



## basic education

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Basic Education  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**TO: HEADS OF PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS  
HEADS OF PROVINCIAL CURRICULUM SECTIONS  
PROVINCIAL LTSM MANAGERS  
DISTRICT DIRECTORS  
DISTRICT LTSM OFFICIALS  
CIRCUIT MANAGERS  
LTSM COMMITTEES  
PRINCIPALS OF ALL SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

### **CIRCULAR S4 OF 2025: GUIDANCE ON THE CHANGE OF TEXTBOOK TITLES**

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) received communication of audit findings identified during the Education Sector Audit which focused on Curriculum Implementation at DBE for financial period which ended 31 March 2024.

Audit finding number 10 on shortages of Mathematics highlighted deficiencies which were identified at the audited schools in terms of shortages of Mathematics textbooks. The shortage was as a result of schools changing the titles and, in some instances, poor safeguarding and retrieval of textbooks. It was noted that the issue of changing titles by teachers is not addressed in a policy / guidelines / circular and this has resulted in some of the selected schools experiencing shortages of mathematics textbooks. Furthermore, there is no clear policy directive or circular that addressed the issue of changing the titles.

The Auditor-General recommended that the DBE should ensure that the Provincial Education Departments (PEDs), education districts and School Management Teams (SMT) effectively monitor textbook procurement in relation to usage and shortage to avoid instances of learners not having or sharing textbooks.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE), through the Learning and Teaching Support Materials Directorate (LTSM) has provided guidance to provinces on the provisioning of textbooks. Provinces receive budgets for the provisioning of LTSM. Provinces are then guided through the provisioning of the Sector plan, which is the guide to provinces when certain procurement processes/ activities should be done in the previous year in preparation for the following year. As part of supporting provinces further, LTSM Forum meetings are held, and Provincial Monitoring visits are conducted as part of closer monitoring and support.

Thus far, the Sector has provided guidance and controls regarding textbooks retention and retrieval, through various documented mechanisms, circular S20 of 2020 on retention and retrieval, 50 Point plan, LTSM Sector plan. Over the years, provinces have interacted with districts and schools to mediate these guidelines.

## **CIRCULAR S4 OF 2025: GUIDANCE ON THE CHANGE OF TEXTBOOK TITLES**

From 4 to 5 July 2024, the DBE had an inter-provincial meeting in which the item regarding the changing of the titles was discussed. The meeting agreed that the DBE should draft a circular guiding provinces regarding the changing of titles.

The DBE is responsible for the development of the national catalogues for textbooks from which the Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) procure textbooks for their respective schools.

Textbooks are then to be issued to learners at the beginning of each year and retrieved at the end of the year so that learners in the following years can make use of these resources. Schools are encouraged to achieve 100% Retention and Retrieval rates every year.

Provinces are advised that when there are new admissions at the school, then top-up textbooks should be procured. The responsibility of monitoring all these processes lies with the schools, parents, districts, the PEDs and the DBE.

According to Action Plan 2024, *Towards the realization of schooling 2030*, every learner should have access to the minimum set of textbooks and workbooks (Goal 19). The changing of title is not a common phenomenon in the sector and if it does happen, provinces are advised to inform the districts and provincial curriculum subject specialists. The following guidelines should be considered when the school/ teacher considers changing any title(s) for a particular grade:

- The availability of the budget to procure the new title for all learners;
- The reason(s) for change of the title envisaged;
- The effects of the change of the title;
- The process needs to be followed if change is necessary.
- The alternative usage of the old title.

It is therefore suggested that schools, through their curriculum and LTSM structures, should have documentation related to the change of titles, if it has to happen, and therefore reflect on the above points when such a decision has to be implemented to ensure that there is no learner who will be without a textbook and also no learner who shares a textbook.

Yours sincerely



**MR HM MWELI**  
**DIRECTOR-GENERAL**  
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