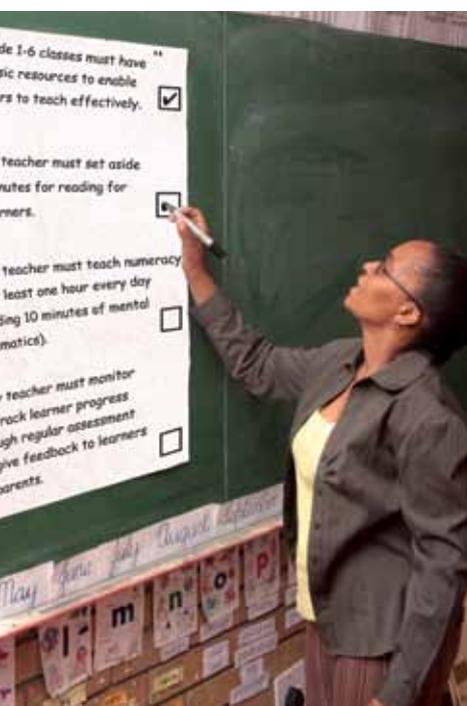




Curriculum News

Improving the quality of learning and teaching
Strengthening Curriculum implementation from 2010 and beyond

May 2011



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basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Foreword by the Minister



Mrs Angie Motshekga, MP
Minister of Basic Education



As teachers, you will all have been back at school for a term now. I trust you have settled into your work and are ensuring that the children in your charge are fully engaged in learning.

This issue of *Curriculum News* focuses on the implementation processes of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements. We have received many questions from teachers. We use this *Curriculum News* to update you on what we have done to date and also on how we have done this.

Our curriculum change processes have been extensive and widely consultative. We have worked with teachers and many people in the educational community to ensure that the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements are up to standard. In this issue of *Curriculum News* a writer of one of the CAPS curricula gives his perspective on the process from his point of view, the Department provides an overview of the policy and national collective decision-making processes followed, we are given insight into the process for selection of textbooks for the national catalogue and preparation of teachers for implementation of CAPS. In addition we tell you a bit more about how as teachers in schools you can use the annual national assessments.

The preparation of the CAPS documents has been a mammoth task that has included the reworking of 76 subjects at different levels and versioning into all our official languages. I provided more time for their completion to ensure that the documents are sound. There will always be differences of opinion over the selection of content but I am confident that we have now done what we set out to do: provide a clear, term-by-term and grade-by-grade specification of what it is that teachers are expected to teach.

The Foundation Phase and Grade 10 curricula will be gazetted soon and available for you to peruse in order to plan for 2012.

We will strive to provide all the support you need but also trust the curriculum is now more accessible and that you feel empowered to seek out the additional information you may need to ensure its success and the success of your learners.

Recapping the Curriculum Revision and Implementation Process

1. Background

In 2009 the Minister of Basic Education appointed a Ministerial Task Team to review the Implementation of the *National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12*.

Its brief was to identify the challenges and pressure points that impacted negatively on the quality of teaching in schools and to propose mechanisms that could address these.

During the period 6-13 July 2009, the Department of Basic Education held public hearings in which national teacher unions and teachers participated. More than 500 electronic submissions were also received.

The Report of the Ministerial Task Team for the Review of the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement, October 2009 made several recommendations to improve the Curriculum.

2. Key recommendations and decisions

On 20 October 2009, the Minister of Basic Education announced her decision to implement the recommendations of the Task Team's Report. These are dealt with in detail in earlier *Curriculum News*.

The Minister made

- (a) Decisions with immediate effect for implementation from 2010; and
- (b) Decisions with a longer term effect for implementation during the period 2012-2014.

- 2.1 Decisions with immediate effect for implementation from 2010 are:
 - (a) Discontinuation of the Learner Portfolio Files;
 - (b) Requirements for a single teacher file for planning;
 - (c) Reduction of the number of projects required by learners; and
 - (d) The discontinuation of Common Tasks of Assessment (CTAs).

Provincial education departments are devising an assessment component to replace the CTAs which comprised 25% of the total assessment mark in the Grade 9 end-of-year examination.

- 2.2 Decisions with a longer term effect for implementation during the period 2012- 2014 are:
 - (a) The reduction of the number of Learning Areas in the Intermediate Phase of the General Education and Training Phase;
 - (b) The teaching of English as a First Additional Language to be given priority alongside mother tongue and should be taught from Grade 1;
 - (c) Regular external systematic assessment of Mathematics, Home Language and English First Additional Language in Grades 3, 6 and 9; and
 - (d) The development of National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements per learning area and subject.

3. Ministerial decisions to be implemented during the period 2012-2014

The National Curriculum Statement will be amended. It will consist of:

3.1 National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements for the National Curriculum Statement

A Ministerial Project Committee was appointed to oversee the development of Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements for the *National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12* (see next article for a discussion of the process followed).

The implementation of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 will be as follows:

2012 implementation in Grades R - 3 and Grade 10;

2013 implementation in Grades 4 - 9 and Grade 11; and

2014 implementation in Grade 12.

3.2 Assessment documents for the National Curriculum Statement

The following supplementary policy documents must be read in conjunction with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements:

(a) The *National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R - 12*. This explains the subject selections and promotion requirements for all four school phases; and

(b) The *National Protocol for Assessment (Grades R - 12)*, which provides a policy framework for the management of school assessment, school assessment records and basic requirements for

learner profiles, teacher portfolios, report cards, record sheets and schedules for Grades R - 12.

The weighting of School-Based Assessment (SBA) and the end-of-year examination will be as follows:

Phase	SBA component %	End-of-year examination %
Foundation Phase	100	0
Intermediate Phase	75	25
Senior Phase	40	60
Further Education and Training Phase	25	75

(d) The seven-point rating scale will be used in all school phases, namely:

ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL	ACHIEVEMENT DESCRIPTION	MARKS %
7	Outstanding Achievement	80 – 100
6	Meritorious Achievement	70 – 79
5	Substantial Achievement	60 – 69
4	Adequate Achievement	50 – 59
3	Moderate Achievement	40 – 49
2	Elementary Achievement	30 – 39
1	Not Achieved	0 – 29

- (e) The time allocations in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases will be as follows from 2012:

FOUNDATION PHASE: TIME ALLOCATION PER WEEK

SUBJECT	GRADE R (HOURS)	GRADES 1-2 (HOURS)	GRADE 3 (HOURS)
Home Language	10	7-8	6-7
First Additional Language		3-2	5-4
Mathematics	7	7	7
Life Skills	6	6	7
TOTAL	23	23	25

INTERMEDIATE PHASE: TIME ALLOCATION

SUBJECT	TIME ALLOCATION PER WEEK (HOURS)
Home Language	6
First Additional Language	5
Mathematics	6
Natural Science and Technology	3,5
Social Sciences	3
Life Skills	4
TOTAL	27,5

4. Preparation of the system

The implementation of the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements will require

- (a) New timetables in the Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase;
- (b) New textbooks for all grades R -12;
- (c) Training of provincial officials, principals, heads of department and teachers; and
- (d) Communication with parents and learners.

These changes will have specific training implications. They are:

- (a) In the Foundation Phase (Grades R-3) a second language is introduced from Grade 1. This First Additional Language will require considerable training of teachers over the next five years. It will also mean new timetables for Grades 1 - 3 and the development of textbooks, workbooks and readers.
- (b) In the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6) the number of Learning Areas is reduced from 8 to 6. This will require new timetables and the training of teachers for newly-combined Science and Technology and Life Skills subjects.
- (c) In the Further Education and Training Phase some mathematics teachers will require training in Geometry.



5. The declaration of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 as National Education Policy

Writing teams were appointed in January 2010 to develop CAPS for all approved subjects in each grade. Their brief was to use the National Curriculum Statement as a starting point for filling in gaps, reducing repetition and clarifying where necessary. The existing curriculum's outcomes and assessment standards were reworked into general aims of the South African curriculum, the specific aims of each subject, clearly delineated topics to be covered per term and the required number and type of assessments per term with the view to making it more accessible to teachers. Each subject now has a grade-by-grade and term-by-term delineation of content and skills to be taught and learnt.

Each CAPS document aligns topics and assessments with available time allocations per subject.

Provision has also been made in the CAPS documents for learners who experience barriers to learning.

The CAPS documents were sent out for public comment in September 2010. The comments were collated and the documents revised in accordance with the recommendations. In some cases writing teams were strengthened to do this.

Once the documents had been approved by the Ministerial Project Committee, they were sent to editors.

A final step in the process involves a teacher union check on the do-ability of the curriculum.

Once this process is complete, most likely the end of May, the CAPS will be submitted to the Minister for her approval and gazetting.

In addition, UMALUSI will quality assure the CAPS documents and plans are also in place to benchmark them internationally.

CAPS documents have been produced in the Foundation Phase (Grades 1-3) for

- (i) Home Language;
- (ii) First Additional Language;
- (iii) Mathematics; and
- (iv) Life Skills (Beginning Knowledge, Creative Arts, Physical Education and Personal and social wellbeing).

CAPS documents are being finalized for the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6) in:

- (i) Home Language;
- (ii) First Additional Language;
- (iii) Mathematics;
- (iv) Natural Sciences (including Technology);
- (v) Social Sciences; and
- (vi) Life Skills (Creative Arts, Physical Education, Personal and social wellbeing)

The *National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12*, to be implemented during the period 2012-2014, is the curriculum that underpins the various programmes followed in each Grade from Grade R – 12.

The *National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12*, comprises:

- (a) National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements for all approved subjects listed in this document; and
- (b) The policy document, *National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12*.

(c) National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12.

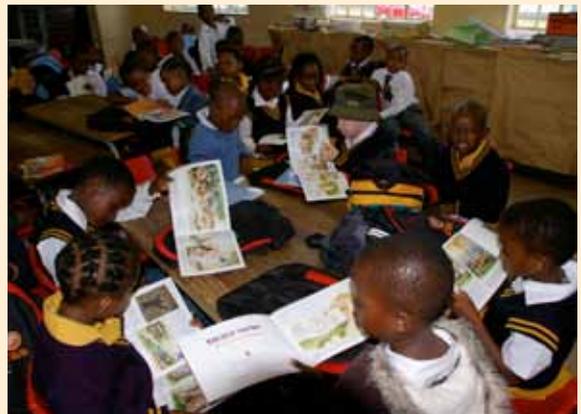
The Minister of Basic Education will declare the *National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12* as national education policy by the end of April 2011 to be incrementally implemented during the period 2012-2014.

Once declared as national education policy, the *National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12* will be promulgated in the Government Gazette and tabled in Parliament.

6. The status of the existing policy documents during the period 2011-2014

The *status quo* as stipulated in the following policy documents will be maintained until the implementation of the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements, and the policy document, *National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12*:

- (a) *National Policy regarding General Education Programmes: The Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 9 (Schools) promulgated in Government Gazette No. 23406 of 31 May 2002;*
- (b) *National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 promulgated in Government Gazettes, No. 25545 of 6 October 2003, No. 27594 of 17 May 2005, No. 27819 of 20 July 2005 and No. 28300 of 7 December 2005.*
- (c) *National Policy on assessment and qualifications for schools in the General Education and Training Band, promulgated in Government Notice No. 124 in Government Gazette No. 29626 of 12 February 2007; and*
- (d) *National Senior Certificate: A qualification at Level 4 on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), promulgated in Government Gazette No.27819 of 20 July 2005.*



Subjects in the curriculum

FOUNDATION PHASE, GRADES R - 3

SUBJECTS	Grade R	Grades 1-3
Official Languages at Home Language Level	X11	X11
Official Languages at First Additional Language level		X11
Mathematics		
Life Skills		

INTERMEDIATE PHASE, GRADES 4 - 6

SUBJECTS	Grades 4-6
Official Languages at Home Language Level	X11
Official Languages at First Additional Language level	X11
Mathematics	
Natural Sciences and Technology	
Social Sciences	
Life Skills	

SENIOR PHASE, GRADES 7 – 9

SUBJECTS	Grades 7-9
Official Languages at Home Language Level	X11
Official Languages at First Additional Language level	X11
Mathematics	
Natural Sciences	
Technology	
Social Sciences	
Life Orientation	
Arts and Culture	
Economic Management Sciences	

FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING GRADES 10 – 12

SUBJECTS	Grades 10-12
Official Languages at Home Language Level	X11
Official Languages at First Additional Language level	X11
Official Languages at Second Additional Language level	X11
Mathematics	
Mathematical Literacy	
Life Orientation	
Agricultural Management Practices	
Agricultural Sciences	
Agricultural Technology	
Dance Studies	
Design	
Dramatic Arts	
Music	
Visual Arts	
Accounting	
Business Studies	
Economics	
Arabic Second Additional Language	
French Second Additional Language	
German Home Language	
German Second Additional Language	
Gujarati Home Language	
Gujarati First Additional Language	
Gujarati Second Additional Language	
Hebrew Second Additional Language	
Hindi Home Language	
Hindi First Additional Language	
Hindi Second Additional Language	
Italian Second Additional Language	



FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING GRADES 10 – 12 (CONT.)

SUBJECTS	Grades 10-12
Latin Second Additional Language	
Portuguese Home Language	
Portuguese First Additional Language	
Portuguese Second Additional Language	
Spanish Second Additional Language	
Tamil Home Language	
Tamil First Additional Language	
Tamil Second Additional Language	
Telegu Home Language	
Telegu First Additional Language	
Telegu Second Additional Language	
Urdu Home Language	
Urdu First Additional Language	
Urdu Second Additional Language	
Civil Technology	
Electrical Technology	
Mechanical Technology	
Engineering Graphics and Design	
Geography	
History	
Religion Studies	
Computer Applications Technology	
Information Technology	
Life Sciences	
Physical Sciences	
Consumer Studies	
Hospitality Studies	
Tourism	



Caps Consultation and **Public Comment** Processes

The preparation of the CAPS documents involved ongoing processes of drafting and consultation as well as a period of public comment to inform revision of the drafts.

How many CAPS documents were developed?

CAPS were developed for each grade and each phase. Each phase includes 22 language statements; this number includes Home Language and First Additional Language in all the official languages. That makes 88 language statements for each phase.

When languages are included at each phase, 24 curriculum statements were to be developed for Grades 1-3 (Languages, Maths and Life Skills); 26 for Grades 4-6 (Languages, Maths, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and Life Skills); 29 for Grades 7-9 (Languages, Maths, Natural Science, Social Science, Economic and Management Sciences, Technology, Life Skills and Arts and Culture) and 87 for the Grades 10-12. Writers thus needed to be found for a total of 176 curriculum statements when the specific needs of all phases and subjects were taken into account.

Who was responsible for the writing process?

A Ministerial Project Committee (MPC) consisting of eight people oversaw the selection of writers and process of preparing and completing the process.

The writers

In total, some 175 writers were appointed to work on the CAPS. This included 28 translators for languages at Home and First Additional Language levels and 14 translators for languages at Second Additional Language level.

How were the writers selected?

Writers were appointed in early 2010 to develop National

Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements for each subject from grades R-12. They were selected on the following criteria:

- (a) Experience in teaching the subject (what about grade);
- (b) Level of knowledge of the subject/deep and broad knowledge of the subject.
- (c) Ability to write critically;
- (d) Ability to meet time constraints; and
- (e) Access to communication infrastructure – e-mail/ internet.

Their Terms of Reference were to:

- (a) Use and consult existing National Curriculum Statement documents including the *Foundations for Learning* and content frameworks in the Subject Assessment Guidelines to develop the CAPS;
- (b) Use a framework provided by the MPC to organise the material in terms of Aims of the subject and Topics and content/skills/knowledge to be taught in each grade and in each term;
- (c) Aim for greater clarity;
- (d) Aim for coherence from one phase to the next;
- (d) Fill in gaps where they exist, eliminate duplication and repetition, and aim for specific rather than general statements; and
- (e) Build up coherence within subject-boundaries so that there is a sense of moving progressively to greater depth and from simple to more complex concepts from grade to grade.

The writing process

The appointed writers were briefed on the task to be completed on 15 April 2010 and on 30 April 2010. They were grouped into subject teams. Each writing team was supervised by a member of the Ministerial Project Committee.

A curriculum for a subject such as maths or languages is organized into four phases and 12 grades. In some cases, one writer wrote the curriculum for one or two phases;

in others, different writers took responsibility for writing different phases of a subject. The overall coherence was checked by the team as a whole as well as a Reference Group that was constituted for each writing team.

Writers interacted with the Reference Group in developing their drafts. They were also encouraged and free to seek advice from teachers and subject experts who were not part of the officially-constituted Reference Group. The Reference Group consisted of between five to six persons. Reference Groups were appointed per subject across all phases. They included inclusive education specialists, Department of Basic Education officials, one teacher, one excellent subject person and a phase specialist. There was one Reference Team for Computer Application Technology and Information Technology, Technology, Services, Technology Subjects and Mathematics.

Public comment on the process

On 3 September 2010, by means of *Government Notice No. 784* in *Government Gazette No. 33528*, the Minister of Basic Education invited stakeholder bodies and members of the public to comment on the newly developed Draft National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements.

The closing date for the receipt of comments, excluding Foundation Phase, was set for 21 days after publication of the signed *Government Notices* in the *Government Gazette*, which was 24 September 2010. The closing date for Foundation phase was set for 11 October 2010.

However, following numerous representations made by the public and teachers and to ensure that all people with an interest in education were given an opportunity to comment on the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements, the closing date for comments was extended to 18 October 2010.

All Draft Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), except Foundation Phase, were uploaded onto the Department of Basic Education and Thutong websites.

Amendment of CAPS documents

The Department of Basic Education received 1844 comments. These were sent to the writers who evaluated, considered and adapted their drafts in the light of these comments. In some instances, writing teams were strengthened by additional members.

Most commentators prefaced their comments with the remark that overall the drafts were an improvement. Many comments focused mainly on assessment or inclusion. In view of this, these issues were dealt separately (see CAPS Update in this *Curriculum News*).

CAPS documents were finalized and approved at the end of January 2011. The translation (versioning) of the documents into all the official languages began once the CAPS had been amended following public comment.

A separate chapter on assessment was drafted, whilst Inclusive Education officials in the Department of Basic Education advised the committee and the writers on how to deal with this matter.

Once the content had been finalized, the documents were professionally edited. These edited versions were approved by the Ministerial Project Committee. They were then inspected by the unions for their implementability, and these recommendations were taken forward to inform implementation.

Declaration of the CAPS as national education policy by the Minister

As a final step, the Heads of Education Departments Committee (HEDCOM) and the Council of Education Ministers (CEM) made their final comments before the declaration as national education policy by the Minister of Basic Education.

The CAPS have now been finalized in line with the recommendations of the 2009 Task Team Report on the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement.

Reflections on the process of writing a new Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS)

In November 2009 the Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga, stunned the educational community with her announcement that OBE was dead. A little more than a year since those words were uttered the new Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) is about to be gazetted, thus becoming educational policy.

The minister's remarks were precipitated by the report on the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement in South African schools (*Report of the Task Team for the Review of the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement*). The report found that teachers were confused, overloaded, stressed and demotivated, and as a consequence, were underperforming.

The report detailed a number of recommendations for addressing and improving the situation. These included:

- Producing one clear and accessible policy document
- Writing a more streamlined curriculum
- Going back to subjects and essential subject knowledge
- Ensuring there is progression and continuity across grades
- Standardising assessment

At the beginning of 2010 subject based writing teams were selected by the DBE ministerial committee to work on developing new curriculum documents. The writing teams were made up of a selection of stakeholders. Most teams included at least one of the following: a national education and provincial education person, academics from tertiary institutions, consultants, subject experts, and teachers. Each team was supported by a number of reviewers and critical readers.

The writing brief centred on three important ideas: simplification, improvement, and clarification. So rather than generate a completely new curriculum, something the educational community could probably not withstand, the proposed plan was to use what was good from the existing RNCS and replace what appeared not to be working. The first thing to go was all the OBE policy terminology: Critical and Developmental Outcomes, Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards were cut. They have reappeared in a different form under the General Aims section of the CAPS documents and the Specific Aims sections in each of the subject documents.

Most writing teams spent the bulk of the nine months of writing working on the content sections for the different subjects. Content incorporates essential knowledge and skills. These are linked across the curriculum like a rubric cube. A simple change to content at one grade can impact vertically on that subject as well as horizontally across other subjects. Ensuring that progression and continuity develop through the grades was one of the challenging goals of this revision. At the same time, the teams had to be careful not to overload the content sections or introduce too much new and unfamiliar material.

Each writing team produced a number of drafts; some as many as thirty. The drafts were reviewed by critical readers, many of whom were practicing teachers. The reviewers provided feedback based on their experience and specialised knowledge. The writing teams then incorporated these changes into their next draft. This writing and reviewing process continued until September 2010, when the draft documents were made available for public comment. After receiving the public comments, the writing teams began another round of revision. Most teams found the public comments very helpful even if the feedback required making significant changes to the documents.

The time involved in redrafting the curriculum over three phases and 12 grades and many subjects was considerable. One writing team focussing on a GET subject collectively clocked up over 2000 hours of time on task.

In an ideal world another round of public comment on the documents may have been in order. But the department was keen to draw a line under the process and begin implementing what it believes is an improved and more user-friendly curriculum.



Orientation to prepare system for CAPS

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) is committed to ensuring that the education system at all its levels is properly prepared for the introduction of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) in all grades – starting with the Foundation Phase and Grade 10 in 2012. The approach we have taken is to prepare educators at all levels of the system to ensure a common understanding.

A focus on the Foundation Phase:

A Training Toolkit for the Foundation Phase was developed for use in all training on the CAPS and related innovations in the Foundation Phase. The Toolkit focuses on:

- the structure and content of the CAPS in the Foundation Phase;
- the role and use of the Workbooks in Grades R-3; and
- the Annual National Assessment (ANA) as a baseline assessment in Grades 2 and 3 and their implications for classroom practice.

First level training targeting three hundred and thirty six (336) Foundation Phase Provincial and District Curriculum Specialists as well as Teacher Union Representatives took place from the 21st February to 11th March. The 336 participants were clustered into three groups - according to their provinces - to allow for in-depth participation. Each training session was conducted over 5 consecutive days underpinned by the following principles:

- a mix of interactive activity-based and discursive presentations;
- modelling of participatory, collaborative and co-operative learning practices;
- a focus on strengthening participants' content

and conceptual knowledge of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) for Grades R-3;

- an emphasis on classroom practice, pedagogy and teaching methodology; and
- Lesson planning and school based assessment practices in Grades R-3.

In all provinces there is a critical core of trained officials to manage provincial level training. These target School Management Teams and teachers. More than twenty five (25) officials have been trained in the smaller Provinces (Limpopo, Free State, Mpumalanga, North Cape) and in the larger Provinces an average of fifty (50) officials were trained (Gauteng, North West, Kwa-Zulu Natal and Eastern Cape).

Provincial Training

All provinces have already developed their training schedules for the Foundation Phase which started in the April school holidays. All Foundation Phase teachers should therefore have received some orientation on the CAPS by the beginning of the 2012 academic year:

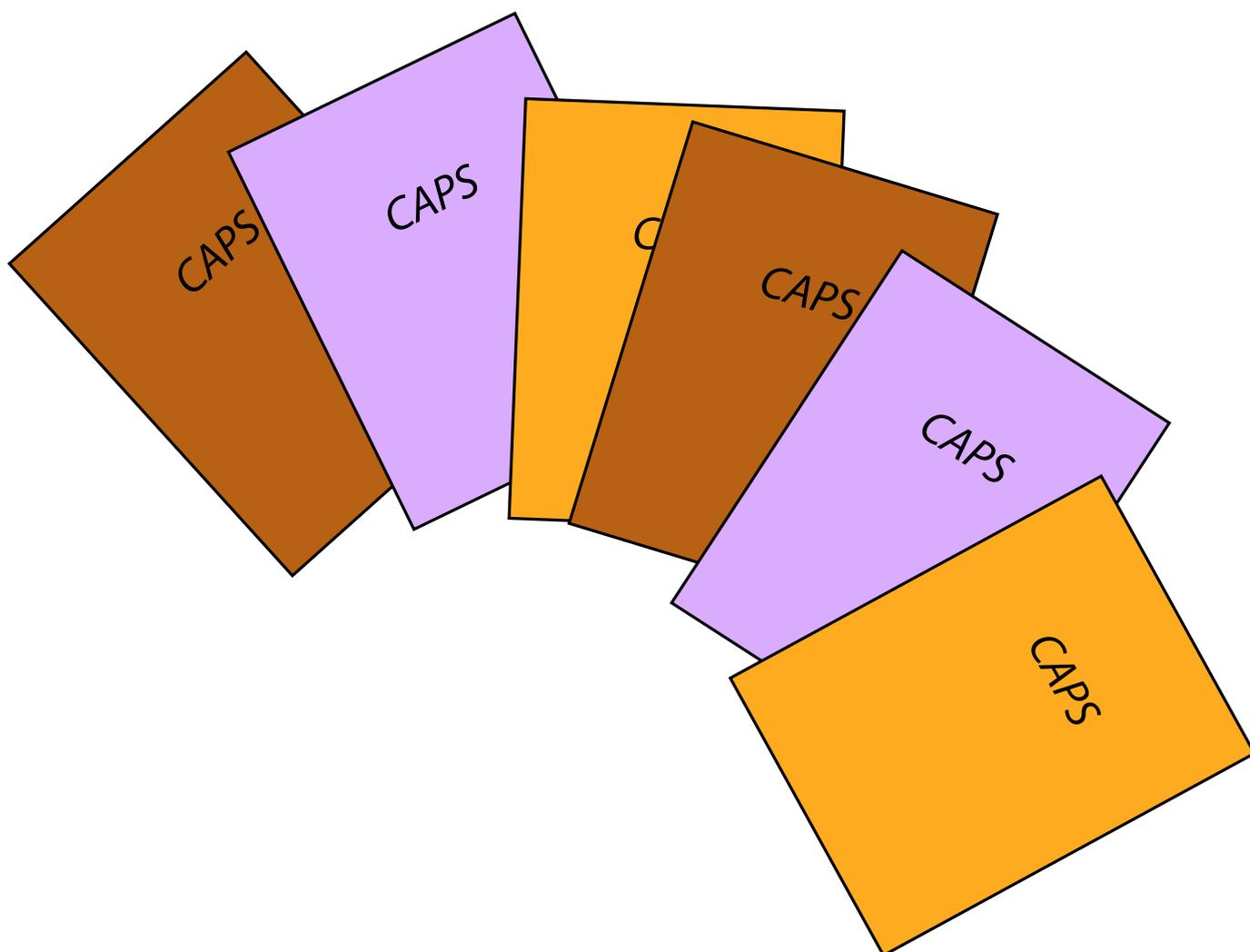
- **Eastern Cape** are planning to train a total of 19 557 teachers starting on the 18th of April in Port Elizabeth, Umtata and East London;
- **Free State** will train 6 000 teachers during the April and July school holidays in Motheo and Kroonstad;
- **Gauteng** will train 15 000 teachers in the April and July school holidays;
- **KwaZulu-Natal** will train 26 000 teachers starting in June in all their districts;
- **Limpopo** is scheduled to train 17 000 teachers also in 4 districts;
- **Mpumalanga** is training 9 000 teachers also in 4 districts;

- **Northern Cape** will train 3 000 teachers at a venue still to be determined, starting in the June holidays;
- **North West** will train 4 250 teachers in the April and June holidays at the North West University Campus; and
- **Western Cape** will be training 9 000 teachers at the Cape Institute and also in the various circuits starting in April.

Training on CAPS for the rest of the phases will follow the same pattern: core training materials to ensure a coherent message across the system as well as the

training of affected teachers at other critical levels of the system.

Training of district-level and provincial subject advisors for **Grade 10 CAPS** will cover a total of 2 217 officials responsible for the 37 subjects on offer in Grade 10. These include both small and large enrolment subjects. Training will take place from **09 to 27 May** – in a number of venues across the country. Teacher training will be scheduled for the June and September holidays. Details on the exact dates and venues for teacher training will be made available in the second term.



The President emphasised the importance of learner support material in the 2011 State of the Nation address, when he called on his administration to “ensure that every child has a textbook on time”.

Learner and teacher support material are especially important in developing countries, as many schools lack material resources, such as age- and culture-appropriate reading materials for children. This is often compounded by the available human resources, as some teachers have obtained only limited academic and professional training. In these schools learner and teacher support material can play a central role in defining a more structured approach to what subject matter is taught and how it is taught.

Yet, research conducted by the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) showed that in 2007 only 45% of South African learners had their own textbooks. This was a decline from 45.5% when the same survey was conducted in 2000.

To address the gap between the national commitment and the reality in so many schools, the DBE will introduce a new system of selecting and providing learner and teacher support material in 2011. Recommendations in this regard were made by the Ministerial Committee on Learner and Teacher Support Material (LTSM). These were discussed and approved by provincial Ministers of Education, Heads of Department and provincial LTSM officials. Detailed plans were developed in ongoing consultation with the national publishing sector.

The new system will focus on two crucial aspects: ensuring only high quality material is offered to schools and ensuring all learners and teachers have the support material they need.

Selecting quality material

The composition of the screening committee is a crucial component of the success of the entire screening process. For each subject a specialist committee will be established, comprising of:

- Subject matter experts
- Language experts
- Outstanding subject-area teachers
- Facilitator

Members of the committee will be drawn from a mix of higher education institutions, non-governmental organisations and the Department of Basic Education. The inclusion of language expertise on the selection committee is crucial in a multi-lingual country, as second language learners often face a significant barrier due to inappropriate language usage.

National Screening Phases

The national screening will comprise of two phases:

- Phase one will be a filtering process to determine the shortlist of titles; the committee will check to see if material is aligned to the curriculum.
- Phase two will comprise of a competitive rating exercise, aimed at identifying the best material from the short-list.

Both phases of the review will be on a ‘blind’ basis, i.e. author and publisher details are removed from the submission. A maximum of the eight top-rated titles will be considered for final confirmation in the National Catalogue. Where fewer than eight titles are considered of appropriate quality, the number for final confirmation will be less than eight. Schools will select materials from this catalogue of nationally approved material.

Each committee member will attend a two-day briefing and training session. Key areas to be covered include:

- Expert inputs on the values dimension of the national curriculum, for example race and gender representations in LTSM.
- Briefing on ethics and conflict of interest, including the signing of affidavits.
- Overview of the process and requirements from reviewers. Including number of final titles, reviewing per phase and recommending LTSM per phase.
- Orientation to the review instruments and how to use phase 1 and 2 instruments.
- Introduction to review methodology, such as systemic reading for phase 2 review.
- Explanation of what is required in terms of reports for LTSM developers.

A systematic screening methodology will be implemented. This will consist of a scan of the text to check for progression and conceptual scaffolding, followed by an in-depth review of a randomly selected topic to assess the pedagogic merit. The former will result in a completed rating sheet while the latter will result in a narrative assessment substantiating the final recommendation: together this will constitute the final report.

Central ordering

A significant factor contributing to high textbook prices in South Africa is the fragmented nature of orders placed with publishers. Often one title attracts multiple small orders resulting in multiple print-runs at a high cost. This results in the general industry practice of pricing based on small quantities and therefore making textbooks significantly more expensive than they need to be. To overcome this, the Department of Basic Education will introduce a centralised national ordering system in 2011, to ensure that learner and teacher material for all is an affordable goal. This will apply only with reference to CAPS selections.

The following process outlines the centralized ordering method:

- A national catalogue will be provided to schools by DBE, listing all approved material, which will be the basis for selection.
- Schools will make the choice of material for their classrooms. School-based choice could be achieved through collaborative effort of relevant subject teachers, Heads of Department, Subject Advisors and where feasible drawing on expertise from surrounding schools – forming School LTSM Committees per subject. The material selected is crucial in effective LTSM utilization and therefore requires significant consideration.
- The national catalogue will be accompanied by information to enable schools to make an informed decision on different material. For example, it will include an expert description of the material and conditions for which the material is best suited. Samples will be provided where possible, in electronic or print form, while exhibitions or workshops could be held by publishers.
- Requisition orders from School LTSM Committees will be forwarded to provincial officials. In turn provincial officials will provide the information to national DBE for consolidation. The orders will be nationally centralized and placed with the relevant publisher.
- Delivery of LTSM will be decentralized, to shorten the time it takes to reach schools and lower distribution cost. The quantity allocated per province will be delivered to the province for distribution to schools via assigned distributors. Each province will be responsible for contracting and managing the distribution service provider.
- All orders, delivery and payments should be monitored through a central database.

Through an examination of international best-practice and extensive consultation, the above-mentioned measures were developed to realise the national objective of ensuring that “every child has a textbook on time”.

Annual National Assessments – a valuable tool in the hands of teachers

The quality of learning outcomes in our schools has been of major concern to educators, parents and the general public for a number of years. Government has decided to tackle the issue head on and make the improvement of the quality of education its number one priority in the short to medium term.

necessary for them to come out with a quality pass at the end of the 12 years of schooling.

For Grades below Grade 12 South Africa introduced (in 2001) national systemic evaluations testing learners' skills in Literacy and Mathematics at Grades 3 and 6; participated in regional assessments (SACMEQ) testing

“Education must be elevated from being a departmental issue, or even a government issue, to a societal issue - one that occupies the attention and energy for all our people” A commitment should be made to a **“Code for Quality Education”**, which describes the responsibilities and discipline required of them – the “non-negotiables”. It must be seen as a revolutionary act for cadres to subscribe to and act within this code.”

Mr Jacob Zuma, ANC President

January 8th Statement 2008

Targets for improving learning outcomes have been set in Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realization of Schooling 205 but to meet these targets the system needs a realistic assessment of where we are so we can set in place strategies to attain those targets.

For many years the South African schooling system has had only one credible and objective measure of learner performance: the National Senior Certificate Exams, Grade 12. For the rest, the system depended on assessments internally set and marked by the schools themselves to judge whether learning and teaching was of a reasonable standard, and aligned to the country's curriculum expectations. Many schools year in and year out declare the majority of their learners fit to move on to the next grade and ultimately to Grade 12 and beyond. The Grade 12 results on the other hand tell a different story of masses of children who fail to master the basics

the same in Grades 6 and participated in international assessments such as TIMMS (testing learner competencies in Mathematics in Grade 8) and PIRLS (testing reading competencies in Grade 4). All of these have come out indicating that South African schools are not performing at the expected levels and have given pointers to where schools might be failing their children. The greatest limitation of all of these is that a) they are based on representative samples and therefore b) do not provide sufficiently nuanced feedback for individual schools and individual learners to enable meaningful and targeted remediation at school level.

A key introduction into the system in our bid to improve quality of learner attainment are the Annual National Assessments in two areas fundamental to learning (literacy and numeracy) for all children in Grades 1 – 6. The primary purpose of these tests is to:



- Provide each school with an objective picture of their learners' competency levels with respect to these two areas using nationally benchmarked tests that are aligned to the curriculum;
 - Provide them with an analysis of the areas of difficulty experienced by their learners;
 - Assist them to design teaching programmes that are targeted to improving actual learning in the classroom;
 - Set realistic improvement targets for individual learners and for the school and
 - Help parents understand better how their children are performing and how they can help them do better.
- For many teachers this is also a much needed tool that should help with all of the above but also provide schools with model assessments at the required level of difficulty, testing all the required skills and competencies and comprising a balanced mix of simple, moderately complex to complex items that they can use to model their own school based assessments throughout the year.
- Teachers should exploit the opportunity that the ANA results present to improve learning for their learners:
- Carefully analyze the performance of your class:
 - o What are the questions and/or skills they performed most poorly in?
 - o Do you know how to help them acquire these skills or will you need to work with other teachers in your school or in your Learning Area or Phase Committee to design appropriate strategies and lesson plans together;
 - o Do you need the assistance of your curriculum advisor and do you know how to get in touch with her/him?
 - o Do you have all the resources required (e.g. the Numeracy and Literacy workbooks; basic stationery required; the CAPS documents).
 - Compare the performance of your learners with the performance of learners in;
 - o Your Circuit/district – are your learners performing at the same level with learners in the same grade in schools in your area; if not – are there teachers in the same context as you whose learners are performing better? – can you learn anything from what they do?
 - o Your province and nationally.
 - Set your own improvement targets. Do not accept second best for your learners. They deserve the best.

The Annual National Assessments will help teachers know where their children are as they work to take them to the next level of performance. And to do that all teachers and all schools need a clear plan of action. The Department of Basic Education expects that

- a) All schools finalized the analysis of their learners' performance by the end of February and shared the results with parents;
- b) Schools that did not perform as well as expected have already heard or expect to hear from their district offices for a discussion of their performance and their improvement plans. (District officials are analyzing the performance of all schools in their district so they can provide targeted support to those schools that need it most);
- c) The national results will be released at the end of

April. Teachers must watch out for these and see where their learners are compared to the national performance.

- d) Keep the target in mind – the majority of our learners, in all Grades from 1 – 9 – should perform at 60% or above in both Literacy and Numeracy/Mathematics by 2014. The current baseline is at 48% for Literacy and 43% for Numeracy at Grade 3; and 37% and 19% in Grade 6 - for literacy and mathematics respectively.

Teachers and schools need to ensure that they move their school's performance to the next level in next year's Annual National Assessments and the time to start is NOW.



A BILL OF RESPONSIBILITIES

FOR THE YOUTH OF SOUTH AFRICA

Preamble:

I accept the call to responsibility that comes with the many rights and freedoms that I have been privileged to inherit from the sacrifice and suffering of those who came before me. I appreciate that the rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa are inseparable from my duties and responsibilities to others. Therefore I accept that with every right comes a set of responsibilities.

MY RESPONSIBILITY IN ENSURING THE RIGHT...



South Africa is a diverse nation, and equality does not mean uniformity, or that we are all the same.

Our country's motto: *IKHE E: /XARRA // KE*, meaning "Diverse people unite", calls on all of us to build a common sense of belonging and national pride, celebrating the very diversity which makes us who we are. It also calls on us to extend our friendship and warmth to all nations and all the peoples of the world in our endeavour to build a better world.



TO LIVE IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

- promote sustainable development, and the conservation and preservation of the natural environment.
- protect animal and plant-life, as well as the responsibility to prevent pollution.
- not to litter, and to ensure that our homes, schools, streets and other public places are kept neat and tidy.
- in the context of climate change, we are also obliged to ensure we do not waste scarce resources like water and electricity.



TO FREEDOM OF RELIGION, BELIEF AND OPINION

- allow others to choose and practise the religion of their choice, and to hold their own beliefs and opinions, without fear or prejudice.
- respect the beliefs and opinions of others, and their right to express these, even when we may strongly disagree with these beliefs and opinions. That is what it means to be a free democracy.



TO FAMILY OR PARENTAL CARE

- honour and respect my parents, and to help them.
- to be kind and loyal to my family, to my brothers and sisters, my grandparents and all my relatives.
- recognise that love means long-term commitment, and the responsibility to establish strong and loving families.

TO HUMAN DIGNITY

- treat people with reverence, respect and dignity as we all belong to the human race.
- to be kind, compassionate and sensitive to every human being, including greeting them warmly and speaking to them courteously.

TO WORK

- work hard and do our best in everything we do.
- recognise that living a good and successful life involves hard work, and that anything worthwhile only comes with effort.
- this right must never be used for exploitation by exposing children to child labour.

TO FREEDOM AND SECURITY OF THE PERSON

- not hurt, bully or intimidate others or allow others to do so.
- solve any conflict in a peaceful manner.
- to take action to protect my safety and the safety of others.

TO EQUALITY

- treat every person equally and fairly.
- not to discriminate unfairly against anyone on the basis of race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, class, language or birth.

TO OWN PROPERTY

- respect the property of others.
- take pride in and protect both private and public property, and not to take what belongs to others.
- give generously to charity and good causes, where I am able to do so.

TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

- express views which do not advocate hatred, or are based on prejudices with regard to race, ethnicity, gender or religion.
- we must therefore take responsibility to ensure this right is not abused by ourselves or others, to not tell or spread lies, and to ensure others are not insulted or have their feelings hurt.

TO CITIZENSHIP

- to participate actively in the activities of the community and affairs of the country.
- obey the laws of our country, ensuring that others do so as well.
- contribute in every possible way to making South Africa a great country.

TO LIFE

- protect and defend the lives of others.
- not endanger the lives of others by carrying dangerous weapons or by acting recklessly or disobeying our rules and laws.
- live a healthy life, by exercising, eating correctly, by not smoking, taking alcohol, or taking drugs, or indulging in irresponsible behaviour that may result in my being infected or infecting others with diseases such as HIV and AIDS.

TO EDUCATION

- attend school regularly, to learn, and to work hard.
- cooperate respectfully with teachers and fellow learners.
- adhere to the rules and the Code of Conduct of the school.

AND PLACES ON MY TEACHERS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO:

- promote and reflect the culture of learning and teaching in giving effect to this right.
- to eliminate unprofessional behaviour.

AND CONCURRENTLY PLACES ON MY PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO:

- ensure that I attend school and receive their support.
- ensure that I participate in school activities.
- create a home environment conducive to studying.

Conclusion: *I accept the call of this Bill of Responsibilities, and commit to taking my rightful place as an active, responsible citizen of South Africa. By assuming these responsibilities I will contribute to building the kind of society which will make me proud to be a South African.*

This Bill outlines the responsibilities that flow from each of the rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.