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Enquiries: AW Africa

Institutional Resource Support Minute: 0006/2018

To: Chief Directors, Directors (Head Office and district offices), Circuit Managers, Heads: Curriculum Coordination and Advice, Subject Advisers, Specialised Learner and Educator Support (SLES) Staff, Principals and Chairpersons of governing bodies of public primary schools

**Subject: Read to Lead campaign**

1. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) launched the Read to Lead campaign in 2015 with the main focus on improving the reading abilities of all South African children.
2. Education Library and Information Services (EDULIS) embarked on a two-year pilot programme in 2017 to assist educators to establish reading corners in Grades 3, 4 and 5 classes. It further plans to roll it out to more primary schools in the Western Cape in 2019.
3. After the two years, the classroom collection should be sustained and augmented by using the school's norms and standard (N&S) allocation (see Circular 0042/2016, dated 27 September 2016).
4. Educators who would like to be part of this project in 2019–2020 can log in on the following URL, [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1\\_QoVA-ehpUkeFSbFFE8z93j3-JzRQZ-W6T3Wf6GYNps/edit](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1_QoVA-ehpUkeFSbFFE8z93j3-JzRQZ-W6T3Wf6GYNps/edit), to complete the questionnaire and submit it.
5. Please also find attached the *Love2Read* booklet that contains the vision as well as the terms and conditions of this programme.
6. EDULIS wants to establish reading corners in classrooms in primary schools in all districts, but due to limited resources, only approximately 20 educators per district will be assisted during the first round (2019–2020).

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

**SIGNED:** HA LEWIS

**DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL: EDUCATION PLANNING**

**DATE:** 2018-06-29



**Programme to promote reading for pleasure as part of the Department of Basic Education (DBE)'s Read to Lead campaign**

**1. Background**

The *Read to Lead* campaign was officially launched on 22 July 2015 and will continue until 2019. The campaign focuses on improving the reading abilities of all South African children. Its main aim is to ensure that all learners will be able to demonstrate age-appropriate levels of reading by 2019.

While the improvement in learner achievement is an important aim of the campaign, children should be motivated to make reading a lifestyle choice. The Reading Roundtable discussions were centred round the theme "A reading nation is a winning nation". A learner's ability to read, write and calculate is considered a vital toolkit in the pursuit of success and in managing life in general.

In this regard, the DBE has moved with the requisite speed to launch several initiatives, among them the *Drop All and Read* campaign. At the heart of this campaign is the requirement that teachers devote at least 30 minutes per week solely to reading. This effort stems from the belief that in order to improve literacy and reduce the number of learner dropouts, reading must become fashionable. However, this cannot be done without providing fully-functioning libraries in our schools. (DBE – Read to Lead)

**2. The Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2016**

In 2016, the University of Pretoria's Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA), headed by Prof Sarah Howie, tested 12 810 Grade 4 students from 293 schools across the country.

The International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2016 released by University of Pretoria (UP) paints a disturbing picture of primary school literacy in South Africa. According to the international comparative reading assessment, South Africa (SA) was placed last out of the 50 countries participating in the study at Grade 4 level. The data suggest that almost 80% of South African Grade 4 learners fall below the lowest internationally recognised level of reading literacy.

## 2.1 Main findings

- 2.1.1 **Eight out of ten South African children cannot read:** 78% of SA's Grade 4 students cannot read for meaning. (PIRLS report, page 55)
- 2.1.2 **SA scores last in reading out of 50 countries:** SA's Grade 4 children scored the lowest mark in the 2016 round of the Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study (PIRLS), compared to countries such as Iran, Chile, Morocco and Oman.
- 2.1.3 **SA lags far behind other countries:** While 78% of SA's Grade 4 kids cannot read, this number is only four percent in America and in England it is just three percent. In Iran 35% of Grade 4 students could not read for meaning and in Chile it was only 13%. (PIRLS report, page 55)
- 2.1.4 **The reading crisis is deeper than previously thought:** The true figure for children that cannot read for meaning is 78%.
- 2.1.5 **Some evidence of improvement in reading from 2006 to 2011 but stagnant since 2011:** The only good news coming out of PIRLS 2016 is that there may have been significant improvements in reading between 2006 and 2011.
- 2.1.6 **SA's reading scores has remained stagnant since 2011:** There has been no improvement in reading scores over the last five years (i.e. 2011 to 2016).
- 2.1.7 **SA's gender gap in reading is the second highest in the world:** Girls score much higher than boys in reading across the board. In Grade 4, girls are a full year of learning ahead of boys.
- 2.1.8 **SA boys' scores seem to have declined** between 2011 and 2016.
- 2.1.9 **A declining number of SA students** are reaching high levels of reading achievement.
- 2.1.10 Apart from the low levels of reading achievement, **South Africa also has the highest incidence of bullying** of all 50 countries that participated in the study.

In order to assist to improve the reading ability of learners, EDULIS embarked on a pilot programme to establish and support classroom libraries/reading corners and to assist educators in sustaining their classroom collections.

Our primary aim however is to assist schools with the establishment of school libraries.

## 3. School libraries

### 3.1 Aim of a library service in a school:

- To promote reading – learners learn to read by reading
- Learn to read to read to learn
- Nurture a love for reading by making reading enjoyable
- To serve as resource centre for assignments and projects – learn information skills

The school library is at the **heart of the school's reading culture**. Where schools have centralised school libraries, the school librarian and principal can help instil a reading culture.

### 3.2 Negative influences on centralised school library:

- If there is no full time librarian/part-time teacher, there is no responsible, accountable person.
- Primary school educators have no admin period, while high school educators may not want to use their admin period for additional responsibilities.
- No library lending occurs due to added responsibility and time restrictions.
- The library is only accessible during break times and after school.
- Who will control library services during break and after school? A school library can only succeed if there is a designated person.
- Library systems and procedures can be daunting.
- The four Ps required for a school library to be functional and sustainable, are:
  1. Place
  2. Person
  3. Programme
  4. Procurement

#### **4. Classroom libraries/reading corners**

##### **4.1 Where schools don't have a centralised school library, they can establish classroom libraries/reading corners.**

The **classroom library** (reading corner) is an accepted school library model described in the National Guidelines for School Library and Information Services (LIS). The library resources of the school are kept in the classrooms in various types of shelves or containers. Ideally they are regularly circulated between classrooms.

EDULIS aims to promote the establishment of reading corners in schools where a centralised school library is not feasible as to give learners access to reading material. Even in schools with excellent media centres, reading corners provide a focal point for literacy learning. It also demonstrates that you believe in the importance of creating lifelong readers.

The reading corner should comprise a shelf or a cupboard of reading resources appropriate to the level of the learners in the class.

##### **4.2 In the classrooms there should be evidence of:**

- reading aloud and storytelling every day;
- a structured daily half an hour of reading;
- plenty of books on display in the reading corner; and
- opportunities for learners to share their reading through book discussions and reviews.

##### **4.3 EDULIS supports the creation of a reading environment and promoting the love for reading.**

Learners (are taught to) read (at school) for the wrong reason. Learners are taught to read to analyse, look for meaning/symbolism and to prepare them for an exam. Why

then must they analyse “How do I love Thee”, instead of reading this poem for pure enjoyment?

The more learners read with enjoyment, the better their reading becomes. Furthermore, voluntary reading has a positive impact on all aspects of their development. (Lifelong Learning Programme n.d. p 3) The first and most important step in promoting reading is to provide access to reading material. “The research supports the common sense view that when books are readily available, when the print environment is enriched, more reading is done.” (Krashen 2004, p 59)

Learners are likely to spend 50–60% more time reading when they are in classrooms with adequate classroom library collections. A classroom library shows that you are committed to creating learners who read beyond the textbook.

This means that the school must ensure that there are plenty of books, magazines and other printed material available in the school library and in the classrooms. It also means that these resources should be physically accessible. Learners must be able to borrow books from the library or classroom collections to read at home. Find interesting articles online or in magazines and put them on cardboard/laminate them so that children can read them.

Light reading material such as comics can be very valuable in promoting reading and developing it as a habit. Ensure that there is enough light reading material, including comics, in the classroom and in the library. Contrary to what was previously claimed, research has shown that reading comics is not harmful to language development and school performance, and often serves as a bridge to other types of reading (Krashen 2004 p 97). Magazines and teen romances are among other types of light reading that promote reading, bring learners to the library and develop the habit of reading. The research is pretty clear – it does not matter what you read, all that matters is how much you read. People who read more, read better.

Getting children into the reading habit is a long-term process for which they need as much support and encouragement as we can give them. This means that as teachers we have to be reading facilitators and creators of the school reading environment, offering learners access to exciting reading resources and opportunities to read. In particular, weak and reluctant readers have to be introduced to the pleasure of reading in ways that are tailored to their needs.



#### **4.4 Objective of the Love2Read programme**

- To promote the love for reading
- To encourage reading for enjoyment and pleasure amongst learners
- To create life-long readers
- To assist committed educators to establish reading corners in their classrooms

#### **4.5 Philosophy of this programme**

- Literacy and numeracy are the foundation on which all other learning happens
- Learners learn to read by reading
- Learners learn to read in order to read to learn
- If a learner is not a reader, he/she will not read, irrespective of e-books, printed copies or other devices. It is therefore important to instil a love for reading first

#### **4.6 Vision of this programme**

- Every classroom must become an active reading room, and every learner an active reader

#### **4.7 Mission**

- EDULIS will assist the educator by supplying her/him with reading material for the identified grade for two years to establish a reading corner. After two years the block loan from EDULIS will be terminated

#### **4.8 Terms and conditions**

##### **4.8.1 EDULIS undertakes to:**

- focus on establishing reading corners in primary schools in particular for Grades 3, 4 and 5;
- deliver resources at the beginning of the year and pick them up at the end of November of each year;
- facilitate workshops/provide assistance to teachers in setting up a reading corner;
- train and support the educator to ensure sustainability;
- provide fiction and non-fiction books in language/s of choice;
- pack the resources according to grade/level;
- lend between 50–100 resources per class; and
- not to fine school for damaged or lost books. Exception will be unacceptable high losses.

##### **4.8.2 The teacher undertakes to:**

- promote the Love2Read campaign;
- implement read to lead activities in the classroom;
- encourage all learners in the class to read;
- make the reading corner interesting and inviting;
- take responsibility for books on loan;
- administer informal lending;
- encourage learners to take the book home but control lending carefully;
- augment their collection for the reading corner;
- encourage peer support, pair reading;
- do before- and after-reading evaluation;
- give regular feedback on the progress of the programme by means of photos, reports and letters;

- give their full cooperation to the school library service officers (SLSOs) and subject advisers; and
- follow-up to recoup losses and give feedback on steps taken.

#### 4.8.3 The principal undertakes to:

- promote the Read to Lead activities;
- support the Love2Read programme; and
- use the Norms and Standard (N&S) allocation to purchase library (reading) material for the reading corner/classroom library. (See Circulars 32/2017: Non-section 21 schools, as well as 0033/2017: Section 21 schools, with both expiry dates of 31 March 2019)

#### 4.9 Advantages

- Material is readily accessible.
- Material will be age appropriate.
- Level of material will cater for all learners (slow/fast/advanced/etc.).
- Going to the reading corner can be used as a reward.
- It is easier to implement “Drop All and Read” in the classroom
- Learner chooses his/her own book. The interests of the learners are paramount! Independent reading is about what learners want to read.
- Learners who have ready access to books in their classrooms have better attitudes about reading.
- Teacher can augment his/her collection and provide newspapers, magazines and even comics to encourage learners to read articles they will find interesting.

