MEDIA RELEASE

19 SEPTEMBER 2026

IT'S OFFICIAL! THE 2026 FOUNDATION PHASE NATIONAL CATALOGUE IS OUT FOR IMPLEMENTATION WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT

The Department of Basic Education's 2026 Foundation Phase National Catalogue has now been approved and endorsed, provinces are now empowered to use the latest catalogue and procurement has commenced.

This follows a 18 September 2026 decision endorsed by the Council of Education Ministers (CEM) after due consideration. A triple-layer review - comprising an AGSA audit, an independent investigation, and legal opinions from both internal legal services and external Senior Counsel have confirmed the integrity of the process.

They found **NO FRAUD, NO FAVOURITISM, and therefore NO BASIS TO CANCEL**.

The new catalogue brings important educational and financial benefits. It provides updated, curriculum-aligned materials, stronger resources for foundational literacy and provision for newer curriculum areas such as Coding and Robotics. It also creates opportunities for greater efficiencies through economies of scale and broadens participation in the publishing sector.

On early grade reading, one of the sector priorities, the new catalogue strengthens access by providing for 40 readers per class and a Core Reader per learner, while reducing the number of listed titles from eight to three to enable more focused teacher development and subject-advisory support.

The Department regards the conclusion of these processes as an important point of certainty for the sector. Recommendations arising from the reviews will be incorporated into the continued strengthening of governance and administration around LTSM, while implementation proceeds.

The priority now is delivery. The DBE has engaged provinces on the details for procurement. We are confident that the sector will come together to ensure that books are bought and delivered as effectively as possible, keeping in mind the upcoming new academic year.

ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

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