

File no.: 21/2/5/2
Reference: 20241204-9101

Curriculum GET Minute: 0009/2024

To: Deputy Directors-General, Chief Directors, Directors, Heads: Curriculum Support, Circuit Managers, Deputy Chief Education Specialists, Foundation Phase Subject Advisers, Principals and Departmental Heads of ordinary public schools

Subject: Managing learning losses – strengthening Language and Mathematics learning in the Foundation Phase

1. This minute provides further guidance and direction regarding curriculum recovery for the Foundation Phase in 2025.
2. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented disruption to education systems across the world. One of the consequences of the pandemic was reduced time for teaching and learning, resulting in substantial learning losses. Numerous global and local reports confirm the deep losses and risks such as:
 - *How is the COVID-19 pandemic affecting educational quality in South Africa?*, 2020, by Martin Gustafsson and Carol Nuga;
 - Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Systemic Diagnostic Report, 2022;
 - WCED Systemic Diagnostic Results Report, 2022; and
 - *Learning losses from COVID-19 in the Western Cape, 2019–2021*, by Servaas van der Berg, Ursula Hoadley, Jaamia Galant, Chris van Wyk and Bianca Böhmer of the Research on Socio-Economic Policy Team from Stellenbosch University.
3. Collectively, these reports show that the levels of learning dropped most severely in the Foundation Phase and, within that, Mathematics and reading were most affected.
4. To mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on learning and teaching, the WCED implemented a multi-year curriculum recovery approach.
5. As part of this multi-year curriculum recovery approach, additional time was allocated to Mathematics and Language in the Foundation Phase.

6. This was piloted in Terms 3 and 4 in 2022 and communicated to schools via Curriculum GET Minute 0008/2022, dated 19 July 2022.
7. This additional time allocation was monitored and reviewed. A survey was also sent out to schools via Curriculum GET Minute 0011/2022, dated 07 November 2022, to get feedback from educators on the way forward.
8. A total of 55% of schools completed the survey of which 94% of the respondents recommended a continuation of the additional time allocation in 2023.
9. The model of extra time in Foundation Phase to recover learning losses was tabled at the Council of Education Ministers who approved the implementation of extra time to recover these losses.
10. Circular S5 of 2023, dated 12 February 2023, was issued by the Department of Basic Education to inform the provincial education departments of the additional time allocation for Foundation Phase (see Annexure A).
11. The extra time allocation for Mathematics and Language in the Foundation Phase was therefore implemented until the end of 2024.
12. This minute serves to inform you that the implementation of an additional time allocation for Mathematics and Language in the Foundation Phase will continue in 2025.
13. School Management Teams and Foundation Phase departmental heads are expected to continue with their support to educators and the monitoring of the process.
14. Principals are requested to bring this minute to the attention of all Foundation Phase educators at their schools.

SIGNED: BJ LORISTON

DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL: CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT MANAGEMENT

DATE: 2024-12-06