TIPS FOR COMPLETION OF THE ONLINE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

We understand that this exercise is new and that it will take some time getting used to it all. This is the beginning of a new approach and we will all take it step by step.

The Value of CEMIS Online Target-setting

To Your School:
- Helps you manage your information for decision-making. Figures can be cross-referenced so that increasingly accurate decisions and projections can be made.
- You will get a printable plan that you can distribute to your staff and SGB. That way everyone is part of the plan and knows where you want to be.
- With other school data-sets already captured on CEMIS, this is an important addition to online information and further development of comprehensive school profiles

To Education Districts and Head Office:
- Setting targets is the process of mapping your school’s destination and provides all those party to your plans an idea of the types of support you will require. If we don’t know what you are setting out to achieve, we cannot adequately plan to support you.

To Department of Basic Education:
- The National Department will be able to track progress on key indicators for educational stability and growth;
- Provide comprehensive and more readily available data to guide the process of budget allocation

How can a set of targets be called a “plan”?

The set of indicators that has been chosen touch on the key elements of a functioning school. Your school will be fulfilling its purpose if your teachers and learners are present every day, if your teachers have the qualifications needed to teach and if the maximum number of learners stay in school for the full 12 years. Classes need to be of the right size and parents need to be involved. Policies should be both available and being implemented. The real test, finally, lies in the academic performance of the learners: are they proceeding through school at an appropriate pace and what are their results?

Once you have completed your baseline figures – your 2011 data – this should equip you to set a target on each of these for 2012. We would then like you to make projections for 2013 and 2014 as well. We know that setting targets is not easy – it is all too tempting to set very ambitious ones and then to be disappointed when these are not met. You will be given the chance to adjust your targets for 2013 and 2014 at the time of submitting the next SIP.

Even WHILE you are setting each target you need to ask the classic planning questions: Where am I now? Where do I want to be? How am I going to get there?

And so the heart of your PLAN will start to be built out into a whole operational plan for your school.
Rationale for the identification of indicators

The broad inter-dependent categories are (i) learners, (ii) educators, (iii) learning & teaching support material, and infrastructure & equipment, and (iv) social support. Examples of sub-elements for target-setting in each of the four categories:

(i) **LEARNERS**
- **Target**: General Performance in all grades in all subjects
  - Rationale: Are there potential weak areas, perhaps as a result of lack of appropriate resources or inappropriate teacher expectations?
- **Target**: FET results
  - Rationale: Is our teaching effective to produce good results? Are children adequately prepared for tertiary study and work life?
- **Targets**: Learner Absenteeism
  - Rationale: Does a learner receive the required number of teaching hours? Is there sufficient vigilance and a strategy to cope with truancy?
- **Target**: Learner Enrolment
  - Rationale: Is your enrolment suited to the school infrastructure? What is the bigger picture in respect of numbers that need to be budgeted for?
  [We know that your enrolment numbers vary in the course of the year. The system will compute the impact of enrolment variations on your targets. The figures to use for the plan should be the figures you have submitted for the SNAP survey.]

(ii) **EDUCATORS**
- **Target**: Establishment Numbers and Qualifications
  - Rationale: Does the school have an adequate number of properly trained educators, and also appropriate learner: teacher ratios?
- **Target**: Teacher Absenteeism
  - Rationale: Are teachers in class regularly to teach?
- **Target**: Teacher Training Hours
  - Rationale: Are teachers trained regularly enough?

(iii) **LEARNING & TEACHING SUPPORT MATERIAL AND INFRASTRUCTURE & EQUIPMENT**
- **Target**: Number of books ordered, received, issued and retrieved
  - Rationale: Has each learner access to the right material and how does the school manage its stocks?
- **Target**: Number of desks/chairs/tables
  - Rationale: does each child have the minimum equipment and facility to learn well?
- **Target**: Last Scheduled Maintenance and Inventory of Emergency Repairs
  - Rationale: Does the custodian invest sufficient in upkeep and maintenance? Is the school victim of vandalism and spending regularly on emergency repairs?

(iv) **SOCIAL SUPPORT**
- **Target**: Number of parents attending meetings
  - Rationale: What is the community/parent involvement?
**What are the links to Whole School Evaluation, to School Self Evaluation and to the things we did before?**

- Each of the 9 areas of whole school evaluation is picked up in one or two of the indicators.
- The ingredients of a functioning school continue to be the staff, the learners, the teaching and assessment programme, the parents, the resources and facilities and the systems.
- The setting of targets over a 3 year span must come out of a self-evaluation process.

**After we have set the targets what will still have to be completed?**

- The targets you set are the numbers that flow from your planning processes.
- You need to define all the activities needed to be sure that your school achieves those targets.
- These operational plans will be kept on record for regular reference by yourself and the Education District support teams.

**The value of each indicator**

*Academic Performance Improvement Plan: targets for numbers taking and numbers passing languages and mathematics (Grades 1 – 9) and for all subjects (Grades 10 – 12)*

Education for all is a right in South Africa. It is common cause that the population in general should be achieving better academic results.

In some cases you will be happy to keep performance at its current level. In some cases, especially in gateway subjects like Mathematics and Science, you will want to juggle with two sets of variables: perhaps you will want to grow the numbers taking the subject and keep the current pass rate; perhaps you want to retain the present enrolment and increase the pass rate.

As you analyse your staffing situation alongside this you might want to plan how to improve teacher:learner ratios, or bring greater balance to the situation at your school, as part of this strategic planning exercise.

You will express your targets in terms of numbers taking and passing the various subjects. We know that your enrolment numbers vary in the course of the year. The system will compute the impact of enrolment variations on your targets. The figures to use for the plan should be the figures you have submitted for the SNAP survey.

*Average number of days absent per learner*

We understand that people fall ill or might have other serious reason to be absent. We also know that while absenteeism is not a serious matter in some schools it is a matter of real concern in others. For this indicator you should use your comments column to indicate if this figure is really spread across your learners or because of a small group who are frequently absent. In your ACTION PLAN you then need to tackle this e.g. involve parents, social workers, discipline systems.
**Average number of days absent per teacher**
Teachers will be absent for authentic reasons but it is also so that there are teachers who are frequently absent. Again this indicator will necessitate that the school should have a plan to deal with any problems in this regard.

**Number of teachers teaching subjects for which they have a relevant qualification**
For this indicator please provide completely accurate information. Use the comments column to indicate a rationale which might indicate, for example, that while x teachers do not have a formal qualification they have an average of y years experience in those subjects and their learners have, for example, averaged z in their test, exam. The data should be used to assess the extent to which your staff is equipped to teach the subjects that you are offering and allows you to plan training programmes or courses.

**Number of learners retained, i.e. repeating a year**
For a learner to repeat a year is not necessarily a bad thing. What is important in this case is to examine trends and their reasons. Is the school habitually enrolling under-prepared learners for example? If the school is a primary school, is the school over-enrolling learners who are too young? Do you have good systems for early identification of learners with special educational needs?

**Number of learners who remain in schooling**
“Dropout” is a serious concern in the Western Cape. Schools are asked to analyse their statistics in this regard carefully and to ensure that there are targets to maximise numbers of learners who stay in school for the full twelve years. A holistic model would need schools to look at everything from enrolment to their efforts to instil the disciplines of learning, to empower and equip learners to make progress.

**Average number of hours spent by teachers on training**
This is a figure that will vary through time. The notes should indicate broadly how the hours are derived eg 23 teachers each attend 3 day workshops etc

**Learner: teacher ratio**
This is a critical statistic in school-based planning. If the exercise reveals any serious imbalance then plans must be set in motion to address this through time.

**Number of books ordered, received, issued and retrieved**
Text books are central to a teaching programme. There needs to be a system to ensure retrieval and re-use of the books. This indicator looks at this area in a helicopter view as the figures in a large school will be very high. It is expected that schools have solid systems to ensure good practice in this regard eg numbered books, lists of books issued and retrieval systems.

**Receipt and use of workbooks**
The workbooks are an important national investment and the use of the workbooks should be tracked. The term “% utilisation” should be interpreted as follows:
- 80 -100%: used every lesson and for all or almost all of the curriculum coverage
- 60 – 79%: used for a substantial number of lessons and for a significant proportion of curriculum coverage
- 45 – 59%: used about half the time and for about half of the curriculum coverage
25 – 44%: used about a third or more of the time and for that proportion of the curriculum coverage
<25%: used occasionally eg for an exercise or in general support of other materials

**Maintenance programme**
The WCED needs to strengthen its data in this regard. Schools are asked to provide this to assist macro-analysis and planning and in order for schools to track their own efforts.

**Provision and use of desks/tables and chairs**
This indicator is intended both to assist on a macro level i.e. provincial data and also to ensure that schools adopt a conscientious approach in regard to ensuring that stock is maintained and not just habitually replaced.

**Attendance of parents at meetings**
The role of the parent or caregiver is a critical one. It is a common concern of schools that parental involvement is something with which they struggle. This indicator is included in order to stimulate schools to set active plans in place to attract parents to their meetings and to ensure that their role in the educational process is understood – right through from the role into the SGB to their role in their own homes. The comments column should list your main strategies.

**Policies**
A number of key policies are listed on the dropdown menu. The idea is that schools should identify which two to four of them that they plan to foreground in the indicated year. This would mean both that the policy would be prepared/updated and also that it would be foregrounded in the life of the school in the year concerned.