



12 May 2015

Overview and Analysis of Basic Education Report on South Africa Standard for Principalship.

1. Background

The Minister of Basic Education called for comment on a proposed *South African Standard for Principalship* in Government Gazette no 37897, dated 7 August 2014¹. These comments were incorporated into the draft document which is being presented to the Portfolio Committee. The publication of the proposed *Standard* was seen as an important step in the process of developing a new job description and finalisation of an assessment instrument for school principals.

2. South African Standard for Principalship

The draft *South African Standard for Principalship* attempts to do four things²:

- Define the role of the principal
- Explain the rights and values that underpin the role of the principal
- List the key performance areas of the principal
- Identify the personal and professional attributes expected of a principal

The draft stresses the point that the standard which developed, is generic and that it will apply to all principals in all schools.

2.1 Role of the Principal

The draft defines the core role of the principal as follows³:

The core purpose of principalship is to provide leadership and management in all areas of the school to enable the creation and support of conditions under which high quality teaching and learning take place and which promote the highest possible standards of learner achievement.

2.2 Rights and Values

A total of ten rights and values are listed which are appropriate in the South African context.

2.3 Key Performance Areas

Each performance area is broken down into the knowledge that a principal should possess and the action that he/she should take to achieve the standard.

The eight key areas are:

- Leading the Learning School;
- Shaping the Direction and Development of the School;
- Managing Quality and Securing Accountability;
- Developing and Empowering Self and Others;
- Managing the School as an Organisation;

¹ DBE (2015)

² Ibid

³ Ibid



- Working with and for the immediate school Community as well as the broader community;
- Managing Human Resources (Staff) in the school; and
- Management and advocacy of extra-curricular activities.

2.4 Personal and Professional Attributes

The draft explains the interconnect of the role of the principal, rights and values, key performance areas and the personal and professional attributes as follows:

The Key Areas, which define the principal's leadership and management role in relation to the Core Purpose of Principalship, are underpinned by Educational and Social Values and assume the acquisition of a body of professional Knowledge and the demonstration of appropriate Actions in each of the key areas. However, in addition to these, a principal will bring a range of Personal and Professional Attributes to the role. These will influence the ways in which the leadership and management role is fulfilled and in the determination of effectiveness in carrying out that role.

The draft identifies 11 personal and professional attributes that a principal is expected to possess and exercise in each performance area.

2.5 General Comments

2.5.1 Assessment and the key performance areas

Reference is made to the QMS noting that the introduction of the OSD in 2008 work was commenced on the development of an Education Management System (EMS) which included a performance contract that principals would have been required to sign. The key performance areas in the "Standard" are the same as those on which the draft EMS was based.

After many years of work by the ELRC task team assigned to develop the EMS, parties were on the verge of signing an EMS collective agreement for principals, when it was later felt that it should be reviewed. The ELRC task team working on the QMS for principals was resuscitated in 2013. It is not known when the revised QMS will be tabled in the ELRC for finalisation. This draft on the "Standard" may be the precursor to the introduction of the revised IQMS for principals.

2.5.2 International research on performance areas

The key performance areas listed in the draft have been informed by research and assessment instruments used in the teaching profession by a number of other countries. These are Ministry of Education New Zealand: *Area School Principals' Professional Standards* (2012); American Institutes for Research: *Measuring school principal performance* (2012); and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD): *Learning standards, teaching standards and standards for school principals: a comparative study* (2013)



Matters for Consideration

- How implementable are these standards?
- Does the Department have a strategy on the implementation of these standards (That include the mediation, training and setting of systems for the smooth and seamless implementation)?
- Has such a strategy if available, been costed?
- How compatible are these standards with other policies of the department?

3. References

Department of Basic Education (2014), *South African Standard for Principalship* in Government Gazette no 37897. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Basic Education (2015), *Draft South African Standards for Principals*. Pretoria.