

# KZN EDUCATION CENTRE POLICY

2013

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- CES: Curriculum Support Services
- Education Centre Managers
- ELITS Staff

Your input was invaluable!

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## MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

The Education Centre programme is a key resource strategy to serve the rural school communities with quality teaching and learning resources. Taking into cognizance that KwaZulu-Natal is a predominantly rural province, a variety of factors emanating from the rural nature of the province affect effective curriculum implementation in schools. This policy is designed to give a clear direction for the achievement of the envisaged education goals. It creates a scaffold for a shared meaning on what needs to be done and how best can it be done within the parameters of the existing departmental policies that commit resources to strategic ends.

The premise which underlies this document is that an Education Centre which is strategically located is an enormous asset to a number of schools that are being serviced. There are four undisputed reasons that support this notion namely;

- (1) Considering the sad legacy of the past which has bequeathed several disparities in the delivery of quality teaching and learning resources that are growing wider unless they are redressed urgently, Education Centres bridge the rural-urban divide with regard to access to information resources and services.
- (2) The attributes of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are characterized by continuous learning; accelerated information overload; rapid progression and digital technologies demand learners who will make a meaningful contribution to the global world without fear of being inadequate.
- (3) The strong connection between teaching and learning resources and effective teaching methodologies cannot be denied.
- (4) Independent learning as a philosophy that gives learners an opportunity to 'lead themselves to success' is imperative. Education Centres serve as the most typical means to implement notions of autonomy, independence and self-directed learning since:
  - They offer of a wide range of resources in the form of library material namely; books, visual and audio-visual materials, digital resources as well as other print materials.
  - They create a conducive learning environment that adds flexibility to learners' individual needs, pace and learning styles.

Therefore, it is a great opportunity for me to introduce the Education Centre Policy abridged as Education Centre Policy which is a blueprint that re-focusses, repositions and intends developing new expanded learning opportunities and services for teachers and learners.

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## **1. SETTING THE POLICY AGENDA**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The establishment and management of education centres in the province are in line with the provincial priority to redress the imbalances of the past. They provide learning opportunities and open the doors of education to all. A network of education resource centres covering all 12 education districts have been established across the province, with a special focus on previously disadvantaged and rural areas. The Education Resource Programme delivers quality services, resources and programmes closer to all school communities throughout the province. An Education Resource Centre has the responsibility of providing several information resources and services in a circuit in order to support teaching and learning. In KwaZulu-Natal [KZN] Education Centres were established through the joint efforts of the KZN Department of Education and the Royal Netherlands Embassy.

### **1.2 Purpose statement**

This policy is formulated to set norms and standards that guide the operations of an Education Centre in order to maintain consistency and achieve the desired outcomes. It would ensure that redress measures are provided pertaining resources and information services and equitable opportunities are provided for remote school communities.

### **1.3 The Name Education Resource Centre**

The name Education Resource Centre can be abridged as Education Centre and it refers to ‘a hub for capacity building and access to information resources’ [Education Centres in KwaZulu-Natal, 2007, p.4]. The following are some of the considerations that were taken into account for the establishment of an education resource centre:

- Geographic proximity to the schools
- Access to transport routes
- Availability of electricity and telephone lines

- Proximity to district or circuit office
- Need for social upliftment, and poverty alleviation
- Professional contact and support

#### **1.4 Functions of the Education Centres**

The main function of an Education Resource Centre is to support teaching and learning by:

- Providing an appropriate range of resources that are well-managed and made accessible to all targeted users
- Creating various programmes and opportunities that develop a repertoire of knowledge and skills for curriculum development and enrichment
- Serving as a channel for internal departmental communication and distribution of information

Education Centres exist in the spirit and values enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa that address the provincial imperatives such as:

- Access to Library and Information Services
- Access to Computer Facilities
- Access to Science Laboratories
- Television and discussion rooms
- Career Information Services
- Administrative Services and
- Meeting Rooms/ Conference Facilities/ Workshops and Training Facilities

Linked to its features, the aims of the ERC are:

- To provide library and information services that allow learners and teachers to benefit from different kinds of teaching and learning resources.
- To provide Information and Communication Technologies [ICTs] services

- To provide space and equipment for science experiments in the laboratories
- To support matric intervention programmes as well as literacy and numeracy programmes
- To offer career-related information services on various fields of specialization
- To provide a complete range of administrative services such as photocopying, faxing, laminating, e-mailing etc.
- To provide space for workshops, tutorials and meetings
- To render relevant programmes that improve the quality of education

The guiding principles for Education Resource Centres are the following:

- Provision of support to quality education
- Assurance to free and open access to information and services that are designed for the advancement of education
- Commitment to literacy and numeracy as foundational learning skills
- Excellence in providing professional service to all users
- Promotion of pedagogical integration of library resources and ICTs
- Ensuring a strong connection between learning resources and teaching methodologies
- Continuous professional development and support for teachers

### **1.5 Legislative Framework**

The Freedom Charter of 1955 and the South African Constitution of 1996 preserves the right to access to information for all South African citizens. To achieve the progressive realization of this right, Education Centres are opening doors of learning for all by encouraging free exchange of information resources among a sizeable number of school and local communities.

The philosophy behind Curriculum 2005 and later the NCS, RNCS and currently CAPS is knowledge construction by the learner using a variety of resources. This resources-based curriculum is a challenge to implement successfully in an environment where there are few functional school libraries. The education resource centres are, therefore, a response to the plight of the educators from the predominantly rural communities where there is a shortage of libraries which schools can use to access information.

The medium term strategic framework 2009-2014 entitled “Together Doing More and Better” paragraph 39.4 bullet 3 pronounces that “over the next five years, at least one resource centre will be created in each region to give support to schools and help them develop best practices in teaching and learning.”

In 2004 the KZN Department of Education formulated a Policy on Education Centres which guides the operations of an education centre as a nodal point that provides resources, facilities and venues for teachers, learners, members of governing bodies and surrounding communities. Furthermore, in 2011 the Organogram of the KZN Department of Education placed the Education Resource Centre Programme as one of the critical programmes necessary for the delivery of quality education.

The National Guidelines for School Library and Information Services [2012] indicates several models of school libraries including a cluster library which constitutes a number of schools within close proximity sharing resources located in an Education Centre/ nodal school. This assertion is in line with the KZN School Library Policy of 2003 and the Education Centre Policy Guidelines of 2005 which also regard a cluster collection serving a number of schools as viable school library model that is based on the resource-sharing principle.

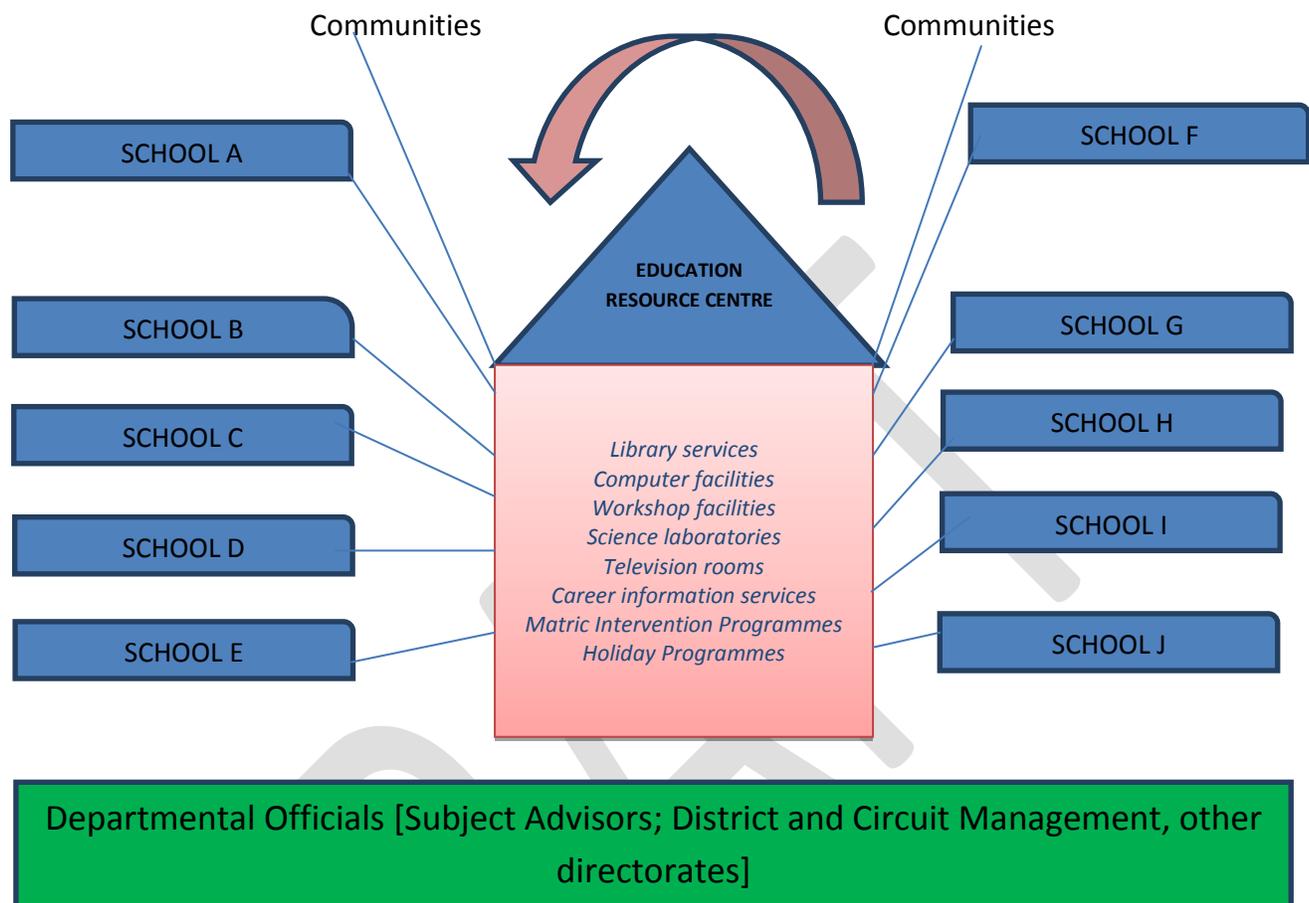
### **1.6 Education challenges leading to the establishment of Education Centres**

The KZN province faces a number of challenges in implementing quality education particularly in the rural areas. Some of these challenges include:

- Lack of access to well-resourced and functional school libraries and insufficient library material to support curriculum implementation at schools (books videos, journals, etc.)
- Lack of access to ICT, e.g. hardware and software, connectivity, online training venues, and technical support.
- Lack of science laboratories and equipment
- Lack of career centres to assist learners to make informed career choices
- Lack of training facilities for teachers' professional development

From 1998-2011 the Royal Netherlands Embassy (RNE) made funding available to support strategic plans of the department to find a practical solution to rural education problems. Initiatives such as the Multi Media Rural Initiative (MMRI) and The Resources and Information Network (RAIN) were supported by the RNE, and they formed a partnership with the KZNDoe to establish and implement the education centre programme. The existing centres were established through partnership between the Department and MiET from donor funding such as RNE, the Zenex Foundation, BHP Billiton, the Transnet Foundation, the Sugar Industry Trust for Education (SIFTE) and the Flemish government. While the KZNDoe was accountable for the delivery of core programmes at the education centres, MiET as its partner facilitated processes through which schools and communities around education centres took ownership of programmes linked to the educational and socio-economic development of their communities.

An Education Resource Centre provides a service to a number of school communities within its proximity, which is illustrated below:



### 1.7 Envisaged Policy Outcomes

- All ERCs have adequate permanently employed staff to effectively manage and render services required.
- All ERCs have quality resources and equipment to support teaching and learning as well as professional development of teachers.
- All ERCs have sufficient space to accommodate expanded learning opportunities
- Collaboration among all role players
- All ERCs are effectively utilized for maximum benefit of teachers and learners
- All programmes and projects implemented in the ERCs take into cognizance available human, material, time and space resources

### **1.8 Audience and applicability**

This policy applies to all KZN Education centres as a procedure that guides operations at an education centre that leads towards the desired outcomes.

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## POLICY STATEMENTS

### Policy statement 1: Management of Education Centres

All Education Resource Centres should be managed by centre managers at DCES level who work closely with support staff namely librarian, laboratory technician, IT specialist, administration clerk, cleaners and groundsman. The Education Centres that have mobile library services will have additional staff of a driver and a library assistant and those that process library material for schools will also have additional library assistants as determined by the organogram. The directorate responsible for them is ELITS at Head Office for support and co-ordination of programmes that promote integration of resources for effective teaching and learning. At a district level ERC managers report to the CES for Curriculum Support Services sub-directorate who in turn reports to the District Manager for administrative purposes as well effective implementation of programmes and projects.

### Policy statement 2: Education Centre Support Structure

All Education Centres will establish an advisory committee consisting of representatives from surrounding schools and communities that are being serviced. However, schools as the main clients will have greater representation i.e. 80% and communities will have 20% representation. Other members will be one representative from GET, FET, Teacher Development and Curriculum Support Services. The advisory committee will be chaired by the centre manager.

This committee will have the following roles and responsibilities:

- Commit to serve a two-year term and attend 4 meetings per year
- Participate in short-term and long-term planning for the centre
- Act as a liaison between the centre staff and the users
- Provide critical and constructive feedback on the centre operations
- Assist in fundraising for the Education Centre
- Give advices and suggest initiatives to promote the centre through collective wisdom

**Policy statement 3: Budget Allocation**

A dedicated budget will be allocated to each Education Resource Centres to enable them to provide adequate resources and strengthen their services at all times.

**Policy statement 4: Fundraising**

Education Resource Centres may fundraise for the growth and development of the centre in line with Treasury Regulations.

**Policy statement 5: Access to Education Resource Centres**

All teachers and learners within the specified cluster should have free and equitable access to the available resources and services. For expanded learning opportunities, the centre will operate on flexi-time aligning its services to learner support programmes guided by the Departmental policies and regulations. Community members within the cluster may access information and services from the ERC.

**EDUCATION CENTRE SERVICES****Policy statement 6: Library and information services**

Education Centres should offer library services for a cluster of schools through block loans, mobile library services, processing of library materials, setting up classroom libraries, celebrating library and literacy days and so on. They should provide a range of quality library resources that support the curriculum and promote a vibrant reading culture in schools. The library opening and closing times must accommodate the community it serves.

**Policy statement 7: ICT services**

Education Centres should offer ICT related programmes that increase access to relevant software such as Britannica, language software etc. as well as access to the internet. Chat rooms should be created for learners and teachers as platforms for sharing information and knowledge on lesson plans, subject content, learning difficulties, social and emotional challenges and other educational activities.

**Policy statement 8: Career Information Services**

All Education Centres will offer career information services that are intended to assist high school learners to make career choices according to their abilities and available job opportunities. These services would enable learners to access relevant information regarding careers, available bursaries, HEIs that offer certificates, diplomas and degrees, job interviews, writing CVs and other pertinent information. Career days will be held at the ERCs from time to time in conjunction with the Special Needs Education Services [SNES] and other relevant stakeholders.

**Policy statement 9: Science Laboratory Services**

Many schools do not have access to laboratories for effective teaching of science subjects. ERCs with designated laboratories and equipment must offer access to these facilities for utilization by a number of schools.

**Policy statement 10: Administrative Services**

Education Centres can provide effective administrative services such as photocopying, scanning, e-mailing, laminating, high volume duplicating, typing, preparing presentations, faxing at a minimal cost and so on. Furthermore, ERCs provide effective co-ordination of meetings, workshops or other related educational gatherings.

## EDUCATION CENTRE PROGRAMMES

### Policy statement 11: Education Centre Programmes

Education Centres should offer a range of Learner Support Programmes and Teacher Support Programmes in addition to the above-mentioned services. The critical ones are:

#### SUPPORT FOR LITERACY AND NUMERACY PROGRAMMES

In response to the alarming poor literacy and numeracy levels, ERCs provides/ will provide digital programmes and reading materials for learners in the previously disadvantaged /rural areas which are still inadequately resourced, remote and poorly equipped. For motivation celebration of literacy and numeracy days or weeks will be organized in the ERCs from time to time. These celebrations would involve schools within a cluster or at circuit levels. Holiday programmes can be organized for learners to participate in a range of literacy and numeracy activities such as Reading and Writing Clubs, story-writing contests etc.

#### MATRIC INTERVENTION PROGRAMME

The Television and Discussion Room in the ERC will address the Matric Intervention Programme and areas the need attention through block sessions whereby learners attend after school, on Saturdays and during school holidays. The key focus areas are on critical subjects namely; Mathematics, Mathematics Literacy; Physical Science; Life Sciences, Accounting and English First Additional Language. For this purpose, ERCs should use iBoxes with MindSet and Sangari content to support teaching and learning. Teaching resources such as the iBoxes allows teachers to apply effective teaching methods and design lessons that meeting the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Additional digital resources on the matric subject content as well as previous examination papers and memos will be provided.

#### TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

Workshops on various subjects are conducted at the ERCs as per arrangement with the centre management. ERCs also serve as a venue for Subject Committee Meetings and other Communities of Practices {CoPs} for professional development and support.

ERCs can be used as delivery sites for various Higher Education Institutions [HEIs] to meet the need for newly qualified teachers. This could lead to double intake of present capacity at HEIs whilst meeting the demand for increased teacher throughput. Teachers will also have a teacher reference section in the library that would make available teachers' guides/ manuals and associated materials for effective teaching.

**Policy statement 12: Establishment of provincial and district coordinating structures**

At Head Office there will be an inter-directorate committee that involves all key stakeholders to coordinate the activities for the Education Centre Programme.

At District level there will be an inter-sub-directorate committee that involves all key stakeholders to coordinate the activities for the Education Centre Programme.

## **2 CONCLUSION**

There is no doubt that additional ERCs are needed in the province considering the number of under-resourced schools and their role in providing resources that support effective implementation of the curriculum.

## **3 REFERENCES**

KZN Department of Education and MiET (2007) *Education Centres in KwaZulu-Natal: a concept document*. Randburg: Uwesio Investments

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITIES	TARGET	2013/14		2014/15		2015/16	
			Time frame	Planned output	Time frame	Planned output	Time frame	Planned output
	Conduct participatory processes with potential beneficiaries	Community structures and NGOs	Quarterly	Buy-in and ownership among all stakeholders	Quarterly	Buy-in and ownership among all stakeholders	Quarterly	Buy-in and ownership among all stakeholders
	Develop a detailed roll-out plan for building, upgrading and equipping ERCs with Infrastructure Delivery	Rural schools	Nov	A list of new centres to be rolled out per district per year	Nov	A list of new centres to be rolled out per district per year	Nov	A list of new centres to be rolled out per district per year
	Seek donor funding that would invest on building additional ERCs	Donors	Ongoing	Additional resources	Ongoing	Additional resources	Ongoing	Additional resources
	Convert “empty schools” into ERCs	“empty schools”	Ongoing	Identification and conversion of “empty schools”	Ongoing	Identification and conversion of “empty schools”	Ongoing	Identification and conversion of “empty schools”
	Sign commitment agreements with participating schools	Cluster schools	Nov	Schools effectively utilise the centre	Nov	Schools effectively utilise the centre	Nov	Schools effectively utilise the centre
Implement quality teaching and learning programmes to school communities	Facilitate installation of digital literacy and numeracy programmes	All ERCs	Nov	Effectively utilised ERCs with vibrant programmes to support the curriculum	Nov	Effectively utilised ERCs with vibrant programmes to support the curriculum	Nov	Effectively utilised ERCs with vibrant programmes to support the curriculum

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITIES	TARGET	2013/14		2014/15		2015/16	
			Time frame	Planned output	Time frame	Planned output	Time frame	Planned output
	Implement the School Library Programme	All ERCs	Ongoing	Learners become information literate and avid readers	Ongoing	Learners become information literate and avid readers	Ongoing	Learners become information literate and avid readers
	Co-ordinate computer training programmes	Teachers and communities	Ongoing	Computer-literate teachers and communities	Ongoing	Computer-literate teachers and communities	Ongoing	Computer-literate teachers and communities
	Support Matric Intervention programmes by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-ordinating Saturday and vacation programmes</li> </ul>	Cluster schools	School holidays and Saturdays	Improved matric pass rate	School holidays and Saturdays	Improved matric pass rate	School holidays and Saturdays	Improved matric pass rate
	Provide career information services	Learners	Ongoing	Learners make informed career choices	Ongoing	Learners make informed career choices	Ongoing	Learners make informed career choices
Develop and utilise collection of resources	Develop a resource collection policy	ERC users	Oct	Access to quality resources	Oct	Access to quality resources	Oct	Access to quality resources
	Select appropriate resources to support teaching and learning	ERC users	Oct	Quality resources made available for all users	Oct	Quality resources made available for all users	Oct	Quality resources made available for all users

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITIES	TARGET	2013/14		2014/15		2015/16	
			Time frame	Planned output	Time frame	Planned output	Time frame	Planned output
	Procure and install resources and equipment in the centres	ERC users	Oct	Quality resources made available for all users	Oct	Quality resources made available for all users	Oct	Quality resources made available for all users
	Establish an effective circulation system for available resources	ERC users	Sept	Functional ERCs	Jan	Functional ERCs	Jan	Functional ERCs
	Ensure internet connectivity to increase access to information resources	ERC users	Nov-Dec	Internet access for all users	Jan	Internet access for all users	Jan	Internet access for all users
	Update the collection through weeding out-dated and adding teaching and learning resources	ERC users	Nov-Dec	Relevant collection are made available for all users	Nov-Dec	Relevant collection are made available for all users	Nov-Dec	Relevant collection are made available for all users
	Establish partnerships with HEIs, NGOs and other role players	ERC users	Ongoing	Collaboration and synergy	Ongoing	Collaboration and synergy	Ongoing	Collaboration and synergy
Support the socio-economic development of communities in the neighbourhood	Run programmes that support communities in the area	Local communities	Ongoing	Support for local communities	Ongoing	Support for local communities	Ongoing	Support for local communities
Conduct monitoring and support for ERCs	Monitor effectiveness of ERCs and conduct ongoing formative evaluation	All ERCs	Ongoing	Fully operational ERCs	Ongoing	Fully operational ERCs	Ongoing	Fully operational ERCs