

Third issue

Curriculum News

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

November 2010

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basic education

Department:
Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

From the Minister



Mrs Angie Motshekga, MP Minister of Basic Education

It is vital that we communicate with you regularly to keep you informed of developments in the curriculum review process. This is the third *Curriculum News*. The first edition was distributed to schools in December 2009 / January 2010 and the second in May this year. We want to keep you abreast of curriculum changes. This is an important issue coming out just after we have signed the Delivery Agreement, committing to improving quality of basic education.

I am happy to announce that the Council of Ministers (CEM) on 7-8 October 2010 agreed to relax the timeframes for implementation of Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). Given concerns raised by a range of stakeholders, including teachers, more measured implementation will be followed.

In this issue, we highlight developments since May 2010.

The three committees that I established earlier this year have reported on some of their recommendations to the CEM. The main committee is ensuring that the National Curriculum Statement is repackaged so that it is more accessible to teachers. Every subject in each grade will have a single,

comprehensive and concise CAPS that will provide details on what teachers ought to teach and assess on a grade-by-grade and subject-by-subject basis. The draft CAPS were released for public comment until 18 October. This issue gives an update on the CAPS.

It also looks at the decisions taken at the meeting of the CEM on 29 June 2010, including:

- The renaming of all learning areas and programmes as subjects from 2011;
- The reduction of the number of learning areas in the Intermediate Phase;
- The introduction of the language chosen by the learner as a Language of Learning and Teaching from Grade One ;
- The introduction of the Annual National Assessments that will be externally set for Grades 3, 6 and 9 in languages (in home language and first additional language) and mathematics;
- Agreement on the weighting of continuous assessment and end of year examinations; and
- Agreement on the use of the same symbols or rating scales for learner performance across all grades.

It is important that we all remember that curriculum implementation is a process in which all stakeholders are involved. We cannot assume that policy can be implemented overnight in a flawless manner. It cannot be rushed.

The whole sector needs to understand and implement the changes at all levels. This has been the major flaw of the past regarding policy implementation. That being the case, we have a responsibility to ensure our policy ideas and strategies are given every chance to succeed.

I am pleased that *Curriculum News* has been received so positively. I encourage all teachers to engage with the newsletter critically. Use it as a basis for discussions in the staff room.

Your voice is important. The Department has also opened a Facebook page at **DBE:CAPS** for your inputs and discussion. We have received many questions and comments from the

teachers which we welcome. We have therefore opened a page on www.education.gov.za where you can view our responses. Please submit your questions or comments to curriculumnews@dbe.gov.za. I trust that you will use these communication channels.

I would like to reiterate that while there have been some amendments to the NCS, the aims and values of the

curriculum remain the same. The curriculum is based on the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values. It aims to develop the full potential of each learner as a citizen of a democratic South Africa. The curriculum seeks to create a lifelong learner who is confident and independent, literate, numerate and multi-skilled and compassionate, having respect for the environment and the ability to participate in society as a critical and active citizen.



DEVELOPMENT OF CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY STATEMENTS (CAPS)

Minister Motshekga has invited stakeholder bodies and members of the public to comment on the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements by means of Government Notice No. 784 (Government Gazette No. 33528 of 3 September 2010).

The newly developed draft National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) for all grades and subjects were made available for public comment until 18 October and can still be viewed on the Department's websites: www.education.gov.za or [Http://www.thutong.doe.gov.za](http://www.thutong.doe.gov.za). They are being amended to take into account public comments received.

The CEM that met on 7-8 October 2010 has agreed to relax the timeframes for implementation of CAPS. It was announced earlier that the CAPS for Foundation Phase would be implemented in 2011 and the rest in 2012. Instead, the Department will implement Foundation Phase and Grade 10 CAPS in 2012 and the rest from 2013.

INTRODUCING FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE IN GRADE 1

The CEM has approved the recommendation that from 2012, all learners in Grades 1-3 be required to offer 4 subjects, viz Home Language, First Additional Language, Numeracy and Life Skills. All learners whose language of learning and teaching will be English from Grade 4 onwards will be required to offer English (FAL) as a subject from Grade 1.

Strengthening literacy

All learners will offer two languages, one at Home Language level and the other at First Additional language level. If LoLT is going to be English from Grade 4 onwards, then English needs to be taught as a subject from Grade 1. If the LoLT remains English or Afrikaans from Grade 1 onwards, then another South African language should be taken as a subject from Grade 1.

Advantages?

By introducing the First Additional Language (English) that will be used later as the language of learning and teaching

in Grade 1, the learner will become more familiar with the language and will be able to acquire the basics of the language sooner. This will strengthen literacy skills.

IMPROVING QUALITY OF LEARNING

We have acted on recommendations of the Review Committee on the reduction of the number of subjects in the Intermediate Phase, from 8 to 6.

This means that in Grades 4 to 6, Technology will be combined with Science. Arts and Culture will be combined with Life Orientation. Economic and Management Sciences will be taught only from Grade 7. The Ministerial Committee has investigated the implementation implications and has confirmed that this can be done without destabilising the system.

These changes, as shown in the table below, will only be introduced in 2013, after the necessary teacher orientation and development of appropriate textbooks.

Table showing changes in intermediate phase in 2013

CURRENT SITUATION 2010 8 LEARNING AREAS	Hours	WHAT IS TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN 2013? 6 SUBJECTS	Hours
• Languages	6.4	• Home language	6
• Mathematics	4.45	• First additional language	5.5
• Natural Sciences	3.3	• Mathematics	6
• Social Sciences	3.1	• Science and technology	2
• Technology	2.08	• Human and Social Sciences	2
• Economic and Management Sciences	2.08	• Life skills	5
• Life Orientation	2.08	- Creative Arts (2h)	
• Arts and Culture		- Physical education (2h)	
		- Religion Education (1h)	

FROM LEARNING AREAS AND PROGRAMMES TO SUBJECTS FROM 2011

Yet another interesting development! The term *subject* will be used across the curriculum from Grade R - 12.

All learning areas and programmes will be known as subjects with effect from 2011, once policy is declared. In the General Education and Training Band, subjects have been called *Learning areas* and *programmes* and *subjects* in the Further Education and Training Band.

EXPANDING ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY LEARNING MATERIALS

Our Department is committed to ensuring that every learner has the necessary textbooks and related material for a successful education. Research has repeatedly shown the importance of textbooks and other learning and teaching support material in delivering quality education. To achieve this, we will not only focus on the quantity of material reaching schools but also on quality, through the following initiatives:

- Workbooks focused on Numeracy and Literacy will be provided to Grade 1 - 6 learners from 2011, especially in Quintile 1 and 2 schools.
- A National Catalogue of approved textbooks will be finalised in 2011. Rigorous selection methods, based on international best-practice, will be used to ensure only the best quality material is offered to our schools. Schools will be able to make a choice of up to 8 options per subject and to make a selection appropriate for their context.

SPECIAL FOCUS

IT'S ALL SYSTEMS GO FOR NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

The Department is ready to confirm to all stakeholders, including principals, teachers and School Governing Body members, that in February 2011, all learners in Grades 2 to 7 in public schools will participate in nationally set tests in literacy and numeracy – Annual National Assessments (ANA).

ANA will provide teachers with empirical evidence on what the learner can and/or cannot do at a particular stage or

grade, and do so at the beginning of the school year. These tests will serve as an important indicator of the critical foundational skills that learners need in order to be able to learn in other subjects as well.

At systemic level, ANA will provide reliable data for policy decisions related to provision and support required at various levels of the system. The National and Provincial departments will use the ANA results to prioritise appropriate support to teachers and schools.

Who will set the ANA?

The ANA will be set nationally so that they can provide a benchmark for all schools in the basic education sector.

When will the ANA be written?

ANA tests for 2010 will be administered in the second week of February 2011. In principle, future ANA tests for a given school year will be administered at the beginning of the following school year.

Which Grades will be involved?

ANA, that will be conducted in February 2011, will involve **all learners** from Grade 2 to Grade 7. Each learner will write a test that is a grade lower than where he/she will be at the beginning of the 2011 school year (for example Grade 7 will write Grade 6 tests which shall be marked by the Grade 7 teacher, Grade 4 will write Grade 3 tests and these will be marked by the Grade 4 teacher, Grade 2 will write Grade 1 tests which will be marked by the Grade 2 teacher, and so forth). Only Grade 1s will fall outside the net because they will be coming from Grade R.

What about Grade 9?

In 2011, Grade 9 tests (Grade 10 learners) will be piloted in 50 sample schools in each province (maximum of 25 learners from each sampled school totalling 25 learners per school x 50 schools per province x 9 provinces = 11 250 learners). In subsequent years, Grade 9 ANA will follow the same pattern as the other grades.

Who will mark the ANA?

Marking of all ANA tests will be done by the teachers of the learners at school level. Districts, in collaboration with School Management Teams (SMTs), will moderate samples of school-marked papers. At national level, DBE will also sample scripts for moderation (limited to Grades 3, 6 and 9) to check if marking was done consistently across districts and provinces.

How will the results of the ANA be communicated?

Schools will release the ANA results as soon as possible after administration in February of each year so that parents may be informed and schools and teachers may use the results to inform their planning for the school year.

What guidance will be given to teachers to prepare learners for ANA?

The DBE will disseminate exemplars of ANA literacy and numeracy items so that schools and parents can assist learners in their preparations for taking the tests in February. The exemplars will cover critical aspects of the learning outcomes that can be assessed using pencil-and-paper exercises. They illustrate various questioning styles, specific competencies and cognitive levels which will be included in the final tests. But, the exemplars can never be exhaustive in testing everything that learners are expected to have learnt by the end of the grade. They can only serve as a guide.

Where can I access ANA exemplars?

Exemplars for all grades should be accessed from the Department of Basic Education's website: www.education.gov.za or <http://thutong.doe.gov.za>.

CLARITY ON WEIGHTING OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT AND END OF YEAR EXAMINATIONS

Council has agreed on a weighting of continuous assessment and end of year examinations from 2011 for Foundation Phase and 2012 for all other Grades, as follows:

- Grades R - 3: 100% School-based assessment;
- Grades 4 - 6: 75% School-based assessment : 25% end of year exam;
- Grades 7 - 9: 40% School-based assessment : 60% end of year exam; and
- Grades 10 - 12: 25% School-based assessment : 75% end of year exam.

RATING SCALES FOR LEARNER PERFORMANCE (FROM 2011)

Symbols or rating scales used to rate learner performance in Grades 10 - 12 as agreed by Council, will from 2011, be extended to Grades R - 9, so that there is consistency across the curriculum.

RATING CODE	DESCRIPTION OF COMPETENCE	PERCENTAGE
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

WHAT'S NEW?

Learner Attendance Policy

A Policy on Learner Attendance was gazetted by the Department of Basic Education on 4 May 2010. It comes into effect in all public schools on 1 January 2011. The aim of the policy is to promote punctual and regular learner attendance by introducing proper recording and monitoring systems in schools.

Since the merger of former education departments into a single education system, provincial education departments have continued to use different procedures for recording and reporting on learner attendance. The absence of a common approach to learner attendance has resulted in parents and learners having contradictory expectations about learner attendance across schools and provinces. The policy therefore provides a common national approach to learner attendance thereby ensuring that all learners are treated equitably across all schools and provinces.

Some key issues of the policy

- All learners, with the exception of Grade 12 learners, must attend school on every school day, including examination periods (before, during and after examinations);
- Grade 12 learners may take **five days** study leave before the first day of the National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examination; and
- Learners' records will be cancelled in the class register if a learner is absent from school for **10 consecutive school days** without a valid reason. Learners' records cannot be retained in the class register when they are no longer attending school as this inflates

learner numbers. Reasons for cancelling a learner's record includes exemption from compulsory school attendance, expulsion, transfer to another school, registration for home education, etc. If a learner returns to school after their record has been cancelled, the learner must be readmitted to school.

- New templates have been developed for the class and period register. The information required in the new templates has been reduced thereby minimising the administrative load for teachers.

What is expected of the teacher?

- The class teacher is responsible for marking the class register in the class registration period on every school day;
- After the class register is marked, the register must be taken to the school office for safe-keeping;
- The teacher must inform the principal if a learner is absent from school for three consecutive school days without a valid reason;
- The teacher must inform the principal of cases of repeated absence so that the principal could follow-up with the parent;
- The subject teacher is responsible for marking the period register at least once a month.

What is expected of the principle?

- The principal must develop a school policy on learner attendance;
- The principal must ensure that class and period registers are compiled, marked and monitored properly and stored safely;
- If the learner persists in being absent without a valid reason, the principal must contact the parent. If after the principal's intervention, the learner continues to be absent, the principal must charge the learner with a breach of the school's code of conduct for learners. If the learner is absent for 10 consecutive school days without a valid reason, the principal must cancel the learner's record in the class register; and
- The principal must monitor and analyse learner attendance rates by grade and make this information available to the HoD and SGB.

Visit www.education.gov.za for full document.

Further information can be obtained from:

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Minister Motshekga signing the Delivery Agreement at the Union Buildings on Friday 29 October 2010.

NEW CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS AND DATES OF IMPLEMENTATION

Current	Change	Timeline for implementation
A heavy administrative workload for teachers	Reduction of recording and reporting. Reduction of the number of projects for learners to one per subject per year. Removal of the requirement for portfolio files of learner assessments. Discontinuation of the Common Tasks for Assessment (CTAs) for Grade 9 learners.	From 2010
Learners are introduced to the First additional Language in Grade 4.	The language chosen by the learner as a Language of Learning and Teaching shall be taught as a subject at least as a First Additional Language, from Grade 1. English will not replace the mother tongue or home language in the early grades.	This will be introduced in 2012.
In the General Education and Training Band, subjects have been called <i>Learning areas</i> and <i>programmes</i> and <i>subjects</i> in the Further Education and Training Band.	All learning areas and programmes will be known as subjects.	This will take effect from 2011.
In the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4 - 6) learners have to do eight (8) learning areas.	The number of subjects in Grades 4 - 6 will be reduced from eight (8) to six (6).	These changes will be introduced in 2013, after the necessary teacher orientation and development of appropriate textbooks in 2011.
The use of textbooks in learning and teaching is not adequate.	The importance of the place of textbooks in the achievement of quality learning and teaching has been re-emphasised.	Workbooks for learners in Grades 1 - 6 will be distributed in 2011. A national catalogue of learning and teaching support materials from which schools can select textbooks will be implemented in 2011 – 2012 in Intermediate and Senior Phases, in Grade 11 in 2013, and in Grade 12 in 2014.
The National Curriculum Statement learning areas designs learning areas in terms of outcomes and assessment standards.	The CAP Statements are organised into topics, following the general aims of the curriculum and subject.	The implementation of CAPS will commence in the Foundation Phase and Grade 10 in 2012.
Assessment of learners' performance in the GET Band (Grades 1 - 9) has been done entirely at school level	From 2011, there will be externally-set annual national assessments (ANA) for Grade 3 and 6 learners. A pilot will be conducted for Grade 9 in 2011.	Full scale implementation for Grades 3 and 6 of 2010 year in February 2011. Annual National Assessment for all Grade 9 learners will be fully implemented from 2012.

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