
GENERAL NOTICE

NOTICE 1059 OF 2014

**DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION
NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY ACT, 1996 (ACT NO 27 OF 1996)
CALL FOR COMMENTS - AMENDMENT OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION
INFORMATION POLICY**

I, Angelina Matsie Motshekga, Minister of Basic Education, acting in terms of section 3(4)(a) of the National Education Policy Act, 1996, and after consultation with the Council of Education Ministers, hereby publish the national education information policy as set out in the Schedule for comment.


All interested persons and organisations are invited to comment on the national education information policy, in writing, and to direct their comments to –

**The Director-General
Private Bag X895
Pretoria
0001**

For attention: Mr SA Shongwe, tel. 012 357 3669, email Shongwe.s@dbe.gov.za,
fax 012 323 0380.

Kindly provide the name, address, telephone number, fax number and email address of the person or organisation submitting the comments.

The comments must reach the Department by 31 December 2014.


**ANGELINA MATSIE MOTSHEKGA, MP
MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION
DATE:**

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PART I:

DEFINITIONS

"Council of Ministers" means the Council of Education Ministers as established by section 9 of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act No. 27 of 1996).

"early childhood development" is defined as an umbrella term that applies to the processes by which children from birth to nine years grow and thrive, physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, morally and socially.

"e-Government" is defined as the continuous optimisation of government service delivery, constituency participation, and governance by transforming internal and external relationships through technology, the Internet and new media.

"EMIS Officer" means the official of the education department charged with certain responsibilities regarding education management information, in terms of this policy.

"further education and training" means all learning and training programmes leading to qualifications from levels 2 to 4 of the National Qualifications Framework as contemplated in the South African Qualifications Authority Act 1995, (Act No. 58 of 1995), which levels are above the general education but below higher education.

"Information Officer" means the official as defined by Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000

"Information Standards' Committee" means the committee, established in terms of this policy, that advises the Director-General with regard to education information standards.

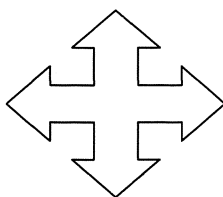
"official data and statistics" means data and statistics that have been formally classified as a true record by the Education Information Officer, in terms of this policy.

"provincial education department" means a department of any provincial government which is responsible for education.

"school" means an institution, either public or independent, providing schooling at some or all of the grades R to 12 levels, in terms of the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996).

ABBREVIATIONS

SAMS:	School Administration Management System (particularly electronic)
LURITS:	Learner Unit Record Information and Tracking System
MS:	Management System
EMIS:	Education Management Information System
SASQAF:	South African Statistical Quality Assurance Framework
StatsSA:	Statistics South Africa
SOCPEN:	Social Pension System
NPR:	National Population Register
HANIS:	Home Affairs National Identification System
DHA:	Department of Home Affairs
DSD:	Department of Social Development



INTRODUCTION

The importance of education information

1. The effective gathering, dissemination and analysis of information in the education system of any country is vital for sound education planning, monitoring and delivery. In the case of South Africa, effective use of information can greatly advance meaningful democracy, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the education system. The constitutional duty of the state to provide an education system that develops individual citizens and the nation as a whole is thus enhanced.

The overall goals of the policy

2. This policy creates a framework that allows for the co-ordinated and sustainable development of education information systems. Two main goals are thereby pursued. The first is the goal of an education system where information systems enhance the day-to-day running of institutions and education departments, and provide better information to the public as a whole, thereby promoting accountability. The second is the goal of an education system where information systems yield increasingly valuable data and statistics needed for planning and monitoring purposes, which occurs at all levels from the individual institution to the national Department of Basic Education.

Nature of education information

3. This policy lays a foundation for the collection of education information with the lowest granularity, viz., and learner unit record data. Every learner in an institution under the jurisdiction of the Department of Basic Education will be listed and profiled in the national database.

The parts of this policy framework

4. The main components of the framework laid down by this policy are the following:
- i. A vision for South African education information systems.
 - ii. A framework for establishing and maintaining effective and sustainable standards governing education statistics, data and information systems.
 - iii. A framework for streamlining the provision of education information by education departments and institutions to the public and all role players.
 - iv. A framework for improving the flow of data and statistics between institutions, the provincial Departments of Education and the Department of Basic Education.
 - v. A framework for the integration of statistical data with other Government information systems.

Fragmentation in our education information systems

5. The South African education system is characterised by a multitude of information systems, both computerised and paper-based or manual, which provide the basis for the many business procedures that the education system must engage in. This includes the function of admitting learners into schools, registering learner attendance and achievement, closing and opening institutions, appraising educators, charging fees, communicating with parents, and so on. In recent years some of these information systems have undergone major transformation, whilst others have remained stagnant and are essentially an inheritance from the apartheid past. Most role players in the education system, whether parents, employees or learners, can attest to the fact that good information systems contribute to improved service delivery, or to the fact that poor information systems disempower and marginalise, with the victims usually being the most disadvantaged in society. It is widely recognised that the state needs to be pro-active in ensuring that information systems in education are improved in the interests of better service delivery. This requires, amongst other things, the development of, and adherence to, effective and adequate national standards governing education management information systems.

Problems around the survey approach

6. It has become the practice for education departments all over the world, but especially in Africa and other developing regions, to depend heavily on annual national censuses, also called 'surveys', in gathering information from institutions. Whilst this approach fulfils an important need, it is recognised that the current censuses can be improved on, for instance through the establishment of common information standards that are shared by the provincial and national departments, in order to generate data that is comparable and of an acceptable quality, and therefore sufficiently reliable to add maximum value to education planning.

Unfortunately data is quickly rendered static when collected through the survey method whose turn-around time does not keep pace with real-time information requirements. Information collected is also administratively unusable because the conditions and their parameters are constantly changing.

There is therefore a need to improve availability of real-time information that can be used administratively for day-to-day operational requirements.

The education information policy gap

7. Attempts to generate information systems standards at the national level have been hampered by the absence of a policy framework that would lay down the structures and procedures to be followed in the generation of such standards. This policy gap has posed problems not just for the Department of Basic Education, but also for the provincial Departments of Education, other government departments and service providers working in the education sector. A lack of properly mandated

standards have often prevented the development of systems, and where systems were developed in the absence of standards; the result has been systems that could not be integrated with related systems, and systems that were not thoroughly informed by the educational context.

A VISION FOR INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION

Principles guiding our vision

8. Since 1996 the principles governing the vision for the South African education system have been, and continue to be, the following:
- i. The national Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) should be a well-coordinated system of education management information systems that facilitate planning and management at institutional, circuit, district, provincial and national levels.
 - ii. The ultimate aim of an information system is to improve the efficiency in the management of the education system, to enhance transparency in the activity of the education departments and promote greater accountability on the use of scarce public resources.
 - iii. Any EMIS must facilitate public access to accurate, timely and relevant information within the legal framework to all role players. Information on education inputs, processes and outcomes at all levels of the system should be accessible to the public, with the exception of personal information where confidentiality should be ensured.
 - iv. The national EMIS should be an integrated system, providing data and/or information for use at all levels of the education system.
 - v. The national EMIS should be flexible to accommodate the changes taking place within the education sector and the new priorities at all levels of the system.
 - vi. The national EMIS should be needs driven with the requirements of the different users informing the data to be collected.
 - vii. The national EMIS should be open-ended with input and output at all levels.
 - viii. Data flow should be bi-directional both vertically and horizontally.
 - ix. Ideally data should be processed, analysed and published close to the collection point.
 - x. The system should be simple, accessible, accurate and standardised.
 - xi. EMIS should facilitate capacity building, support and training on collection, processing, analysis, dissemination and use of information at all levels of the education system.
 - xii. There should be a mechanism for co-ordination between the national and provincial levels to accommodate the diverse needs of the provinces, especially in establishing a core data set and the use of appropriate and compatible technology.
 - xiii. The national EMIS should link up with other education and training systems, including other Government information systems, such as Department of Home Affairs (DHA), Statistics South Africa (StatsSA), Department of Social Development (DSD), South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), Sector Education Training Authorities (SETAs) and Department of Labour (DoL).
 - xiv. The national EMIS should be able to interface with other data sets both within the Education sector such as NEIMS and IECS and outside the education management establishment, including PERSAL, the Population Census data, NPR and SOCPEN

It is also recognised that with better operational systems in place, education planners at all levels would have access to greater volumes of reliable, quality data for planning and other purposes on condition that these operational systems adhered to national standards that ensured compatibility at a national level.

Benefits for parents, learners and educators

9. A situation is envisaged in which participants in the education system, be they learners, students, parents, educators or other employees, will have access to education information systems that greatly facilitate good education service delivery. Parents will have access to reliable and understandable information relating to the schools of their children, and of other schools. Information systems will contribute towards the more effective implementation of admissions procedures for learners and students, and will empower people with information on the educational choices available. Essential information on education as a whole will be available in all institutions, and in all departmental offices. Educators will be in a position to make more informed decisions about their careers and lifelong-learning paths on the basis of better information regarding in-service training and institutions offering employment. Overall, information systems will contribute to a better-run education system, where less time and other resources are wasted in inefficient practices.

Information systems in institutions

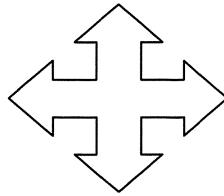
10. This policy calls for provision of a School Administration System (SAMS) in every institution providing basic education. Historically disadvantaged schools will receive support from the state to assist in the establishment of the SAMS. Information systems in departmental offices, schools and other institutions do not need to be part of a single product, but they should be unified by common design and data standards, making interaction between systems possible and they must comply with the Learner Unit Record Information and Tracking System (LURITS) specifications. The central systems of the education departments will extract relevant administration data from systems at schools and other institutions, which will allow for more effective planning, decision-making and administration in the departments.

The need for inclusiveness

11. Transformation in terms of education information systems should be inclusive. Parallel to the development of improved computerised systems and the diffusion of 'e-Government', should be the ongoing improvement of manual systems in line with the design of computerised systems, so that elements of the education system are not excluded, and the transition from manual to computerised systems can be streamlined.

Improved education management and better learner performance

12. Planning and monitoring, at all levels from the institution to the Department of Basic Education, will be improved through the greater availability of accurate and relevant information on the education system. This will result in better-informed implementation and resource allocation strategies, which will improve the overall performance of the education system. Through access to this information, legislators and other publicly elected officials will be in a better position to serve their constituencies in education related matters.



LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK THAT INFORMS THE POLICY

This policy is closely linked to other legislation and government initiatives.

13. It is the duty of institutions to provide information to the education departments and the public in terms of section 59 of the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No.84 of 1996),. This provision of information needs to occur in a manner that is efficient and allows for the proper archiving of institution data in the education departments. This policy creates a framework that improves the processes by which institutions provide information. In terms of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act No. 27 of 1996), the Minister of Education must monitor and evaluate the standards of education provision, delivery and performance, to a large extent through the use of national education statistics. This policy promotes the processes required to ensure that reliable national education statistics are available.

The Promotion to Access to Information Act, 2000

14. This policy complements the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No.2 of 2000 PAIA) which deals with access to any information held by the state or a private or public institution and natural persons, this policy deals mainly with access to data and statistics as a whole and focuses mainly on action to be taken by the state in response to requests for information, this policy focuses to a large degree on the pro-active steps the education departments must take in order to ensure wide access to information, which will reduce the need for individual requests. This policy directly complements the Promotion of Access to Information Act, by specifying the level of the education system at which specific information is made available in the first instance

The Statistics Act, 1999

15. This policy complements the Statistics Act, 1999 (Act No.6 of 1999). Section 14 of the Statistics Act deals with the obligation of government departments to work closely with the Statistician-General in, for example, maintaining national standards of statistical reporting and co-ordinating the statistical collections of the country. This policy creates a framework for the national Department of Education and the provincial departments of education to comply with this obligation in a more organised and effective manner through improved procedures for ensuring the accuracy and proper presentation of education statistics.

Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013

16 This policy complements the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013, whose purpose to:

- (a) Give effect to the constitutional right to privacy, by safeguarding personal information when processed by a responsible party, subject to justifiable limitations that are aimed at-
 - (i) balancing the right to privacy against other rights, particularly the right of access to information; and
 - (ii) protecting important interests, including the free flow of information within the Republic and across international borders;
- (b) regulate the manner in which personal information may be processed, by establishing conditions, in harmony with international standards, that prescribe the minimum threshold requirements for the lawful processing of personal information;
- (c) provide persons with rights and remedies to protect their personal information from processing that is not in accordance with this Act ; and
- (d) establish voluntary and compulsory measures, including the establishment of an Information Regulator, to ensure respect for and to promote, enforce and fulfil the rights protected by this Act.

SITA and GITO

17 STATE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AGENCY ACT NO. 88 OF 1998 as amended by the State Information Technology Agency Act 38 of 2002 [signed by the President on 31/10/2002 and published in the Gazette No. 24029 of 7/11/2002]. The Government Information Technology Officers' (GITO) Council advises government on the application of IT to improve service delivery. Its membership consists of the chief information officers from national departments and premiers' offices. The council has been involved in developing an IT security policy framework, IT procurement guidelines and e-government policy and strategy. It also monitors government IT projects to avoid duplication.

Batho Pele public service delivery

18 This policy complements the Batho Pele strategy of Government to improve service delivery to the public. By creating a framework for systems development, this policy will facilitate the improvement of the education information systems which will, in turn, improve the lives of those who participate in education.

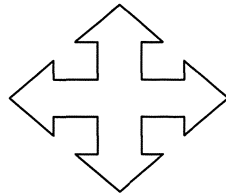
South African Qualifications Authority

19 This policy complements the initiatives of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) to create a National Learner Records Database (NLRD). By

specifying that the development of learner records for the use of the education departments should be in line with the NLRD initiative, optimum use of resources in Government, and unified data sets are enhanced.

Focus on education-specific information

- 20 This policy complements state regulations and standards governing financial and personnel systems used in all sectors of Government. Whilst the framework presented in this policy may influence the usage of the multi-sectoral financial and personnel systems in education, the framework is intended to influence design directly where systems are specific to the education sector.



PART II: GENERAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION

DUTY OF EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC

Need to pro-actively respond to the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000

21 In terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No.2 of 2000), education departments and education institutions, whether public or private, have an obligation to provide information to a variety of interested parties. To comply effectively with this obligation, education departments must ensure that the most appropriate points of access for particular types of information are made clear to the public. Moreover, the education departments must be pro-active in satisfying the information needs of the public by distributing commonly requested information to potential requesters. Such a pro-active approach can reduce the need to respond to individual requests, and can ensure that more disadvantaged communities, who may normally not make formal information requests in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, are empowered with the information they need. This is not an Act of Parliament, suggested word “Paragraphs” 21 to 27 below stipulate some of the specific actions education departments must take.

Information on where to get information

22 Education departments must make publicly available information of the type contained in Appendix 1 of this policy, which specifies where different kinds of information are most readily available. Moreover, where information requests pertain to one province only, but the information is available at both the national and provincial departments, education departments must encourage the submission of such requests to the relevant provincial department. Whilst this will facilitate the implementation of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No.2 of 2000), this does not absolve information officers from the obligation, stated in section 20 of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, to transfer information requests to other information officers more suited to responding to the request.

Registers of institutions

23 In order to cater for the information needs of parents, learners and students, the national Department of Basic Education and the provincial departments of education must maintain updated registers of institutions. These registers must include the basic contact details of institutions, as well as the curriculum and language information reasonably required by the information user. A national register must

be available in the national Department of Basic Education and in the head offices of each of the provincial departments of education. The provincial register for that particular province must be available in all the offices of the provincial departments. Subject to the availability of resources, the relevant provincial registers must also be made available progressively in institutions, beginning with those institutions serving the most disadvantaged communities. The registers must also be published on departmental websites, if available. In addition, other means of dissemination, such as newspapers, must be considered. In order to facilitate ongoing merging of the provincial registers into a national register, all education departments must compile their registers in accordance with national standards established in terms of this policy. Education departments may combine the register with the manual envisaged by section 14 of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No.2 of 2000).

Operational information to be made available to parents

24 Education departments must also make available to the public, in particular parents, operational information relating to institutions. Considering that this operational information in many cases changes annually for each institution, education departments may decide not to include this information in the register stipulated in section 21, and may, instead, select another means of communication, on condition that this is adequate for the information needs of the public and parents.

Institution details for use by third parties

25 Third parties often wish to distribute particular information to institutions. The education departments must facilitate this by making postal addresses of all institutions, and, if possible, telephone numbers available. This information must, if possible, be available electronically on departmental websites. In the case of an education department not having a website, an adequate alternative means of distribution must be used. Education departments may not make facsimile or electronic mail addresses of institutions available for the purposes of mass distribution. This is to protect these means of communication and the institutions concerned from abuse. Education departments may use the register stipulated in section 21 to distribute this data to third parties.

Information for research purposes

26 Education departments must anticipate the needs of researchers to analyse data on the education sector and must be pro-active in preparing standard and typical data files, in particular enrolment data, for use by researchers. This data must be available timeously and in the current term. Such files must adhere to national standards, established in terms of this policy, with regard to definitions and formats. In the case of a researcher requiring data not included in the standard and typical data files, and where the research is not officially mandated within the education system, the education department concerned must assess the possible value of the

research against the departmental resources required to prepare the data, and should respond to the request accordingly.

Standardisation of statistical tables

27 Education departments must include in their annual reports key statistical tables that contribute to the accountability of education departments to their respective legislatures and the public in general. Nationally agreed upon standards governing these tables must be adhered to.

Protection of private information

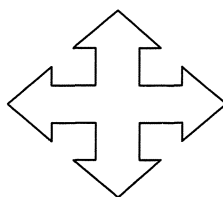
28 In providing information to the public, education departments must ensure that procedures exist which prevent the release of information considered private and protected in terms of the *Protection of Personal Information* (Act No.4 of 2013) or Chapter 4 of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000.

Warehousing of education data

29 Education departments must safely and accessibly store data reflecting the current education system, and historical profiles of the education system from the past, in accordance with nationally determined standards. The data that must be stored will include data relating to the following aspects of institutions and the department(s):

- i. Basic details, including names of institutions
- ii. Curriculum offerings
- iii. Personnel details
- iv. Basic learner details
- v. Learner performance details
- vi. Building and infrastructure details
- vii. Financial records

The data warehouses must comply with LURITS specifications



DUTY OF PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENTS TO PROVIDE STATISTICS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

Need for reliable provincial information

30 For planning and monitoring purposes, it is necessary for data and statistics to be provided on a regular and cyclical basis by provincial departments to the Department of Basic Education. The data and statistics must be reliable and in accordance with national standards. It is also necessary, on occasion, for the Department of Education to request special submissions of data and statistics from the provincial departments, where the information need is not fulfilled by the regular information reporting and submission cycles. Provinces have a responsibility to supply data and statistics to other educational statutory bodies, upon request.

EMIS Officers

National EMIS Officer

31 The Director-General of the Department of Basic Education must designate a National EMIS Officer, whose basic functions will be as follows:

- i. To co-ordinate and control the release of official EMIS statistics and data to other national government departments, statutory bodies such as Statistics South Africa, and international organisations.
- ii. To ensure that EMIS statistics and data released according to Paragraph 30 comply with national and general standards with regard to accuracy and presentation.
- iii. To act as the only departmental official, apart from the Director-General of the national Department of Basic Education, also known as the Information Officer in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act No.2 of 2000), with the authority to classify Department of Basic Education EMIS statistics and data as official in accordance with section 14 of the Statistics Act No.6 of 1999.)
- iv. To act as the only departmental official, apart from the Director-General of the Department of Education, with the authority to approve a national data collection project, for example a survey of schools, conducted by the Department of Basic Education
- v. To, on an ongoing basis, synthesise the analyses, reports and recommendations of provincial EMIS Officers, designated in terms of section 30 below, on provincial information systems, so that appropriate national standards and strategies can be formulated that contribute to the vision of education information systems explained in this policy.
- vi. To monitor compliance with national information systems standards where education information systems are being developed at the national level.
- vii. To promote the adequate standardisation of SAMS used by institutions, in accordance with Paragraph 43 of this policy.

- viii. To organise regular meetings with all provincial Education Information Officers in the furtherance of the education information systems vision at the national level.
- ix. To ensure that there is adequate communication between Education Information Officers and the Information Standards' Committee to ensure delivery.
- x. To liaise with the Statistician-General and Statistics South Africa to promote the aims of the Statistics Act, 1999 (Act No.6 of 1999), to ensure that section 14 of the Statistics Act, requiring the Minister of Finance to approve the undertaking of a new statistical collection, or the substantial changing or discontinuation of a statistical collection, is adhered to.

Provincial EMIS Officer

32 Each provincial department head must designate an EMIS Officer, whose basic functions will be as follows:

- i. To co-ordinate and control the release of official statistics and data to other government departments and educational statutory bodies, but in particular the Department of Basic Education, in accordance with established information reporting cycles, but also in response to special information requests.
- ii. To ensure that statistics and data released according to section 30(i) comply with national and general standards with regard to accuracy and presentation.
- iii. To act as the only departmental official, apart from the head of the provincial department, also known as the information officer in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, with the authority to classify EMIS statistics and data of the provincial department as official in accordance with section 14 of the Statistics Act No.6 of 1999.
- iv. To act as the only departmental official, apart from the head of the provincial department, with the authority to approve a data collection project, for example a survey of schools, conducted by the provincial department.
- v. To work with the Education Information Officer of the Department of Basic Education in ensuring that the requirements of section 14 of the Statistics Act, governing the role of the Minister of Finance in determining statistical collections, are fulfilled the particular province.
- vi. To analyse, report on, and make recommendations on an ongoing basis for improvements to the electronic and non-electronic information systems of the provincial department and its institutions so that these systems can contribute to the vision of education information systems explained in this policy.
- vii. To monitor compliance with national information system standards where education information systems are being developed in the province.
- viii. To collaborate with the other provincial Education Information Officers and the national Education Information Officer designated in terms of section 29, in the furtherance of the education information systems vision at the national level.

District EMIS Officer

33 Each Provincial Department will ensure that each District Manager designates a District EMIS Officer. In the absence of a district, a Regional Education Information

Officer will be designated. The basic functions will include the following:

- i. To co-ordinate and control the release of institutional data to all information Users, but in particular the Department of Basic Education, in accordance with established information reporting cycle, but also in response to special information request.
- ii. To ensure that data released adhere to quality standards as required by the published requests.
- iii. To Act, as the only departmental official, apart from the head of district, also known as the information officer in terms of Promotion of Access to Information Act, with the Authority to classify EMIS statistics and data of district as official in accordance with section 14 of the Statistics Act NO. 6 of 1999.(The PAIA Act does not provides for sub-delegation)
- iv. The education officer will have the authority to maintain and update educational records.
- v. To analyse, report on, and make recommendations on an ongoing basis for improvements to electronic and non electronic information system of the district so that the system can contribute to the vision of education information system explained in the policy.
- vi. To maintain compliance with national information system standards where the education information system is being developed and enhanced in the district.
- vii. To collaborate with the other district Education Information Officers, provincial Education Information Officers, and the national Education Information Officer designated in terms of paragraph 29, in the furtherance of the education information systems vision at the national level.
- viii. To analyse data and providing rapid feedback to the institution. Report contradictory data extracted from the source system. Ensure the source system is repaired and improved for better reporting.
- ix. To institute a sound methodology to ensure integrity of institution records by:
 - Ensuring that a business process is developed and adhered to during data processing and migration between systems and data is consistent across systems; and
 - Establishing effective and rigorous data verification, data capturing and data handling methodology and sign – off procedures to ensure clean, accurate, reliable, and consistent and quality data.

Institutional EMIS Officer

34 Each Institution Manager must designate an institution EMIS Officer, whose basic function will include the following:

- i. To co-ordinate and control the release of institutional data to all information users, but in particular the Department of Basic Education, in accordance with established information reporting cycle, but also in response to special information request.

- ii. To ensure that data released adhere to quality standards as required by the published standards and requirements.
- iii. To act as the only departmental official, apart from the head of the institution, also known as the information officer in terms of Promotion of Access to Information Act, with the authority to classify statistics and data of the institution as officials as officials in accordance with section 14 of the Statistics Act No.6 of 1999.
- iv. The information officer will have the authority to maintain and update education record.
- v. To analyse, report on, and make recommendations on ongoing basis for improvement to the electronic and non- electronic information system of the institution so that the system can contribute to the vision of education information system explained in this policy.
- vi. To maintain compliance with national information system standards where the education information system is being developed and enhanced in the institution.
- vii. To collaborate with the other institutional Education Information Officer, district Education Information Officer, provincial Education Information Officer, and national Education Information Officer designated in terms of paragraph 29, in the furtherance of the education information systems vision at the national level.
- viii. To analyse data and provide rapid feedback to the institution. Report contradictory data extracted from the source system. Ensure the source system is repaired and improved for better reporting.
- ix. To institute sound methodologies to ensure integrity of institution record by :
 - Ensuring that a business process is developed and adhered to during data processing and migration between systems and data is consent across systems; and
 - Establishing effective and rigorous record keeping, data verification, data capturing and data handling methodology and sign – off procedures to ensure clean, accurate reliable and consistent quality data.

Relationship between EMIS Officer and Information Officer of Promotion of Access to Information Act

35 Heads of Provincial Education Departments and the Director-General of the Department of Basic Education must establish the function of the Education Information Officers in such a way that confusion around the relative roles of the information officers determined by the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No.2 of 2000) and the EMIS Officers is minimised. The point should be emphasised that Information Officers' functions as determined by the Promotion of Access to Information Act are mainly related to dealing with individual records and information about the services offered by the organisation. Their functions are less related to EMIS statistics, data information systems and standards.

36 The EMIS officer may be the head of the EMIS unit or directorate, if this is considered to enhance effectiveness. It is not a requirement that the Education Information Officer carry line responsibility for designing and implementing information systems in view of the fact that the focus of the Education Information Officer could become too broad. However, in the case of line responsibility for information systems residing separately from the Education Information Officer, the Director-General of the Department of Basic Education or the head of provincial education department must ensure that adequate reporting and communication channels are established between the two line functions to promote functionality.

Availability of EMIS Officers

37 Heads of provincial education departments and the Director-General of the Department of Basic Education must ensure that the function of the EMIS Officer can be performed on all working days, even in the temporary absence of the person designated as EMIS Officer. The EMIS Officer has to be easily contactable, and his/her office's contact details easily available and regularly updated.

Availability of resources for the EMIS Officer

38 The Director-General of the Department of Basic Education and heads of provincial departments must ensure that staffing norms are regulated such that the EMIS Officer has sufficient staff and resources at his/her disposal in order to perform his/her duties. Despite the specific obligations of provincial EMIS officers to provide the Department of Basic Education with data and statistics, the provincial EMIS Officer must also fulfil a range of information needs of the provincial education department itself.

Resources required by EMIS Officers

39 There must be adequate resources for the EMIS Officer to perform his/her duties, in terms of funding, human resources and equipment. The duties of EMIS Officers include the following:

- i. Design and planning of school surveys and censuses in accordance with prescribed standards.
- ii. Management of data capturing processes, both manual and automated.
- iii. Data analysis, manipulation and dissemination.
- iv. Assessment of data accuracy and quality.
- v. Compilation of statistical reports, with statistical and qualitative analysis.
- vi. Archiving of key historical data in accordance with national standards.
- vii. Systems analysis, including the analysis of the effectiveness and standards compliance of management systems.

National EMIS Officers and the Statistician-General

40 Section 14 of the Statistics Act, 1999 (Act No.6 of 1999) requires the Statistician-General to ensure the maintenance of national standards in official statistical collections, and to co-ordinate statistical collections. The Education Information Officer in the Department of Basic Education must actively support the Statistician-General in this obligation.

EMIS Officer as designator of official statistics

41 Only data and statistics formally certified as a true record by the head of a provincial education department or Director-General of the Department of Basic Education or an Education Information Officer, may be regarded as official. In determining whether data or statistics can be certified as a true record, the Education Information Officer must ensure that a reasonable level of analysis and verification has occurred. The Education Information Officer must be informed by the purpose for which the data or statistics will be used when determining whether the data or statistics can be regarded as a true record. The Education Information Officer must be guided by generally accepted practice, and general government standards, in particular those issued by the Statistician-General in terms of the Statistics Act, 1999 (Act No.6 of 1999), stated in Clause 7 of the Act: (7) (a) The Statistician-General may designate as official statistics any statistics or class of statistics produced from statistical collections by:

- i. Statistics South Africa; or
- ii. Other organs of state, after consultation with the head of the organ of state concerned.

42 Where problems or possible problems exist in official data or statistics, the Information Officer must make this clearly known through adequate explanatory notes. Moreover, the Information Officer must clearly state the source of any data or statistics that have been certified as official. Reasonable consistency between different releases of official data and statistics must be maintained.

Informal exchange of data and statistics

43 Paragraph 2 40 and 41 above should not preclude departmental officials from exchanging data and statistics informally where there is no need for the data or statistics to be declared a true record. This uncertified data has to be referred to as estimates. However, only data and statistics that have been certified a true record may be used in final reports and in final decisions. This arrangement excludes granular LURITS information that can only be handled in adherence to the protocol stated in the LURITS Regulations, promulgated through NEPA.

It is furthermore stipulated that the exchange of LURITS information is subject to the stipulations enshrined in Chapter 1, Section 2 of the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013

The process of providing data and statistics

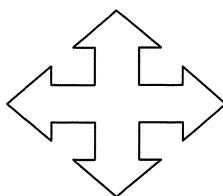
44 The Director-General or EMIS Officer in the national Department of Basic Education must clearly specify what data and statistics are required from provincial departments on a regular basis. Specifications must be sufficiently detailed to minimise ambiguities and misunderstandings, and must be stated in terms of national standards governing definitions and formats. Dates of submission, determined after consultation between the national and provincial departments, must also be specified. Only the provincial EMIS Officer, or the provincial head of the education department, may officially hand over the requested data or statistics to the national Education Information Officer. The provincial EMIS Officer must state formally any conditions regarding the information. Informal exchanges of data and statistics between the provincial and national departments may occur, but for preliminary analysis and reporting only, as prescribed in section 37 above.

Special requests for statistics

45 The Director-General or EMIS Officer in the national Department of Basic Education may make special requests for additional data and statistics, where these are not covered in the regular cycles of submissions. In making special requests, the national Education Information Officer must supply clear specifications for the request, and timeframes that are reasonable relative to the nature of the request. The national Education Information Officer will specify the reason for the special request. Only the provincial Education Information Officer, or the provincial head of the education department, may officially hand over the requested data or statistics to the national Education Information Officers. The provincial Education Information Officer must state formally any conditions regarding the information.

Collaboration between EMIS Officers for development purposes

46 The provincial and national EMIS Officers must work together to improve the efficiency and value of statistical collections.



DUTY OF EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS TO DEVELOP EDUCATION INFORMATION SYSTEMS

EMIS Officers' responsibilities in terms of systems development

47 Both the provincial and the national EMIS Officers must actively contribute to the development of education information systems, through the co-ordination of relevant line functions, development work within departments, and promoting the compliance of systems with national standards.

Efficient utilisation of state resources

48 In recognition of the fact that information systems are costly to develop, and the fact that needs across provinces and institutions are often similar, the Education Information Officer in the Department of Basic Education must encourage national systems development projects, in response to national, provincial and institutional needs, to avoid duplication and the inefficient use of state resources. S/he thus has to undertake cost-benefit analyses which will inform the development of systems.

DUTY OF INSTITUTIONS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

49 As stated in paragraph 13 above, it is the duty of education institutions to provide information to the education departments. paragraph 45 to 48 below elaborate on this duty of institutions.

Supplying information to LURITS

50 The DBE must acquire education information regularly from both public and independent institutions. Provincial departments with the necessary infrastructure must provide electronic information to LURITS, the content and frequency of which is specified in the regulations.

51 It is the duty of all heads of institutions to supply accurate education information to the best of their ability, in the knowledge that the deliberate distortion of information constitutes fraud. Where an education census requests details with regard to the race, gender or disability status of persons, for the purposes of tracking redress of apartheid inequalities, it is the duty of heads of institutions to comply with the request.

Supplying information to private and Government organisations

52 Where the provision of information by an institution involves an activity such as a survey within the institution, approval must be sought from the provincial Head of Department or Director-General in DBE.

Adequate definitions of terms in acquisition of education information

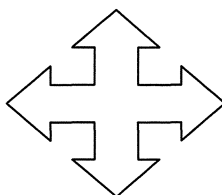
53 In order to facilitate the collection of accurate and comparable information from institutions, the departments of education must ensure that all data collection tools include clear and precise definitions of terms used, to prevent ambiguities and misinterpretations. These definitions must conform to national standards in this regard.

Feedback on analysed information to respondents

54 The departments of education must take active steps to supply institutions with relevant statistical and analytical results of education censuses and other data collection surveys, which these institutions participated in. This will make participation in education information acquisition more meaningful to institutions, and will encourage future participation.

DUTY OF PARENTS, LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

55 Parents of learners in schools have a duty to provide information and/or source documents on both learners and parents to the institution where this information is required for the normal running of the institution. This information would include, for example, name, date of birth, learner ID number, home address, home language and basic health information, though not necessarily HIV/AIDS status. There is no duty on parents to provide information on income or wealth status, unless parents wish to apply for full or partial exemption from the payment of school fees, in terms of section 39(4) of the South African Schools' Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996).



POWERS TO SET STANDARDS

56 In terms of section 3(4)(a) of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act No. 27 of 1996), the Minister has the power to determine the standards referred to in paragraph 52 below insofar as they affect the education departments and institutions comprising the South African education system.

Consideration of the broader information systems environment

57 Processes used to arrive at information standards must reflect the complexity of the information systems environment itself, and of a system of provincial departments and institutions with varying degrees of autonomy. Processes should strike a balance between the urgent need for standards to be generated, on the one hand, and the constitutional rights of departments and institutions and the need for consultation, on the other. Moreover, processes should be sensitive to the reality that some provincial departments and institutions have, largely for historical reasons, not been in a position to invest as much in information systems as others. In this regard, it must be ensured that processes empower the historically disadvantaged, whilst at the same time valuable lessons gained from systems where considerable investment has taken place, are made to benefit the country as a whole.

Types of standards

58 For the purposes of this policy, different types of standards can be identified. There are standards governing:

- i. Descriptors and definitions of education terms. Terminology and classifications used in the administration and planning of the education sector needs to be uniform across the country. This terminology should be captured in a national education dictionary, which should also be a point of departure for specifying the inter-relationships between terms that systems designers require, as well as the data field names that would correspond to particular terms.
- ii. Statistical tables. Key statistical tables produced by the education departments, for instance in annual statistical reports, must be standardised for national planning to be possible. Standards in this regard should consider and incorporate official and emerging education indicators for South Africa and the United Nations Organisation. In the case of SEMIS, it is necessary for each product to produce a minimum set of standardised school tables reflecting the data of the school.
- iii. Information publications. In the interests of user-friendliness, and comprehensiveness, it is important for certain information publications to be standardised across all provinces, for example lists of institutions made available to the public.
- iv. Unique identifiers. Identifiers that are unique at the national level are required

for a range of people and items, for example learners, educators, whether publicly or privately employed, curriculum offerings and institutions. Standards governing the generation of such unique identifiers are required.

- v. Data file layout. Where different systems exist that must be integrated, the standardisation of data files is essential.
- vi. Data coding. Codes used to refer to attributes must be standardised for data integration to be possible.
- vii. Data quality. The processes of data capturing and cleaning by education departments must be governed by minimum quality standards in order to ensure that data accuracy is of an acceptable level.
- viii. Platforms of systems. Minimum standards must be set for hardware and software insofar as this is required for integration of systems and transfer of data.
- ix. Performance of systems. Certain aspects of the performance of systems should be standardised, in particular aspects relating to efficiency, timeliness, quality of data, the protection of privacy and the backing up of data.
- x. Communication between systems. Network protocols must be standardised for the effective transfer of data between systems to be possible.
- xi. Data archiving. Minimum standards for the archiving of historical data in education departments and institutions are required to ensure that individual histories, and the history of the system as a whole are available in the future.
- xii. Record keeping. The minimum standard for the keeping of records and the
- xiii. type of records to be managed at an institutional level”

Information Standards' Committee

Functions of the committee

59 The Director-General will establish and appoint members to the Information Standards' Committee to advise him or her in the information standards generation process. The Committee will be accountable to the Director -General. The functions of this committee will be to:

- i. Conduct research into the area of education information systems standards.
- ii. Co-ordinate consultation on standards between key role players.
- iii. Receive and evaluate written inputs from role players, including members of the public and IT firms.
- iv. Advise the Director-General on standards to be made official Policy, after careful consideration of the options.
- v. Be the custodians of the definitive and most recent set of approved information standards for the education system.
- vi. Make standards widely known and available.

Composition of the committee

60 The Information Standards' Committee will consist of between 10 and 15 permanent members and will include representation from:

- i. The Department of Basic Education
- ii. The provincial departments of education
- iii. The Department of Higher Education and Training
- iv. Statistics South Africa
- v. The Department of Public Service and administration
- vi. Department of Communications
- vii. The State Information Technology Agency
- viii. The Information Technology industry
- ix. Educational statutory bodies

61 The Director-General may appoint departmental Education Information Officers described in paragraph 29 and 30 to represent the Department of Education and provincial education departments in the Standards' Committee. Representation from the provincial education departments will be collective in nature, and individual members of the Information Standards' Committee from provincial departments will represent provincial interests as a whole and not the interests of their respective individual provincial departments. Representation from the Information Technology industry shall not represent the interests of any particular firm, but the industry as a whole. The Information Standards' Committee is not intended to be a fully representative body with decision-making powers. It is instead a specialist advisory body that makes recommendations to the Director-General. Appointment to the Information Standards' Committee should be considered in this context.

Procedures for the committee

62 The Director-General must request nominations from the organisations listed in paragraph 61 above in deciding the appointments to be made to the Information Standards' Committee. The Director-General must appoint a chairperson of the Information Standards' Committee. The chairperson shall determine frequency of meetings and meeting protocols in consultation with the Director-General. Only the Director-General may terminate membership of the Information Standards' Committee, for reasons such as:

- (i) the Registered Member absents him/herself from two (2) consecutive Board meetings over a period of 12 months without showing good cause;
- (ii) absents him/herself from four (4) non-consecutive Board meetings over a period of 12 months without showing good cause;
- (iii) the Board, acting reasonably and in good faith, determining by 2/3 affirmative vote of its members that the Registered Member has refused or failed to comply with the provisions of this Policy or any applicable rule made by the Board;
- (iv) his/her ceasing to be incumbent in position their membership was drawn from

Co-option of members to the committee

63 The Information Standards' Committee may co-opt members for limited periods in

order to obtain certain expertise, for instance expertise specific to a particular education sector, like Adult Basic Education and Training.

Process for generating information standards

64 The research conducted or commissioned by the Information Standards' Committee must apply international best practice, local education priorities and trends in the information technology industry to influence the standards generating process. Thorough and ongoing analysis of systems and censuses not directly controlled by the education departments but that may influence the development of education information systems must take place.

Consultation and dissemination of information by the committee

65 Regular and adequate consultation must occur between members of the Information Standards' Committee, but also between the Information Standards' Committee and other role players. Considering that provincial representation is general and not done through the membership of representatives from all the provinces at once, the Information Standards' Committee must update provincial departments in writing on work in progress once a month, or whenever there are new developments. Moreover, regular updates of ongoing work must be submitted to the Director-General.

The committee and role players in general

66 The Information Standards' Committee must attempt to make its work known to all potential role players, and must ensure that it is easy for role players to submit recommendations regarding information standards. The Committee must respond to every submission received within two months of submission.

Use of industry conventions

67 The standards generated by the Information Standards' Committee must be understandable, yet should adhere to conventions that are familiar to actors in the systems development industry, considering that these actors will constitute important beneficiaries of the standards documentation.

Format of the standards documentation

68 The standards generated must be documented in a format that makes the process of periodical revisions clear and manageable. The format must, for example, make it clear when previously existing standards have been withdrawn or modified.

Final approval

69 When the Minister is satisfied that new standards have been generated and serve the interests of the education system, he or she must officially approve the standards

concerned. The approval will be in the form of a Government Notice referring to the latest amended collection of all standards generated in terms of this policy.

Dissemination of approved information standards

70 The Information Standards' Committee must ensure that the standards documentation becomes as widely accessible as is necessary. Copies of the documentation should be available on a website.

APPENDIX 1:***Summary of Sources of Information for the Public***

	<i>National Department</i>	<i>Provincial department</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Institutions</i>
Lists with basic institution information for parents, learners and students.	~ *	~		~ (subject to
Operational data on institutions, for instance pass rates and poverty		~		sufficient resources) ~
data, for parents.				
Standard databases for	~ *	~		
Contact details of institutions for	~ *	~		
use by third parties				
Official annual statistical reports	~ *	~		
for the public in general.				

*

*If only provincial information IS needed, then the requester IS encouraged to contact the relevant provincial department of education, even if the Department of Basic Education also keeps the information.

Diagrammatic Representation

The following pages provide a diagram to assist in understanding the policy.

