



Reference: 20161118-6281

2/6/2

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Circular: 0041/2017

Expiry date: None

To: Deputy Directors-General; Chief Director: Districts; District Directors; Circuit Managers; Managers: Strategic Information, Governance and People Management; Heads: Curriculum Coordination and Advice; Subject Advisers; People Management Coordinators; Principals of ordinary public schools and Chairpersons of governing bodies

Brief summary: *This circular instructs schools to annually conduct School Self-Evaluations to ensure comprehensive and credible School Improvement Plans. Every school is required to have an updated School Improvement Plan which enables the school to measure its progress through ongoing self-evaluation.*

Subject: School Self-Evaluations and School Improvement Plans

1. Introduction

Annual management processes such as School Self-Evaluations (SSEs), School Improvement Plans (SIPs), budgeting and reporting are required in all public schools in the country to contribute towards an enabling and functional school environment (Goal 21 - Action Plan to 2019: Towards Schooling 2030).

2. School Self-Evaluation (SSE)

- 2.1 Prior to developing SIPs, it is essential that school communities conduct SSEs in accordance with the national policy on Whole School Evaluation (WSE) (Government Gazette Volume 433, No. 22512). According to the WSE policy, the focus is on internal monitoring (SSE), external evaluation (WSE) and well-structured support services.
- 2.2 SSE is a process of reflection by school communities on practices which should be systematic and transparent with the aim of improving learner performance, teaching practice and school functionality. This approach is designed to help schools measure the extent to which they are fulfilling their responsibilities and improving learner performance.

- 2.3 SSE must be guided by the nine key areas for evaluation as contained in the national policy on WSE. Schools may visit the Department of Basic Education (DBE) website at <http://www.education.gov.za> to download the SSE document.
- 2.4 The recently developed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for circuit managers provide guidelines for support to principals.

3. **School Improvement Plan (SIP)**

- 3.1 The intended outcome of all school activities is improved learner achievement. Comprehensive SIPs indicate the means by which the identified needs for overall improvement will be made.
- 3.2 Schools should utilise the results of the SSE process together with the Provincial Systemic Tests/National Senior Certificate examinations diagnostic reports and teacher development information from the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) processes to prioritise improvement activities for inclusion in SIPs.
- 3.3 Online SIPs should be submitted annually at the end of January. The WCED provincial SIP includes a section on academic performance improvement as well as the necessary elements that support school improvement in order to lead to improved accountability and quality of learning outcomes.

Schools should develop SIPs in two parts:

- Section A: Interventions leading to improved learner performance.
- Section B: Target setting once the academic results are known.

- 3.4 SIPs should be signed off by the principal and the circuit manager as well as the Chairperson of the Governing Body. They will then be used for integration into the District Improvement Plan.

4. **Responsibility of the school**

The authority for the professional management of schools is vested in the principal supported by the governing body. Principals must ensure that the following activities are completed:

- Conduct SSEs annually;
- Develop credible SIPs;
- Implement SIPs; and
- Report progress on the implementation of SIPs.

5. **Responsibility of the district office**

District offices have a key role to play in supporting schools to achieve educational outcomes (Policy on the Organisation, Roles and Responsibilities of Education Districts – Government Notice 300 of 2013). These responsibilities include:

- Support to schools by the circuit manager to carry out SSEs;
- Acknowledgement of SSE reports by the circuit manager;
- Approval of SIPs;
- Support provided to implement the activities specified in the SIP; and
- Monitor the progress of the implementation of SIPs.

6. **Attachment**

Strategic Overview of SSEs and SIPs.

7. Kindly bring the contents of this circular to the attention of all concerned.

SIGNED: BK SCHREUDER
HEAD: EDUCATION
DATE: 2017-10-14

STRATEGIC OVERVIEW OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATIONS AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS

