



## **KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE**

**EDUCATION**  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

02 February 2021

### **State of Readiness for School Opening on 15 February 2021**

The Province of KwaZulu-Natal is ready for school opening on Monday, 15 February 2021. The main aim is to have the first lesson on the first hour of the first school day.

This calls for readiness in terms of learner admission, availability of physical resources such as classrooms, stationary, textbooks, school furniture, water, sanitation, COVID-19 essentials, learner transport as well as nutritious food for learners who are beneficiaries of the National School Nutrition Programme.

Availability of human resources such as teachers, non-teaching staff (including screeners and cleaners) are very critical for the opening of schools. The staffing of districts for school support is of critical importance in the system of education. In terms of finances, the transfer of norms and standards to schools is very important. The following discussion provides the state of readiness for opening of schools in KwaZulu-Natal.

#### **Availability of Covid-19 Essentials**

For the safety of school communities (learners, teachers and non-teaching staff), the Department of Education has made good progress to ensure that all the COVID-19 essentials are delivered to schools before the arrival of learners.

This includes the provision of water and sanitation facilities. The Department of Education has evidence that liquid COVID-19 essentials are already delivered to all districts. In two districts where there is a challenge of storage space, Head Office is providing support. There is confirmation that all schools will have required COVID-19 essentials when learners arrive and this will include cloth masks for teachers and learners.

It must be mentioned that schools are ready as the School Management Teams (SMTs) opened on 25 January 2021.

#### **Learner admissions**

Out of 2 771 015 learners that are expected to be admitted by schools in red 2021, the province has already admitted 2 769 212 learners which is 99.93%. Learner admissions have been completed in most of the grades.



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The unplaced learners are mainly in Grades 1 and Grade 8. This is understood because these are entry grades for foundation phase and secondary school phase. In order to assist parents whose children have not yet been admitted, districts have formed admission committees which will intervene in cases where learners don't find space.

The Department also expects the "walk-ins" because of factors such as movement of parents from one location to another.

### **Filling of Vacant Posts.**

The Department noted as early as 2020 that there are vacant posts created by attrition, retirements, promotions and even Covid-19 fatalities. These are posts Departmental Heads, Deputy Principals, Principals, Cleaners, Screeners for Teachers and Cleaners. There is good progress in the filling of these posts.

To strengthen support for school functionality and productivity, office based posts of Circuit Specialists (Managers, Curriculum Teacher Development Specialists etc. have been filled. In terms of surplus 3671 educators the Department of Education had and 1001 of them have been placed. The Department of Education is finalising the placement of other 2670.

### **Infrastructure**

Although there are schools which were vandalised and damaged by storms during holidays, the damages will be dealt with whilst schools are in operation except for schools where damage is such that teaching and learning cannot take place. In such instances, Head Office is working with districts to ensure that schools are ready for the commencement of teaching and learning on 15 February 2021.

Schools will not run short of water because water tanks were installed in schools where there is no running water. There are 18 455 water tanks across the province.

### **Textbooks and School Furniture**

One of the main requirements for schools to open is Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM). This includes stationery, textbooks and school furniture. There is good progress because the province has already delivered 100% of the stationery. As of today the province has delivered 96.4% of textbooks and the remaining 3.6% will be delivered during the week ending on 5 February 2021. In line with White Paper 6 (Inclusive Education), the procurement of braille textbooks has been concluded and deliveries are ready to take place.

Orders for "top up school furniture" were completed and 100% of school furniture is in the warehouse ready to be delivered by 15 February 2021.



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### **National School Nutrition programme (NSNP)**

KwaZulu-Natal has 5 460 schools which are approved for benefitting from the NSNP. The number of benefitting learners is 2 442 744. The province is ready to roll out the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) when schools open this year. However, the Department of Education has directed schools to provide food parcels even before schools open. The Department of Education has done this through KZN NSNP Circular No. 2 of 2021, which provides guidance on how the system will implement the NSNP in 2021.

The province has put in place systems to monitor the percentage of learners provided with food. The central monitoring systems will be ready when schools open on 15 February 2021.

### **Learner transportation**

For transportation of learners the province is ready. There are 85 contracts comprising of 495 buses, 19 mini-buses and day of school 212 taxis. All these vehicles will be ready on the first day of school opening to transport 62 070 learners. Several meetings have been held with Service Providers to ensure that all systems are ready. For the purposes of Covid-19 compliant trips, there will be notices displayed in the vehicles about the wearing of masks. The Department of Education has made plans to ensure that all contracted dedicated learner transportation vehicles have sanitisers and disinfectants when schools open.

### **Readiness for Teaching and Learning**

The Department of Education has printed all the (ATP'S) have revised Annual Teaching Plans from Grade R to Grade 12 and deliveries are underway. Head Office curriculum specialists completing the mediation of the districts using such online platforms as TEAMS. Revised Annual Teaching Plans to District Officials are ready to mediate the ATP'S to teachers. Later all schools will be provided with electronic copies of all the ATP'S. The province can confirm that teachers will be able to manage the coverage of the 2021 curriculum using the revised ATP'S.

Subject Specialists are ready to provide support to teachers where it is needed.

### **Time Tabling under COVID-19 Restrictions**

Time tabling options will not change drastically from last year's options. Some schools will still need to alternate days so as to accommodate all learners whilst observing social distancing. The time tabling options will include alternating weeks, platooning, alternating days, hybridization and normal time tabling.



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The choice of the time tabling option will be determined by the demand for classroom space and the consumption. Thereof. The province is fully aware of the fact that the majority of schools will not be able to accommodate all learners on 15 February 2021 due to social distancing and other COVID-19 safety. With permission from the Minister of Basic Education the province will communicate the dates for a staggered return of learners to schools before 15 February 2021.

### **Transfer of Norms and Standards**

There is progress in the transfer of norms and standards to schools. The focus is on the transfers such as allocations for textbooks and stationery for Public Ordinary Schools, Section 20 Petty Cash, Independent Schools (2nd Tranche), Special Schools, Section 21 Learner Compensation (FTE), Section 20 Learner Compensation (FTE), SGB Subsidy, Pre-Primary Grade R for Public Ordinary Schools. Boarding Schools, Full Service Schools, Learner Deviations and Covid-19 cleaning and grass cutting.

In conclusion, the Province of KwaZulu-Natal is ready to open schools for the 2021 Academic Year. Considerable progress is being made to address minor outstanding issues such as late admissions. School functionality visits will be conducted by oversight committees and Departmental Officials on the first day of schooling.

**Issued by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education**