



GOVERNMENT OF SINDH
EDUCATION & LITERACY DEPARTMENT

Karachi, dated: 14th June, 2016

NOTIFICATION

No. SO(G-III)E&L/School Clustering Policy/2016 – With the recommendation of sub-committee of Sindh Education Sector Plan (SESP) Steering Committee vide notification No. SO(G-III) E&L/RSU/3-580/15 dated 09-12-2011, and with the approval of competent authority, Government of Sindh has formulated a comprehensive Policy framework on School Clustering which will be implemented in a phased manner.

2. In order to reap full benefits of the school clustering scheme it is imperative that its implementation should be started with the piloting in one district each of the 6 administrative divisions of Sindh and based on the results and learning after the first year of piloting, the Government will consider further roll out.

3. Primarily, this policy is intended to effectively address issues of isolation of rural schools due to large distances, non-availability of teachers, inadequate resources and non-availability of opportunities for professional development on equitable basis for improving educational management and resultantly educational outcomes.

4. The following Policy Framework on school clustering containing five central themes is hereby approved and notified for its implementation of school clustering in the Sindh province first through pilot exercise in 6 Districts of the Province (District Malir for Karachi Division and all 5 Divisional Headquarters Districts and its subsequent roll out for implementation of the policy as intended

POLICY FRAMEWORK

5. The ELD in view of the challenges faced to Education and the research work carried out sets forth its intention in this Policy through setting in the framework of School Clustering as one of the key and tangible response to the identified challenges and approves following policy framework for the implementation of school clustering in the Sindh province. This Policy outlines management structures that will be put to manage, supervise and monitor the Cluster based School Management System. The policy framework comprises **five central themes** as follows:

- i. **School Cluster**
- ii. **Cluster Hub School**
- iii. **Head, Cluster Hub School**
- iv. **Guide Teacher(s)**
- v. **Cluster Based School Management**



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A. SCHOOL CLUSTER

6. There shall be a school cluster as follows:

- a) A 'school cluster' is defined as a group of schools that are geographically close and accessible to each other, within a radius of 15-20 kms (it would vary depending on each case and as further elaborated in this policy and SOPs and guidelines to be framed under this policy;

- b) Each cluster will consist of a given number of schools determined through EMIS and GIS data and field verification processes;
- c) One school in each group will be selected to serve as the Cluster Hub School (CHS). The Head of the CHS will work as the cluster in charge for overall leadership, guidance and coordination of cluster level activities;
- d) One or more Guide Teachers will also be notified to support with implementation of activities in the school cluster by the Clusters Commissions to be notified under this Policy;
- e) The school clusters will be identified by the concerned Taluka Education Officers (TEOs – Primary and Secondary) in consultation with the DEOs (Primary and Secondary), according to the criteria and categories set forth in this policy document;
- f) The identified clusters will be verified by the RSU through processes identified in the guidelines and SOPs (hereunder), and upon verification the concerned DEO (Primary or Secondary as would be the case) will notify the clusters;
- g) **The process of cluster identification and notification will be completed within one and a half month of the promulgation of this School Clustering Policy, initially for the piloting and in all the 6 districts. At least, 10 clusters would be formed in each district. This should be done after working out a reasonable number of clusters for each district, which are deemed manageable during the currency of the pilot phase, for implementation.**

A (1) Commission of School Clusters

7. Commissions of clusters will be established at the district and divisional levels to provide better top management, oversight and monitoring of the Policy Implementation in line with the stated policy objectives. Cluster Commissions will provide a platform to share and resolve problems, plan utilization of resources, provide a voice to the schools and teachers at all levels. Commissions of school clusters will be formed at the district and divisional levels as follows:-

A (1-a) Divisional Cluster Commission

8. It will be co-headed by the Divisional Director (Primary and Secondary) and will include civil society members including private and NGO sector representatives, parents and community members and two members from each district cluster commissions. The Divisional Cluster Commission will be notified by Provincial ELD. The Commission will perform various functions including:

- i. Approve and notify school clusters based on the recommendations of the District Cluster Commissions;
- ii. Notification of district cluster commissions including nomination of members;
- iii. Development of a performance monitoring plan in coordination with RSU for the cluster based school management;
- iv. Monitoring and reviewing performance of district cluster commissions;
- v. Approving district cluster commission activity plans;
- vi. Notification of Cost Centre at Cluster Hub School (CHS) in coordination and consultation with the relevant district and provincial authorities;
- vii. Coordinating with various departments within ELD who will be involved with cluster level activities;
- viii. Ensuring required support to all clusters and CHSs through the district commissions.

A (1-b) The District Cluster Commission

9. The District Cluster Commission will be co-headed by the DEOs of Primary and Secondary and will include all the CHS Heads, selected parents and community members, and representatives from NGOs, CBOs and private organizations working in education. The district commission will be



notified by the Divisional Director (either Primary or Secondary as the case may be) in his capacity as Chairperson of the Divisional Cluster Commission. The district cluster commission will have the following responsibilities:

- i. Recommendations to Divisional Cluster Commission for approving and notifying school clusters;
- ii. Selection and appointment of CHS Head;
- iii. Appointment of Guide Teachers;
- iv. Approval of inter cluster teacher transfers according to the delegated administrative authority of the DEOs (primary, secondary);
- v. Approval of intra cluster teacher transfers at the elementary or secondary levels (according to the delegated administrative authority);
- vi. Coordination of teacher professional development activities;
- vii. Approving cluster activity plans;
- viii. Providing required support for various cluster level activities;
- ix. Monitoring and reviewing performance of school clusters.

A (2) Schools Clusters Categories

10. 91% of all the schools are primary level, 5% are middle/elementary level and 4% are secondary level, there will be multiple types of school clusters categorized as follows:

- i) School cluster with all primary schools: **Primary Cluster;**
- ii) School cluster with one middle or elementary school: **Elementary Cluster;**
- iii) School cluster with one secondary school: **Secondary Cluster;**
- iv) School cluster with Campus School as the Guide School: **Campus School Cluster.**

B. CLUSTER HUB SCHOOL

11. The CHS will ideally be as central and accessible as possible to its satellite schools; it should have adequate facilities and ideally be situated in or closer to a town centre where other social and commercial services are available. The CHS will provide academic and management leadership for other cluster schools.

12. The schools will be identified following due process and in line with the criteria, as Hub Schools by the Taluka Education officers (TEOs – primary and secondary). The note will be placed before the DEOs (primary and secondary as may be the case) by the TEOs. The CHSs will be notified by the Divisional Directors after the recommendations of DEOs (primary or secondary as may be the case) are considered and approved by the Divisional Cluster Commissions.

B (1) CHS Selection Criteria

- a) Centrally located and be accessible for other schools in the cluster through public transport or walking distance;
- b) One level higher (at least a middle or secondary in case of an all primary school cluster) compared with other schools in the cluster. If there is no middle/elementary or secondary schools in the cluster then the main primary school will be upgraded to elementary level following due process;
- c) Well-resourced in terms of number of teachers (more than 5 in case of a primary or middle school, more than 8 in case of an elementary school, and more than 10 in case of a secondary school – sufficient number of subject teachers should also be available);
- d) Provided with administrative staff to be able to allow the CHS to function as a Cost Centre;
- e) Sufficient number of rooms to be able to allocate at least one room for cluster activities; and
- f) Better facilities such as a boundary wall, drinking water facility, electricity, toilet, furniture for teachers and students, in general comparison with the others. Any residual need for improving facilities can be taken up with relevant authorities.



C. CLUSTER HUB SCHOOL HEAD

13. The CHS will work under one Head. The Head of the CHS will be a strong and committed manager, with a vision that can extend beyond his or her school to the needs of all schools and the community in the cluster.

14. The Head will be the administrative and academic in charge of the cluster hub and constituent schools. He/she will be an officer of BS-17 or above (whether filled through promotion or by transfer). The selection of Head will be done through the respective cluster commission at the district level headed by the DEOs (primary and secondary).

C (1) CHS HEAD Responsibility and Authority

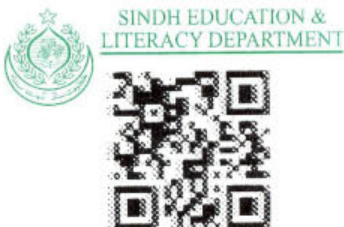
15. The CHS Head will have the following authorities and functions:

- i. The Head will be of at least Grade 17 or above;
- ii. The Head will have the administrative powers (in line with the applicable delegation) to transfer teachers within cluster for which he/she should have good reasons to be recorded, and that unless the situation warrants, the usual tenure of a school teacher in a school within the hub should not be less than 2 years. For any transfers outside of the cluster but within the same taluka or district, the district level commission headed by the DEOs of Primary and Secondary will provide the approval and the concerned CHS heads will seek approval of teachers before referring the case to the district commission;
- iii. The Head will have the powers to temporarily assign a teacher to a school, which is within the cluster, on need basis;
- iv. The Head will also have DDO powers;
- v. The Head will furnish data for the cluster to the monitoring officials;
- vi. The Head will facilitate textbook distribution for the cluster;
- vii. The Head will manage repair and maintenance budget for cluster schools;
- viii. The Head will nominate Guide Teachers for the cluster, duly appointed by the respective district cluster commission;
- ix. The Head in coordination with Guide Teachers will lead teachers for cluster based teacher professional development;
- x. The Head will coordinate with and monitor SMCs in the cluster for their greater involvement and for effective utilization of school funds and for progress updating on the children;
- xi. The Head will supervise cluster schools in coordination with Guide Teachers to plan their needs and that of the cluster; and
- xii. The Head will represent his/her cluster as and when required at the cluster commission level.

16. The Heads will undergo specially designed programs and courses for their capacity building at any appropriate training organization for which Government has made the arrangements, before taking on the role, and will receive ongoing professional support throughout their appointment.

D. GUIDE TEACHER

17. The number of Guide Teachers notified for school cluster will depend on the size of cluster and its varying needs. At the least however, there will be three Guide Teachers nominated for each cluster, covering the academic and management activities. The Guide Teachers can be nominated by the CHS Head either from within the CHS or other cluster schools. The respective district cluster commission will finalize the selection of Guide Teachers. The Guide Teachers will be trained teachers with a minimum academic qualification of a bachelor degree and experience of at least ten



years as a teacher. However this can be reviewed and relaxed by the District Cluster Commission in view of the availability and in line with the principle of opting for teachers fulfilling or closest to the criteria / ability to best serve the objectives.

D (1) Responsibilities of Guide Teacher

18. The Guide Teacher will have the following roles and responsibilities:

- a) The Guide Teacher will provide mentoring support to all the teachers in the cluster for their professional development;
- b) The Guide Teacher will facilitate teacher learning circle in the cluster;
- c) The Guide Teacher will coordinate with the teacher education institutions on behalf of the Head for any teacher training activities for cluster teachers;
- d) The Guide Teacher will furnish all the necessary data about cluster teacher;
- e) The Guide Teacher will regularly coordinate with SMCs for their involvement in cluster activities, school planning, and procurement of goods and services;
- f) The Guide Teacher will assist the Head in other management related tasks such as textbook distribution, identification of cluster schools' needs, developing plans for cluster etc; and
- g) The Guide Teacher will provide necessary guidance and counseling to the students for next steps in their life beyond schooling, or for further education

19. The Guide Teacher will be provided special training by PITE or through any other appropriate arrangement by the Education and Literacy Department for the purpose, prior to his/her appointment or within the first few months of joining, covering teacher professional development to be able to effectively coordinate and mentor teachers at the cluster level. During the course of his/her employment the Guide Teacher will undergo ongoing professional development at specialized teacher education institutions.

E. CLUSTER BASED SCHOOL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CBSM)

18. The CBSM will involve multiple organizations that are responsible for carrying out implementation of activities at the cluster level.

19. The CHS will be responsible for implementation of all activities at the cluster level through its head, guide teachers, other cluster school staff and SMC members. The CHS will seek approval of the district cluster commissions (in line with the delegated administrative powers) for inter cluster teacher transfers, appointment of guide teachers, school planning for repair and maintenance (in line with guidelines of PDR wing), textbook distribution, and sharing of cluster monitoring data as per SOPs.

20. The district and divisional cluster commissions will be responsible for steering of cluster activities at their respective levels, and for providing various approvals including appointments of CHS Head and Guide Teachers and inter cluster transfers of teachers (in line with the delegated administrative powers of the Directors, DEOs and TEOs and on the recommendation / approval of the Cluster Commission.

21. The DEOs and Divisional Directors (primary and secondary heading cluster commissions at their respective levels will be responsible for all necessary support to the clusters to ensure their smooth functioning.

22. The summary of the core functions to be performed under the CBSM along with the institutional responsibilities is placed at Annexure A:



E (2) Performance Monitoring Plan for Cluster Based School Management (CBSM) Policy Implementation

23. The RSU will develop a performance monitoring plan (PMP) for the ELD to notify, which will include indicators for monitoring of strategic objectives, activities and results under the CBSM. The PMP will be implemented quarterly and data collectors from within the provincial monitoring and evaluation wing of ELD will gather information against indicators using tailor-made pro forma.

24. The RSU will produce quarterly progress reports (QPR) for the CBSM, either through its own field based validation or through the M&E, for onwards submission to the Secretary ELD and other relevant wings/sections/directorates/committees.

25. Based on the perusal of PMP and QPRs by the Senior Education Management (Minister/Secretary/Special Secretary) subsequent modifications to the CBSM can be made, at the policy as well as implementation levels, after an agreement is reached on the issues and that the proposed solutions/revisions are accepted to be in line with the stated objectives and through improvement of policy and its implementation.

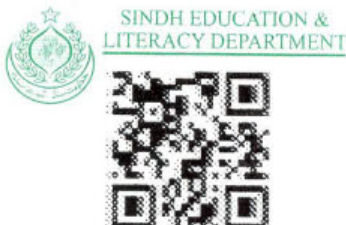
**-DR. FAZLULLAH PECHUHO-
SECRETARY TO GOVT. OF SINDH**

No. SO(G-III)E&L/School Clustering Policy/2016:

Karachi, Dated: 14th June, 2016

Copy for kind information to:-

1. The Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Sindh
2. The Secretary to the Government of Sindh, Finance Department, Karachi
3. The P.S to Senior Minister, Education & Literacy Department, Karachi
4. The P.S to Secretary, Education & Literacy Department, Karachi
5. All Commissioners of the Administrative Divisions / Chairman Reforms Steering Committee
6. All members of SESP Steering Committee
7. All Directors of School Education, Primary and Secondary
8. All Deputy Commissioners of the administrative districts
9. All District Education Officers, Primary and Secondary
10. Office Copy
11. The Official Website



(Signature)
(Syed Qasim Akbar Nimai)
Section Officer (G-III)

ANNEXURE-A

Management Function	Action Required	Responsible
Commissions of clusters will be created at the district and divisional levels, bringing together school clusters to give them more voice and support. These commissions will be headed by DEOs and Division Directors.	District level commission will include all the Heads of CHSs and will be headed by the DEO. Divisional level commission will include all district level commission heads (DEOs), and will be headed by the Divisional Director.	DEOs, Divisional Directors
Clusters will be aligned with the provincial monitoring system, feeding directly into the provincial monitoring data through data collectors at the district level. Data collected by the clusters will be sample verified by the data collectors / M&E directorate before transmitting to the province.	The CHS will coordinate with the cluster commission for submission of monitoring data to M&E Directorate.	Provincial Monitoring & Evaluation Wing of ELD, Cluster Commission, CHS
Clusters will facilitate textbook distribution; textbooks for cluster schools will be received at the CHS, and from there heads of other schools in the cluster will collect the books. The books will either be stored in a room at the CHS, or a nearby facility will be rented as a warehouse for the textbooks.	The district cluster commissions will coordinate with the ELD and the Sindh Text Book Board (STBB) for ensuring timely delivery of all the books in the required numbers to make sure that all children receive all the required books in time. The administrative staff at the CHS will maintain an inventory of the textbooks to avoid any wastage.	STBB, ELD, District Cluster Commission, CHS
Clusters will facilitate better representation of the sample for the SAT/PEACE assessments/other researches.	SAT/PEACE will select sample teachers and students from each cluster in coordination with the district cluster commission to improve representativeness and increase reliability of assessment results	PEACE, SAT, District Cluster Commission
The repair and maintenance budget of the education department will be moved to the cluster level, and will initially be fixed at Rs. 500,000, to be released in quarterly tranches pending 80% expenditure and reporting of previous tranche (subject to PDR's guidelines).	ELD will issue necessary notifications. Cluster Commission will ensure that each CHS has the necessary administrative support to manage repair and maintenance budget.	ELD, Cluster Commission, CHS, PDR Wing of ELD
The CHS, in consultation with the concerned school will provide more support on management, planning and transparent expenditure of SMC funds cumulatively for all schools in the cluster	The CHS Head and Guide Teachers will help prioritize needs for cluster schools. The cost Centre at the CHS will provide support with financial management, and procuring competitive rates and services to concerned schools.	CHS, Head, Guide Teachers, PDR wing, SMC / RSU
A Cost Centre will be established at the CHS, and dedicated staff including a senior clerk and an accounts officer will be posted at the CHS. The Cost Centre will be given specific budget under non-	ELD and divisional commission will issue necessary notifications for cost Centre, staff allocation and necessary budgets	ELD, Divisional Commission



salary covering repair and maintenance, cumulative SMC fund, school specific budgeting (SSB), teacher CPD, and other costs related to textbook distribution, monitoring etc.		
A cluster based teacher mentoring and support strategy will be developed and implemented. The strategy will be developed by district and division cluster commissions in coordination with Guide Teachers and CHS Heads.	The Guide Teachers under the leadership of the CHS Head will provide ongoing mentoring and support to cluster teachers, including promoting teacher peer learning and networking opportunities through learning circles and professional development forums.	Guide Teachers, CHS Head, district and divisional cluster commissions
Under the CBSM, school based SNEs will be done to ensure rationalized supply of teachers to all schools, as opposed to the existing Taluka/district level SNEs that place teacher deployment under the ADO and DO, not necessarily responding to individual school needs.	ELD will issue notification for school based SNEs	ELD
In order to improve teacher management and efficiency, a teacher rationalization policy will be developed and enacted soon.	ELD will notify teacher rationalization policy	ELD
A working committee should be formulated at STEDA for development of the CPD strategy. The strategy once developed will be implemented at the cluster level.	PITE, BOC and other non-government provincial level institutions and international teacher development projects should be co-opted on the working committee that STEDA can lead for developing the CPD strategy.	ELD, STEDA, PITE, BOC
A teacher management information system (TMIS) will be developed that maintains a professional profile of every teacher, including a record of all training programmes that he/she has attended.	TMIS will be built as another layer within the SEMIS to avoid parallel systems. SEMIS will gather data required for TMIS involving cluster commissions.	RSU, SEMIS, Cluster Commissions, ELD
School up-gradation will be carried out in clusters that are all-primary to provide opportunities for further education to the children and necessary staff appointments will be done accordingly.	ELD will issue the school up-gradation notification in coordination with the division and district education offices.	SIP, ELD, DEO, Divisional Director



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