	<b>Illustrative Rates per learner</b>
Tourism	520
Visual Arts	505

- c) The funding should be a direct vote for provincial equitable share allocation according to the Division of Revenue Act, 2015, as amended.
  - d) The funding should be based on the number of learners enrolled for each focus subject at each school for each grade at a flat grade.
- (3) The additional allocation for the school must be used for:
- (a) subject specific tools, equipments, machinery;
  - (b) maintenance of tools, equipment, machinery and buildings;
  - (c) non-core learning, teaching and support material (LTSM);
  - (d) consumables for practical assessment tasks (PAT); and
  - (e) water and electricity as per the spatial planning requirements of the school.
- (4) Parents may be exempted from school fees in accordance with the provision of the Act related to the Fee Exemption Regulations criteria.
- (5) The school to be compensated for learners exempted from payment of school fees to a maximum of the applicable no fee threshold (after subtracting the basic school allocation already provided).
- (6) Schools may supplement their state funding through additional external donor or other means of regulated funding.

### **School Governance**

12. (1) School governance complies with the provisions of the Act and any other minimum norms and standards that may be determined as part of regulations of the Act.

## **Educator Provisioning**

13. Provisioning for educators is based on the principle that available posts are distributed among schools, proportionally to their number of weighted learners in accordance with the prevailing post distribution model.
- (a) These norms and standards also comply with the provisions of the post distribution model on the specific factor of a need to promote a learning area. All focus subjects are allocated a more favourable learner-educator ratio in the distribution table due to the nature of the subject.
  - (b) Despite not being part of the Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statements (CAPS), Sport and Exercise Science, Maritime Economics and Nautical Science will have learner-ratio determined at 12:1 and 15:1 respectively with a promotional factor of 1, period load % of 84, time allocation of 4 and funding level % of 100.
  - (c) A subject not listed in the post distribution model will be allocated a norm in line with the requirements and content of the subject.

## **Subject Combinations for focus schools**

14. Subject combinations for focus schools at grades 10-12 comply with the national policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the national curriculum statement grade R-12, as amended.

## **Subject packages**

- 14.1 Learners in the Grades 10-12 must offer the four compulsory fundamental subjects (2 official Languages: one Home Language and one First Additional Language, Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy [notwithstanding proviso for learners offering a technical stream] and Life Orientation. Learners must also choose three optional elective subjects from the following packages, two of which should be from the same organising field:
- a) Agriculture: Compulsory Fundamentals with two electives from this Organising Field:

Organising field	Subjects
Agriculture	Agricultural Management Sciences Agricultural Sciences Agricultural Technology

- b) Arts and Culture: Compulsory Fundamentals with two electives from this Organising Field:

Organising field	Subjects
Arts and Culture	Design Dance Music Visual Arts Dramatic Arts Sports and Exercise Science

- c) Engineering and Technology: Compulsory Fundamentals (including either Technical Mathematics or Mathematics/ Physical Sciences or Technical Sciences) with two electives from this Organising Field:

Organising field	Subjects
Engineering and Technology	Civil Technology Electrical Technology Mechanical Technology Engineering Graphics and Design

- d) Physical, Mathematical, Computer and Life Sciences: Compulsory Fundamentals (including Mathematics for Learners offering Physical Sciences) with two electives from this Organising Field:

Organising field	Subjects
Physical, Mathematical, Computer and Life Sciences	Computer Applications Technology Information Technology Life Sciences Physical Sciences Technical Sciences

- e) Services: Compulsory Fundamentals with two electives from this Organising Field:

Organising field	Subjects
Services	Consumer Studies Hospitality Studies Tourism

- f) Maritime Studies: Compulsory Fundamentals (including either Technical Mathematics or Mathematics/ Physical Sciences or Technical Sciences) with two electives from this Organising Field:

Organising field	Subjects
Business, Commerce and Management and Engineering and Technology Studies	Maritime Economics Nautical Science Civil Technology Electrical Technology Mechanical Technology Engineering Graphics and Design

### **Monitoring of implementation of the norms and standards**

15. The national Department of Basic Education (the Department) is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the norms in terms of section 8 of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (No. 27 of 1996), as amended. The Department is required to undertake its monitoring and evaluation role

*"in a reasonable manner, with a view to enhancing professional capacities in monitoring and evaluation throughout the national education system, and assisting the competent authorities by all practical means within the limits of available public resources to raise the standards of education provision and performance."* (Section 8(4)).

16. Each Head of Department will be expected to verify that the national norms are being complied with in all respects, or that acceptable alternatives are being implemented after consultation with the Department. If the Provincial Education Department (PED) is unable to comply with the norms because of a lack of expertise or for any other reason, the Department must be informed without undue delay, so that the problem can be examined and remedies sought.

### **Review of the norms and standards**

17. (1) The Department of Basic Education must periodically review the norms and standards contained in herein in order to ensure that those norms and standards remain current.
- (2) (a) The Provincial Education Department may within the parameters set by these norms and standards, adapt the norms and standards to best suit schools within the province concerned.

(b) Any adaptation contemplated in paragraph (a) may under no circumstances lead to a diminution of minimum norms and standards set herein.

**Short title**

18. These norms and standards are called the Norms and Standards for Focus Schools (referring to the realisation of the provisions of section 12 (3)(iii) of the South African Schools Act, 1996, as amended).