

**IN THE NORTH GAUTENG HIGH COURT
(REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA)**

CASE NUMBER: 24565/2012

In the matter between:

SECTION27

First Applicant

HANYANI THOMO SECONDARY SCHOOL

Second Applicant

TONDANI LYDIA MASIPHEPHETHU

Third Applicant

and

MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION

First Respondent

MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL:

Second Respondent

LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

SUPPORTING AFFIDAVIT

I, the undersigned

BRONWEN JILL WILSON-THOMSON

hereby state under oath:

1. I am an adult female lecturer in Curriculum Division in the Wits School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. I hold a Masters Degree in Education and I

am currently completing my Doctorate of Philosophy in Curriculum. I teach Curriculum at both undergraduate and post graduate level. I have conducted research in classroom practice and curriculum interpretation and implementation. I have worked in this area since 1994.

2. I deposed to an affidavit in the urgent application launched under the above case number on 4 May 2012 (“the main application”), which culminated in an order granted by Kollapen J on 17 May 2012 (“the first order”). My curriculum vitae was attached as **“BJW1”** to the main affidavit.
3. The facts contained in this affidavit are both true and correct and, unless the context indicates otherwise, within my personal knowledge.
4. In my affidavit in the main application I set out my opinion on the importance of teachers’ content knowledge in effective teaching and learning. I also set out the reasons why I support a catch-up plan for Grade 10 learners in order to close the gaps in their curriculum caused by lack of access to textbooks for over half of the academic year.
5. I have read the affidavit by Nikki Stein and supporting submissions made in support of this application. I elaborate below on certain aspects of this application relating to the catch-up plan filed in court (“first catch up plan”) and the document presented to SECTION27 on 3 August 2012 but not yet filed with this Court (“new catch-up plan”).
6. I disagree with the DBE’s contention that there is no difference between the National Curriculum Statements (“NCS”) and the new Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (“CAPS”). While the content of the two curricula may be similar, viewing the two curricula as the same, undermines the intention of the CAPS curriculum which aimed to provide clear pacing and sequencing of the curriculum content and more explicit elaboration of content to support a richer interpretation of broad curriculum statements.

7. The CAPS curriculum was introduced in response to teachers' requests for more clarity and detail. The teachers who requested this clarity and detail represent a broad selection of practicing teachers, many of whom were from under-resourced schools in rural areas. The assumption that these teachers can use NCS-aligned textbooks together with their own approaches undermines the very purpose for which CAPS was intended in that it does not assist teachers in sequencing and pacing the work as they had requested. Teachers most in need of this support are already, as a result of their location and histories, disadvantaged.
8. The South African country report on the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality ("SACMEQ III"), the relevant extract of which is attached as "**BBW1**" establishes that immediate intervention is needed to address the declining quality of education in Limpopo. Limpopo province produced the lowest percentage of learners in South Africa who reached acceptable reading and mathematics competence levels by the end of the foundation phase. Textbooks are an important part of this necessary intervention, but must also be supplemented by appropriate support for learners and teachers.
9. In my view, it is essential in any meaningful catch-up that provision is made for extra tuition time for learners and additional content knowledge support for teachers.
10. Additional support for teachers is crucial in the context of a new curriculum. This requires localized content-focused specific professional development, rather than sporadic general training workshops or subject guides which do not provide adequate support for teachers.
11. The first catch-up plan makes no provision for this. The document only provides for the development and distribution of learner guides to assist learners in covering their curriculum. My submissions on the first catch-up plan are as follows:

- 11.1 In the light of the fact that new content is added, we cannot assume that the teachers are competent or confident in teaching it. This has been acknowledged by the Department of Basic Education (“the DBE”) in their press statement of 25 July 2012, attached hereto as “**BBW2**”. If this is done through subject guides, there must be detailed and substantial explanations of content to support both teachers and learners.
- 11.2 The Respondents plan to “infuse” the new content into their existing teaching, which in practice means that they are likely to give the subject guides to the learners to study in their own time. This is a poor methodology and is also likely to fragment the learners’ focus and detract from their overall learning. A more comprehensive plan, which includes face-to-face teaching, must be included, to ensure that content is adequately covered.
- 11.3 The extent to which learners have understood the new content must be assessed before the final examinations in November 2012. Should the learners be unsuccessful in these assessments, the Respondents must provide more comprehensive face-to-face learner support to ensure that the curriculum is adequately covered.
- 11.4 While the DBE acknowledges that teachers are not confident in all the areas of the curriculum, subject guides alone will not deal with this problem. An effective catch-up plan must provide face-to-face support for teachers. The success of this support must be assessed. In cases where teachers still have difficulties, the DBE should conduct face-to-face teaching of learners themselves.
12. I have analysed the new catch-up plan with a view to assessing its compliance with the order granted by Kollapen J in the main application and also in relation to how well it is likely to meet the needs of students who have not had CAPS-compliant textbooks:

13. The plan fails to directly address concerns arising from the lack of CAPS-compliant textbooks. It is an attempt to fit Grade 10 learners into existing enrichment programmes for Grade 12 learners. The plan is very general, and does not cater for the particular circumstances which underlie it. More detail is required to be able to monitor progress. My submissions are as follows:

13.1 The plan refers to learners having access to textbooks. It is not clear whether this means that learners will have personal copies to allow exam preparation in their own time: if not, plans to deal with this (through, for example, photocopied activities) need to be developed and their quality monitored. This is particularly important in the light of the fact that textbook delivery is still not complete.

13.2 While the DBE says that teaching has been happening, it does not give a clear indication of what has been covered in relation to the CAPS requirements. The gaps in practice need to be clearly identified. The first catch-up plan was based on differences in the curricula, and not necessarily gaps in practice.

13.3 The plan refers to a province-wide, general enrichment plan, while the concern in this case relates to Grade 10 content in particular. The grade 10 plan needs to be set out in more detail with deliverable outcomes to enable monitoring of progress.

13.4 The teacher development and support component of the plan is vital to its success. The details of how this will be conducted needs to be provided in much more detail especially with reference to Grade 10 content.

13.5 It is not clear whether the workbooks referred to, are the guides developed to cover new CAPS content (and prerequisite content from previous grades of CAPS) or the workbooks supplied as a

matter of course. Details of how the guides are to be used and how learner success is to be monitored needs further clarification and a clear monitoring plan is needed.

- 13.6 The spring Boot camp referred to must go beyond exam preparation, and provide opportunities for teaching of new Grade 10 content where necessary.
 - 13.7 It is not clear whether trial exams will be set for Grade 10 learners, if so results need to be used to inform further teaching and where necessary, remediation. Time needs to be made available for such remediation.
 - 13.8 The Annual National Assessment programme referred to in the new catch up plan does not include Grade 10 assessment. Since this is the focus of the catch-up plan such assessment is necessary for monitoring purposes.
 - 13.9 This catch-up relies on the availability of materials: Since this has been problematic to date, and necessitated the main application, a more detailed plan on both delivery and ways in which the content and implementation needs to be included.
 - 13.10 Although the urgency of the catch-up is obvious, the timeframes are very short and lack sufficient detail. I am of the view that they are unrealistic.
14. I do not believe that effective and meaningful catch-up can be achieved in the space of the remaining few weeks of this academic year. When I initially deposed to an affidavit in support of the catch-up plan until the end of 2013, I did so, on the basis that it would be implemented over a six-month period. Given that the plan was not implemented in June 2012 as intended, it is essential that it is carried over into next year so that proper support can be given to teachers and learners.

DEPONENT

SIGNED AND SWORN BEFORE ME AT _____ ON THIS THE ___ DAY OF _____ 2012, THE DEPONENT HAVING ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SHE KNOWS AND UNDERSTANDS THE CONTENTS OF THIS AFFIDAVIT, THAT SHE HAS NO OBJECTION TO TAKING THE OATH AND THAT SHE CONSIDERS THE SAME AS BINDING ON HER CONSCIENCE.

COMMISSIONER OF OATHS