basic education
Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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TO: HEADS OF PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS
DISTRICT DIRECTORS
CIRCUIT MANAGERS
SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES (SGB)
SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

CIRCULAR NO *S10* of 2026: MINISTERIAL CAMPAIGN ON THE ROLL-OUT OF THE NATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE IN SCHOOLS AND THE SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) hereby announces the commencement of the Ministerial National Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools (WinS) Self-Assessment Campaign, which marks the first phase in the implementation of the National Guidelines for WinS.

1. Background

The DBE developed the National Guidelines for WinS to provide a nationally coordinated framework for improving WASH services in schools. The Guidelines support provinces, districts and schools to strengthen the planning, implementation, operation and maintenance of WASH facilities and services, promote positive hygiene behaviours, improve governance and accountability, and establish systems for regular monitoring and continuous improvement. Ultimately, they provide a practical roadmap for creating safe, healthy and dignified learning environments that support teaching, learning and learner wellbeing.

The Guidelines were developed through an extensive consultative process involving Provincial Education Departments (PEDs), relevant government departments, private sector, development partners and other key stakeholders. To prepare for implementation, the DBE hosted a National Capacity Building Workshop from 23–24 June 2026, where provincial implementation teams were oriented on the Guidelines, the WinS Self-Assessment Tool and provincial implementation planning. This preceded the successful ***Ministerial Launch of the National Guidelines on 25 June 2026***, signalling the commencement of national implementation.

2. Ministerial WinS Self-Assessment Campaign

The Ministerial WinS Self-Assessment Campaign will run for **60 days**, from Monday, 17 August 2026 to Friday, 16 October 2026.

The campaign serves as the first national implementation activity under the Guidelines. It aims to encourage every public school to assess its current water, sanitation and hygiene conditions using the official WinS Self-Assessment Tool, identify priority areas for improvement, and establish a national baseline to inform planning, resource allocation and ongoing support.

Schools are required to complete the digital self-assessment using the KoboToolbox platform. Provincial-specific access links are available on the DBE website, with a dedicated link for each province. **Link to DBE website:** https://www.education.gov.za/Programmes/CareandSupport/WASHinSchools.aspx

3. Provincial Coordination

PEDs are requested to actively coordinate and promote participation across all districts and schools. From the provincial implementation teams previously submitted to the DBE, each province is requested to nominate one **Provincial WinS Focal Person** to lead and coordinate the implementation of the National Guidelines and the Ministerial Campaign. The nominated official will also serve as the primary liaison with the DBE and partners.

4. Recognition of Excellence

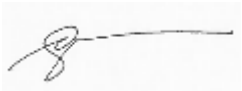
The success of this campaign depends on broad participation of schools across the country. Provinces are therefore encouraged to mobilise schools to participate as early as possible, allowing sufficient time for support, follow-up and improved completion rates during the campaign period.

To encourage participation and recognise excellence, the Minister of Basic Education will recognise the best-performing WASH Districts at the conclusion of the campaign, based on the proportion of schools that successfully complete the WinS Self-Assessment.

The DBE is confident that this campaign will strengthen collaboration across the sector, empower schools to improve their WASH services and contribute meaningfully towards creating healthier, safer and more dignified learning environments for all learners.

Your continued leadership and support in ensuring the successful implementation of this important national initiative are appreciated.

Yours Sincerely



DR G WHITTLE
ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL
DATE: 05/08/2026