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PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

RESEARCH UNIT

PO Box 15 Cape Town 8000 Republic of South Africa
Tel: 27 (21) 403 8273 Fax: 27 (21) 403 8118
www.parliament.gov.za

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Overview and Analysis of DBE Progress Report on the Teacher Centres

1. Background

The Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (ISPFTED) called for the establishment and strengthening of Provincial Teacher Development Institutes PTDis and District Teacher Development Centres (DTDCs)¹.

These PTDis are physical sites that serve as the base from which provinces coordinate and deliver all national and provincial priorities on Continuous Professional Teacher Development (CPTD). The objectives of these priorities could take the form of courses for Teacher Training².

District Teacher Development Centres (DTDC) are physical sites located in districts and which are easily accessible to teachers within which curriculum support staff can be located and where teachers can also access resources³. It is in these centres that the needs of teachers in terms of capacity are addressed. The centres are able to create opportunities for the creation of professional learning communities.

The District Teacher Development Centres are sometimes referred to as Teacher Centres.

It is expected that Teacher Centres must be strategically located within the departmental organogram with clear guidelines defining reporting lines, legal status of the structure, roles and responsibilities of officers responsible for the oversight functions of centres and operational procedures.

It is envisaged that PTDis should be headed by a manager at director level while each of the DTDC should be headed by a manager at the level of a Deputy Chief Education Specialist who should be accountable to and report to the head of the PTDI on issues relating to teacher development programmes⁴.

The brief is expected to provide information on the status of the Teacher Centres so that Members of Parliament can be able to effectively engage with the DBE and further seeking clarity based on the DBE strategic plan and Annual Performance Plan (APP).

¹ DBE (2014) ISFTED

² Ibid

³ Ibid

⁴ DBE (2015) Draft Norms on Teacher Centres



2. Analysis of the DBE Report on the Status of Teacher Centres

2.1 Audit of Teacher Centres

The DBE conducted an audit of Teacher Centres and the following was established⁵:

- Five provinces have established PTDIs and these provinces include the Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and the Western Cape.
- The country has a total of 147 Teacher Centres which are spread across provinces as follows:

Table: Statistical Spread of Teacher Centres Country-wide⁶

Province	No of Centres	Centres with ICT Labs	Connectivity	Teacher Centres with Programmes	Access to Emails	Functional
EC	16	9	6	12	16	6
FS	5	4	4	4	5	4
GP	21	13	9	17	21	7
KZN	49	35	19	38	47	28
LP	9	8	8	9	8	8
MP	17	12	6	16	17	6
NC	3 (2)	5	5	5	5	3 (2)
NW	24	16	5	14	23	7
WC	3	3	3	3	3	3
TOTAL	147	105	65	118	145	72

KwaZulu-Natal has the highest number (49) of Teacher Centres as compared to other provinces, however, only 28 of these centres are functional.

It is estimated that about 49% of the centres are declared functional in terms of the following set of criteria⁷:

- Effectiveness of the Centre Manager
- Availability and functionality of ICT
- Connectivity
- Relevance and number of Teacher Development Programmes

⁵ DBE (2014) Audit on Teacher Centres in South Africa

⁶ DBE (2015) DBE Report on Functionality of Teacher Centres

⁷ DBE (2015) Draft Norms on Teacher Centres



- Frequency of Teacher Training Workshop
- Community Empowerment Programmes

2.2 Milestones achieved by the DBE⁸

- The Department has been able to collaborate and establish strategic partnerships with stakeholders such as Vodacom, Mindset, Microsoft, Cisco, UNISA and UNICEF;
- All Teacher Centre Managers received training in the effective management and leadership of these centres;
- E-learning specialists have been trained on the ICT Integration Programme which focuses on developing the skills of teachers to integrate ICTs into their teaching and learning programmes, as well as to promote the utilisation of technologies to support curriculum delivery for improved learning outcomes;
- A number of apps have been developed in partnership with Organisations such as the Ukufunda Virtual School, Teacher Communicator app and many more; and
- The Department has developed draft Norms and Standards for Teacher Centres. The draft norms cover the following Areas⁹:
 - Governance and Management;
 - Funding Model;
 - Post Provisioning;
 - Resourcing;
 - Teacher Development Programmes; and
 - Redress.

2.3 Challenges reported¹⁰

- Lack of proper infrastructure which include training spaces in some of the centres, especially the school based and district offices based;
- Staffing continues to be a challenge in most of the centres. A common trend on staffing amongst existing centres is to have a Centre Manager x1; Clerk, and General Assistants (GAs);
- In some instances, Subject Advisors (SA) are not based in the centres; which leave the Teacher Centres with minimum human resources that could drive teacher development;
- Training schedules and non-viable training programmes due to incapacity;
- In most centres, teacher support/training is not provided on a daily/regular basis due to limited resources;
- Limited sufficient budgets to allow for the smooth and seamless roll-out of Teacher Development Programmes;

⁸ DBE (2015) DBE Report on the Functionality of Teacher Centres

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid



- Lack of security leading to vandalism; and
- Unclear role of the Districts Offices where some of the centres are dumping places.

Matters for Consideration

- Given the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development's expectation on the establishment of Teacher Centres, How far is the Department in ensuring that all Districts have enough Teacher Centres, accessible without causing schools to incur unnecessary high costs with regard to transport to the centres?
- How sustainable is the initiative on Teacher Centres, if they are not able to fundraise?
- What is the level of investment made in the establishment of these centres? Are there plans to ensure that security Officers are placed in these centres?
- The difference in approach of these centres, Is there a way through which programmes of these centres could be standardised?
- Provinces like Limpopo, have always been regarded as underperforming in ANA and NSC, Records reflect that there are few centres in this province. What is the plan of the DBE in ensuring that provinces like these are prioritised in allocations of centres?
- Where on the DBE programme is the function of Teacher Centres located? Should these centres be driven by Teacher Development or District Development?
- Some of the centres are so understaffed that they only have a Centre Manager and One Support Staff, how are these centres supported to ensure that they remain effective?
- When are the norms and standards on the resourcing of these centres going to be finalised?
- The centres are expected to be truly resourceful for both Teachers and Learners. How many of these centres have Library services? How resourced are those libraries and who manages these libraries? Are they trained?
- Some of the centres are providing mobile services when providing school support. Is there a prescribed model for these kind of mobile services? How is this model funded?
- Whom at District Level is accountable for the functionality of these centres?



3. Reference

- Department of Basic Education (2014), *Audit Report on the Teacher Centres in South Africa*.
- Department of Basic Education (2015), *Draft Regulation on the Minimum Uniform Norms and Standards for Provincial Teacher Development Institutes and District Teacher Development Centres in South Africa*.
- Department of Basic Education (2015), *DBE Report on the Functionality of Teacher Centres*.

