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12/2/2

Enquiries: E. Peck

Curriculum GET Minute: DCG 0021/2017

To: Deputy Directors-General, Chief Directors, Directors, Heads: Curriculum Support, Circuit Managers, Deputy Chief Education Specialists, GET and FET Coordinators, Senior Phase Subject Advisers and Principals of all ordinary public secondary schools

Subject: Grade 8 Diagnostic Assessment Tool for Language, Mathematics and Natural Sciences

1. The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) developed a Diagnostic Assessment Tool for Grade 8 that was implemented in schools in 2016 in Language, Mathematics and Natural Sciences.
2. The outcome of this test will guide schools in implementing interventions that will not only close the gap in the number of learners passing especially Mathematics and Natural Sciences in Grade 9 but that there will also be an increase in the number of learners taking these subjects in the Further Education and Training (FET) Band.
3. To this end all high schools were offered training in the use of the Diagnostic Assessment Tool (Version 5.1) by subject advisers during 2015 and received a CD with the Diagnostic Assessment Tool, recording sheets as well as an instructional video.
4. This minute serves to inform schools to prepare for the diagnostic assessment of Grade 8 learners in 2018. The suggested dates are 24, 25 and 26 January 2018.
5. A suggested roll-out plan is as follows:
 - a) All Grade 8 learners write the three one-hour tests during 24-26 January 2018.
 - b) Teachers complete marking tests by 30 January 2018.
 - c) Schools capture results electronically on excel spreadsheets (latest version) by the second week of February 2018.
 - d) Schools email summary spreadsheets and intervention plans to district offices by 23 February 2018 for a district analysis of the results.
 - e) District offices compile and analyse data and intervention plans and forward to Head Office by 09 March 2018.

6. Ideas to support learners in Language, Mathematics and Natural Sciences:
Schools may use other forms of intervention to support struggling Grade 8 learners, such as partnering with local businesses to support the school in the following ways:
- a) Offering supplementary tuition using tutors, students and/or retired teachers for Saturday, afternoon and holiday classes (i.e. winter and spring schools).
 - b) Offering private extra classes paid for by parents.
 - c) Combining efforts and sharing resources with neighbouring schools.
 - d) Streaming/grouping learners in ability groups per subject.
 - e) Using the "pull-out" method i.e. withdrawing learners for the specific subject period from a mixed ability class to another class where a teacher will teach them according to their own needs and abilities, after which they return to their register class again.
7. WCED is in the process of digitising these tests. Progress regarding this will be communicated to schools in good time.
8. Principals are requested to ensure that the information in this minute is conveyed to all teachers and relevant staff members.

SIGNED: PAD BEETS

DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL: CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT MANAGEMENT

DATE: 2018-01-09