

The Delivery Agreement for the Basic Education Sector

Signed by the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs AM Motshekga, MP

Friday 29 October 2010

OUTCOME 1: IMPROVED QUALITY OF BASIC EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

Government has agreed on 12 outcomes as a key focus of work between 2010 and 2014. Each outcome has a limited number of measurable outputs with targets. Each output is linked to a set of activities that will help achieve the targets and contribute to the outcomes.

Each of the 12 outcomes has a Delivery Agreement which in most cases involves all spheres of government and a range of partners outside government. Combined, these agreements reflect government's delivery and implementation plans for its foremost priorities.

This Delivery Agreement is a negotiated charter which reflects the commitment of the key partners involved in the direct delivery process. It also stipulates the activities to be undertaken to produce the mutually agreed-upon outputs, which in turn will contribute to achieving Outcome 1, 'Improved quality of basic education'.

GOVERNMENT'S VISION FOR BASIC EDUCATION

Government has prioritised the improvement of the quality of basic education as Outcome 1 of a total of 12 outcomes. This means that basic education is the top priority of this administration.

It is widely recognised that the country's schooling system performs well below its potential and that improving basic education outcomes is a prerequisite for the country's long-range development goals.

As President Zuma has stated 'our education targets are simple but critical'. The need is fairly straightforward as far as the basic education sector is concerned. Our children and youths need to be better prepared by their schools to read, write, think critically and solve numerical problems. These skills are the foundations on which further studies, job satisfaction, productivity and meaningful citizenship are based.

OUTCOME 1: IMPROVED QUALITY OF BASIC EDUCATION

KEY CHALLENGES FACED BY THE BASIC EDUCATION SECTOR

- Improving quality learning outcomes in schools in terms of improved learner performance
- Strengthened monitoring of learner performance across the basic education system
- Improved quality of teaching
- Improved access to and use of quality textbooks
- Improved attendance of learners and retention of learners in grades 9-11
- Improved use of learning and teaching time
- Improved early childhood development (ECD)
- Strengthened management at school and district levels
- Strengthened 'social contract' between government, teacher unions, teacher training institutions, parent and SGB organisations, business and civil society organisations

DELIVERY PARTNERS

The signatories to this agreement are the national Minister of Basic Education, the national Deputy Minister of Basic Education, the nine provincial Members of the Executive Council for Education (education MECs) and an additional 17 Ministers whose departments have a direct or indirect role to play in the improvement of basic education.

These signatories form the core team of delivery partners. However, their work is dependent on good relations and ongoing collaboration with many organisations, a selection of which is listed below.

- The teacher trade unions
- Organisations representing school governing bodies
- Non-government organisations and faith-based organisations working with schools

- Organisations representing the business sector
- Labour unions in general

The following statutory bodies and parastatals:

- Umalusi, also known as the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training
- South African Council for Educators (SACE)
- Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC)
- The universities
- ETDP SETA (Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority)
- Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)
- Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA)

OUTPUTS

Outcome 1 has been broken down into four outputs, which are explained below. Below these four outputs are eight sub-outputs. These sub-outputs relate to the 27 goals of the Action Plan made public by the Minister of Basic Education in 2010.

In education there cannot be a neat hierarchy of cause and effect, because causality occurs in many directions simultaneously. For instance, better support services on the part of districts directed at schools improve the system of accountability (output 4) whilst at the same time improving the quality of teaching and learning (output 1). It is important that these complexities be understood when interpreting the structure of this Delivery Agreement.

In order to achieve Outcome 1 : Improved quality of basic education , the following outputs have been identified in order to transform the system:

OUTPUT 1: IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING.

Sub output 1: Improve teacher capacity and practices

Sub output 2: Increase access to high quality learning materials

A number of international testing programmes have demonstrated that South Africa's learner performance in reading, writing and mathematics is well below what it should be. The national Systemic Evaluation programme and the Grade 12 examinations have also demonstrated that learner performance is well below what one would expect given the resources available to the schooling system. Clearly, there is a need for teaching and learning to improve. If this happens, not only will learners know more at the end of each school year, they are also more likely to remain in school for longer.

The capabilities and the level of motivation amongst many teachers need to improve. The 2009 Teacher Development Summit acknowledged the gravity of the problem and served as an important catalyst for taking teacher in-service training in South Africa to a new level. Currently, policies are being finalised that will see the national department developing new training packages, to a large degree through distance education and e-Education, and leveraging the development of relevant training programmes by universities and private training providers.

Nationally standardised workbooks of a high quality are to be introduced in all public schools for all learners in Grades R to 9. These workbooks represent a cost-effective means of ensuring that minimum standards with respect to depth of learning and scope of subject content are communicated to teachers and learners and are upheld. In addition, clearer guidelines on which currently available textbooks are suitable in particular contexts will be released soon by the national department in an attempt to improve the provincial and school selection processes.

A better monitoring mechanism is about to be introduced which will provide a much more accurate picture than what is currently the case of the degree to which learners have access to the textbooks they need. A so-called *Minimum Schoolbag* will be defined for each grade which will specify what the minimum standard is with respect to learner access to educational materials.

OUTPUT 2: UNDERTAKE REGULAR ASSESSMENT TO TRACK PROGRESS

Sub output 1: Establish a world class system of standardised national assessments

Sub output 2: Extract key lessons from ongoing participation in international assessments

A key problem in the past has been that there has been insufficient measurement of the quality of teaching and learning below Grade 12. Without sufficient monitoring of what learners learn, it is not possible for parents and district officials, or indeed teachers themselves, to know what action needs to be taken.

In 2008, in line with best practices in other developing countries, the national department introduced universal and standardised testing in Grades 1 and 6, within the Annual National Assessments (ANA) programme. In 2011 Grade 9 will also be included in the programme. It is envisaged that ANA will expand and improve and become a cornerstone of quality improvements in South Africa's schools, providing important information on learning and its context to teachers, parents, district officials and the country as a whole. Targets based on performance in ANA have already been set at the national and provincial levels. Moreover, targets based on performance within international testing programmes have been determined.

OUTPUT 3: IMPROVE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Sub-output 1: Universalise access to Grade R

Sub-output 2: Improve the quality of early childhood development

Evidence points towards the benefits of pre-Grade 1 schooling in improving learning outcomes throughout primary and secondary schooling. Essentially, if children are given a good educational foundation early in life, they find it easier to learn beyond Grade 1. It is envisaged that Grade R will be universal by 2014. However, the task of improving the quality of Grade R and ECD generally is a task that will extend beyond 2014.

There will clearly have to be a stronger focus on consolidating the quality of Grade R, and ECD generally, following the enrolment successes of the last few years. Many of the priorities outlined under output 1 above relating to the improvement of teaching and learning apply to Grade R in schools. Moreover, resource packs containing teaching and learning materials for use specifically in Grade R are being distributed to all schools with Grade R by the national department. However, given that Grade R is in many schools subject to funding modalities that are different to those applicable to other grades, much of the quality focus must be on assessing the appropriateness of the existing 2008 Grade R funding policy, in particular insofar as it impacts on class size and the level of qualification of teachers.

OUTPUT 4 ENSURE A CREDIBLE, OUTCOMES-FOCUSSED PLANNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

Sub-output 1: Strengthen school management and promote functional schools

Sub-output 2: Strengthen the capacity of district offices

Effective teaching and learning requires a school that is functional, in other words a school where people's rights and responsibilities are clear, the leadership of the school principal is respected and the school is valued by the community. The focus on improving school management and school functionality needs to be strengthened in a number of ways.

Time management is one area requiring improvement. A new national monitoring system will equip district offices with new tools that will be used when visiting schools to assess programme completion in both quantitative and qualitative terms. District assessments will lead to both provincial and national reports tracking progress against key indicators.

The problem of over-sized classes, often with 50 or more learners, has not received enough attention in the past. Over-sized classes have been found to be a result of teaching posts not being filled, insufficient classrooms, but also to a large degree poor management of the time of teachers. Incentives for teachers to work in rural areas, policy for which has existed since 2007, will be used to a greater degree than before. Moreover, the system whereby teaching posts are distributed to schools has been re-designed to deal more directly with the reduction of over-sized classes.

A key part of the time management challenge is to ensure that the contact time of learners with their teachers is increased by reducing learner absenteeism, keeping in mind that high levels of absenteeism are often an early signal of dropping out of school. Measures such as school lunches for learners in poorer communities will continue to be used as a means of improving attendance. But beyond catering for basic nutritional needs, it must certainly be effective teaching and fully functional schools that will provide the best incentive for learners to attend regularly.

ANA, the Action Plan and the present Delivery Agreement are key elements of a new approach to make schooling more accountable. It is important that all actors in the schooling process, from learners to education administrators, should feel accountable for their use of resources. Neither poor performance nor outstanding performance should go unnoticed. It is necessary to know where under-performance occurs and the underlying reasons for this so that timely and well-targeted interventions can occur. At the same time, outstanding performance should be acknowledged and replicated through the system. It is especially important to promote good management and accountability within the 82 district offices in the country and amongst the school principals of approximately 25,900 public schools.

The table that follows indicates which of the 38 indicators from the Action Plan are included within the Delivery Agreement, and under which Delivery Agreement sub-output.

Indicator number	Indicator title	Sub-output in the Delivery Agreement
1.1	Percentage of Grade 3 learners performing at the required <i>literacy</i> level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.	1.1
1.2	Percentage of Grade 3 learners performing at the required <i>numeracy</i> level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.	
2.1	Percentage of Grade 6 learners performing at the required <i>language</i> level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.	
2.2	Percentage of Grade 6 learners performing at the required <i>mathematics</i> level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.	
3.1	Percentage of Grade 9 learners performing at the required <i>language</i> level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.	
3.2	Percentage of Grade 9 learners performing at the required <i>mathematics</i> level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.	1.1
4	Number of Grade 12 learners who become eligible for a Bachelors programme in the public national examinations.	1.1
5	Number of Grade 12 learners passing <i>mathematics</i> .	
6	Number of Grade 12 learners passing <i>physical science</i> .	
7	Average score obtained in Grade 6 in <i>language</i> in the SACMEQ assessment.	
8	Average score obtained in Grade 6 in <i>mathematics</i> in the SACMEQ assessment.	1.1
9	Average Grade 8 mathematics score obtained in TIMSS.	
10	Percentage of 7 to 15 year olds attending education institutions.	
11.1	The percentage of Grade 1 learners who have received formal Grade R.	3.1
11.2	The enrolment ratio of children aged 3 to 5. (This is an indicator of concern to DBE and DSD.)	
12.1	The percentage of children aged 9 at the start of the year who are in Grade 4 or above.	
12.2	The percentage of children aged 12 at the start of the year who are in Grade 7 or above.	
13.1	The percentage of youths who obtain a National Senior Certificate from a school.	
13.2	The percentage of youths who obtain any FET qualification. (This is an indicator of concern to DBE and DHET.)	
14	The number of qualified teachers aged 30 and below entering the public service as teachers for first time during the past year.	
15.1	The percentage of learners who are in classes with no more than 45 learners.	
15.2	The percentage of schools where allocated teaching posts are all filled.	
16.1	The average hours per year spent by teachers on professional development activities.	
16.2	The percentage of teachers who are able to attain minimum standards in anonymous and sample-based assessments of their subject knowledge.	1.1
17	The percentage of teachers absent from school on an average day.	
18	The percentage of learners who cover everything in the curriculum for their current year on the basis of sample-based evaluations of records kept by teachers and evidence of practical exercises done by learners.	4.1
19	The percentage of learners having access to the required textbooks and workbooks for the entire school year.	1.2
20	The percentage of learners in schools with a library or media centre fulfilling certain minimum standards.	1.2
21	The percentage of schools producing the minimum set of management documents at a required standard, for instance a school budget, a school development plan, an annual report, attendance rosters and learner mark schedules.	4.1
22	The percentage of schools where the School Governing Body meets minimum criteria in terms of effectiveness.	
23.1	The percentage of learners in schools that are funded at the minimum level.	4.1
23.2	The percentage of schools which have acquired the full set of financial management responsibilities on the basis of an assessment of their financial management capacity.	
24.1	The percentage of schools which comply with nationally determined <i>minimum</i> physical infrastructure standards.	4.1
24.2	The percentage of schools which comply with nationally determined <i>optimum</i> physical infrastructure standards.	
25	The percentage of children who enjoy a school lunch every school day.	
26	The percentage of schools with at least one educator who has received specialised training in the identification and support of special needs.	
27.1	The percentage of schools visited at least twice a year by district officials for monitoring and support purposes.	
27.2	The percentage of school principals rating the support services of districts as being satisfactory.	4.2