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FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CURRICULUM SERVICES

JUNE 2004

## VALUES IN EDUCATION

It is important to consider constantly how values can be incorporated into our planning and teaching on an ongoing basis so that the classroom and school ethos reflect the ideals of our national Constitution, also embodied in our Critical and Developmental Outcomes. It is important for us to reflect and consider the values from the Constitution which should be shaping our schools.

### Ten fundamental values of our Constitution and their relevance in education:

#### 1. DEMOCRACY

The constitution defines South Africa as a sovereign democratic state founded upon the value of universal adult suffrage with a national common voter's roll, regular elections and multi-party system of government. This means that government is based on the will of the people, that we are responsible for our own destinies since, through the electoral process, we run our country and our public institutions.

**To reflect this value, we need democratic classrooms where the learners participate in decisions relating to the learning process.**

#### 2. SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY

Emancipation of the mind and spirit is a noble achievement, but without implementation of social justice to correct the injustices of the past, reconciliation will be impossible to achieve

So, while the constitution grants inalienable rights to freedom of expression and choice, it also establishes as a right the access to adequate housing, health care service, sufficient food and water, social security and basic education

Children, specifically, enjoy the inalienable right to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care and social services and to be protected from maltreatment, abuse or degradation.

**Our classrooms must be just and caring places where the different circumstances of all learners are factored in.**

#### 3. EQUALITY

The constitution is unequivocal on equality, stating that everybody is equal before the law and may not be unfairly discriminated against on the basis of race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social status, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.

Understanding the value of equality and the practice of non-discrimination means not only understanding that you have these rights, as an educator or as a learner, but others have them as well.

It is out of this clause that the values of respect and tolerance for others stem. It is also because of the equality clause that we value linguistic diversity, for we may not discriminate against each other on the basis of language. **Thus we should learn one another's languages so that we can communicate as equals. This recognition of the language rights of others is supported by our provincial language policy.**

#### **4. NON-RACISM AND NON-SEXISM**

This value outlines the challenge of striving towards practices that treat everybody as equals in order to redress the imbalances of the past where people were oppressed or devalued because of their race or gender. From this value the policies of affirmative action flow.

**Non sexism also means that female educators and students are not victims of sexual abuse or harassment in schools, and that females are not discouraged from completing their schooling because of abuse, harassment or pregnancy.**

#### **5. UBUNTU (HUMAN DIGNITY)**

Ubuntu has a particularly important place in our value system for it derives specifically from African customs: **I am human because you are human.**

**Out of the values of Ubuntu and human dignity flow the practices of compassion, kindness, altruism and respect which are at the core of making schools places where the culture of teaching and culture of learning thrive and of making them dynamic hubs of industry and achievement rather than places of conflict and pain.**

Ubuntu embodies the concept of mutual understanding and the active appreciation of the value of human difference. It requires you to know others if you're to know yourself within a multicultural environment. Ultimately, Ubuntu requires you to respect others if you are to respect yourself.

#### **6. AN OPEN SOCIETY**

The South African Constitution as the supreme law lays the foundation for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people. Democracy and openness are interchangeable and interdependent values.

The Constitution is the route to an open society because we have the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion, the right to freedom of expression in relation to the press, artistic creativity, academic issues, scientific research, assembly and association.

Our rights come with certain responsibilities: we may not exercise our rights to openness if they have the intention of inciting violence, propagandising war, or advocating hatred based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion.

The value of openness cherishes debate, discussion and critical thought, for a society that knows how to talk and how to listen does not need to resort to violence.

**It means, most of all, encouraging a culture of dialogue and debate that is often absent or discouraged in our schools.** A culture of discussion out of which values and priorities are perpetually being reflected on, evaluated and reassessed should be cultivated.

#### **7 ACCOUNTABILITY (RESPONSIBILITY)**

Democratic tools such as the vote confirm and reinforce the values of accountability, responsiveness and openness. More specifically the public administration, which includes the school system, must be governed by the values and principles of professionalism, efficiency, equity, transparency, representivity and accountability.

But accountability means that we are all responsible for the advancement of our nation through education and our schools and that we are responsible to others in the society for our individual behaviour.

**In the school situation this implies, among other things, constant contact with and reporting to parents.**

#### **8 THE RULE OF LAW**

South Africa is founded on the value of the supremacy of the constitution and the rule of law. The law is supreme in that there is a consensus of rules and regulations we must obey. All participants within the education system are subject to the law of the land.

**Administrators may not defraud school budget for personal gains, educators may not physically or sexually abuse their learners, learners may not carry illegal weapons, possess illegal narcotics, trash school property and intimidate educators.**

Non-violence might be the value that flows out of the constitutional principles of Ubuntu, equality and openness, but it is also one that is upheld by the rule of law.

## **9 RESPECT**

School-based research on values and education conducted for the Department of Education shows that the two values people feel are most lacking in schools are respect and dialogue. Respect is an essential precondition for communication, for teamwork and for productivity. Learning cannot happen if there is not mutual respect between educators and learners.

The Convention of the Rights of the Child goes further: It calls for education to be directed to strengthening “the development of respect for the child’s parents, for his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilisations different from his or her own”.

**Education must also direct itself to “the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sex, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin”.**

## **10 RECONCILIATION**

Reconciling is more than merely being a question of saying sorry. It requires redress in other, even material, ways, as well.

“Unity in Diversity” means accepting each other through learning, it means interacting with each other, and studying how we have interacted with each other in the past. It means accepting that South Africa is made up of people and communities with very different cultures and traditions, and with very different experiences of what it means to be South African, remembering that these experiences have often been violent and conflictual.

**The conditions of peace, of well-being and of unity – adhering to a common identity, flow naturally from the value of reconciliation.**

## **CELEBRATIONS**

**Logically, if we share common values, we will share common celebrations. Let us consider the meaning of celebrations in a school context.** Celebrations entail reflection, expressions of thanksgiving and consolidation. Key messages are:

- Celebration of freedom attained and thanksgiving.
- Pride in our achievements as a nation since 1994, in who we are and who we are becoming.
- Forward looking to further progress, democracy and stability.
- Inclusivity of everyone in S.A. as well as friends and partners.

Each month of the year has a particular focus and these foci could be built into Learning Programmes to make celebrations a natural part of teaching.

### ***MARCH: Human Rights Month***

- Lessons to discuss Section 2 of the Constitution.
- Values outlined in the Constitution.
- Profile National Symbols.
- Enhance Patriotism.

### ***APRIL: Freedom Month***

- Celebrate our achievements as a nation in the past 10 years.
- Celebrate Unity in Diversity.
- Re-commitment to Nation Building.
- Profile National Symbols.

### ***MAY: Worker’s Month***

- Economic Development and Job Creation.
- Poverty Alleviation Strategies.
- Sustainable Development.
- HIV/AIDS and the Workplace.
- Wellness Programme.
- Volunteer services to the community.

**JUNE: Youth Month**

- History of the country.
- Challenges facing the youth today:
  - HIV/AIDS
  - Racism and Sexism
  - Poverty
- Encourage greater participation in Maths, Science and Technology.
- Strategies against substance abuse.

**AUGUST: Women's Month**

- Focus on women's emancipation.
- Contribution of women to sustainable development.
- Domestic violence.
- Child abuse.
- HIV/AIDS and the home.

**SEPTEMBER: Heritage Month**

- Celebrating our Heritage, Symbols and Values.
- Celebrating Unity in Diversity.
- Competitions: Our Roots are Speaking – Speech, Drama, Creative Writing, Visual Art, etc.

**OCTOBER: Teacher's Month**

- Accolades for the good work done by educators.
- Professional Development for Educators.
- Educators take a stand against abuse in general.
- Commitment and re-dedication to the 'Noble Call'.

**NOVEMBER: Non-Violence Against Women**

- 16 Days of Activism on No Violence Against Women and Children.

**DECEMBER: Month of Reconciliation**

- Month of Goodwill.
- Month of Reconciliation.
- Celebrate all the things that bring us together as a nation rather than those that separate us.

**OUR HERITAGE, VALUES AND SYMBOLS**

- × Creating proudly South African Schools.
- × Celebrating our Heritage.
- × Appreciating and celebrating traditional values and customs.
- × Reclaiming of cultures and creating space to tell our stories.
- × All schools have flags.
- × Special assemblies for National Anthem.
- × Freedom day website promotion and use.
- × Festival of indigenous music (Tiriso).
- × Encourage schools to start with setting aside days to visit heritage sites.

**PLEASE CONTACT 0832981119 OR 4054852 (051) IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES RELATING TO CURRICULUM ISSUES.**