basic education
Department
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

To: All Principals of Public Schools

Chairpersons of School Governing Bodies

IMPROVING LEARNER PERFORMANCE THROUGH INCREASED PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The Minister of Basic Education, Mrs AM Motshekga, MP, has committed the entire education sector to improving educational quality in schools in terms of improving learner outcomes. We have set out clear goals and targets for learner outcomes through improved learning and teaching to be achieved in our *Action Plan to 2014: towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025.*

We are determined to improve the levels of literacy and numeracy skills of all our learners. The Minister has introduced a number of programmes to improve learner achievement including the introduction in 2011 of the Annual National Assessments for all public schools.

The role of parents and guardians in supporting their children's education is vital. Many parents still believe that education is the responsibility of the school and the Department alone, and that they have no role to play. It is crucial that parents are empowered and kept informed of their children's and the school's progress.

Key information that must be shared with parents and caregivers is each child's performance in the ANA. This must be provided to them when the results are released. Parents should be invited to meet with their child's teacher to discuss individual results. In addition, all principals must call meetings with parents to explain what the results were in the individual school and to explain clearly how the school plans to improve on these results as part of its School Improvement Plan.

School Governing Body members and parents have an important role to play in monitoring the academic performance of the school. The principal must ensure that reports and reviews of the school's academic performance in terms of progress and challenges be included in all School Governing Body and parents' meetings. Minutes of all such meetings must be kept and made available to departmental officials during their monitoring visits to schools.

Principals should also ensure that parents are kept informed of key Departmental interventions and programmes and that they understand the rationale behind such. As part of the drive to improve learners' literacy and numeracy skills, Government has undertaken the enormous task of providing every child in Grades 1-9 with workbooks in literacy/language and numeracy/ mathematics. It is important that parents are informed about the purpose of the workbooks and should be encouraged to monitor their children's progress in the workbooks. Learners should bring their workbooks home every day.

Principals and School Governing Bodies should also engage parents in discussions around factors outside the classroom that impact on learner performance including school attendance and punctuality. Drugs and other forms of substance abuse, for example, impact negatively on learner achievement. Departmental policies on these and other issues should be explained carefully to parents and they should be engaged actively to come up with strategies to assist the school. The Principal and School Governing Body also need to ensure that all parents are familiar with the school's Code of Conduct and the rights and responsibilities of learners and teachers to ensure that the school environment is conducive to quality learning and teaching.

The business of schools is learning and teaching, and if we are to achieve our goals of improving educational quality in schools, we must ensure that all parents are actively involved in supporting our efforts.

I would like to draw your attention to a number of information pamphlets developed by the Department, aimed specifically at parents, that you may find useful to encourage parents to participate actively in the education of their children. These may be found on the Department's website at: www.education.gov.za.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of all principals who, through their management and leadership, strive to ensure quality learning and teaching in all our schools.

With my best wishes

MR PB SOOBRAYAN
DIRECTOR-GENERAL
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