

# Delivery of school textbooks on track for 2014

The Publishers' Association of South Africa (PASA) convened a media conference on Monday, 13 January 2014, to discuss the role of the publishing industry in the delivery of textbooks in South Africa.



The implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), which was phased in from 2012 to 2014, required new textbooks that were aligned to its objectives. Publishers have, over the last three years, worked closely with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and other role players to realise the aims of the new curriculum by supplying textbooks to South African learners.

It is common knowledge that supplying textbooks to learners countrywide is fraught with challenges. This is mainly because a successful process of textbook delivery relies on the cooperation of several role players - the DBE and Provincial Education Departments (PEDs), school principals and teachers, paper manufacturers, publishers, printers and distributors.

It is for this reason that we highlight the point that delivery of textbooks in 2013 for the 2014 school calendar year was the most successful since the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement. Well over 90% of textbooks ordered by the DBE in 2013 were delivered to government warehouses and other book suppliers - booksellers and distribution agencies - by the end of October 2013, with a mop-up process completed by the end of November of the same year.

The early delivery of textbooks will hopefully give the DBE the opportunity to start the 2014 school calendar year with few or no glitches in this regard.

The early delivery of textbooks in 2013 was due in no small measure to the cooperation of role players in the book value chain. The most valuable cooperation was with the Department of Basic Education. The Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) Forum - attended by the DBE, PEDs and Publishers - facilitated the planning, execution, monitoring and the implementation of corrective measures for the delivery process. Similar LTSM forums with nine PEDs enabled us to complete our deliveries.

In addition, the DBE developed a Basic Education Sector Plan aimed at streamlining activities around the procurement and delivery of textbooks across provinces such that the sector delivers on its mandate along the same timeframes. Also worthy of note is the early release of the national catalogues by the DBE, as this is the major enabler for the procurement, printing and delivery processes. Other significant role players not to be omitted were distributors in the form of booksellers and other logistical entities.

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