



**basic education**

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Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# **GUIDELINE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROMOTION AND PROGRESSION REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADES 10 - 12**

**2015**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Guideline is to ensure the consistent and uniform application by all Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) of the *Regulations pertaining to the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12*, promulgated as Notice No. R1114, in Regulation Gazette No. 9886 of 28 December 2012, which states that a learner may only be retained once in the Further Education and Training Phase in order to prevent the learner from being retained in this phase for longer than four years. This Guideline is intended to support the implementation of the current policy and proposes a consultative approach that PEDs can adopt to manage the progression of Grade 10 and 11 learners. Uniform application by all provinces is required to prevent discrepancies in interpretation and practice.

It needs to be noted that given the promulgation of this regulation, all PEDs are obliged to inform their schools of this policy dispensation and to ensure that this policy is appropriately applied. It is therefore necessary that the contents of this Guideline is brought to the attention of all schools in the province.

This Guideline provides a clear explanation of how and when this legislation needs to be applied and also details the criteria that needs to be applied in the implementation of this policy, coupled with the suggested consultative process that may be followed, the management of any appeals that may be presented and finally how these learners should be supported when progressed to the next grade.

## 2. APPLICATION OF THE PROGRESSION LEGISLATION IN GRADES 10-11

The legislation's intent is to uphold the best interest of the learner and to minimise unnecessary school dropout in the schooling system so that every learner has the opportunity to achieve an exit qualification such as the National Senior Certificate. Learner dropout can be attributed to frustration and loss of hope by learners who have experienced chronic patterns of underperformance in the FET phase.

The basic principle relating to this policy statement is that a learner should not spend more than four years in the phase. However, at the Council of Education Ministers (CEM) meeting held on 14 August 2015, the following criteria were adopted as pre-requisites to allowing a learner to be progressed from either Grade 10 to Grade 11, or from Grade 11 to Grade 12. These criteria are as follows:

- (a) the learner must have failed to satisfy the promotion requirements of either Grade 10 or Grade 11, and repeated either Grade 10 or Grade 11;
- (b) the learner must have passed the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) and another three of the seven subjects offered;
- (c) the learner must have attended school on a regular basis. Absenteeism in excess of 20 days, without a valid reason, will disqualify the learner from being progressed;

- (d) the learner must have complied with the prescribed School Based Assessment (SBA) requirements for that academic year.

The learner must satisfy all of the above criteria to be progressed to the next grade.

Each of the criteria listed above is elaborated in the section that follows:

**(a) Criteria 1: Failed to satisfy the Promotion Requirements of either Grade 10 or Grade 11.**

The following three scenarios would be relevant in this case:

Scenario 1

A learner repeats Grade 10 and does not meet the promotion requirements at the end of the second year.

Scenario 2:

A learner has met the requirements for Grade 10, but is repeating Grade 11, and, does not meet the requirements.

Scenario 3:

A learner repeats Grade 10 but does not meet the promotion requirements. She/he is progressed to Grade 11. She/he does not meet the promotion requirements in Grade 11 in the first year.

**(b) Criteria 2: Pass four of the seven subjects offered and one of the four subjects passed must be the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT).**

The learner must pass the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT), which could either be English FAL or Afrikaans FAL. The rationale for the inclusion of the LoLT is based on the principle that for the learner to succeed in the next grade, he has to be competent in the LoLT, which is one of the key determinants of success from one grade to the other. One of the four subjects passed by the learner could be Life Orientation. This implies that the learner could pass three other subjects and Life Orientation.

**(c) Criteria 3: Regular School Attendance**

Regular school attendance will ensure that the learner has had exposure to the school curriculum for the duration of the school year. If the learner has been absent for more than 20 days, without a valid reason, this constitutes irregular attendance.

**(d) Criteria 4: Compliance with the School Based Assessment (SBA) Requirements**

Compliance with the SBA requirements will ensure that the learner has satisfied the assessment requirements of each of the subjects, and this will confirm the learner's commitment to the subject. Despite the fact that the learner is required to pass only four of the seven subjects, he must satisfy the SBA requirements for all subjects, including the subjects he has failed.

However, it needs to be noted that progression in Grades 10-12 does not guarantee the final certification of a learner in Grade 12. Such a learner must comply with the certification requirements as contemplated in *paragraph 37(1) (a)* of the policy document, *National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12* to enable him or her to obtain a National Senior Certificate. This implies that the learner will be allowed multiple opportunities in the writing of the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination, in order to ensure that he/she satisfies the requirements of the NSC, which is conditional to the shelf life of the school based assessment.

However, while legislation allows for progression, a parent/guardian may decide that the learner should be retained in the same grade because it is deemed in the best educational interest of that learner. This final decision by the parent/guardian must be based on substantive evidence of the learner's holistic performance at the school and through a consultative process involving the learner, the parent, the teachers involved and any other support professionals necessary.

### **3. A PROPOSED CONSULTATIVE APPROACH IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROMOTION PROGRESSION POLICY**

In the case of a learner who qualifies to be progressed, the following consultative process is suggested to ensure that all persons are involved so that an informed decision is made.

#### **3.1. AT SCHOOL LEVEL: A PROMOTION/PROGRESSION MEETING WITH STAFF**

It is necessary for a school to hold a special meeting of relevant subject staff to evaluate each learner that has not met the promotion requirements more than once in grade 10 or 11 in order to decide whether the learner should be retained. Due consideration should be given to the following:

- (a) Were parents/ guardians kept informed of the learner's poor performance on a regular basis despite continued underperformance by the learner?
- (b) Establish whether the learner responded positively to the curriculum intervention and support strategies provided by the school, to assist low achieving learners to improve their performance.
- (c) Evaluate the attendance history of the learner throughout the year to establish whether absence was with or without valid reasons
- (d) Establish if the learner was absent from tests, examinations and other internal assessments, without a valid reason.
- (e) Evaluate the general behaviour and attitude of the learner towards his /her school work.
- (f) Consider any psychosocial support needs that may have contributed to the learner's low levels of motivation and subsequent poor performance in grade 10 or grade 11.

Each learner's case must be evaluated holistically with supporting evidence collected by the subject teachers throughout the school year. This will enable the principal to advise the parent comprehensively, on the retention or progression of the learner concerned.

### **3.2. A CONSULTATIVE MEETING WITH THE PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

If there is consensus among all subject teachers during the promotion/progression meeting that the learner should be retained in the current grade, then a meeting must be held with the parent/guardian so that the advice is carefully and clearly explained by the school and understood by the parent/guardian before the learner's school report is handed to them. This meeting should be held by the School Management Team and the meeting should include a discussion of the following:

- (a) The conditions for retention must be presented to the parent/ guardian and the learner. Provide enough detail and explain the performance of the learner with supporting evidence.
- (b) The educational advantages of retaining the learner should be clearly explained to the parent/ guardian.
- (c) Present the option for the learner to change subjects. The implications of the subject changes must be clearly explained.
- (d) The differentiated academic support that will be provided by the school to the learner must be explained to the parent/ guardian.
- (e) Discuss the alternate or specialised support that the parent may want to access and provide for the learner to supplement the academic support provided by the school.
- (f) The School Management Team must also provide details of the alternate pathways that may be followed by the learner. The benefits and implications of options available must be clearly explained.
- (g) The signing of the Partnership Contract which emphasises the joint responsibility for the decision that has been taken. It stipulates the collaborative support, responsibility and commitment to ensure regular school attendance, completion of School Based Assessment Tasks and setting achievable targets to track the learner's progress. It must be printed in duplicate. Both copies must be signed by the learner, parent/guardian and a representative of the school. This document is an undertaking in good faith, of the key stakeholders commitment to motivate the learner to succeed in his/her renewed efforts to make the required academic progress. One copy must be kept on file at the school and the other remains with the parent/guardian. It should be used as an accountability tool to monitor progress or lapses made during the course of the year.

### **3.3. ARRIVING AT A FINAL DECISION**

- (a) The decision reached at this meeting must be reflected on the learner's report card. If the learner is retained, this must be confirmed in writing by the parent.
- (b) Should the parent not agree to the retention of the learner, the learner must be progressed to the next grade and the report card must clearly reflect that the learner has not met the promotion requirements for the current year but has been progressed to the next grade.
- (c) The conditions for progressing the learner must be fully discussed and agreed upon by the school, the parents/ guardians and the learner and should include the following conditions:
  - The option for the learner to change subjects and the implications of the subject changes must be clearly explained.
  - The Partnership Contract which stipulates the collaborative support, responsibility and commitment of both parties must be completed and signed.
  - The differentiated support that will be provided by the school to the learner must be outlined so that the parent/guardian can also consider supplementary interventions for the learner.

#### **4. APPEAL PROCESS**

A parent/guardian has a right to appeal the final decision made by the school to progress or retain a child. To appeal a progression or retention decision, the parent/guardian must submit a written request, not later than three (3) days after the official opening of schools, to the school principal specifying the reasons why the progression or retention decision is being contested.

Within fourteen (14) working days of receiving a request to appeal, the Head of Department or his/her designee shall make a final determination in this regard. The onus shall be on the parent as the appealing party to show why the progression or retention decision should be overruled.

#### **5. CURRICULUM SUPPORT FOR THE PROGRESSED LEARNER**

Districts and schools must have clearly articulated intervention strategies that include an early identification of low achievers or at-risk learners so that the school, district and province can develop and implement additional learning opportunities through meaningful extended day/year-long programmes outside of regular school hours to build the self-esteem of these learners and facilitate their social adjustment, or facilitate their access to alternate career pathways that are available locally.

Curriculum support responsibilities: may be categorized as follows:

##### **5.1. District Based Support Teams (DBST)**

- Keep a register/database of progressed learners

- The data base should reflect the subjects that placed the learner at risk
- The data base should be monitored biannually (July/November) to monitor progress of the learners
- Ensure that parents are informed (biannually or quarterly) of learners performance/progress and the proposed action to improve performance
- Co-ordinate a district wide support programme to assist learners at risk
- Support schools to identify core content per subject that progressed learners should master as part of the remedial plan
- Subject Advisors to assist teachers in crafting intervention strategies and improvement plans as per subject specifics.
- Offer ongoing training to schools and teachers on teaching and learning, communication and social and behavioural factors.

## **5.2. School based Support Teams (SBST)/Institutional Level Support Teams ( ILST)**

- Initial identification of learners at risk and compile a (quarterly/biannual) database
- Monitor and report on progress of learners at risk / progressed learners
- Develop and implement remedial programme to support under-performing learners e.g. study guides, previous question papers and memoranda, extra classes during holidays or weekends
- Identify core content per subject that progressed learners should master as part of the remedial plan
- Ensure that there is regular testing and re-testing of subject content areas that challenge learners.
- Inform parents (quarterly/biannually) of identified learners performance/progress and the proposed action to improve performance
- Offer regular meetings (quarterly/biannually) with parents to address progress and challenges
- Offer workshops for parents of identified learners to support teaching and learning.

## **5.3. Parents**

- Regularly control and monitor learner's tasks/homework, preparation for projects and readiness for tests/examinations.
- Attend meetings as requested by School Management Teams
- Regularly visit the school to enquire about the progress of their children
- Where possible parents should arrange additional tuition in identified subjects based on the performance of the learner
- Parents must ensure that learners complete the remedial programmes successfully

## **6. MONITORING OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION BY PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

The Provincial Education Department must monitor the implementation of this guideline and more specifically PEDS must ensure compliance to the Progression Policy across all schools. To ensure compliance the PED must undertake the following:

- (a) The PED, through the district office must conduct regular inspections/spot checks of the Learner Schedules and Learner Report Cards to ensure that progressions are carried out as per policy.
- (b) A checklist could be developed by the province, for use during the conduct of the spot checks, which must be completed by the official conducting the spot check and signed by the principal. This will serve to confirm that the school has adhered to the stipulations of the promotion and progression requirements.
- (c) The PED must track the performance of the learners across the different grades to verify that the learner has failed a grade within the phase, and satisfied the other criteria listed, before the learner can be progressed. This will also assist in the case where learners are transferred to another school.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

The application of the policy on promotion and progression needs to be managed with discretion taking into consideration, the best interest of the learner and ensuring that the parent or guardian, is included in the decision making process. Most importantly, districts and schools must have clearly enunciated intervention strategies that include an early identification of low achievers or learners at-risk so that the school, district and province can develop and implement additional learning opportunities through meaningful extended day/year-long programmes to address the learning deficits of its learners.