

**CONCEPT DOCUMENT**

1. **BACK TO SCHOOL CAMPAIGN**
2. **PURPOSE**
   1. To propose the approach for outreach activities to be conducted by government as part of the 2022 Back to School campaign.
3. **INTRODUCTION** 
   1. Annually, government rolls out a range of Back to School initiatives at the beginning of January to mid-February to promote Education as a country priority to human and economic development, essential to lifting people out of poverty and enabling them to live a better life.
   2. The National Development Plan (NDP) calls for the implementation of a joint national initiative involving all stakeholders to drive efforts to improve learning outcomes. It is therefore the country`s collective effort to work together in order to meet the set targets and achieve the desired outcomes:
      1. Higher pass rate in matric with a greater focus on subjects such as mathematics and science; drop out of young people; improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools, colleges and universities to ensure that young people obtain the best education possible.
   3. Following a challenging 2021 year where the COVID-19 pandemic marred and disrupted the school calendar, causing uncertainty and anxiety, GCIS is proposing a coordinated government wide 2022 Back to School campaign to facilitate the 2022 School Readiness in support of the education sector with the broader society and partners.
4. **THE OUTCOME ENVIRONMENT**
   1. Throughout 2021, the Department of Basic Education together with sector partners had successfully informed South Africans and kept them abreast on issues affecting the sector and the learning outcomes programmes, plans and challenges through media briefings, interviews (to unpack complex matters) and social media. Numerous progressive interventions were made under the leadership of the Department of Basic Education to ensure that learning and teaching continued, despite challenges. Some of the issues in focus in 2021 have been, but are not limited to:

* Vandalism of schools
* Reopening of schools
* Learning during lockdown
* Sector Recovery plan
* Conflicting views in society about what should happen going forward.
* Water & sanitation
* Learner pregnancies and
* School safety, including bullying
* Issues of Learner Transportation
* The BEEI (Basic Education Employment Initiative)
  1. The sector has attained successes against all odds, recently concluding the incident free matric examinations period. It had been fraught with many problems within and outside its ambit, many of which are crosscutting and society wide in nature. The issue for instance of teenage pregnancy, must compel the nation to focus the light on the conduct of men who knowingly have sex with young women who are below the legal age of consent. A strengthened coordinated effort, including communities, is required in attaining learning outcome targets and addressing challenges therein: *school infrastructure, teenage pregnancies, school safety issues (violence and abuse, COVID-19 and many others.* These continued to shift attention from the core function of the basic education sector.
  2. In 2022, South Africa will again enter into a third year of COVID-19 lockdown and the preoccupation of saving lives and livelihoods continues. Striking a balance between the COVID-19 mitigation strategy and the overall MTSF implementation is critical as government is nearing the middle of the current 5-year term of the 6th democratic administration. The resent GCIS (GSCID) Quarter 3: 2021/2022 research findings indicate that only about a third (34%) of South Africans are of the view that government is accountable and transparent. Communication on achievements, plans and challenges - rallying all to play their parts, will go a long way in restoring confidence to a greater extent.

1. **CONTEXT** 
   1. Medium-Term Strategic Framework 2019–2024 (MTSF 2019-2024) is the manifestation of an implementation plan for the NDP Vision 2030 and for the implementation of the electoral mandate of the sixth administration of government.
   2. The recently approved biannual MTSF performance compiled by DPME is yet to be communicated to the public as part of the accountability and transparency obligations of government, a pre-requisite to good governance and trust. The Back to School campaign provides an opportunity and framework for government to communicate performance of learning outcomes in schools and rally partnerships in the improvements of those, in a coordinated manner.
   3. The proposed campaign captures a seamless communication opportunity for the learning outcome and programmes for the period January to February 2022 – from the Safer Summer or Safe Holidays campaign, to the SONA 2022.
   4. The COVID-19 Vaccine demand creation programme has targeted learners and their families to vaccinate ahead of their return to schools on 12 January 2022.
2. **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES**
   1. Mobilise the society at large, including sector stakeholders and partners around partnerships in the realisation of the Education priority and learning outcomes and targets.

Facilitate school readiness for 2022 by:

* Informing all stakeholders about the various aspects involved in the 2022 plans including but not limited to:
* COVID-19 compliance (Non-pharmaceutical Interventions; guidelines, standard operating procedures, orientation and training manual, Vaccination of 12+, norms and standards etc.)
* Assure and address anxiety and fears in communities regarding going back to school.
* Provide clear and consistent information about the issue of leaners placement, which tends to have some challenges at the beginning of each academic year.
* Where necessary, amplify and communicate about the “Second Chance” campaign.
* Inform and educate communities about the Safer Learner Transport Programme
* Solid and clear information about the school admission processes and the overall requirement and importance of ID documents for learners, not only for this process but also for many other essential services.
* Amplify the communication around the importance of vaccination by all within the sector including learners 12 years and above.

5.2. Profile and promote learning and leaner support programmes - MTSF, SONA. This should include profiling the Presidential Youth Employment Stimulus and also encouraging entrepreneurial skills through our private partnerships initiatives and the government’s economic programmes, and celebrating the new intake of Classroom Assistants under the PYES programme.

5.3. Strengthened collaborations between the Basic Education sector and partner departments - *Higher Education, Social Development, Health, Communication (e-learning) Women, Youth and People with Disabilities, Public Works, Water and Sanitation, Employment and Labour, and other implicated departments and entities around Education.*

5.4 Strengthened interface between schools and the broader society - cooperation and supportin implementation of the outcome programmes.

5.5 Participation in creating a conducive learning environment in and out of schools for the learners for the attainment of the outcome targets. This should include support resources to learners, especially those in poor and struggling households – stationery; uniforms; sanitary materials for young women to mention a few options.

1. **PROPOSED CHARACTER / FORMAT** 
   1. The campaign rollout will have a Monitoring and Evaluation function - **reporting back to the nation** to garner public confidence in the government’s collective commitment to the education priority and to provide key information that enables South Africans to play their part. **Visibility of the leadership on the ground through v**isits to service sites, communities and engagements with key sector partners of the learning outcomes.
   2. The Minister of Basic Education will mainly lead school tours and interactions with the school management teams.
   3. The **DDM approach to this social mobilisation effort is recommended** for the rest of the leadership, whereby they will mobilise and Call to Action the communities in their districts.
   4. **A clear Call to Action** statement to all (learners, sector stakeholders and communities, business etc. to participate, lend a hand and support in meeting set targets, plans and in finding solutions to the identified challenges and hindrances.
   5. The departments supporting the learning outcome are requested to amplify progress and plans of their contributing programmes/initiatives they lead, using unmediated and mediated communication channels.
2. **2022 CONTENT FOCUS** 
   1. **The campaign to mainly focus on, but not limited to:**
3. **Safety first as we head back to school for the 2022 academic calendar. (**Summer holidays campaign in January)

* COVID-19 Vaccination of both staff as well as learners who are eligible.
* SOPs for the Containment and Management of COVID-19 for Childcare Facilities, Schools and School Communities
* Active promotion of NPIs.

1. **Presidential Youth Employment Stimulus (Basic Education Employment Initiative).**

* Making sure that the work being done by the assistants is profiled while also making sure that we profile "the real human story" behind each placement, how this has added value to the lives of the youth and the programme role to the broader employment creation agenda of government
* This will be supported by a Roadshow which will be undertaken by the Basic Education Ministry to support the reopening of schools.
* Communication plans from provinces (Education) are in place.

1. **ECD Function Shift**

* This will see certain functions shift from Social Development to DBE.
* There is a communication plan as well as a fact sheets.

1. **Three Stream Model**

* Focus on vocational education and a training, skills based learning to ensure that learners and schools of specialization are quickly absorbed into sectors.
* This is done in conjunction with Departments of Employment and Labour as well as Higher Education and Training in collaboration with industries, to see that the learners are being trained.

1. **DPME’s MTSF Progress report on outcomes - for factual account of achievement and challenges.** The DPME will be requested to provide a baseline progress report on this outcome area.
2. **2nd chance opportunities** for 2021 Matric Class.
3. **The fight against GBVF and general violence in schools** (intergovernmental School safety programme).
4. **School Health and Wellness programmes including but not limited to**

* Sanitary towels and psycho social support services by DSD.

i. **Information about the Safer Learner Transport** system from the Department of Transport.

j. The Department of Home Affairs to assist the admission processes by promoting the application for and collection of ID documents.

1. **KEY STAKEHOLDERS** 
   1. **The following stakeholders have been identified:**
   2. Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities
   3. Presidency Group of Departments and Entities - DPME, GCIS and entities MDDA and BrandSA
   4. Department of Social Development (DSD)
   5. SAPS - Civilian Secretariat for Police
   6. Department of Home Affairs
   7. The Department of Transport
   8. Department of Higher Education and Training
   9. Department of Employment and Labour
   10. National Youth Development Agency (NYDA)
   11. Civil Society organisations
   12. Chapter 9 institutions
   13. Business
   14. Society at large around school communities
2. **TARGET AUDIENCES**
   1. To effectively achieve the communication objectives our target audiences will be segmented into primary and secondary target audiences.
   2. **Primary target audience:**

* Teachers (compliance with sector norms and standards, policies)
* Learners (vaccinate to be protected from adverse illness, Play your part )
* The Education sector (Teachers, Educators, management teams.)
* Parents and care-givers/guardians, families (readiness for children going back to school - here are our plans, play your part, vaccinate your child for her/his safety)
  1. **Secondary target audience:**
* Teacher unions (are our issues addressed, staff safety)
* SGBs
* Civil society organisations
* Sector partners (how can we support in achieving learning outcome targets)
* The media (communication partnership - channel for information disseminating)
* The general public (accounting to citizenry, Call to action to play their part).

1. **COMMUNICATION APPROACH** 
   1. **Communication Objectives**

* Position basic education as a catalytic priority for the long term economic development, human and community development of the country - all kids must be in school.
* Showcase the education sector strides on the learning outcome performance - basic education employment assistance programmes, COVID-19 containment measures-norms and standards.
* Clearly communicate the 2022 sector readiness and plans, including COVID-19 response plan and plans to address issues hindering the learning outcome.
* Drive a Call to Action to the sector communities, partners and society at large to support learning programmes of the outcomes.
  1. **Key messages**
* Emphasis on the 2021 outcome achievements, 2022 plans and Interventions on the problematic targets and shortcomings such as school infrastructure, water and sanitation, school safety programmes including, learner pregnancies and learners etc.
* The Call to Action messages for partnerships in the realisation of the sector plans and support to the learners to create a conducive learning environment (Play your part - adopt a school, a child, donate goods and services etc.)
* COVID-19 Safety- prevention and vaccination**,** including booster jabs for adults
* School Safety is our collective responsibility.
* Education is a societal issue.
  1. **Phased communication** plan to be developed,

***Pre phase: 3 - 10 January 2021:***

* Mainly planning and internal (government) communication around the campaign for synergies; consolidation of the concept, intergovernmental relations and harvesting content and information from key departments.
* Communication content and product development - messages artwork, circulars - dominant issues in this phase are placement and admission of children to schools, led by DBE provincial departments; as well as Vaccination demand creation activities targeting learners - Summer holidays.
* Consolidation of a calendar of activities for communication on the campaign activities.
* Showcasing of school readiness by the school management teams, prior the children returning to school.

***During phase: 12 - 30 January 2022***

* Roadshow to be undertaken by the Basic Education Ministry to support the reopening of schools. (Date TBC)
* It will be important to consolidate a Calendar of activities - stakeholder participation that will be vetted by DBE to avoid learning disruptions
* 12 Jan - 1st days at school media mobilisation plan - coordinated not to disrupt learning programme of the day
* 20 January - Matric results announcement by Basic Education Minister
* Post school opportunities communication activities thereof led by the Higher Education Minister
* The Deputy Minister in the Presidency Ms Thembi Siweya will conduct a month long Monitoring and Evaluation Blitz in January 2022 across all nine provinces to schools to promote this campaign.

***Pre and SONA phase: 1- 30 February 2022***

* Pre and during SONA Communication campaign activities
* Post SONA communication activities including clusters/priority media statements and interview schedule
* Basic Education Lekgotla Summit in the last week of February – an annual summit hosts the sectors stakeholders as the DBE continues to find solutions to the myriad of challenges that face the sector (Date TBC)
  1. **Implementation tactics**

Activities will be implemented as follows:

1. Dialogue with sector partners and communities
2. School road shows by Political Principals
3. Service points /sites visits, including vaccine site visits activations
4. Delivery of donations by government and partners - sanitary towels, uniforms and other related learning aids
5. Media Walkabout at project sites (new school buildings etc.)
6. Media management and mobilisation to showcase government programmes and services available for schools, children and Maximum use of community media – interviews, media doorstops, soundbites, short videos, etc. and social media
7. **BUDGET** 
   1. **This may still need to be confirmed, but the following principles must apply:**
      1. Many of the activities and ideas can comfortably be executed within the existing baseline of government departments including outreach budgets and budgets assigned for DDM M&E.
      2. Given the desire to build social solidarity and the collective pursuit of the current MTSF, the appeal is made to publicly elected representatives, Public Servants, as well as members of civil society to contribute from their own pockets to needy learners. For instance, the GCIS has, from mid-December 2021 commenced a blitz to collect donations of Sanitary Hygiene Equipment (SHGs) from staff and partners.
8. **STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES**
   1. A communication plan will be developed to guide campaign participation and by buy-in from key stakeholders - popularize the events and activities and amplify key messages.
   2. It is recommended that the draft concept be finalised with the education departments and DPME - MTSF outcome facilitator, for alignment and for guidance on focus areas for the priority.
   3. The IGR letters to be sent to all provinces and key government departments to outline the concept and facilitate participation planning. Planned visits and activities to be submitted centrally for better coordination and media mobilization purposes by GCIS.
   4. Provincial teams of GCIS working with Premiers’ office will facilitate Local Environment Assessment Reports (LEARs) for Principals’ upon request.

Call to action parents and partners message focus ideas:

**Partake in ensuring that**

* Children are ready for school - physically, emotionally and developmentally
* Help Children to make a positive transition between primary and secondary school
* Support children to stay in school - Give uniforms, donate stationery or SHGs, books etc,
* contribute in ensuring that young people have the skills and resources required to make positive transition and choices into adulthood
* Promote *awareness of NPIs in the fight against COVID-19 and promote Vaccination.*