



**basic education**

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Department:  
Basic Education  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**RURAL EDUCATION DRAFT  
POLICY**

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CONFIDENTIAL DRAFT

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## ACRONYMS

ASIDI	Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Development Initiative
CRDP	Comprehensive Rural Development Programme
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CRDP	Comprehensive Rural Development Programme
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
GET	General Education and Training
FET	Further Education and Training
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LTSM	Learning and Teaching Support Materials
MCRE	Ministerial Committee on Rural Education
MCRE	Ministerial Committee on Rural Education
NDP	National Development Plan
NEPA	National Education Policy Act
NSNP	National School Nutrition Programme
NSC	National Senior Certificates
NMF	Nelson Mandela Foundation
PED	Provincial Education Department
RE	Rural Education
REAC	Rural Education Advisory Committee
SASA	South African Schools Act
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SGB	School Governing Body
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

## DEFINITIONS

<b>‘Agricultural education’</b>	means the teaching of agriculture, natural resources and land management through hands-on experience and guidance to prepare learners for entry level jobs or to further education to prepare them for advanced agricultural jobs;
<b>‘classification’</b>	means a set of discrete, exhaustive and mutually exclusive categories that can be assigned to one or more variables or items;
<b>‘cluster of schools’</b>	more than one school with their own facilities on the same site. The site name is registered in the same name of one of the schools.
<b>‘communal land’</b>	means land which is occupied or used by members of a community, subject to rules of custom of the community;
<b>‘curriculum’</b>	a statement of intended outcomes to be achieved, what knowledge content is to be acquired, which competencies are to be developed and the levels of performance that are expected from learners in each of the grades;
<b>‘district’</b>	the geographic area within a province that has been demarcated by the MEC for Education as the first level of administration and sub-division within a PED;
<b>‘Early Childhood Development’</b>	an umbrella term that applies to the process by which children from birth to at least nine years grow and thrive, physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, morally and socially;
<b>‘education’</b>	education undertaken is an educational Institution established, declared or registered in terms of the <i>Child Care Act, South African Schools Act, Adult Basic Education Act, Further Education and Training Colleges Act, Higher Education Act</i> or provincial law;
<b>‘focus schools’</b>	A school that specializes in an area of the curriculum;

<b>‘foundation phase’</b>	The first phase of a school curriculum applicable in Grades R , 1 , 2 and 3;
<b>‘functional school’</b>	means a school where learners and teachers have access to the following basic social services: health, social development, a library, and transport.
<b>‘Further Education and Training’</b>	all learning and training programmes leading to qualifications on level 2, 3 and 4 of the National Qualification Framework;
<b>‘General Education and Training’</b>	all programmes leading to a qualification at level 1 on the National Qualification Framework;
<b>‘Grade R’</b>	the reception year for a learner in a school or and ECD Centre, that is, the grade immediately before Grade 1;
<b>‘Higher Education Institution’</b>	Any institution that provides higher education on a full time, part time or distance basis which is established, deemed to be established or declared as a public higher education Institution, or registered or conditionally registered as a private higher education Institution under the <i>Higher Education Institution Act</i> .
<b>‘home language’</b>	the language that is spoken most frequently at home by a learner;
<b>‘indicators’</b>	a measure designed to assess the performance of a system, policy, programme or project;
<b>‘indigenous languages’</b>	a language that originated in a specified territory or community and was not brought in from elsewhere;
<b>‘intermediate phase’</b>	the second phase of the school curriculum applicable in Grades 4, 5 and 6;
<b>‘learning outcomes’</b>	a description of what knowledge, and skills values learners need to know, demonstrate and be able to do;

<b>‘literacy’</b>	ability to read and write with understanding in any language;
<b>‘Language of Learning and Teaching’</b>	Is a language medium through which learning and teaching, including assessment occurs
<b>‘multilingualism’</b>	ability to speak more than two languages; proficiency in many languages;
<b>‘National School Nutrition Programme’</b>	A national programme managed by the Department of Basic Education, targeted at poor communities, whose objectives are to contribute to enhanced learning capacity through school feeding; promote and support the Implementation of food production Initiatives in schools; and strengthen nutrition education for school communities;
<b>‘National Senior Certificate’</b>	the NSC is a 130 credit certificate at level 4 on the National Qualification Framework (NQF);
<b>‘primary school’</b>	a school that offers all or a selection of grades from Grade R to 7;
<b>‘private land’</b>	means a land that is not owned by the state or any organ of state;
<b>‘public school’</b>	a school contemplated in <i>Chapter 3 of the South African Schools Act 1996</i> ;
<b>‘qualified educator’</b>	a person who is in possession of an approved professional teaching qualification for employment in public education;
<b>‘rural areas’</b>	farms and traditional areas characterised by low population densities, low levels of economic activity and low levels of infrastructure;
<b>‘School Governing Body’</b>	A statutory body vested in the governance of a public school and it may perform only such functions and obligations and exercise such rights as prescribed by the <i>South African Schools Act. 84 of 1996</i> ;
<b>‘secondary school’</b>	a school that offers all or a selection of grades from Grade 8 to Grade 12;

<b>‘self-esteem’</b>	indicates children’s and teachers’ valuing of themselves, an identity and sense of pride in oneself and the place where one lives, learns and works;
<b>‘senior phase’</b>	the third phase of the school curriculum applicable in Grades 7, 8 and 9;
<b>‘social connectedness’</b>	points towards being connected to meaningful others and belonging to a group, that is school communities using partnerships to function as educational units of wellbeing, learning and teaching;
<b>‘subjects’</b>	a specific body of academic knowledge selected and organised as part of a curriculum;
<b>‘teachers’</b>	school-based educators whose core responsibility is that of classroom teaching at a school.

## SCHEDULE

### CHAPTER 1

#### INTRODUCTION TO THE POLICY

##### 1. Purpose of the Policy

- 1) This rural education policy aims to improve access to education, as well as the quality of education for all in rural schools. The policy provides a framework for:
  - a. the development of context-specific, relevant and sustainable strategies to deal with the challenges in rural schools whilst drawing on strengths in rural communities; and
  - b. improving the quality of education in rural schools that will allow the creation of appropriate strategies and practical intervention to improve the quality of education in rural schools.
- 2) A number of pro-poor initiatives aimed at promoting equity and improving the quality of education in previously disadvantaged schools, including rural schools have been implemented since 1994. In spite of these significant interventions, a large number of rural schools are still characterised by inadequate resources, teacher shortages, absenteeism and learners that dropout from school, and above all, poor educational outcomes.
- 3) The policy grapples with the often recognised disadvantage of rural communities and schools (inadequate resources, teacher shortages, absenteeism and learners that dropout from school, and poor educational outcomes) on one hand, and the various assets that exist in rural communities (e.g., indigenous knowledge systems) which can be harnessed to enrich teaching and learning in rural schools.
- 4) The policy recognises the role of the community and sense of belonging (both to the community and the school) and connectedness among stakeholders.

- 5) The policy aims to reflect the realities in rural communities and provide a framework for the development of context-specific and sustainable interventions for rural schools.
- 6) This policy applies uniformly in all provincial departments of education, districts and schools. The provincial education departments can use this policy as a framework for the development of policy, guidelines and strategies for rural education.

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## CHAPTER 2

### RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY

#### 2. Policy Context

- 1) South Africa is a signatory to various international protocols. One of the most recent, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), addresses extreme poverty in its many dimensions and, in particular, SDG 4: Quality Education, aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (UN, 2015, p.21). The Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2015a) further prioritises inclusion and equity in and through education by improving education policies and the way they work together.
- 2) South Africa is committed to achieving these internationally mandated goals through effecting the values underpinning the Constitution of South Africa, 1996 and the Bill of Rights, notably, principles of human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms, including the right to education.
- 3) The National Development Plan (NDP, 2011), through its education and training vision, highlights the need for access to quality education for all. In this context, good educational outcomes must be aligned to the interests of all stakeholders and be responsive to local community needs and economic development.
- 4) In line with the above, as stated in the Department of Basic Education’s *Action Plan to 2019: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2030*, the DBE has implemented varied pro-poor initiatives aimed at promoting equity in access to primary and secondary education and by improving the quality of education in previously disadvantaged schools, including rural schools. Progress towards achieving these goals is uneven, with rural schools continuing to bear the brunt inequality (in human and material resources) and poor performance.
- 5) The policy must be read in with the following policies and legislation:
  - a. The Constitution of South Africa, 1996

- b. The South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996)
- c. Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive and Training System (2001)
- d. Employment of Educators Act, 1998 (Act No. 76 of 1998)
- e. National Norms and Standards for School Funding (DoE, 1998)
- f. The National Minimum Uniform Norms and Standards for School Infrastructure
- g. Language in Education Policy

### **3. Sustainable Rural Education and Development**

- 1) A report from a study on rural schools commissioned by the Nelson Mandela Foundation (NMF), *Emerging Voices* (2005), argued for a holistic response to the special circumstances facing rural communities. The report was informed by the view that social justice depends on policy and programme responses that provide quality educational environment in all schools, including rural schools, so as to assure children's wellbeing as well as the communities' social progress and political participation. It recommended that state provision of rural schooling should be resourced and organised differently from urban schools as a necessary measure to meet the needs of rural learners.
- 2) The 2005 report of the MCRE made recommendations on the policy environment relating to rural schools. Rural education was to be re-visioned away from a focus on deficits to one that examined opportunities for transformation within rural communities, to promote a participatory and democratic governance and management process.
- 3) At a systemic level, the MCRE report, recommended a special focus on rural education that would recognise the uniqueness of the rural landscape. An outcome was the establishment of a rural directorate at the DBE having provincial counterparts. Its task was to consider policy formulation to address the special needs of rural schools and to oversee implementation. Such a structure is needed to

monitor the implementation of this rural education policy and provide support to provinces.

- 4) The CRDP accepted by Cabinet in 2009 highlights the need for the transformation of the rural economy through programmes that facilitate integrated development and social cohesion through participatory approaches in partnership with all sectors of society.

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## CHAPTER 3

### PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY

#### 4. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 and Bill of Rights

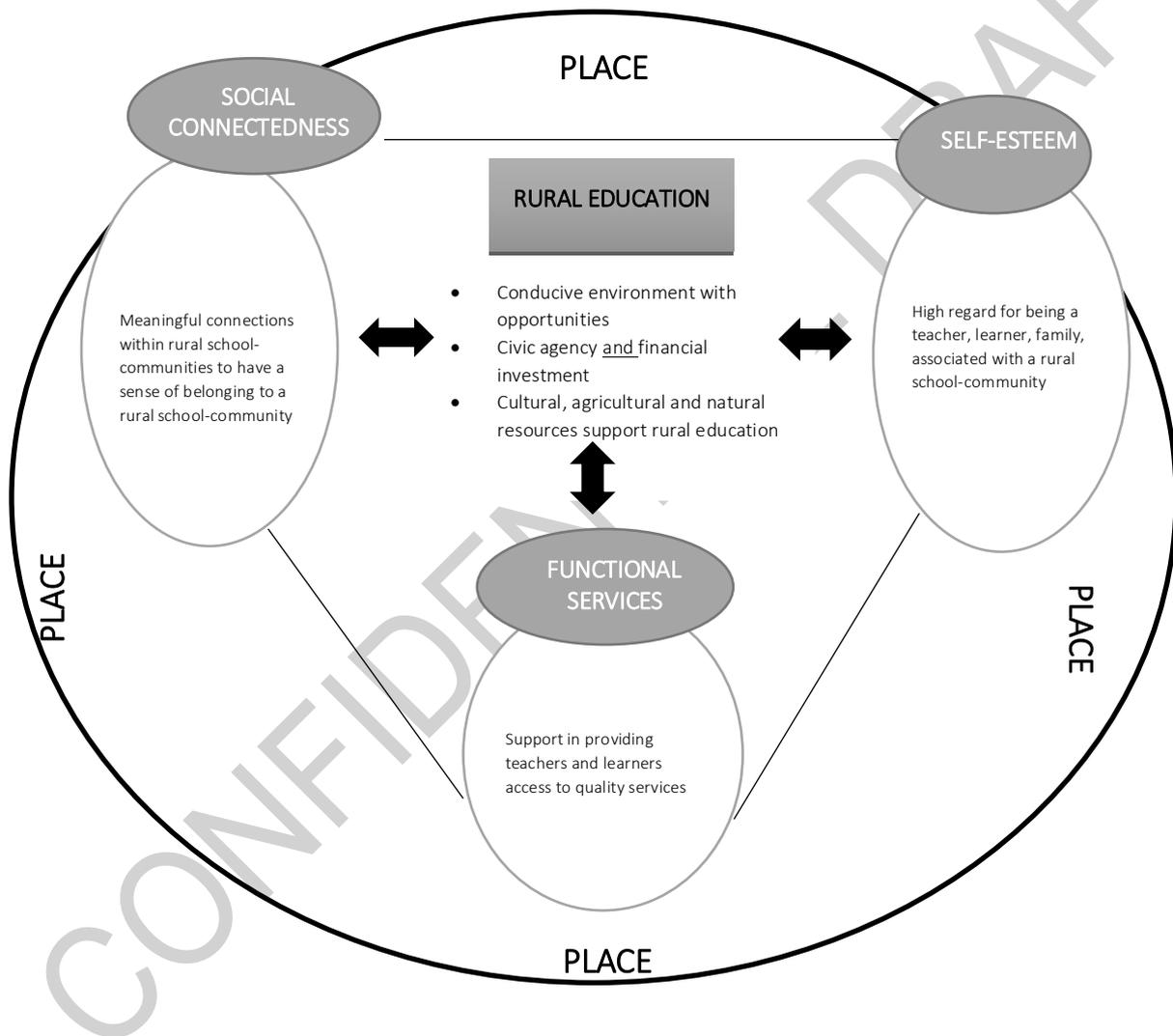
- 1) This rural education policy is informed by the principles enshrined in the Constitution, including the right to basic education, equity and the dignity of learners and teachers.
- 2) The policy further follows the principles outlined in the preamble to the SASA to combat unfair discrimination, to uphold the rights of all learners, and to contribute to the eradication of poverty.
- 3) In order to realize the above imperatives, the policy is premised on the notion that challenges facing rural school communities can be addressed by engaging civic agency where community actions make use of existing rural resources, as well as targeted fiscal investments aimed at addressing the resource shortages experienced by rural schools.

#### 5. Conceptual Framework

- 1) This policy proposes rural education provisioning that capitalises on resources available in rural communities. The provision of quality education in rural schools requires not only targeted fiscal, but also civic agency, with the DBE working in collaboration with rural communities to mobilise resources (including socio-cultural, agricultural and natural resources, as well as indigenous knowledge systems).
- 2) The policy aims to address the isolation, disconnectedness, shame and distrust, as well as the lack of development often associated with rural communities and schools.
- 3) From this perspective, developmental outcomes (learning, wellbeing) are less aligned with economic riches and more aligned with:
  - a. Self-esteem: Children's and teachers' valuing of themselves, an identity and sense of pride in oneself and the place where one lives, learns and works.

- b. Social Connectedness: Being connected to meaningful others and belonging to a group, i.e. school communities using partnerships to function as educational units of wellbeing, learning and teaching.
- c. Functional Services: Learners and teachers must have access to basic development services that includes but not limited to the following: health, social development, and libraries.

**Figure 1: Conceptual framework: three interrelated dimensions of “place” influencing rural education.**



## CHAPTER 4

### DEVELOPING QUALITY RURAL EDUCATION

#### 6. Classifying rural schools

- 1) In South Africa there is no single definition of 'rural' as rurality is characterised by diverse contexts. 'Rural' refers to areas that consist of the tribal lands controlled by traditional leaders; as well as agricultural areas. While 'rural' usually refers to settings that are sparsely populated and where agriculture is the major means of economic activity, the concept also includes areas of dense settlement created by colonial and apartheid-driven land settlements. Several 'mining' areas where mining is no longer active also fall into this category.
- 2) A lack of a single definition for rural and diversity within these contexts make it difficult to formulate policies and develop programmes that are tailor-made for rural schools. It also hampers efforts to intervene meaningfully in improving the quality of education in rural schools.
- 3) Overcoming this challenge requires a rigorous classification of rural schools. Such a classification could be informed by a set of indicators or filters to be included in a classification index:
  - a. Location: public schools in rural areas may be situated on government land, communal land or private land (primarily on farms and on church land); isolationism and remoteness; and dispersed settlements.
  - b. Other filters could include: School phase; various social and economic deprivation factors; poverty; distance from services/facilities and service delivery; the physical and cultural environment; and the size of the school.
  - c. The analysis must also extend the multi-deprivational indices, developed by Statistics South Africa to categorise public schools in Limpopo and the Eastern Cape, to all public schools in rural domains.

## **7. Reviewing and aligning curriculum policy**

- 1) This rural education policy views rurality as a driver of educational reform, not a follower of urban agendas and priorities. Therefore, curriculum development, provisioning, resourcing and subject choice for rural schools should be guided by three key principles which should be incorporated in the implementation of curriculum in rural schools.
  - a. A curriculum that promotes a sense of place, pride and belonging in the school community but at the same time allows for individual mobility.
  - b. A curriculum that recognises resource scarcity in rural areas but that acknowledges and harnesses the resources and knowledge that exists in rural communities. For example, environmental concerns and agriculture are core resources intrinsic to the lived experiences of rural communities.
  - c. A curriculum that reflects the aspirations of the individual learner and the community whilst responding to the well-being and development needs of the community.

## **8. Language**

- 2) The language situation in rural communities across South Africa is complex. Most school communities in rural areas are multilingual, although it is often the case that teachers and learners have different home languages. This diversity of home language is increased, given current migration patterns. Despite the limited number of people with English as a home language, English retains the status of the preferred LOLT for many parents and teachers. Poor learning outcomes are a direct result of this decision at SGB level. This requires:
  - a. The development of the skills of teachers to teach effectively given multilingualism in education.
  - b. The development of LSTM in home languages and reflecting rural contexts
  - c. Strengthening SGB capacity with knowledge of the value of literacy development in home language in parallel with English as a subject and not the LOLT.
  - d. Creation of programmes on public and social media that popularise and support the learning of indigenous languages.

## **9. Agriculture**

- 3) Agriculture is a key economic sector in South Africa, with a long history of subsistence and agribusiness in rural areas. Agricultural education can play a role in responding to the changing labour markets and environment changes through providing an inclusive and responsive agricultural and environmental curriculum.
- 4) The education system can contribute to further economic, social and human development in rural areas by expanding agricultural education and investing in appropriate LTSMs, teacher training, and partnerships with key role-players and by:
  - a. Formalising agriculture as a teaching subject in GET and FET.
  - b. Establishing focus schools for agriculture in all provinces.

## **10. Arts, Culture and Sports**

- 5) The implementation of the curriculum in arts, culture and sports in rural schools is not adequate. Key reasons stem from the limited value placed on indigenous activities and resources inherent to rural spaces, that include cultural capital and natural resources that can be used to support across the curricula.
- 6) To strengthen implementation of these subjects in rural context will require:
  - a. Ensuring all rural schools include arts and culture teaching in their formal curriculum.
  - b. Establish focus schools for Arts, Culture and Sports in rural areas at FET level.
  - c. Investing in appropriate LTSMs, teacher training, and partnerships with key role-players.

## CHAPTER 5

### RESOURCING RURAL SCHOOLS

#### 11. Mobilising communities to facilitate education and development initiatives

- 1) Relevant place-based education in rural areas requires the participation of role-players in rural communities to access available resources to enhance teaching and learning. This requires:
  - a. Recruiting young people (matriculants and unemployed graduates) as volunteers in curriculum support (numeracy, literacy, reading, ICT and homework), administrative support, as well as sports and culture. The intention is to recruit and train local young people to enter the teaching profession.
  - b. Mobilising the school community in development initiatives (environmentally specific: agriculture, mining, fishing, wildlife management, nutrition).
  - c. Mobilising elders to share cultural and natural heritage of the community (history, arts and culture, language).
  - d. Establishing partnerships with the local community to support teaching, learning and wellbeing in the school community (businesses, local government, service providers, faith based organisations, traditional councils).

#### 12. Recruitment, retention and development of teachers

- 2) It is difficult to recruit, retain and develop qualified teachers in a rural setting due to distances of schools from towns, poor infrastructure and limited service delivery.

Addressing these challenges requires:

- a. Creating a package of teacher incentives that goes beyond finance and includes teacher development, career progression, transport, accommodation, recreation and other essential services.
- b. Offering teachers incentives on the basis of the classification of rural schools described in paragraph 5.1.

- 5) Establishing teacher villages that include teacher development centres as hubs for school development, as well as safe accommodation, recreation and other essential services for teachers employed in a cluster of schools.
- 6) Establishing edu-villages, which could be modelled after and linked to existing agri-villages and/or other programmes, where none exist, new ones could be built. These could form hubs for school development and the provision of services for teachers and other school personnel in a district. These initiatives will not only contribute to improving the quality of education in rural contexts, but will also contribute to sustainable rural development by providing additional job opportunities and services to rural communities and serve as a resource to rural schools.
- 7) Mobilising HEIs to offer programmes and courses relevant to rural education in initial teacher education and continuing professional development. HEIs should offer programmes and courses in rural education in various modes, privileging distance education, onsite ITE, and placement of student teachers for practicums/teaching practice in rural schools.
- 8) Providing various types of support for specialised educators (science, maths, agriculture, technology, language and ECE) so that they can work in a cluster of schools, in particular remote schools.

### **13. Small schools in rural areas**

- 1) The implications of closing small schools in rural areas are far bigger than closing small schools in urban settings. For example, in sparsely populated areas where distances between schools and poor road conditions are not conducive to public transport use, small schools can be the only means of access to education. In such cases it is necessary to prescribe a minimum package for small primary and secondary school to support learning and teaching.
- 2) In a primary school a minimum of 6 teachers is needed, excluding the principal and Grade R practitioner, so that schools do not have multi-grade classes across phases.

- 3) A minimum requirement per primary school is:
  - a. 1 x foundation phase teacher;
  - b. 5 teachers in the intermediate and senior phases: 1 x EFAL; 1 x HL; 1 x Maths/Natural Sciences/Technology; 1 x Social Sciences/Creative Arts/Life Orientation; and 1 x Economic Management Sciences.
- 4) For secondary schools each subject must be taught by a qualified teacher.
- 5) In a secondary school teachers should teach a maximum of 2 subjects at FET level
- 6) Itinerant teachers may be used to serve more than one school where qualified teachers are not available, provided the distance allows this.
- 7) Other requirements for small schools include:
  - a. Support staff including a senior admin clerk, a cleaner and a security guard.
  - b. Until all schools are given the required resources, the district can establish a centre for a cluster of schools. This will allow the school cluster rather than the individual school to become administrative and resource entity. This will ensure a more efficient and effective provisioning to each school. It can also allow the sharing of human and physical resources, including recreational facilities and specialised rooms like libraries, laboratories etc.
  - c. Provision of LTSM: ICT package for small schools to include a server with preloaded content for Grade R, GET and FET Bands, data projector, computer hardware and internet connectivity; Library facilities; and Laboratories.

## CHAPTER 6

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### 14. National level

- 1) The DBE is responsible for setting guidelines; developing strategies; and monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the rural education policy. It is responsible for ensuring that resources required for the implementation of the policy are available. To do this:
  - a. The Minister will establish a REAC comprising key role players and stakeholders to advise the Minister on the implementation of the rural education policy; funding rural education programmes; and monitoring and evaluating the impact of policies on rural schools.
  - b. The Director-General will establish inter-departmental collaborations to strengthen the support and the delivery of quality education in rural schools.
  - c. The Director-General will establish a national team of key heads of branches that meets to plan, implement and account for the ways in which their branches respond to this rural education policy mandate. Further, this team will report on other programmes and initiatives that target rural schools.
  - d. The Director-General will establish an interprovincial rural education committee that will comprise of officials responsible for rural education in all provinces. This committee will be responsible for the coordination of a multidisciplinary approach to support rural schools in providing quality education.

#### 15 Provincial level

- 2) Each province is responsible for implementing the policy. To do this provinces should:
  - a. Establish a dedicated Directorate or sub-directorate (guided by the number of rural schools) for rural education.
  - b. Establish a provincial rural education committee that interpret national policies, prepare implementation plans and coordinate the activities embracing rural education across the province.

- c. Prepare plans for implementation at individual and school cluster level and plan the placement of edu-villages and teacher development centres.
- d. Secure the required financial, material and human resources to implement the policy.
- e. Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the rural education policy.

#### **16. District level**

- 3). Establish a District Rural Education Committee to oversee and monitor the implementation process and to support the schools in rural areas. To strengthen this Committee:
  - a. Allocate a dedicated person responsible for rural education in all districts;
  - b. Facilitate the training of SGBs in specialised functions arising from the policy.

#### **17. School level**

- 4) The SGB's responsibilities include:
  - a. Mobilising the community to enhance the participation of the broader school community and various stakeholders in school development;
  - b. Identifying and harnessing resources (cultural, natural, material, social) to support teaching and learning.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

- 1) The rural education policy aims to ensure that rural schools provide quality education for all learners, in line with the democratic principles of the Constitution as well as the vision of the NDP. This requires overcoming many challenges of concern to the macro environment as well as school level disparities across the public school system.
- 2) The next step in this policy process is to provide a detailed implementation plan that includes a carefully constructed financial plan. For most recommendations the DBE and the RE Directorate together with their counterparts in the PEDs will spearhead the implementation process, coordinating activities at provincial and local levels of management and governance.
- 3) The DBE is to develop a rural monitoring and evaluation programme to assess whether and in what ways the rural education policy and subsequent programme initiatives are being implemented and what impact on they have on the quality of education in rural schools.
- 4) The improvement of rural education in SA is inextricably linked to effective service delivery in other sectors. These include, among others, health, social development, transport and economic development.
- 5) In addition, educational access and success in one phase are interlinked with similar outcomes across the system – ECD, Basic Education (GET and FET) and Higher Education and Training - and that poor educational outcomes in any one phase hinder access to and performance in the next phase. Consequently, although this report considers the GET and FET phases, it recognises that reform of rural education depends on a holistic view of transformation where education mediates development.