



**12 May 2015**

## **Overview and Analysis of Basic Education Report on the Introduction of Advance Diploma in School Leadership and Management.**

### **1. Background**

The Department of Basic Education aspired to introduce what could later be a threshold qualification for aspiring school principals as part of its wider strategy to improve educational standards. The course was Advanced Certificate in Education: School Leadership and, beginning in 2007, the course was tested nationally with candidates, including serving principals, as well as members of School Management Teams (SMTs)<sup>1</sup>.

Several cohorts of Principals across the country, through provincial offices, were given bursaries to pursue studies in this course via selected Universities, they were taken through the programme. An impact study was conducted by the Department in 2011 and the following recommendations were made<sup>2</sup>:

- DBE continues to use the ACE programme.
- DBE considers rolling-out the ACE programme for the benefit of all schools in the country.
- DBE broaden the scope in the roll-out so as to include a cohort of Deputy Principals and Heads of Departments (HoDs) in schools.
- DBE to consider making the ACE programme an entry-level qualification for aspiring new principals.
- That the DBE considers updating the ACE programme materials, to take account of the findings of the evaluation,
- That DBE consider upgrading the programme to an advanced diploma level.

Noting that statistical analysis reflected that schools with at least one ACE candidate improved their matric scores twice as fast as other schools between 2008 and 2010. This was seen as a significant finding that should encourage the DBE to continue with the programme.

While the mixed case study evidence showed that there was no straightforward relationship between the ACE programme and improved learning outcomes, the statistical data showed that training school principals leads to school improvement in the majority of cases.

The Department of Basic Education, taking into consideration, the recommendation of the impact study, and seeking to align their plans in line with the National Development Plan (NDP), has developed a management and leadership programme for principals in the public sector, the Advance Diploma: School Leadership and Management (SLM) which is expected to provide structured learning opportunities that promote quality education in all South African school contexts through the development of a corps of education leaders who will have the ability to apply critical thinking and understanding in pursuit of the democratic transformation<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Basic Education (2009)

<sup>2</sup> Basic Education (2011)

<sup>3</sup> Basic Education (2015)



It is hoped that the programme will empower school leaders to develop skills, knowledge, and values necessary for leading and managing schools effectively and efficiently. This will then translate into a huge contribution towards the improvement of quality education across the schooling system.<sup>4</sup>

The programme is aimed at achieving the following objectives<sup>5</sup>:

- Improved leadership and management of the curriculum
- Evidence-based decision-making in schools, making optimal use of ICT
- Schools that are run as efficient and effective learning organisations
- Schools that work with and for the community
- Schools that contribute to continual strengthening of the school system.

## 2. Progress Report

Basic Education consulted widely on the introduction of ADE: SL to the extent that a research was conducted<sup>6</sup>. The review of the research and literature on leadership and management in South African schools depicted a considerable increase in the sources available for the development of the ADE: School Leadership.

It was noted that while the ACE curriculum relied heavily on international literature, and on fictional 'scenarios', the ADE curriculum will be informed by research grounded in a range of South African school contexts. Some areas still have limited research, notably managing physical and financial resources, and managing teaching and learning, but there are a few sources to utilise in developing the ADE. In other areas, there is more relevant literature although there is still ample scope to add to the research evidence on school leadership and management in South Africa.

The literature review followed the structure of the ACE core modules and the material summarised in the review provided a helpful starting point for the DBE Task Team appointed to design and develop the ADE modules.

These sources can underpin the discussion of each module and unit, while edited versions of the quotations could be used as boxed text to illustrate points made by authors. The ACE programme has already made a major contribution to school improvement in South Africa and a well-designed ADE, underpinned by the research reported in this review, should be able to continue and extend the progress reported in the evaluations of the ACE programme.

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<sup>4</sup> Basic Education (2015)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Ibid



#### **Matters for consideration**

- Has the Department ever conducted a survey/profile of principals in the system?
- What distinguishes principals of 'former model C' from those in townships and rural communities? Is it their qualifications or is it the systems these principals are able to put in place or fail to put in place?
- What then exactly informed the introduction of the ACE: SL programme? What was the target group? Was the programme able to fulfil what it was intended? What form of evidence is there?
- Why now introduce another programme? What should happen to the ACE: SL programme, especially those who graduated? Should they also reregister to upgrade?
- How compatible is this initiative with Labour Relations? Are Unions involved in this regard?
- How much does the new programme cost? Will the department realise value for money out of this initiative?

### **3. References**

Department of Basic Education (2015), *ADE Literature Review*. Pretoria

Department of Basic Education (2015) *Programme Outline for Advanced Diploma in School Leadership and Management*. Pretoria

Department of Basic Education (2011), *The Impact of the National ACE: SL Report*. Pretoria