

COMMUNICATION SERVICES

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A JOINT STATEMENT BY THE EC EDUCATION AND TRANSPORT MECs ON THE SCHOOL READINESS FOR THE 2015

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen

May I take this opportunity and welcome you all to this press briefing

Eastern Cape Province is part of the coastal areas that opened their doors to teachers on the 19th January 2014, and will receive learners on the 21st January 2015. Today, we are assembled here as the department seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of our state of readiness to receive learners in this year, 2015. Without wasting your time let me deal with the issues that I suppose are the highlight of this schooling term.

STATE OF READINESS

School readiness relates to whether schools in the Province can start teaching on the first day of schools opening, and to that effect, the Department has developed a school readiness indicator framework that includes:

- Schools opening support visits
- Progress on learner admissions
- LTSM delivery

To date all our indicators point to a commendable state of readiness for 2015 as preparation were finalised last year and implement towards the end of the year so that come this time, teaching takes place on the first day of schooling in this province. Our report therefore shows the following:

1. DELIVERY OF STATIONERY

99, 6% of stationery is already in schools and will help ensure that teaching will take place on the first day of our academic calendar. The Department placed orders for

5 353 schools and 5 336 schools have already received their stock, and the outstanding 17 schools will be wrapped up by Friday of the 23rd January 2015.

2. TEXTBOOKS DELIVERY

As I have alluded during the release of results early this year, textbooks for the 2015 academic year are only funded at 5% top up to cater for book losses and growth in learner numbers. This is the case because the Department has provided schools with full supplies of CAPS compliant textbooks between 2011 and 2014 to support the phasing in of the new CAPS curriculum across grades.

The official policy of the Department is that textbooks can only be renewed after a four year cycle, hence only a 5% top up for the 2015/16 and 2016/17 financial years.

92% of the topping up orders have already been delivered to schools, with 6% in the distribution to schools. However, the Department has also allowed for late submissions from schools to cater for increase in numbers.

3. ADMISSION OF LEARNERS

In preparation for the 2015 admissions, the department has issued Circular No.6 of 2014, to guide schools on the administration of learner admissions in Public Ordinary Schools. The latest report from Districts indicates that:

- Districts have already established **Admission Committees** to support schools that experience high demand for admissions, and help with the mopping up of waiting lists from unplaced learners.
- School principals have held meetings to sensitise and mobilise parents on early registration of learners, and this has paid well across Districts.
- Districts have completed admissions, and schools have finalised their time tables, class lists, and allocation of teachers in line with the Post Provisioning Norms (PPN). The Department has put in place contingency plans to deal with special cases that need urgent attention.

4. SCHOLAR TRANSPORT READINESS

408 Vehicles were inspected yesterday and the process is continuous as even today some are still undergoing the same inspection. This inspection forms part of the key requirements for participation in the scholar transport programme.

More than 1330 public transport operators are expected to sign Service level Agreements (SLA) with the Department of Transport today so that learners can be transported as from tomorrow until the end of the first schooling term (April). For proper monitoring we further call upon the members of the public to report/notify us about any challenges through our **SMS line 32936** or **call the toll free number 0800 644 644**.

5. SUPPORT VISITS ON SCHOOLS OPENING

The Department's approach to 2015 schools opening will focus on underperforming Districts. These are Districts that have achieved below 60% in the 2014 NCS examinations. Provincially, 5 of the 23 Districts in the Department fall in this category, and they are:

- Butterworth
- Dutywa
- Fort Beaufort
- Mt Frere
- Queenstown

Visiting teams will include members of the **Portfolio Committee on Education**, as well as members of the **Executive Council** who have specified schools they would wish to visit. The teams will be led by managers of the Department, with Members of Senior Management Service deployed to accompany members of the Portfolio Committee and the Executive Council to their specific schools. Names of schools to be visited and a schedule of visits is here-in attached.

IMPROVING LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN 2015

The 65,4% matric results is welcomed as an indicator of an upward improvement trajectory, but more has to done to push the Province further in 2015. Our analysis of 2014 results points out three domains that require a concerted effort and these are:

- **School leadership support and development**
- **Teacher development and professional support**
- **A responsive service delivery model to challenges of the Department**

5.1. School leadership support

The focus on leadership development will fall on schools that performed poorly in the 2014 Matric examinations, and the purpose is to support their Principals in curriculum management and leadership. Indications from the Matric results are that:

- 36 schools (4%) performed at 0-19%, and 3 of these obtained a 0%;
- 139 are performing between 20% and 39%
- 24 of these schools have been performing below 40% for the past 5 years

The department has established partnerships to support these schools, and these are partnerships with:

- Capitec Bank on a mentoring and coaching program;
- University of Fort Hare on management and leadership development;
- University of KZN and the ETDP SETA on Principalship development;

I need to highlight that as the department we shall assess their progress on a quarterly basis and constantly keep them on our radar screen to monitor their progress.

5.2. Teacher support

Our analysis of subject performance points to a twin trajectory of good performance in the Arts and Technical subjects, but poor performance in the Natural, Economic and Social Sciences. Performance in Liberal Arts and Technical subjects stands at 95% average pass, and this contrasts remarkably with a 42% average pass in Maths and 51% in Physical Science. The Department, through the Leadership Institute, has mounted a teacher development and support program that includes professional

development and training for Math and Science teachers. A number of support systems have been facilitated to nurture this program, and these include:

- The rollout of the Telematics program in partnership with Stellenbosch University, to beam live Maths and Science lessons in 46 centres
- Maximising access to the e-learning platforms of Mindset free-to-air broadcast, DBE Cloud, Thutong Education Portal and the Digital Class piloted by Vodacom in partnership with DBE.

We will support this program through a rigorous teacher provisioning strategy that includes:

- A recruitment drive to ensure that the Best Teachers are in the EC;
- Making certain that teachers are in attendance;
- Taking swift action against teachers who have been absent for a long time;
- Work on a 90 Day turnaround on all labour dispute matters;
- Resolving issues of Personnel in excess;
- Filling of vacant posts.
- Appointment of teachers on merit, competence, trust and integrity.

5.3. DINALEDI

We have taken a long term view of the contribution of special purpose programs like the Dinaledi Schools project. The original purpose of this program was to produce quality passes in Maths and Science. Evidence thus far points to a lacklustre performance and inability to produce the requisite number of distinctions in Maths and Science. We are now revising the list of schools participating in this program, and our focus is heightening the support on more deserving schools.

5.4. MOTIVATING PERFORMING SCHOOLS

To ensure consistency of performing schools, the Department will now be recognizing them as pockets of excellence. The spotlight will be on performing principals and teachers who continue to make the Department proud. There is a planned awards ceremony which will be convened on the 28th January 2015 to recognize these best performing schools.

6. EDUCATION SERVICE REDESIGN

The Department has issued a draft Service Delivery Model for public comments to enable stakeholder participation. The purpose is to design a service delivery model that can respond to challenges of the Department, and its key elements are:

- Revision of the schooling system to align with national norms and standards;
- Capacitated Circuit Offices that can provide professional and strategic support schools;
- Revised District configuration that is aligned to norms and standards; and
- A fit for purpose Head Office structure that articulates school needs

The consultation process will be conclude by the middle of February 2015 with a purpose of implementing a new model by the 01st of May 2015.

HARD CHOICES:

6.1. Managing small schools

Small schools are difficult to resource due to their sheer size, as a result they are unable to get a full complement of staff for their curriculum streams. The norm for Primary schools is 150 learners, and 200 for Secondary schools. The Department will be entering into discussion with affected communities to discuss the future of small schools.

6.2. Withdrawing subsidies from underperforming Independent schools

Subsidized underperforming Independent Schools will lose their subsidies in the new financial year. This includes a review of the registration status of perennial underperforming Independent Schools. Plans are afoot to notify them of the decision to review current arrangements.

Dealing with underperforming schools

Despite the fact that all schools performing below 40% will receive their marching orders on the 29th January 2015, we also need them to provide us with a detailed recovery plan that is aligned to the district plan to explain their next step towards improvement.

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