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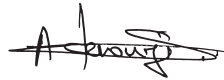
Basic Education Laws Amendment (BELA)

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A AMMENDMENT HISTORY:

Amendment Date	Version	Amendment Date	Final Approval Level

B. APPROVAL

Title	Name	Date	Signature
Director	O.D Adewuyi	12 Feb,2025	

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The Department of Education Bella B policy refers to the Basic Education Laws Amendment (BELA) Act 32 of 2024, which was signed into law by President Cyril Ramaphosa on December 24, 2024. The legislation amends sections of the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 and the Employment of Educators Act (EEA) of 1998.

The BELA Act aims to address administrative challenges in schools and continue the transformation of the South African education system. While its initial legislative process was marked by significant public debate, the new law is now applicable.

Key provisions of the BELA Act

1. Compulsory education

Grade R: Attendance at school from Grade R (the reception year before Grade 1) is now compulsory from the year a child turns six. **Ages 7 to 15 or Grade 9:** The law makes schooling mandatory for every child until they turn 15 or complete Grade 9, whichever comes first.

Penalties: Parents who prevent their children from attending school without just cause can face penalties, including fines or imprisonment.

2. School admissions and language policies

HOD Oversight: School Governing Bodies (SGBs) must submit their admission and language policies to the provincial Head of Department (HOD) for approval. This is intended to prevent discriminatory practices. **HOD Final Authority:** After consulting with the SGB, the HOD has the final authority to admit a learner to a public school.

Promoting Inclusion: The HOD can direct a school to adopt more than one language of instruction if it is practicable, provided that the school is given the necessary resources to do so. **South African Sign Language (SASL):** The act formally recognizes SASL as an official language for educational purposes.

3. Home education

Registration: Parents who choose to homeschool their children must register them with the Department of Basic Education.

Curriculum standards: The instructional program must align with the national curriculum and show that the child's skills and content acquisition are comparable to national standards.

Assessments: Parents must arrange for periodic assessments by a competent assessor and submit reports to the HOD.

4. School governance

SGB powers: The BELA Act aims to harmonize the powers of SGBs with the directives of the provincial HOD. Financial accountability: SGBs must submit quarterly financial reports to the HOD. The HOD also has the power to investigate financial mismanagement. Conflict of interest: The Act requires SGB members to declare their interests in relation to state business.

5. Learner safety and conduct

Corporal punishment: The Act reinforces the ban on corporal punishment, including any acts that belittle, humiliate, or induce fear in a learner.

Initiation practices: Any initiation practices that take place during school activities are prohibited.

Learner pregnancy: The Minister is empowered to make regulations on managing learner pregnancies in schools