



**UMnyango WezeMfundo
Department of Education**

**Lefapha la Thuto
Departement van Onderwys**

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Topic

Learner Unit Record Information and Tracking System

Enclosures

None

Distribution

- ✓ Chief Directors and Directors at Head Office and District Offices
- ✓ Principals of all Public and Independent Schools

Enquiries

Relevant Policy, Planning & DISM Officials in District Offices

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LEARNER UNIT RECORD INFORMATION AND TRACKING SYSTEM

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To introduce ALL schools to the Learner Unit Record Information Tracking System (LURITS).
- 1.2 To inform the schools about the LURITS orientation sessions.
- 1.3 To give a clear direction in terms of the roles of the principals and districts with regards to LURITS.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 In order to improve the validity and reliability of the data collected by EMIS the Department of Education has developed a National Learner Unit Record Information and Tracking System (LURITS).
- 2.2 The National Learner Unit Record Information and Tracking System will collect the individual data of each learner in the country for all sectors from Grade 1 to Grade 12 and will track the migration of learners from school to school throughout their school careers.
- 2.3 The learner data will be stored in nine central databases/data warehouses placed in each province and integrated at national level into one central data store for reporting and analysis purposes. The foundation principles of the system include the following:
 - Each learner is registered ONCE only in the system;
 - Each learner has a unique national identifier that is used to track the learner;
 - Unit record data on each learner is contained in the system and updated at required intervals;
 - Movement and transfer data is updated in real time in provincial systems or with as little time lag as possible.
- 2.4 This system will be implemented **incrementally** in schools from July 2008 onwards by the provincial EMIS unit.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) carries the legislative responsibility of providing education information to the

education system as a whole, to support monitoring, planning and decision-making processes.

- 3.2 The existing EMIS collects aggregate learner data at institution level via two annual school surveys.
- 3.3 The weakness in this system lies in the fact that aggregate data collected at one level of analysis (institution level), cannot be used for lower levels of analysis and it is difficult to examine relationships among different variables or to recompile data should reporting needs change.
- 3.4 In addition aggregate data cannot sufficiently explain changing enrolment, completion, retention and drop out patterns and cannot enable the tracking of individual learner movement within the system either horizontally and vertically.
- 3.5 The National EMIS department has therefore identified the need to design and implement a learner unit record INFORMATION and TRACKING system.
- 3.6 The system envisaged by the Department of Education will provide detailed data and information on individual learners and be capable of answering complex questions on learner movement, learner drop out and retention rates or patterns and be flexible enough to adapt to changing education information needs.
- 3.7 A unit record learner information system will be capable of examining and describing both nationwide trends happening *across* provinces and institutions, as well as developments *within* provinces and *within* institutions.

4. AIM OF THE SYSTEM

The aim of the system is to provide:

- a comprehensive and complete database of all learners in the SA education system from Grade 1 to Grade 12;
- accurate learner numbers in all institutions;
- an accurate profile of learners leaving the system;
- the rate and patterns of intra- and inter-provincial transfers;
- the trends relating to and the rate at which learners leave (exit) the schooling system;
- patterns and trends of learner progression through the schooling system;
- accurate learner information for education planning, reporting, monitoring and evaluation;
- accurate learner information for analysis and research purposes;

- a system for managing the administration of learner transfers, dropouts and promotions in the country;
- the inclusion of additional unit record datasets (such as learner performance data) over time.

5. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 Gauteng Schools Education Act (1995), Sections 9 and 10.
- 5.2 South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996), Section 59(1) and (2).
- 5.3 Employment of Educators Act (Act No. 76 of 1998), Section 18.
- 5.4 National Education Policy Act (Act No. 27 of 1996), Section 8(1) – (4).
- 5.5 Amended Norms and Standards for School Funding.
- 5.6 Promotion of Access to Information (Act No. 2 of 2000).
- 5.7 Minimum Information Security Standards (1996)

6. LURITS ORIENTATION SESSIONS / LURITS CLINICS

- 6.1 Schools will be invited by the EMIS unit to attend an orientation session for the tracking system in which the functionality and operational process of the system will be explained. It is not necessary for schools to contact the EMIS units in this regard as all schools will be informed in advance about the details of these orientation sessions. Schools will only be required to supply data for the system once they have attended the required orientation session.
- 6.2 There are different ways in which schools will be able to upload learner data into the national system:
 - 6.2.1 Schools that are using the SA-SAMS school administration package will be able to create batch files for direct upload into the national system without any additional administration burden as LURITS is tightly coupled with the school's administration system and therefore it simply taps into the already existing information that a school maintains on its local system.
 - 6.2.2 Any school that is using a computerized school administration package other than SA-SAMS will be catered for via a third party interaction option. The State Information Technology Agency

(SITA) is managing the project on behalf of the Department of Education and has developed a file specification to be implemented by third party service providers for file exchange with the national system.

This file specification is available on the SITA website at www.sita.co.za from 17 June 2008. In addition, SITA will provide a telephonic help service for third party developers from 1 July 2008. (Gail van der Meijden, SITA Senior Business Analyst, IT Consulting; Solution Delivery, +27 (0)12 470 1271).

7. ROLE OF PRINCIPALS

- 7.1 It is the Principals' responsibility to ensure that the SA-SAMS school administration package is operating without any glitches as it has been modified to generate the xml files for the LURITS system.
- 7.2 Principals of schools that are using third party administration packages should ensure that they request their developers to modify their systems to create the required xml file for the LURITS system on receipt of this circular. (Refer to 6.2.2).
- 7.3 Principals are requested to ensure that they release **relevant personnel** for training on both SA-SAMS and LURITS for effective implementation of LURITS.
- 7.4 In order for LURITS to work effectively and efficiently, and for the Department to gather accurate and good quality data, all school Principals should ensure that the data in the school administration system (SA-SAMS or other) is quality assured, verified, and updated as and when changes occur before being uploaded. Principals will be held accountable for the completeness and accuracy of the data of their schools.
- 7.5 Principals should ensure that they give the necessary support to the administrators that will be working on SA-SAMS/LURITS.
- 7.6 Principals should ensure that that their schools comply with the national requirement, that is, that **all schools provide all learner data to the National Learner Unit Record and Tracking System as per provincial deadlines and targets.**

8. ROLE OF DISTRICTS

- 8.1 Districts should ensure that they verify the LURITS data that is submitted by schools.
- 8.2 Districts should give the necessary support to schools for the successful implementation of LURITS.
- 8.3 Where necessary, districts should make their resources available for schools, for example, by acting as a Point of Presence to be used by schools for generating the LURITS xml file.
- 8.4 Districts should enforce compliance to using LURITS and the electronic submission of data for EMIS purposes.

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