



INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE CHIEF DIRECTORATE

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CIRCULAR NO. 5 OF 2019

TO: DEPUTY- DIRECTORS GENERAL
CLUSTER CHIEF DIRECTORS
CHIEF DIRECTORS
HEAD OFFICE DIRECTORS
DISTRICT DIRECTORS
PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC ORDINARY SCHOOLS
CHAIRPERSONS OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

FROM: HEAD OF DEPARTMENT-EDUCATION

SUBJECT: ADMINISTRATION OF 2020 LEARNER ADMISSIONS IN PUBLIC ORDINARY SCHOOLS-
SECTION 5 OF SASA (1996)

DATE: 12 APRIL 2019

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Circular is to outline processes to be followed in all public ordinary schools on the administration of learner admissions during the academic year 2019 in preparation for January 2020. These processes must be in line with the following prescripts:

- 1.1. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No 1 of 1996
- 1.2. The South African Schools Act, Act no 84 of 1996 (SASA) as amended
- 1.3. Admission policy for Ordinary Public Schools published in Government Gazette No 19377, Notice 2432 of 1998 and
- 1.4. Any other applicable provincial law

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Department of Education has noted with concern that some schools are not administering learner admissions properly; admitting learners who are under age in Grade 1 and admitting learners up to the end of the first term of the academic year. Consequently; late learner admissions impact negatively on the quality of teaching and learning and affects contact time, time on task and learner performance. The proper administration of learner admissions will afford maximum contact time which will in turn improve the desired learner outcomes and learner performance.

It is further noted that, school principals are admitting learners that are more than the figures declared in the Post Provisioning Norms (PPN) distribution and that creates problems when it comes to allocation of posts to subjects. The school must make a written request to the Head of Department if there are valid reasons forcing them to admit more learners on top of the enrollment that has been used to calculate PPN via District Director for recommendation. No growth post will be considered for any school that has not been granted official approval to increase learner numbers after receiving the official staff establishment.

There are schools that have exceeded the norm for learner enrollment, the maximum number of 930 to a large Primary School and 1000 in the case of a secondary school.

The above-mentioned scenario is further complicated by a number of small schools that are offering diverse curriculum streams with limited human resources and thereby compromising quality teaching and learning.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Department to administer admission of learners to all public ordinary schools and further approve curriculum streams to be offered, however all principals of schools are legally delegated to perform this function as proxy of the Head of Department.

The principals of public schools must ensure that, all eligible learners especially those of compulsory school going age access admission without any unfair discrimination.

School principals and their School Governing Bodies (SGBs) should ensure that learner admissions are conducted according to age qualification, work place etc. Documents required are certified copy(ies) of Identity document, birth certificate, Proof of Immunization card; School report and School transfer letter.

Parents classified as immigrants must, when applying for admission to a school for their children or for themselves, show evidence of work permit or study permit from the Department of Home Affairs.

3. DELIBERATIONS

4. A public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way.
5. The principal of a public school represents the Head of Department (HoD), it is the Head of Department who has prerogative to accept or decline requests on admission of learners. Hence, he/she will be expected to give update to the district director, periodically or when requested to do so, on all matters related to this delegated function.
6. School Governing Bodies of public schools must determine the school admission policy in compliance with the legislation.
 - 6.1. The school must establish learner admission committees to administer learner admissions properly and liaise with the District Learner Admission committee.
 - 6.2. **ALL APPLICATIONS** of learners **MUST** be captured in SASAMS with their Identity Numbers clearly reflected.
 - 6.3. The schools must observe and comply with admission requirements and Management Plan as it impacts on resourcing aspects of the department.
 - 6.4. Schools wishing to deviate from the contents of this circular should do that by submitting written correspondence to the Head of Department after consulting their District Directors for recommendation.

- **ADMISSION PERIOD**

- *The Issuing out of application forms* shall commence on 10 April 2019 and close on 14 June 2019
- *The admission period* shall be from 10 April 2019 to 20 September 2019. All learners applying for admission for 2020 must be placed by 11 October 2019.
- **ONLY** the exceptional cases e.g. relocations and work transfer of parents will be accommodated.

7. ADMISSION AGE OF A LEARNER IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL

- 4 years turning 5 by 30 June in the year of admission for Grade R.
- 5 years turning 6 by 30 June in the year of admission for Grade 1.

8. DISTRICT ADMISSION COMMITTEE

Each district will establish a District Learner Admissions Committee to effectively manage queries related to learner admissions in the district. The main objective for establishing such a committee is to assist the District Director in ensuring that admissions are finalized within the prescribed time frames in each district so that teaching and learning is utilized optimally from the first day of school in the academic year.

The District Learner Admissions Committee will be chaired by the District Director or delegate. Members of this committee will include:

- Chief Education Specialist (CES): IDS & G
- SGB Coordinator
- Circuit manager/s
- Customer Care

The functions of the committee will include, inter alia the following:

- To handle all learner admission queries referred to the district from schools, community, provincial and national offices.
- To give timeous feedback to applicants regarding their admission queries.
- To compile a district report on how each query was resolved
- To maintain a database of queries for each year of application.
- To identify trends related to learner admission queries and implement intervention strategies.
- To manage possible emerging learner enrollment influx and resource appropriately.
- To liaise with Circuit managers, school principals and SGBs on matters pertaining to learner admissions.

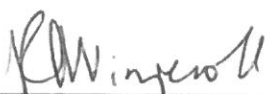
Attached hereto, is a Management Plan (Annexure A) and a Business Process for 2020 Learner Admissions (Annexure B) which are to be implemented by all schools and districts.

9. CONCLUSION

This circular applies with immediate effect and rescinds all other previous circulars related to learner admissions. You must further note that the Head of Department has a right to implement consequence management to an individual or structure that is violating the contents of this circular, using relevant legislation.

Your co-operation in this matter will be highly appreciated.

Yours in quality education,



Mr. T. KOJANA

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT- EDUCATION

12/04/2019

DATE

ANNEXURE A

MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR LEARNER ADMISSIONS:

No	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME FRAME
1.	Re-enrolment of learners		
1.1.	Currently enrolled learners are re-registered	School principal and SGBs	10 April- 24 May 2019
2.	Registration process		
2.1.	Issuing out of application forms to parents	School principal and SGBs	10 April – 14 June 2019
2.2.	Capturing of applications in SASAMS	School principal and SGBs	10 April - 20 September 2019
2.3.	Return of application forms with all required documentation	Parents	10 April - 14 June 2019
2.4.	Admission period	School principal and SGBs	10 April - 20 September 2019
3.	Placement of learners by the school		
3.1.	Placements of learners and inform parents of success and unsuccessful application in writing	School principal and SGBs	09 July 2019
3.2.	Report on number applied, placed and unplaced learners	School principal and SGBs	20 September 2019 (See attached template)
3.3.	Parents accepts/rejects placement offers in writing	Parent	09 July 2019
4.	Placement of learners by districts		
4.1.	Placement of unplaced learners who applied within the application period, in schools with available space	Districts	30 August - 11 October 2019
4.2.	District Director finalize placement of all unplaced learners	Districts	30 August - 08 November 2019
4.3.	District Director submit to Head office a list of all learners who have been placed	Districts	05 -15 November 2019
4.4.	District Director manages the placement of late registration to Head office		Daily

ANNEXURE B

BUSINESS PROCESS FOR THE 2020 LEARNER ADMISSIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

Registration and admission of learners has become one of the biggest challenges in the sector. The common problem, thus far, is the fact that the English Medium schools are currently faced with the problem of absorbing all applicants in their schools and the informal settlement schools are over-populated whilst schools in the old settlements become under-populated. Demands for admission at performing schools remain a challenge in the sector.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Provincial Education Departments conduct learner admission programmes differently and in different periods of the year. Lack of common procedures and common time lines create a challenge as learners move from province to province due to internal migration. Metropolitan areas are more affected by such migration, leading to the merger and closure of non-viable schools in rural areas. If the situation is not handled uniformly, Provincial Education Department will remain unprepared for the placement of learners in time to ensure the completion of the admission process before the end of the year.

3. CURRENT CHALLENGES IN THE SECTOR

The following are challenges facing the sector in addition to the ones described in the introduction section which necessitate the development of a common business process:

- a) Immigration to major cities (new settlements);
- b) School still charging registration fees;
- c) Inconsistent application of admission policies by schools;
- d) Undocumented foreign learners;
- e) Shortage of classrooms;
- f) Slow response in rural provinces; and
- g) Slow response by admission teams to resolve registered queries.

4. RESOLUTIONS

HEDCOM of 11 April 2017 resolved that Branch P: Planning, Information and Assessment and the Interprovincial Committee on EMGD should also consider coming up with uniform timelines for learner admissions across the provinces.

HEDCOM of 15 August 2017 **supported** the recommendation to approve the National Business Process for Learner Admissions with further comments that:

- (a) efforts should be made to formulate a strategy meant to address the challenge of learners who applied for admissions to schools only at the beginning of an academic year, which particularly affected Gauteng and the Western Cape PEDs, with learners moving to the two (2) Provinces at the beginning of the year. This should be accompanied by advocacy to create awareness and thus minimise the phenomenon;
- (b) all PEDs should seriously consider implementing online admissions systems, learning from the experiences of Gauteng and the Western Cape. The DBE should lead this process by drafting a plan, with defined timeframes, which should assist in bringing uniformity in this regard across the sector; and
- (c) when the matter is presented at the Council of Education Ministers (CEM) meeting, it should be anticipated that a concern could be raised regarding efforts to regulate timelines for learner admissions in all public ordinary schools across provinces, given the reality that there were differences in provinces. PEDs such as Gauteng and Western Cape already had online admissions systems in place. The proposal should thus be presented as a guideline, as opposed to regulations. Such an approach could result in more uniformity than was envisaged, through a process of collaboration across provinces;
- (d) undocumented foreign learners;
- (e) shortage of classrooms.

5. AIM OF THE BUSINESS PROCESS

The Department of Basic Education in consultation with provinces has developed a Business Process for Learner Admissions in line with HEDCOM's recommendation. The aim of the Business Process for Learner Admissions is to ensure that the sector embarks on a prescribed early learner registration and admission process and reporting that is uniform but take into consideration provincial differences.

6. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Section 3(3) of the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1986 stipulates that every Member of the Executive Council must ensure that there are enough school places so that every child who lives in his or her province can attend. The Act further stipulates that all children between the ages of 7 and 15 are compelled to attend school and therefore parents and guardians should ensure that all learners of these ages are registered to go to school and that their children attend school regularly.

7. IMPORTANCE OF EARLY REGISTRATION

It is the responsibility of every parent and guardian to ensure that their children are registered for the following year, well before the end of the current school year. Early admissions assist Provincial Education Departments in the determination of:

- a) Post provision;
- b) Learner teacher support materials;
- c) Learner furniture;
- d) Additional classrooms; and
- e) Ensuring that teaching and learning commence on the first day of the schooling calendar.

8. TIMELINES FOR THE ADMISSIONS OF LEARNERS

Recommendations for the uniform timelines for learner admissions are as follows:

- a) Advocacy for the admissions of learners should commence during the first term (February to March) of the school calendar;
- b) Registration should commence on the first day of the second term (April) of the school calendar;
- c) Registration should close at the end of August;
- d) Placement of learners should be completed by the end of September; and
- e) The placement of unplaced learners should be finalised between October and November.

9. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS

The following are the main activities that Provincial Education Departments are expected to perform in ensuring effective early admission of learners into schools:

- a) Review Regulation/Circular
- b) Determine admission period with a comprehensive management plan (timeframes) mapping out:
 - i. Application Period - distribution of admission forms, when parents return forms, information on documentation needed;
 - ii. Management of registration - clear criteria for waiting lists and process to rank applications using feeder schools and residential information as examples, depending on provincial Regulation;
 - iii. The period to inform parents on the status of their children's application;
 - iv. Period of placement of learners with information on period to lodge appeals, where to find support if a learner is not placed with contact details of provincial and district officials responsible admissions
 - v. Clear strategies on admission of non-citizens
- c) Establish admission teams at provincial and district level;
- d) Mediate admission Circular to schools;
- e) Ratify admission policies of schools;
- f) Determine the capacity of each school grade by grade.
- g) Conduct advocacy campaigns to inform parents about early registration and provide all the necessary information about admission processes;
- h) Place all admission information on the provincial website;
- i) Monitor admission processes in schools and intervene where there is non-policy compliance;
- j) Identify hotspots and develop strategies to address them;
- k) Create a rapid response team to handle grievances and appeals;
- l) Resolve/mediate appeals within the shortest period possible;
- m) Compile report and update figures monthly for the DBE attention as per the requirement of the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education;
- n) Make requisition for additional resources (classrooms, teachers)

10. BUSINESS PROCESS AT EACH LEVEL OF THE SECTOR

10.1 DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION:

- a) Coordinate admission interprovincial planning meetings;
- b) Provide advice on PED Regulations on learner admissions and give feedback;
- c) Consolidate data from provinces on learner admissions;
- d) Inform members of the public on information regarding learner admissions;
- f) Compile quarterly reports on admissions;
- g) Report on learner admissions various levels of the sector, including the Portfolio Committee on Education.

10.2 PROVINCES

- a) Develop learner admissions regulations and circulars;
- b) Generate a management plan for learner admissions;
- c) Put required information on PED website;
- d) Mediate all documents on learner admissions to Districts;
- e) Identify hotspots and generate a plan to address them;
- f) Monitor and support the admission of learners in Districts;
- g) Address learner admissions appeals;
- h) Submit learner admission reports to DBE as requested; and
- i) Report on a quarterly basis to the DBE.

10.3 DISTRICTS

- a) Ensure proper implementation of learner admission regulations and circulars;
- b) Generate a management plan for learner admissions;
- c) Inform public of learner admission matters;
- d) Identify hotspots and generate a plan to address them;
- f) Address learner admissions appeals;
- g) Monitor and support the admission of learners in schools;
- h) Report on a monthly/weekly basis to the PDE.

10.4 SCHOOLS

- a) Develop learner admission policy;
- b) Supply district with data;
- c) Inform public of learner admission matters;
- d) Conduct learner admissions in line with legislation;
- e) Communicate with applicants; and
- f) Provide regular reports to the district.

11. TABLE OF BUSINESS PROCESS AT EACH LEVEL OF THE SECTOR

No.	DBE	PROVINCE	DISTRICTS	SCHOOL
1	Advise on PED Regulations on learner admissions and give feedback.	Develop learner admissions regulations and circulars.	Ensure proper implementation of learner admission regulations and circulars.	Develop learner admission policy.
2	Consolidate data on learner admissions.	Generate a management plan for learner admissions.	Generate a management plan for learner admissions.	Supply district with data.
3	Inform members of the public on information regarding learner admissions.	Put required information on PED website.	Inform public of learner admission matters.	Inform public of learner admission matters.
4	Monitor and support the implementation of learner admissions.	Mediate all documents on learner admissions to Districts.	Identify hotspots and generate a plan to address them.	Conduct learner admissions.
5	Compile quarterly reports.	Identify hotspots and generate a plan to address them	Mediate all documents on learner admissions to schools.	Communicate with applicants.
6	Report on learner admissions.	Monitor and support the admission of learners in Districts.	Address learner admissions appeals.	
7		Address learner admissions appeals	Monitor and support the admission of learners in schools.	
8		Submit learner admission reports to DBE as requested.	Report on a monthly/weekly basis to the PDE.	
9		Report on a quarterly basis to the DBE.		

12. SCHOOL CAPACITY

The capacity of each school must be determined in advance to prevent unnecessary and deliberate overcrowding of some schools in areas where some schools could be running empty. The capacity of the school should be done grade by grade and class by class while taking into consideration classroom sizes in terms of the Infrastructure Norms and Standards prescription of seven (7) square metres per teacher and one (1) square metre per learner and that of available resources such as ablutions facilities and available grounds.

GRADES	NUMBER OF CLASSES	NUMBER OF LEARNERS (CURRENT)	MAXIMUM NUMBER THAT CAN BE ACCOMMODATED	ESTIMATED ENROLMENT BEFORE 2019
GRADE R				
GRADE 1				
GRADE 2				
GRADE 3				
GRADE 4				
GRADE 5				
GRADE 6				
GRADE 7				
TOTALS				
SECONDARY SCHOOLS				
GRADE 8				
GRADE 9				
GRADE 10				
GRADE 11				
GRADE 12				
TOTALS				

CHECKLIST FOR ADMISSIONS READNESS

PROVINCE:..... DISTRICT:.....

SCHOOL:..... DATE:.....

ADMISSIONS ASPECT	YES	NO	COMMENTS
1. Made the Provincial Regulations on admissions available?			
2. Made Circulars on admissions available?			
3. Appointed a District Admission Coordinator?			
4. Established a District Admission Team?			
5. Developed an Admission Management Plan?			
6. Developed an admission advocacy campaign?			
7. Determined a clear admission period? (start & end date)			
8. Demarcated areas that are feeder zones for schools?			
9. Developed a step by step guide that will be followed by schools and applicants during the admission process?			
10. Developed a monitoring programme for admissions?			
11. Determined the capacity of schools by grade?			
12. Developed monitoring and reporting template?			
13. Established a response team?			
14. Developed a system to deal with queries and appeals with clear timeframes?			

15. Developed a system to prevent overcrowding in schools?			
16. Provided a list of schools that are full and those that have spaces for unplaced learners?			
17. Have Districts/Circuits set up help desks to manage late admissions.			

OFFICIAL:.....DESIGNATION.....

SIGNATURE:.....DATE:.....