CHIEF DIRECTORATE: EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT
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ASSESSMENT INSTRUCTION 49 OF 2026

TO: **DEPUTY DIRECTORS – GENERAL**
CHIEF DIRECTORS
HEAD OFFICE DIRECTORS AND DISTRICT DIRECTORS
CHIEF EDUCATION SPECIALISTS
HEADS OF EXAMINATIONS
CIRCUIT MANAGERS
DEPUTY CHIEF / SENIOR EDUCATION SPECIALISTS
PRINCIPALS OF ALL PUBLIC AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
TEACHER UNIONS / ORGANISATIONS
SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

DATE: **27 OCTOBER 2026**

ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2026 MOTHER TONGUE-BASED BILINGUAL EDUCATION (MTbBE) NATIONAL ASSESSMENT IN QUINTILE 1 – 3 SCHOOLS - GRADE 4 AND GRADE 5

1. The Assessment Instruction gives guidance on the administration of Mother Tongue-based Bilingual Education (MTbBE) tests in quintile 1 to 3 schools that are implementing it. The selected subjects are Mathematics and Natural Sciences in Grade 4 and Grade 5.

2. The year 2026 marks the second year of the implementation of the MTbBE, and the implementation is incremental as it started with Grade 4 in 2025 and Grade 5 in 2026. **The Provincial Education Department will print Grade 5 question papers for all learners of the affected schools and one copy for Grade 4 affected schools. The schools must devise and implement effective measures to ensure that all affected Grade 4 and 5 learners write the MTbBE tests.**

3. These assessments replace the end-of-year examination set by the school for Mathematics and Natural Sciences and Technology and will form part of Progression and Promotion requirements. Grade 4 and 5 learners will be assessed in two languages, IsiXhosa and English, or Sesotho and English, as well as Afrikaans and English.

3.1 The percentage language split in the assessment is as follows:

3.1 Grade 4: 80% Home Language and 20% English

3.2 Grade 5: 70% Home Language and 30% English.

3.3 The MTbBE National Assessment has two sections for learners to respond. In Section A, the content is assessed in the Mother Tongue (home language), and in Section B the content is assessed in English.

3.4 Learners are expected to answer questions in the following formats:

(i) 40% Multiple Choice;
(ii) 20% Closed constructed response questions (short response questions); and
(iii) 40% Open-ended response questions (longer response questions).

4. The exemplars have been distributed to all participating schools for teachers to prepare learners for the national assessments. There will be no **English Home Language-only assessments.**

5. The nationally set MTBBE tests must be administered by schools under examination conditions. The date and the time for collection of Grade 5 question papers will be determined by discussion between the head of exams and the school principal, informed **by the distance, transportation, and condition of the road.**

(a) Grade 4 sample question papers must be collected earlier to allow the school to have a clear printing plan.

(b) The question papers must be locked in a safe or strongroom and only distributed to learners on the day of writing as prescribed.

(c) The district examination officials will sign to confirm the received consignment.

6. **Annexure A** must be utilized at the district examination office during the collection of question papers, and school principals will sign and confirm the number of question papers

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received per grade. **Annexure C** is the attendance register that the learners will sign during the administration of the tests.

(a) School Principals / Teachers must ensure all learners sign the attendance registers on both days of the administration of the tests. **The signed attendance registers must be submitted to the district examination office by all schools of the participating schools a day after the completion of both tests.**

(b) The district examination officials must ensure that the signed attendance registers are filed and kept safe as Portfolio of Evidence (POE); the PED will communicate the submission date for filed attendance registers at Head Office.

(c) **A common timetable for the two subjects is as follows**:

Date	Day	Subject	Time	Duration
19 November 2026	Thursday	Natural Science and Technology	08:30 – 09: 50	1 hour 20 minutes
20 November 2026	Friday	Mathematics	08:30 – 09:30	1 hour

(d) Following the administration of tests, Subject Teachers must mark and record the marks on SA-SAMS. Moderation of the marking must be done at the school level, supplemented by district, provincial and national verification. Schools will be required to submit a random sample of marked scripts to the provincial coordinators for external analysis and reporting.

(e) Provincial / District Subject Advisors must monitor and support the MTbBE implementation. Districts will be required to implement the sample as provided. No additional sampling or replacement of schools may be undertaken without authorisation from the Provincial Examination Office.

7. If a school has more than one Grade 4 classes, only one intact class can be submitted per class per school. All scripts must be packaged in sealed, clearly labelled envelopes/plastic bags; use **Annexure B. Please Note that National Senior Certificate Grade 12 security bags must not be used to pack MTbBE scripts:**

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(i) School name and EMIS number
(ii) Number of scripts submitted
(iii) Province and district name
(iv) The subject name

8. Upon completion of data capturing and analysis, the Department of Basic Education will return all sampled scripts to the respective provinces, and the PED will arrange with districts to collect them.

DDG: CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY
MR TJZ MTYIDA

30/10/2026
DATE

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Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
EDUCATION

Iphondo leMpuma Kapa · Iskhe leMpuma
Provinsie van Oos Kaap: Departement van Onderwys
Provense ya Kapa Botjhabela: Lefapha le Thuto

RECORD OF RECEIPT AND DISPATCH OF MTbBE TESTS FOR 2026 - Annexure A

District	Distribution/collection point	Name of school	Circuit
School Principal:			

MTbBE Timetable								Signature of distributing official (District official)
DATE	Subject / Paper	Quantity of question papers received Grade 4	Quantity of question papers received Grade 5	Date of collection	Exact time	Name of collecting official	Signature Recipient	
19 November 2026	Natural Science and Technology							
20 November 2026	Mathematics							

Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
EDUCATION

Iphondo leMpuma Kapa. Isebe leMfundo
Provinsie van Oos Kaap: Departement van Onderwys
Provense ya Kapa Bolphabela: Letapha la Thuto

TEMPLATE FOR SUBMISSION OF MTbBE SCRIPTS ANNEXURE B

NAME OF SCHOOL: _____

NUMBER OF SCRIPTS SUBMITTED: _____

SUBJECT: _____

DISTRICT NAME: _____

PROVINCE: _____

Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
EDUCATION

Iphondo leMpuma Kapa: Isebe leMfundo
Provinsie van Oos Kaap: Departement van Onderwys
Profensi ya Kapa Bohlabela: Letapha la Thuto

MTbBE Attendance Register 2026 Annexure C

Name of school:			**Grade:**	
EMIS number:			**District:**	
Subject:			**Circuit:**	
Date:			**Name of Principal:**	
Indicate if a candidate is present with (√) and (A) if the candidate is absent **Please Note: Each candidate must sign the attendance register**				
NO.	**A / √**	**Full name of learner**	**Surname**	**Candidate's signature**
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
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8.				
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21.				
22.				
23.				
24.				
25.				
26.				
27.				
28.				
29.				
30.				

Number of candidates: _____

Number of scripts received by the invigilator: _____ **Name of invigilator:** _____ **Signature**_____