

The Effectiveness of Eswatini Education and Training Sector Policy (2011) On the Professional Development of Primary School Head Teachers in the Manzini Region

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ABSTRACT. The study sought to investigate the effectiveness of the Swaziland Educational and Training Sector Policy (2011) on professional development of primary school head teachers. A convergent mixed-paralleldesign was used in which (17) seventeen head teachers were selected using random sampling and purposively selected three (3) school inspectors. Primary data were collected using semi-structured questionnaires, face-to-face oral interviews and focus group discussions. Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis while descriptive statistics used for quantitative data. Findings indicate that there were no well-cut training strategies developed to enable sufficient professional development of head-teachers through in-house training. Also, the implementation of the EDSEC (2011) is limited by, inadequate resources deployed and constrained time for the in-service training of school heads. Therefore, the conclusion is that there have been no significant improvements on escalated administrative performance by primary school head teachers. It is recommended that initiatives be developed to intensify the performance of head-teachers so that they can be effective school managers. For such, the revised 2018 EDSEC should be afforded adequate resources to promote the professional and intellectual growth of school head teachers and effective policy implementation through the Ministry of Education and Training.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Continuous growth of professional knowledge and skills is an essential part of improvement and development in any profession as it helps professionals to update their competencies as to meet the dynamism of the profession and improve their professional credibility. Day and Sachs (2004) argue that a teaching qualification is no longer sufficient in providing principals with knowledge and skills they require if there is no regular updating of these competencies through professional development activities. Guillaume and Vitucci (2014) point out that in an education system; officers, principals, and teachers need to be retrained so as to enable them implement and manage new changes, which are manifested in the form of new policies and strategic development plan mooted by the government.

The Swaziland Education and Training Sector Policy (2011) is held as the blueprint for guiding educational policy and practice in Eswatini. In Eswatini, professional development of school administrators is an issue mentioned in the Swaziland Education and Training Sector Policy (2011). Section 8.6.4.2 of this policy states that head teachers, deputy head teachers, Heads of Departments (HODs) will be supported with on-going support and managerial skills training in order to improve the quality of teacher training and education. In Section 9.2 emphasis is put on the In-Service policy goal of promoting and supporting systematic and sustainable high quality teaching and learning through effective school management and encouragement of the professional growth and development of teachers. As an input for ensuring this development, the Ministry of Education and Training through its In-service training (INSET) department provides school administrators short courses on administration which are almost two weeks in all new appointees of head teachers.

The target is on-going support and managerial skills training in order to improve the quality of teacher training and education. In-line with Woodall and Winstanley (1998); and Fielden, (1998) who stated that professional development is a requirement of all staff within an organization in order to enable them to better contribute to achieving organizational goals. This is important given that professionals have varying skills and experiences for the task at hand. Professional development therefore is a necessary component of harmonizing skills for the set goals. Continuous growth of professional knowledge and skills helps head-teachers and teachers alike to update their competencies in meeting the dynamism of the profession and improve their professional credibility.

In an effort to bring about competence in school management, different countries have adopted diverse approaches. A report by UNESCO (2009) states that in Germany, attention has been given to appointing head teachers trained in administration and management and with no first-hand teaching experience. In the United States of America, there is no formal requirement for head teachers to have teaching experience, rather specialist university training in school management is trusted to prepare people for the job. In France, teachers' distaste for managerial positions has encouraged other staff in the national education system to take them up and the proportion of counselling and educational support staff (who do not have teaching status) competing for teaching posts is growing regularly. According to Jull (2013), school leadership, head teacher professional development and school management practices in sub-Saharan Africa have little variation from the model of schooling established during the colonial rule. With increasing pressures from growing demand for higher quality of primary schools, head-teachers play a crucial role in creating an enabling schooling environment. Within Uganda, and across many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, head-teachers are not adequately prepared for their roles, and few professional development opportunities exist to provide them with the skills they need. However, Wamba (2015) observed that, contrary to South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania and Botswana, Malawian and Eswatini scholars have not produced useful research reports on the preparation of head teachers. It is against this background, that a study was initiated to establish how the Eswatini government supports the school head teachers in their professional development as stipulated in the Eswatini Education and Training Sector Policy (2011).

The Ministry of Education and Training set up a department of In-service training (INSET) which organizes short orientation courses for novice school administrators in educational management skills and financial management. However, despite the apparent commitment to implement the EDSEC (2011) through orientation of novice school administrators in administrative and management skills, there are alarming instances and reports where head teachers have been found devoid of the required school management knowledge and skills. These include financial management, effective curriculum supervision, team building, conflict resolution, human resources management, time management, instructional leadership, clinical supervision of teachers, and management of student time (Swaziland National Report, 1994). It is against this backdrop that the study investigated the effectiveness of the EDSEC policy (2011) on primary school head teacher's professional development. Thus the main objectives of this study were to investigate methods used by the ministry, head teachers' perceptions of Swaziland Education and Training Sector Policy (2011), head teachers views on the effectiveness of Swaziland Education and Training Sector Policy (2011).

1. *Empowerment Theory*

The key theory that underpinned this study is the Structural Empowerment theory. Kanter's (1993) theory of structural empowerment deals with dialogue of organizational performance and employee autonomy. According to Kanter (2004) empowerment embraces feelings of competence, autonomy, job meaningfulness, and an ability to influence the organization. Individuals who are empowered are highly committed to the organization, more accountable for their work, and better able to fulfil job demands in an effective way (Degner, 2005). It shows that if structures within the workplace grant access to resources, this will allow employees to carry out their work in effective ways.

Teacher empowerment has become increasingly visible within current trends related to educational best practices through the EDSEC (2011). The EDSEC (2011) envisages this as a significant factor in the success of the schools as a platform for the development of upcoming economic leaders. It is considered as an important variable in comprehensive school improvement efforts of today's effective schools' movement. The Structural Empowerment theory underpins the present study through how its principles and assumptions relate to the effectiveness professional development through the EDSEC (2011). This theory provided the basis of formulating the research objectives on evaluating in-service training provisions for motivating continued growth through opportunities provided by the related government policies.

The variables involved in the study are conceptualized using the conceptual model delineated in Figure 1. This illustrates the interrelationship between the independent and dependent variables. The independent factors leading to professional development of head teachers in Eswatini include the Eswatini education policy factors such as training, workshops, regular inspection and appraisal.

2. *Conceptual Framework*

Independent Variables: EDSEC policy (2011) **Dependent Variables: Head teacher Professional Development**

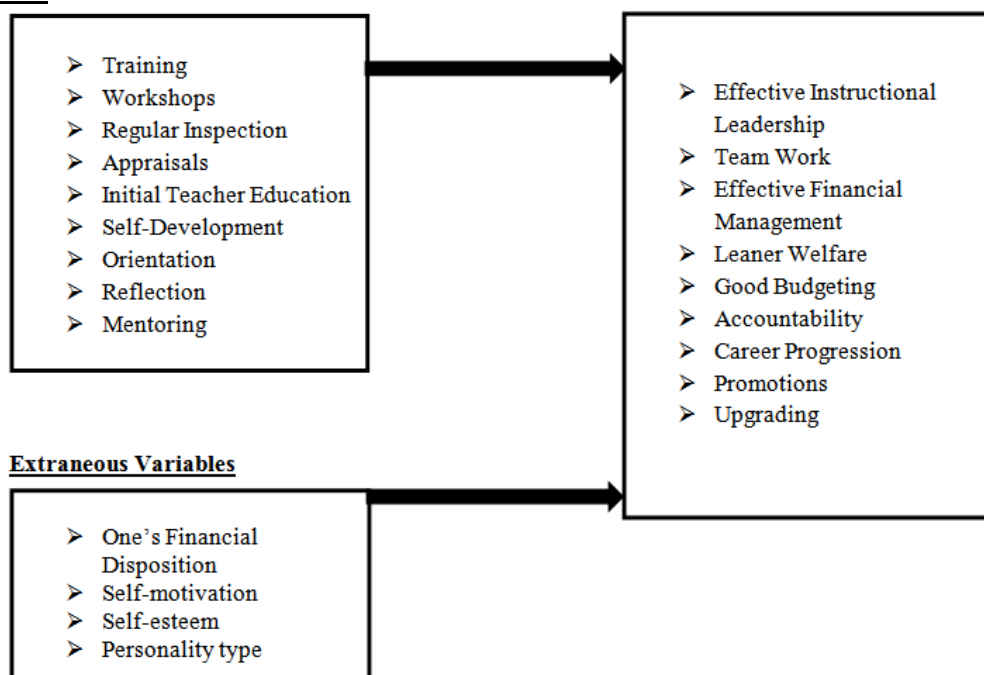


Figure1: Conceptual Framework of the study (Sources: derived from research)

The conceptual framework in Figure 2.1 illustrates the interrelationship between the independent and dependent variables. The independent variables leading to professional development of head teachers in Eswatini include the Swaziland education policy (2011) variables which recommends viable programs such as training, workshops, regular inspection, appraisal, self-development, reflection and mentoring which the Ministry of Education and Training have tasked the In-set department to work with schools in the country for the success of all the programs. If all the independent variables can be implemented effectively, the result can be effective instructional leadership, teamwork, effective financial management, good budgeting, accountability, promotions to name a few which are all components of professional development. However there may be other variables unrelated to the Swaziland Education and Training policy (2011) variables that may also contribute to the head teachers' professional development such as individual head teachers' self-motivation and financial disposition. If the Ministry of Education and Training can effectively implement its outlined in-service programs like training of principles, regular works-shops, infusion workshops, carrying out regular and effective school inspections coupled with appraisals of school head-teachers, this will then enhance the head-teachers' professional development which will be manifested in their effectiveness in instructional leadership, in building team work (team building) in their schools effective and accountable financial management, enhancing learner welfare and in their potential for career progress, promotions and upgrading.

Related literature

Klapper (2001) recognizes several opportunities where teachers can learn through continuing professional development that may include both formal and informal learning. Noted are formal include learning through actual teaching, formal training, workshops and seminars, post graduate qualifications, as well as teaching methodology books. While informal include the implementation, development and evaluation of teaching materials, collaboratively with colleagues, peer observation, group discussion, mentoring of less experience teachers, initial teacher education, observation of novice teachers, self-development, conducting workshops and presentations about your own teaching experience, materials development, and dissemination of good practice (Hasti, MacPhail, Calderon & Sinelnikov, 2014).

Arguably, in Swaziland, there is no specific training programme given as a pre-requisite for the position of head teachers. If such a programme existed, perhaps the concept of orientation would have been included. Notably, the Education sector policy (2011) through the provision of in-service, is silent about the provision of orientation as a key part of in-service training. The implications of this are critical in that novice head teachers are posted to schools and have little assistance in fitting into the job. As a result it may take longer to start effective producing results at the new school.

For beginning head teachers in the early years of management the focus tends to be on survival rather than on management strategies necessary to achieve the fundamental goals of the school (Langdon, 2011). As a result a new head teacher may be faced by incredible challenge which frustrates them. Such challenges can be sufficiently great for a large portion of head teachers leave the profession at this point. Langdon (2011) discussion of effective induction programs draws attention to the importance of shifting the focus from survival to core issues in teaching; mentors, for instance, need to acknowledge the main purpose for induction is to promote best practices in management skills. Well-designed induction programs therefore need to for both the needs of teachers for ongoing self-development and for those of their learners. Orientation aims to make sure that both new head teachers (newly appointed with no experience and experienced colleagues who are transferred to a new context) feel secure and supported (Haase, Heckhausen, & Silbereisen, 2012; Pignatelli, 2011).

Professional Development is important for a number of reasons. It enhances teachers' ability to evaluate and act efficiently in situations where critical judgment is required, for instance, in relation to changes in curriculum, subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and technology (Grogan & Andrews, 2002). As Villegas-Reimers (2003) observed that teachers play a double role in this process as agents for change and as one of the variables that need to be changed. By the same token, Darling-Hammond (1994) argues that professional development is a key element in developing the learning and teaching processes. It also plays an essential role in promoting quality (Waycott, Bennett, Kennedy, Dalgarno, & Gray, 2010). Professional development is important for both newly qualified teachers and teachers who have recently arrived in the institution. New graduates are in particular need of guidance and support in order to act appropriately in relation to the issues they may encounter in the new context (Timperley, 2008). The same essence is shared for teachers transferred from one school to another or when teachers are promoted to a new post such as Senior Teacher or Coordinator. Relevant examples include the Colleges of Applied Sciences (CAS) context, where new teachers, both foreign and local, are recruited every semester. Staff entering these posts need support to function effectively. Ongoing development is required for all teachers both new and old in order to keep themselves updated and to cope with the local and international change (Duran, 2012).

There is general consensus in the literature that continuing professional development is necessary for building head-teachers' capacity to improve their knowledge and practice with the ultimate goal of promoting students' learning. However, such professional development represents a substantial investment of time on the part of the head-teacher and a significant financial investment on the part of the educational authority that funds it. As such, it is essential to identify factors that lead to positive outcomes from professional development. The factors that impact on the effectiveness of head teachers' professional development are varied, and there is no consensus on how to analyse or promote the effectiveness of professional development (Dadds, 2014). There is, however, general agreement that systemic factors can impact on head teachers' learning and practices. According to Craft (2000), school organizational limitations and differing school cultural practices can act to constrain head teachers' professional learning.

According to Woods, Cowie and Woods (2015) enabling head teachers to become fully engaged in both the planning and the delivery of development activity is likely to increase its relevance and effectiveness. Consideration should be given to establishing a group of head teachers and education authority staff in larger authorities who would have responsibility for planning and delivering a rolling programme of professional development activities for head teachers that would integrate with and complement the range of activities that authorities already support or aspire to support. Smaller authorities could group together in consortia. Woods et al. (2015) adds that key to the effectiveness of professional development is the availability of multiple pathways to learning, including opportunities for interaction and networking, as well as appropriate knowledge input. Important aspects for attention are:

- a) Co-operative learning, which is reflected in the value attached by head teachers to networking and interaction with colleagues and others. Building on current practice, consideration could be given to fostering active learning communities within larger authorities and groups of smaller authorities.
- b) Improving pedagogy of provision. Whilst there are examples of good provision, in other cases attention is needed to the relevance of content for participants (which requires awareness of their current knowledge and needs) and to the pace, variety, challenge and opportunity for discussion built into professional development activity (Woods et al., 2015).

The Ministry of Education and Training still considers the SETSP (2011) as the blueprint to guide the education system. It relates to continuing professional development for improving teaching performance (Ministry of Education and Training, 2011). While the Head Teacher Management Training Programme (HTMTP) has often been flagged, no concrete documentation exists about this programme and how or when it is to be implemented. Only its objective is stated in the Education sector policy (2011) That is to *design and introduce a (part time) 3-month certificate program in leadership and instructional, financial and institutional*

management for new deputy principals prior to their later appointment as school principals (Ministry of Education and Training, 2011:42). Without an implementation strategy, the HTMTP program remains as a grossly insufficient policy objective to effective head-teachers professional development. There is also no concrete evidence of any attempts to execute this policy goal. A gap therefore exists to explore the problems caused by policy discrepancies between policy formation and policy implementation in helping head-teachers develop and grow as per the Swaziland Education Sector Policy (2011).

II. METHODOLOGY

This study used a convergent parallel mixed design which requires a researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, analyzes them separately, and then compares the results to see if the findings confirm or disconfirm each other. The key assumption of this approach is that both qualitative and quantitative data provide different types of information often detailed views of participants qualitatively and scores on instruments quantitatively and together they yield results that should be the same. Target population were all the primary school head teachers and school inspectors in the Manzini region, there are 168 primary schools in the region, each primary school has one head teacher. The region has 15 inspectors. The study targeted to evaluate the effectiveness of the EDSEC (2011) on primary school head teachers' professional development. Table 1 shows the sample for the study. Seventeen head teachers were selected randomly while three inspectors were selected purposively according to their work on the randomly selected schools.

Table 1: Sample size of participants

Category	Population	Sample
Regional inspectors	15	3
Head-teachers	168	17
Total	183	22

Semi-structured interviews were used on the inspectors for data on work experiences, knowledge and perceptions of the EDSEC (2011) and how it impacted on primary head-teachers' professional development.

Questionnaires provided a category of statements and respondents were to use the five Likert scale to relate their level of agreement with the content for the concerned research objective. The five scale was; 1=strongly, agree, 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree and, 5=strongly disagree. Questionnaires were also used to collect data from head teachers as well as focus group discussions. The discussions were well managed, to allow deep-seated feelings on the subject to emerge naturally (Sherraden, 2001). The head-teachers were divided into 2 focus group interviews. During focus group interviews, the researcher's role was critical to the success of the group discussion (Finch & Lewis, 2003). The researcher ensured that each participant was given an opportunity to participate in order to balance the contributions of individual members (Finch & Lewis, 2003). Recording the discussion was an important aspect in focus group interviews. This was done through the use of a tape recorder and by taking notes (MacDonald & Headlam, 2009). The researcher pre-tested the focus group interview guides with mock focus groups.

Content validity was conducted to validate the questionnaires, and interview items so that wording of the items were amended before they were administered to the participants. These were also validated by three lecturers from the University of Eswatini and one inspector from the Manzini region who did not participate in the study. The researcher ensured reliability of the instruments by calculating the reliability coefficients of the questionnaire using Cronbach Alpha, refer equation 1. Cronbach alpha estimates the proportion of variance in test scores that are consistent or can be attributed to true score variance (Cronbach, 1970). A pilot study of 3 head-teachers from primary schools that did not participate in the final study was also conducted to test the data collection instruments.

$$r = \frac{K}{K-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum SD^{-2} 1}{SDt^2} \right)$$

Where r = Reliability

$\sum SD^{-2}$ = Sum of the variance of individual item in the test

SDt^2 = Variance of the entire test

K = Number of the items in the test

Instrument reliability for the whole questionnaire was obtained for each domain; revealed that the methods employed by the Education sector policy (2011) head teachers' professional development was 72% reliable and revealed that head teachers' perceptions on the importance of policy was 70% reliable. It was further

revealed that head teachers' views on the effectiveness of policy was 78% while the challenges in the implementation of policy was 76%, reliable.

An approval letter was first obtained from the Ministry of Education and Training to conduct the study in the schools. Questionnaires were distributed to the head-teachers and picked up on an agreed date. The questionnaires were self-administered. This was followed by focus group discussions with the head teachers. Scheduling of these included an agreement on a suitable date where they would gather from their work stations to a common point for the discussion. Travel expenses were born by the researcher to ensure full attendance. The location was central at the Sydney Williams Primary School and date was set on weekend to avoid neglect of duty. Inspectors consent to participate in the study was sort individually through request letters and dates were scheduled for the interviews. Each face-to-face interview was forty-five minutes and recorded on consent on interviewee.

Descriptive statistics was used to summarize quantitative data collected from the questionnaire. Data was processed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) computer software version 20.0. Qualitative data was processed using content and thematic analysis. Tape recorded data from the in-depth were transcribed and, coded, classified under categories and subjected to content analyses. Coding permitted quantification of responses as well as and reporting verbatim.

III. FINDINGS

Methods employed by the EDSEC(2011) in enhancing the head teachers' professional developments shows that most of the respondents (82%) disagreed with the statement that in-service training was adequate as a means of professional development. Most of the respondents (76%) did not agree that study leaves for the purposes of taking a specific course were granted by the Ministry of Education and Training. It was agreed upon by most of the respondents (65%) that the regional education office did run professional development workshops. A considerable number of the respondents (59%) disagreed that cluster workshops are used for the purposes of professional development. The findings in the study imply that methods employed by the policy in enhancing head teachers' professional development is not adequate. The respondents indicated that in-service trainings were not enough. This has been illustrated by table 2 below

The Methods employed by 2011 EDSEC policy to enhance head-teachers' Professional Development (n=17)

Item	Agree		Disagree	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
In-service training is adequate	03	18	14	82
Study leaves for specific courses are granted by TSC	04	24	13	76
Regional office run workshops	11	65	06	35
Cluster workshops	07	41	10	59

Source: Field data (2018)

The head teachers were also engaged in a focus group discussion with the researcher. Two focus groups were conducted and comprised of eight members and seven members respectively. It was a view of the majority of the participants in the focus group discussion held with head teachers that there was generally lack of policy methods from the responsible authorities in the Ministry of Education and Training. The lack of methods as discussed by the participants manifested itself in the following key ways which were captured as sub-themes; guiding instrument, professional development methods not clear and disconnect between policy and practice.

Head teachers' perceptions on the importance of EDSEC (2011) to their professional developments shows that almost all the respondents (94%) agreed with the statement that the EDSEC(2011) was important for the purposes of head teachers' professional development. On attributes, 76% agreed it provided a sense of leadership vision, 76% agreed enabled improved management of their own time, 76% agreed it encouraged head teacher goal setting for teachers. Also 94% of the respondents agreed that EDSEC (2011) contributed to their effective communication skills. While a majority of the respondents (71%) attributed it to effective management of work related and personal related stress. They perceive important to enhancing their management skills. This therefore, implies that the EDSEC (2011) is important for better management of schools and for education. This has been illustrated by table 3 below.

Head teachers' perceptions on the importance of the EDSEC policy to their professional development (n=17)

Item	Agree Frequency	%	Disagree Frequency	%
Managing self as head-teachers	16	94	01	06
Providing leadership vision	14	82	03	18
Improves Management of own time	13	76	04	24
Encourages Setting personal goals	13	76	04	24
Effective communication skills	16	94	01	06
Managing work related stress/personal stress	12	71	05	29

Source: Field data (2018)

The participants were further asked in the focus group discussion to give their opinions on the importance of professional development for a head teacher. The participants revealed that for effective leadership and accountability professional development of head teachers is an important strategy and for ease of executing duties. Some participants stated that all sectors of society keep improving day after day, hence lack of professional development may lead to redundancies and ineffectiveness, and therefore it is important to capacitate head teachers with the necessary skills to effectively operate in their offices. It was a consensus among the majority of the participants that professional development is important for head teachers. Regarding the importance of professional development a number of prominent subthemes emerged; upgrading of skills for head teachers; improvement of the quality of school management and improvement of academic performance in schools.

Effectiveness of the EDSEC (2011) on the professional development of head teachers shows that 76% of the respondents agree that EDSEC(2011) has no concern for head teachers' professional development. 88% disagreed that it adequately provides for head teacher professional development. While all respondents agreed that the EDSEC (2011) must be revised to include direct provisions for promoting of headteacher professional development. Also, there was 94% a consensus for the need to better implementation of the EDSEC(2011). However, 82% rejected the statement that policy is effective in addressing head teachers' professional development needs. Therefore, implying that the policy is not effective and needs to be revised in order to include the direct provisions for promoting the head teacher's professional development. The findings could imply that the policy was not properly implemented. This has been illustrated by table 4 below

Head teachers' views on the Effectiveness of the EDSEC 2011 education sector policy (2011) on their professional development (n=17)

Item	Agree Frequency	%	Disagree Frequency	%
The Education Sector Policy has no concern for head teacher professional development.	13	76	04	24
The Education Sector Policy of 2011 adequately provides for head teacher professional development.	02	12	15	88
The EDSEC Policy of (2011) must be revised to include direct provisions for promoting of Head teacher professional development	17	100	00	00
There's need for better implementation of the policy	16	94	01	06
The policy is effective in addressing our professional develop needs	03	18	14	82

Source: Field data (2018)

During focus group discussion almost all the participants in the study indicated that the Education Sector policy (2011) is not effective enough because of its implementation. The policy according to the head teachers dwells much on the development of teachers than head teachers.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that there were no clear methods in the Swaziland Education and Training Sector Policy (2011) that promoted the professional development of primary head-teachers. There were provisions of in-service training for both teachers and head teachers. Only workshops were also used as a means of training for head teachers. There was no specific section that was directed to the professional development of head

teachers detailing the core of the office duties. However, head teachers perceived the policy as important for their professional development as school overseers.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ministry of Education and Training should make a clear provision in the revised Swaziland Education and Training Sector Policy (2018) on the methods needed specifically for professional development of head teachers. There should be a provision that head teachers should personally take a responsibility and initiative in preparing and developing themselves for school leadership through self-study, attending seminars and workshops as an important initiative. The Ministry of Education and Training should undertake proper monitoring the policy implementation and benchmark with SADC the methods essential for effective development of school administrators. Government through the Ministry of Education and Training should provide adequate resources for proper implementation of the policy to hasten proper school management.

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