
GENERAL NOTICES

NOTICE 1438 OF 2008

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NOTICE NO OF.2008

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY ACT OF 1996

CALL FOR COMMENTS ON THE NATIONAL POLICY FOR AN EQUITABLE PROVISION OF AN ENABLING SCHOOL PHYSICAL TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

I, Grace Naledi Mandisa Pandor, Minister of Education after consultation with the Council of Education Ministers and in terms of section 3(4) of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act No 27 of 1996), hereby declare the National Policy for An Equitable Provision of an Enabling School Physical Teaching and Learning Environment, as set out in the schedule.

All interested persons and organisations are invited to comment on the policy, in writing and to direct their comments to-

The Director-General, Private Bag X895, Pretoria, 0001, for attention: Mrs E Mamathuba, tel 012 312 5954, email mamathuba.e@doe.gov.za, fax 012 312 6058.

Comments must reach the Director-General on or before 23 December 2008.


GRACE NALEDI MANDISA PANDOR, MP
MINISTER OF EDUCATION
DATE: 14-11-2008

SCHEDULE

NATIONAL POLICY FOR AN EQUITABLE PROVISION OF AN ENABLING SCHOOL PHYSICAL TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
BMP	Basic minimum package
CEM	Council of Education Ministers
CPAR	Country Procurement Assessment Review
DoE	Department of Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ELSEN	Education for Learners with Special Education Needs
FET	Further Education and Training
GIS	Geographic Information System
GET	General Education and Training
HEDCOM	Heads of Department Committee
ICB	International Competitive Bidding
ICTs	Information Communication Technologies
IDIP	Infrastructure Development Improvement Programme
JIPSA	Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition
LPPP	Leveraging Private Purchasing Power
NEIMS	National Education Infrastructure Management System
NSNP	National School Nutrition Program
PDPW	Provincial Departments of Public Works
PEDs	Provincial Education Departments
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
PPPFA	Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act
PPP	Public Private Partnerships
PRPs	Physical Resource Planners
SCM	Supply Chain Management
SGBs	School Governing Bodies
SRN	School Register of Needs
TA	Technical Assistance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. **Historical background:** In 1994, South Africa's democratically elected government inherited one of the world's most inequitable education and training systems. Unequal education opportunities were fostered mainly through unequal distribution of education resource inputs that are known to negatively impact on student learning. Student learning outcomes were understandably acutely inequitable. The physical teaching and learning environment—school infrastructure and basic services—has historically been one of the most visible indicators of inequitable resource inputs. The majority of our learners were taught in decrepit and unsafe buildings; their schools had no electricity, safe water, sanitation, telephones or co-curricula facilities and equipment.
- 1.2. **Significance of the physical teaching and learning environment:** Yet as recent studies show, there is a link between the physical environment learners are taught, and teaching and learning effectiveness, as well as student learning outcomes. Poor learning environments have been found to contribute to student irregular attendance and dropping out of school, teacher absenteeism and the teacher and students' ability to engage in the teaching and learning process. The physical appearance of school buildings are shown to influence student achievement and teacher attitude toward school. Extreme thermal conditions of the environment are found to increase annoyance and reduce attention span and student mental efficiency, increase the rate of student errors, increase teacher fatigue and the deterioration of work patterns, and affect student learning achievement. Good lighting improves students' ability to perceive visual stimuli and their ability to concentrate on instruction. A colorful environment is found to improve students' attitudes and behavior, attention span, student and teacher mood, feelings about school and reduces absenteeism. Good acoustics improves student hearing and concentration, especially when considering the reality that at any one time, 15 percent of students in an average classroom suffer some hearing impairment that is either genetically based, noise-induced or caused by infections. Outdoor facilities and activities have been found to improve student formal and informal learning systems, social development, team work, and school-community relationships.
- 1.3. Inequalities in the teaching and learning environment may therefore frustrate core sector policies to improve education quality, equity of inputs and equity of outcomes.
- 1.4. **Prior efforts to track provision:** Cognizant of this reality, the Department of Education (DoE) set off to systematically document the extent and nature of provision of the physical teaching and learning environments that we inherited in 1994. Two years after the transition to freedom, DoE published the first ever school register of needs (SRN) that revealed stark inequalities and inadequacies in the teaching and learning environments of most our learners. Since then, the SRN had been updated in 2000 and then again in 2006. In-between these surveys, the DoE doubled efforts to close the gap in resource provision. These efforts were buttressed by the government's readiness to substantially increase resource allocations for school infrastructure and basic services from R 352 million in 1995/1996 to R500,000.00 to R 4.95 billion in 2008/2009. They were also enabled by the joint DoE and national Treasury interventions to strengthen institutional delivery capacities.
- 1.5. **Progress and persisting challenges:** Progress is evident, albeit inadequate and uneven. Inadequacies are stark in some aspects like the provision of school libraries where nearly 80 percent of schools are still without science laboratories, lack of computers for teaching and learning in 68 percent of our schools, and inadequate classrooms leading to overcrowding in nearly a quarter of our schools.¹