

MEETING WITH DOE IN PRETORIA: 25TH AUGUST 2009 @ 9AM

CHAIR: MR NDELE (DOE)

1. Jenny Kinnear: New Promotion Requirements

The Department are intent on promoting literacy and numeracy. The assessment policy is being reviewed and will be tabled for public comment.

The minister has taken the decision not to offer the GEC at Grade 9 level. Basic education extends from Grade 1 to 12.

Concerns were raised by SAPA members that:

- There is no condonation option and they request that this should be reviewed
- This is a good plan to raise standards
- The implementation is too hasty
- There are problems with the large number Maths and Language failures.

The Departments response is that the condonations are built into the new promotion requirements. Concern that in practise condonation weakens implementation.

'We (DOE) need to trust the teachers professional judgement when it comes to assessment. This will be for implementation with immediate effect in schools that have already implemented. However, nationally this will be implemented in 2010. Mr Ndele invited comments (written) to follow.

2. Jenny Kinnear: Cluster Meetings

The cluster meetings are provincial forums. The focus that these meetings take need to be negotiated on a provincial basis.

National wants moderation to take place at all schools at the end of the year and during the year.

SAPA raised concern over the vast distances that need to be travelled to attend these meetings. Who should be covering the costs of these trips. DOE responded again that these issues need to be raised at a provincial level. Cluster meetings are a tool that provinces use to manage and support curriculum intervention.

The Chairman summarised the comments and said this should be raised at provincial level.

3. Advocate Boshoff: SAPA as a professional association.

Many professional associations changed to be unions to qualify to be in the ELRC and thereby be involved in labour issues. The President (Mr Zuma) also encouraged Principals to be members of a professional association. SAPA said that we hoped this would lead to increased membership. DOE said that we can't force people to belong to a professional association. DOE encouraged SAPA to be represented at all levels and in all structures. Standing national meetings like this should be happening in all Provinces.

4. Advocate Boshoff: Research

The research report of Prof Jansen was published for public comment. The question was about whether there is a need for this quality assurance structure, and how this would work with other current quality assurance structures. The question was also whether this unit would be in or outside the department, and who it would report to. The minister decided that this will not be a statutory body. Mr Ron Swartz has been appointed as the Head of this Unit (DOE).

5. Broader Research in the Department

All ministerial committees are published in the Government Gazette as well as their terms of reference. The way research is usually done is that the minister will ask for advice.

Invitation was extended to SAPA to make a proposal to the DOE on how to better link current research to what is happening in schools.

6. Advocate Boshoff: School fees

The social needs are funded by taxes. To get exemption for tax purposes, schools are listed for tax exemption as a company. Tax deductability is allowed for donations made to a public entity. This can't be a scheme or deemed not to be in the 'spirit' of the tax law then this cannot be a deduction.

7. School Sport: Mrs Xulu

DOE made a power-point presentation and promised a handout at the end of this presentation.

Concern raised that the planning did not include the principals at all. The success of this programme depends on the input from the principals. DOE assured us that they do not want to do away with what is already working in schools. There are leagues that are working very well and they will not be tampered with

Implementation will be quintile 1 schools and training and equipment will be offered.

There will not be a post provisioning change, we will be working through the Life Orientation teachers.

SAPA proposed that there should be a differentiation between LO and Physical movement studies. Also attention needs to be given to having gender specific teachers to do the separate Physical Education classes of boys and girls

DOE: Equipment will be provided, but not facilities. Details on how this will happen will need to be worked out.

8. National Policy Implementation: Adv Boshoff

There are national policies that are for implementation at provincial level. Sadly the system is vast and we acknowledge that the level of implementation is not good. All policies are focussed on the school and delivery at this point to benefit the child.

However, there does need to be a balance, often provincial has a better perspective on what is happening on the ground; and so they may be in a better position to adapt

implementation to best suit their needs and unique circumstances. DOE encouraged that we continue to raise these issues and table specific problems.

9. Laptop Initiatives: Doe presentation

An update on this process. R130 per month will be given to teachers, who can put this towards a laptop and software and some modules on curriculum. This will only be offered to permanent educators. Provinces can implement in phases over 2 to 3 years, based on seniority in a rank.

There have been priorities set, we will look at rural schools first. Commencing July 2009, some provinces will be implementing for all educators at once. Procurement will be left up to each educator. They will also need to get insurance and connected. Each laptop will need to connect to DOE once a month to confirm that the conditions of the agreement are still being met.

10. The Principal as Commissioner of Oaths

DOE noted that it is accepted that the principal has this duty. In court it has been a policy that a person from a law firm may not verify their own documents to reduce the risk of collusion. SAPA raised the issue or USSASA not accepting certified documents from a school that were certified by the principal.

The act that deals with the Commissioner of Oaths does not place many restrictions on the fields of acting. While you are appointed to this post and you comply with the precepts and are in the borders of South Africa, you are able to act. A deputy acting in the post of principal then takes on all these powers, and can also act as Commissioner of Oaths while they act as Principal.

11. Governing Body Elections

SAPA tabled that parent participation has been very low. The current quorum needs to be changed to increase participation. Proposal to abolish the quorum, and the second is to run the election over the whole day in order to increase participation. Invitation was to extended to SAPA to nominate 2 people to sit on task team.

12. Support for Grade 12: Ms Govender

The DOE has continued to provide support for the learners. There has been an edition of study material and also a 'countdown' timetable for all pupils. Also programmes on SABC. (Also see DOE website)

13. NCS

A national tour was done to hear what the provinces were saying about the NCS. Also 500 written submissions were received. Generally there has not been a request to change the curriculum, but rather to improve implementation.

DATE of next meeting 24th November 2009

ACTION POINTS

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| 1. | Written comments invited on new promotion requirements | SAPA office |
| 2. | Provinces to address problems with cluster meetings on a Provincial level | Prov. Exec |
| 3. | SAPA provincial executive encouraged to meet with provincial Departments on a regular basis | Prov. Exec |
| 4. | SAPA to make a presentation on how to better link current research to what is happening in schools | SAPA Nat Exec |
| 5. | SAPA to draw up a report on specific areas where national Policy is not being implemented at provincial level. | SAPA Nat Exec |
| 6. | SAPA to nominate 2 people to sit on Gov Body Task team | SAPA President |