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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Reference: Namakwa English Medium Classes
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TO: CONCERNED PARENTS IN NAMAKWA

Dear Colleagues

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ENGLISH MEDIUM CLASSES IN THE NAMAKWA DISTRICT FOR JANUARY 2020

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to give a final update on the work done by the Namakwa District Office in conducting a survey on the feasibility of implementing a sustainable strategy for English parallel medium classes at three (3) identified schools in the Namakwa District.

2. Background

A number of concerned parents approached the District Office to enquire about the possibility of implementing English medium of instruction at Springbok Primary School since the majority of the parents are working and residing in Springbok.

Three schools have since been identified for possible implementation of English parallel classes in January 2020. These schools are Springbok Primary School, Carolusberg Primary School and Port Nolloth Primary School.

3. Establishment of English Medium Task Team

An English Medium Task Team comprising of Circuit Managers, Curriculum officials as well as IMGD officials had been established at the District Office to conduct a feasibility study as well as to determine the sustainability of the implementation of English medium classes at the three schools in the District. The task team had to report back to the District Director on a weekly basis.



The terms of reference of the task team was to:

- Meet with the School Governing Bodies of Springbok Primary School, Carolusberg Primary School and Port Nolloth Primary School to consult with them on the possible implementation of English medium classes in January 2020;
- Assist schools to conduct a survey amongst parents and feeder communities on the need for English medium classes at these respective schools;
- Review the admissions and language policies of these three schools;
- Assist parents with learner admission applications for English medium classes.

4. English Medium Survey and Advocacy

The Task Team met with the School Governing Bodies of Springbok Primary School (24 July 2019), Carolusberg Primary School (25 July 2019) and Port Nolloth Primary School (28 July 2019) to consult with them on the implementation of English medium classes.

Advocacy was also done by distributing flyers in 15 villages and surrounding farms, conducting the survey amongst parents and communities as well as to do door-to-door in Carolusberg.

The School Governing Bodies of Carolusberg Primary School and Port Nolloth Primary School held meetings with the parents in their respective schooling communities. The School Governing Body meeting with the parents for Springbok Primary School did not materialize. They did however conduct the survey amongst the parents.

A brief outline of the advocacy strategies followed by the School Governing Bodies are as follows:

- The School Governing Bodies of Carolusberg Primary School and Port Nolloth Primary School held information meetings with their parents. All parents who attended the meetings were in favour of the implementation of English medium classes at the respective schools.
- Copies of the English medium flyers and survey questionnaires were sent to the three schools for further distribution, placed at municipal offices, shops and other strategic off-set points.
- Parents and community members submitted their completed survey questionnaires to schools. It was then forwarded to the district office for capturing.

The following concerns were raised by School Governing Bodies during the consultation process:

- Teachers were uncertain how the implementation of English medium might affect them. They also wanted to know how the staff establishment would be determined.
- Would it also be expected of the current staff members to teach in English;
- How would the implementation of English medium affect issues of time-tabling, staff provisioning, etc.
- How would the implementation of low numbers of enrolment for English medium affect the rest of the school? Clarity was sought on whether both multi-grade and mono-grade classes would then be implemented at the school.

- The School Governing Body of Springbok Primary School indicated that there is no physical space for extra mobile classes on the premises. There are only four classrooms available for English medium.
- The School Governing Body of Springbok Primary School required a written commitment that all expenses that might occur during the implementation of English medium will be paid by the Department.

5. Outcome of the Survey Results

The survey was conducted in the feeder communities of Carolusberg Primary School, Springbok Primary School and Port Nolloth Primary School.

The results of the survey are as follows:

No	School	Towns	Total Applications	Survey Results	
				Yes	No
1.	Port Nolloth Primary School	Port Nolloth	18	233	64
2.	Carolusberg Primary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carolusberg • Fonteintjie 	5	24	9
3.	Springbok Primary School	Springbok	32	39	190
Total			55	286	263

The statistics indicate that there is a discrepancy between the survey results and the actual number of learner admission application forms received at the schools and the district office.

Upon further engagement on the above findings, parents and community members indicated that they support the idea of the implementation of English medium classes at these schools but they do want their children to be taught in English. Parents argued that their children are already struggling at school and that the change to English medium might pose an additional challenge to them. They also indicated that they would struggle to assist their children with their schoolwork in English.

6. English Medium Learner Admissions Applications

The following is a breakdown of the learner admission applications received for English medium classes per school per grade:

NAME OF SCHOOL	GR R	GR 1	GR 2	GR 3	GR 4	GR 5	GR 6	GR 7	TOTAL
Carolusberg Primary School	0	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	5
Springbok Primary School	4	3	5	7	3	3	2	5	32

Port Nolloth Primary School	0	5	2	1	3	7	0	0	18
TOTAL	4	10	8	8	7	11	2	5	55

The Norms and Standards for Language Policy in Public Schools (Paragraph D: 3) stipulates that:

“It is reasonably practicable to provide education in a particular language of learning and teaching if at least 40 in Grades 1-6 or 35 in Grades 7-12 learners in a particular grade request it in a particular school.”

The challenge is that the district office received only 55 learner admission applications for three schools and that the numbers are spread across Grades R to 7. This poses a huge challenge to the district on the feasibility of the implementation of English parallel medium classes in January 2020.

7. Conclusion

The District acknowledges the need for the implementation of English parallel medium classes as is evident from the survey conducted and the learner admissions received.

The number of learners (55) that seek English medium of instruction is too low, as per the norms and standards of the language policy in schools, hence it might not be reasonably practicable to implement English medium classes at this stage.

In order to meet the needs of these learners', district officials would consult with School Governing Bodies and affected teachers to assist these learners with code switching at the respective schools. We are also in process of engaging schools to procure English textbooks for the learners across the various subjects.

This strategy is proposed for the interim until we would be able to fully implement English parallel medium classes in the District.

Hoping that you'll find this in order.



MR.G.T. PHARASI

Head of Department: Education