



CHIEF DIRECTORATE: EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

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ASSESSMENT INSTRUCTION 43 OF 2025

TO: DEPUTY DIRECTORS-GENERAL
CHIEF DIRECTORS
HEAD OFFICE DIRECTORS AND DISTRICT DIRECTORS
CHIEF EDUCATION SPECIALISTS DISTRICT
CURRICULUM COORDINATORS
DISTRICT ASSESSMENT OFFICIALS (DAOs)
DISTRICT SUBJECT ADVISORS (DSAs)
PROVINCIAL SUBJECT COORDINATORS
CIRCUIT MANAGERS
DEPUTY CHIEF EDUCATION SPECIALISTS
SENIOR EDUCATION SPECIALISTS
PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS (GRADE 12)
TEACHER UNIONS/ORGANISATIONS
SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

DATE: 24 AUGUST 2025

IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE MOTHER TONGUE – BASED BILINGUAL EDUCATION (MTbBE) ASSESSMENT IN SCHOOLS

1. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has officially adopted Mother Tongue – based Bilingual Education (MTbBE) for implementation incrementally across the system. The year 2025 is the initial incremental implementation of Phase 1 of MTbBE, starting at Grade 4 extending the Foundation Phase LoLTA model for all official languages.
2. The selected Phase 1 subjects are Mathematics, and Natural Science & Technology. Other subjects will be added during the Phase 2 implementation.
3. MTbBE is an overarching anchor of basic education in the most familiar languages of children, particularly African native speakers in South African schools. They were previously not developed as languages of learning, teaching and assessment.
4. For MTbBE implementation, the DBE will set the end of the year 2025 tests in Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Technology for Grade 4 learners focussing on the nine official African Languages. However, the 80:20 English and Afrikaans will be made available.

MTbBE TARGET GROUP

5. The priority is on Quintile 1- 3 public schools which offer an African Language(s) as a Language(s) of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (LoLTA) in Grades 1-3 but previously switched to English (as LoLTA) in Grade 4. Quintile 4-5 schools within the same situation as those in Quintile 1-3 may participate during the Phase 1 implementation to benefit learners.
6. The assessment data from various studies at the DBE points to a large gap in the achievement of those learners who change the medium of instruction in Grade 4 as compared to those who do not. The 2025 Grade 4 national MTbBE assessment results will be utilised as a baseline to inform the system.

TEST DESIGN

7. The mark allocation, content and weighting of the cognitive levels will follow the guidelines provided by the ATPs and CAPS.
8. A single test will only have two languages ie. one African Language and English/Afrikaans.
9. The percentage language split in the tests is as follows:
 - a) Grade 4 in 2025: 80% African Language and 20% English/Afrikaans.
 - b) Grade 5 in 2026: 70% African Language and 30% English/Afrikaans
 - c) Grade 6 in 2027: 60% African Languages and 40% English /Afrikaans.
 - d) Grade 7 in 2028: 50% African Languages and 50% English/Afrikaans.
10. In Grade 4, Section A of the tests will be in the African Languages (80%) while Section B will be in English/Afrikaans (20%). The same will apply where there is a combination of Afrikaans and English.
11. The weighting regarding types of questions will be as follows:
 - a) 40% Multiple Choice
 - b) 20% Closed responses (short questions, one word etc.); and
 - c) 40%: Open ended.

ADMINISTRATION

12. The nationally set MTbBE tests will be administered by schools under the normal examination environment. Schools will be assisted to set their own tests using the principles of translinguaging adopted for the MTbBE strategy using a nationally developed test framework for Term 1 -3. Curriculum GET will distribute to schools, the PanSALB verified and authenticated terminologies for all African languages in the two subjects. DBE understands that because it is the first time since 1994; that we are using African languages as LoLTAs for Maths, Science and Technology (MST); there will be lengthy discussions around appropriate terminologies, and we would appreciate feedback.

13. Exemplar tests will be made available at the beginning of Term 3 in preparation for the end of year examination Districts will communicate with schools how the tests will be collected.
14. This assessment replaces the school-based end of the year test in the 2 subjects that the schools print.
15. A common timetable for the two subjects is proposed as follows:

Date (2025)		Subject	Time	Duration
10 Nov	Monday	Natural Science and Technology	08:30 – 09:50	1 hour 20 min
12 Nov	Wednesday.	Mathematics	08:30 – 09:30	1 hour

16. As the MTbBE Grade 4 tests will replace the end of year Grade 4 examination in November 2025; this means it will form part of progression and promotion mark.
17. Like any examination in the GET, subject teachers will mark and record the marks in SA-SAMS.

MODERATION AND MONITORING

18. Moderation of the marking will follow the normal examination protocols.
19. Provincial Subject Advisors will monitor and support MTbBE implementation.
20. A random sample of marked scripts will be collected from schools by the districts for external moderation, analysis and reporting. Communication on this will be sent at a later stage.
21. All heads of examinations must please ensure that the contents of this examination instruction are mediated to all schools.

Thanks for your continued support and cooperation.

Yours in Education


 MR R. TYWAKADI
 DDG: CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY

02/09/2025
 DATE