



Cape Home Educators

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THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR - GENERAL: Curriculum Policy, Support and Monitoring

Department of Basic Education

222 Struben Street

PRETORIA

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For Attention: Me P Ngcobo

Comments on the Draft policy on Home Education

We, **the Cape Home Educators (CHE) Association**, are an autonomous Home Educating association representing our constituents' home education interests in the Western Cape. The Department of Education has the association on their database as an interested and affected party. In 2014 and 2015 we were invited by the DBE to take part in 2 two-day sessions respectively, which included various presentations from the main home educating associations, legal and other. Together with related dynamic discussion and dialogue, these sessions were constructive and according to Dr. Simelane and others, very informative and educational, but nevertheless too short to adequately address the various complex issues.

BACKGROUND

Since homeschooling was legalized in South Africa at the dawn of our democracy, home education has been growing exponentially. In the 2011 census, there were approximately 58,000 children who were receiving home education in the country as the current education system failed families and could not cater for the various needs which children and families were burdened with. Contemplating international trends, we strongly believe that homeschooling will continue to increase at an exceptional rate.

Art.51 of the SA's school act of 1996 which addresses home education, is such a failure that it resulted in only 5% of home educators complying with the policy. Due to education officials not understanding the philosophy of home education, a great sense of mistrust has been bred over the years between the home

educating community and the Department of Education. Therefore as an association we can appreciate and welcome the efforts of the DBE to rectify the flaws of the current policy. Unfortunately the proposed changes in the policy will make the situation worse and even fewer home educating families will comply. As an association we are grateful for the opportunity to work with government to find workable, viable solutions to these issues.

FLAWED CONSULTATION PROCESS

The policy which was released for public comment on the 17th of November 2017 was already drafted before the consultation process with the home educating community in 2014. After the presentations by the homeschooling community nothing had been changed in the policy. The DBE ignored the inputs that were delivered to them and it is now made clear that the various homeschooling representatives were just invited to these meeting to "rubber stamp" this policy.

Albert Einsteins definition for insanity is as follows : Doing the same thing over and over and every time expecting a different result. Unfortunately, the DBE has once again, through its repeated actions polarized the home schooling community. Through these repeated polarising actions the DBE somehow expects homeschoolers to comply and "buy in" to this policy.

Great leadership has a unifying effect and can get groups of people with different points of view to work together. Currently great leadership is not being portrayed by the DBE and as an association we expect unifying leadership from the DBE.

1.Policy Clause 12 Application for registration of a learner for home education

OBJECTION

Parents have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child. From the ages of 0-7 years and from 15 years to adult, the parents can fulfill their responsibility to their children without having to ask for permission from the Head of Department.

If a child has learning disabilities which the school cannot cater for, the parent should not be impeded by bureaucracy to do what is in the best interest of the child.

If a child is abused, raped or bullied in a school, the parent should not be impeded by bureaucracy to do what is in the best interest of the child.

If schools are overcrowded and the institution cannot deliver adequate education, the parent should not be impeded by bureaucracy to do what is in the best interest of the child.

If it is in the child's best interest to be educated in an acceptable cultural and religious environment, the parent should not be impeded by bureaucracy to do what is in the best interest of the child.

If a child excels in a certain sport or cultural activity and needs more time to pursue this talent, which homeschooling accommodates, the parent should not be impeded by bureaucracy to do what is in the best interest of the child.

If the child has a physical disability or sickness and cannot function properly in a school environment, the parent should not be impeded by bureaucracy to do what is in the best interest of the child.

If families are living in remote, rural areas far from educational institutions, the parent should not be impeded by bureaucracy to do what is in the best interest of the child.

The above clause proposed restricts the parent to fulfill their obligation to their children.

PROPOSAL

As an association we propose that the idea of having to **ask permission** from the HOD to home educate the child be removed and replaced with the parent having to **notify** the department of their intention to home educate.

2. Policy Clause S13(2)(e)(iii)

“arrange for the learner's educational attainment to be assessed annually by a competent assessor, at the parent's own expense, who will apply a standard that is not inferior to that which is determined in the NCS....”; and

S18.5(2)...use the services of a competent assessor to assess the progress of her or his child

OBJECTION

The financial burden placed on Home Educating families by this article, is extremely high. This will make home education unattainable for families of a low income bracket and homeschooling will not be perceived as an educational option for all in South Africa, but only for the rich. Due to this fact, many homeschooling parents will be forced to send their children back to school, which will put further strain on the current institutional system.

Homeschooling families also contribute to the tax base which funds education. In more enlightened countries i.e. New Zealand, home educators receive grants for taking the responsibility to home educate and relieving the educational system and the state of the financial burden.

The department of education will have to appoint officials who can process and assess the reports of the 52 000 children who are currently being home

educated. This, once again, will place an exorbitant financial burden on the state and tax payers.

PROPOSAL

The current homeschooling curriculum providers offer various school-leaving internationally accredited qualifications. i.e. Cambridge, SAT's, GED, CAPS. IEB, etc. These providers are currently, by default, regulating the home education environment.

3. Policy Clause S6.2(2)(c)(6)(a)

“ any parent who without just cause and after a written notice from the Head of Department, fails to comply with subsection (1) is guilty of an offense and is liable of conviction or a fine or imprisonment for a period of six months, or to both such fine and such imprisonment. “

OBJECTION

As home educating parents sacrifice much i.e. an extra income, to do what is in the best interest of their children, they are now also liable to be imprisoned for six years for non-compliance with a draconian policy. Law abiding citizens will be criminalized as opposed to serious crimes of which the penalty is less than aforementioned. This section of the article will once again, drive home educating families into a covert position where they will act like a persecuted minority.

PROPOSAL

The current social, welfare and policing systems are adequate to prevent abuse of children and it should not become the task of the Department of Education.

THE SPIRIT OF THE POLICY

The policy is written from the perverted point of view that parents cannot be trusted with the education of their children and need to be constantly monitored by the State / DBE.

The following is a quote from the Economist: "*South Africa has one of the worlds worst education systems.*" The publication reported that South Africa ranked 75th out 76, in a ranking table of education systems drawn up by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

The World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2015-2016 ranked South Africa last in terms of its quality of maths and science education. 140th out of 140 countries. It ranked South Africa 138 out of 140 countries when it comes to the quality of the education system.

Joan van Niekerk, the manager of training and advocacy for childline South Africa cited a recent report by the Human Sciences Research Council which revealed that 34% of learners experienced sexual harassment and sexual abuse at school

from peers and another 14% from educators.

Thousands of pages of reports and research can be presented to prove the point that the South African Education system, under the polarising leadership of the DBE, is crumbling due to ineptness. It can be clearly seen that the DBE cannot be trusted with the education of our children which are the future of our country.

It is clear that the DBE is struggling to monitor and manage its own system and now it wants to manage and monitor homeschooling which it does not understand.

As a responsible parent who has to uphold my child's right to quality education, the DBE controlled schooling system would be at the bottom of my list of choices.

CONCLUSION

Due to the lack of research by the DBE and proper consultation with the various effected parties, the policy, in its current form, will unfortunately, once again, be rejected by the home educating community. We therefore URGE the DBE to educate themselves with regards to home education and its various philosophies. The home educating community is driven by passionate parents who love their children immensely and have their best interests at heart. Herein is an opportunity for this passion to be channeled by government in the right direction, to **benefit** education in this country.

Regards

Victor Sabbe

CHE Chairman