# NOTIFICATION

**NO.SO (G-III)SE&L/3-1604/2021:**-With the approval of Competent Authority, the School Clustering Policy (Revised) 2021 of School Education and Literacy Department (as approved by Provincial Cabinet) is hereby notified with immediate effect.

**- GHULAM AKBAR LAGHARI-**
**-SECRETARY TO GOVT. OF SINDH-**

**NO.SO (G-III)SE&L/1-1604/21:-**          Karachi, dated: 26th November, 2021

## A copy is forwarded for information to:-

1.  The Chairman (P&D) Department, Government of Sindh, Karachi
2.  The Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Sindh
3.  The Secretary (Services) SGA&CD, Government of Sindh, Karachi
4.  The Administrative Secretaries (All)
5.  Accountant General Sindh, Karachi.
6.  The Special Secretaries (All), School Education & Literacy Department (SE&LD).
7.  The Chief Program Manager, Reform Support Unit, SE&LD.
8.  The Additional Secretaries (All), School Education & Literacy Department.
9.  The Director, Sindh Education Policy Commission, SE&LD
10. The Director General, Inspection & Registration Private Schools, SE&LD.
11. The Chairman, Sindh Text Book Board, Jamshoro
12. The Director General (Monitoring and Evaluation), SE&LD
13. The Director General, Planning Development & Research, SE&LD.
14. The Director General (Design), Education Works, SE&LD
15. The Director General (HRMIS and Training), SE&LD.
16. The Executive Director, Sindh Teacher Education & Development Authority (STEDA).
17. The Director General, Provincial Institute of Teacher Education (PITE) Sindh Nawabshah.
18. The Director, Directorate of Curriculum & Research (DCAR) Sindh, Jamshoro
19. The Additional Director, Teacher Training Institutions Sindh, Hyderabad.
20. The Director School Education (ES&HS) All.
21. The Director School Education (Primary) All.
22. The District Education Officer (ES&HS) All.
23. The District Education Officer (Primary) All.
24. The Deputy Secretary (Staff) to Chief Secretary Sindh.
25. The Superintendent, Sindh Government Printing Press, Karachi for publication of this notification and the policy in official gazette.
26. PS to Minister for Education & Literacy Sindh.
27. PS to Secretary, School Education & Literacy Department, Govt. of Sindh Karachi.
28. Taluka Education Officer (Primary). All
29. Taluka Education Officer (ESHS). All
30. Official Website.
31. Officer order file.

SCHOOL EDUCATION &
LITERACY DEPARTMENT
GOVT. OF SINDH

**(ABDUL SATTAR MALAK)**
**SECTION OFFICER (G-III)**

# SCHOOL CLUSTERING POLICY (REVISED) 2021

Section Officer (G-III)
School Education Department
Government of Sindh

# SCHOOL EDUCATION & LITERACY DEPARTMENT
# GOVERNMENT OF SINDH

# SCHOOL CLUSTERING POLICY (REVISED) 2021

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SCHOOL EDUCATION &
LITERACY DEPARTMENT
GOVT. OF SINDH

# SCHOOL CLUSTERING POLICY (REVISED) 2021

WHEREAS it is expedient to revise the existing School Clustering Policy 2016 to fulfil the commitment of School Education and Literacy Department to "Strengthen decentralized education service delivery through school clustering in Sindh Province for improved education quality and access and to improve overall state of its affairs and further to provide for the decentralization of certain administrative and financial powers to the grassroots level, Government of Sindh, is pleased to enforce the revised and more comprehensive School Clustering policy, 2021 as under:

## 1. SHORT TITLE, EXTENT AND COMMENCEMENT

i. The policy shall be called "School Clustering Policy (Revised) 2021".

ii. It shall apply to all Primary/Middle/Elementary / High and Higher Secondary Government schools in Sindh and shall come into force at once as per following arrangement:

## 2. DEFINITIONS:

2. In this Policy, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context:

   a. **"Campus School'** means a school notified under a School Consolidation Policy, 2011.

   b. **'Cell Hub School'** means a school that will offer, ordinarily, the post primary education to students at feeder schools falling within a School Cell; it will serve for transition of pupils passing grade V from primary feeder schools. It may also include a Cluster Hub School. The Cluster Hub School will also serve as Cell Hub School for the transition of pupil purpose.

   c. **'Cluster Head teacher'** CHT is an overall administrator of his/ her Cluster Hub School and overall in-charge of all schools in that Cluster.

   d. **'Cluster Hub School'** means a main school in a cluster, centre of all activities within the same cluster to be identified through a process and having features and characteristics as provided in this policy.

   e. **'Cluster Schools'** means the schools located within a School Cluster.

   f. **'Feeder School'** means school within a cluster or cell not being declared as Cluster Hub or Cell Hub School for the respective School Cluster.

   g. **'Head Master':** It includes Head Master and Head Mistress of Primary/Middle, Elementary or Secondary/High school, he/she will be responsible for overall administration of Hub School itself.

   h. **'Potential School'** means a Public Sector/Government School capable of being declared as Cluster Hub School or Cell Hub School as per criteria set forth under this policy, up-gradation Policy or the Guidelines issued by the Government.

   i. **'Principal':** Principal is a head of Higher Secondary School.

   j. **'Resourceful school'** A school having basic facilities like adequate rooms, staff, furniture, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, etc., to make it fit to act as Cluster or Cell Hub

   k. **'School Cell'** means a group of schools (feeder School) that are geographically compact, near, and accessible to each other within a school cluster with the composition and features as provided in this policy primarily meant for the smooth

transition of pupils of cluster schools to post-primary education and controlling enrollment dropout as well. The Cluster Hub School will also serve as a School cell for the schools in close proximity to it for the purpose of transition of the pupils as provided in the policy.

l. **'School Cluster'** is a group of geographically neighbouring interconnected schools working in a certain area and characterized by common activities as provided in this policy and appendix annexed to it.

## 3. STATUS OF SCHOOL CLUSTERING POLICY 2016

3. The School Clustering Policy 2016 was introduced by the School Education and Literacy Department in 2016 in 06 districts and 62 clusters as a piloting phase. The policy was, originally aimed at effectively addressing the 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; it is now time to revise the policy and further implement this policy.

## 4. BACKGROUND/ LESSONS LEARNED

4. The following are some of the lessons learned during the implementation of the school clustering process in 2016:

i. Primarily Cluster formation criterion was based on geographical coverage of the radius of 15 km without any compact alignment with the local administration setup which was too narrow in the given situation. There are separate administrative units for local governments and for the hierarchy of education i.e., the Union Councils, Union Committees, Municipal Committees etc., there, so it lacked its alignment with local government administrative set up.

ii. Only a limited number of higher-grade schools were available with required resources in the radius of 15 km, these schools were supposed to be declared as Hub Schools and were designated as 'Cluster Cost Center' to look after the financial matters of the cluster. Since there were very few high-grade schools in the clusters, with a limited number of gazetted education officers/ Headteachers with BPS-17 to be assigned for Drawing Disbursing Officer (DDO) powers to manage finances, this apparently seemed a big constraint rather a challenge in implementing clustering.

iii. Cluster based support mechanism was somehow missing, in the previous CPD approach, to develop synergies between district-based teachers' training institutes and ongoing training and support for cluster headteachers and teachers.

iv. There was not a clear transition pathway for students to continue their education to the next level within the pre-defined clusters where the availability of higher grade schools was very limited.

## 5. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR SCHOOL CLUSTERING

5. The purposes for school clustering revolve mainly around six thematic areas i.e., governance, economic, pedagogic, administrative, financial and social.

- **Governance:** Establishing a decentralized education tier/functions/structure at the local basic administrative level. Delegating necessary and required administrative and financial functions and powers to the Cluster Hub School for improving overall

efficiency and performance of education system as well as effective service delivery mechanism.

- **Economic / Cost-Effective Schools Management System:** It includes sharing of resources and facilities, procuring of resource materials in bulk.

- **Pedagogic:** It encompasses improvements in instructional and learning quality, curriculum and encouragement of teacher development through on going professional development and teachers peer networking, development of shared resources for teaching and learning, school-based annual academic plans and learning assessments, providing an environment for innovation, encouraging co-operation in school projects, and encouraging student competition and collaboration.

- **Administrative**: It provides a focal point to disseminate directions, instructions and policies of the government and policy makers, besides, it acts as a centre for information collection; to manage leave matters of the staff and exercise other administrative powers within a cluster if delegated by the Government or SELD as the case may be, regular inspection and supervision of teachers & students. Though it acts as formal unit in the administrative hierarchy of the School Education and Literacy Department, it promotes efficiency and cost effectiveness and simplifies the over-arching existing administrative system. It will also raise local level awareness amongst the individuals and communities to shape the education system by highlighting the causes of under development.

**Financial:** The assignment of financial powers up to the level of Cluster Hub schools and Cell Hub Schools gradually and as per this policy on need basis which will in turn enhance budgetary efficiencies for operational activities and day-to-day need of Cluster Hub level.

**Social:** It includes increased community engagement and responsibility to increase students enrolment and attendance and completion of school education. Also to support reduction of regional and social inequalities i.e., reducing gender disparity in education as well as provision of inclusive educational opportunities for children with disabilities and facilitate the mainstreaming of out-of-school children. Support and facilitate education portfolio in public/ private partnerships.

6. There is also need for strengthening of different levels of schools to train teachers, retain enrolment, control dropout, ensure the transition of primary school pupils to post primary grades. All this needs to have a systematic approach to ensure Equitable Access, Quality of Learning and better Governance in the education system.

## 6. EFFECTIVE ADDRESSING OF ISSUES

i. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of teachers and human resources due to long distances of schools and non-availability of professional development on an equitable basis for professional growth.

ii. The transition of pupils from primary to lower secondary and secondary grades.

iii. Effectively addressing administrative matters to continue academic activities of schools without interruption.

iv. To assist Director Schools/ District/ Taluka Education officer in implementing Sindh Education Sector Plan & Roadmap (SESP&R) as well as Government' policies issued from time to time.

v. Simplify monitoring of the school and facilities, interactions amongst schoolteachers with focused attention.

vi. Assessment of students'/ Teachers' learning needs and progress.

vii. To develop synergies amongst the policies of the government i.e., CPD, NFE, School Upgradation, Teacher Transfer Policy, Financial policies, Monitoring and Evaluation framework, etc.

## 7. STRENGTHENING OF SCHOOLS

7.    School Education & literacy Department (SELD) will implement various programs to support school clustering. This includes up-gradation of primary schools to Elementary school level to provide the children lower secondary and secondary education and decentralization of financial powers, etc. To improve governance and ensure sustainable reforms in the primary/elementary education sector, it is important to ensure transparency and accountability of resources by (1) decentralization of administrative units, (2) providing DDO powers to the headteachers of cell hub schools and (3) ensuring adequate funds that can be tracked within the provincial financial management (FM) information system. The creation of DDO codes for cell hub school headteachers will bring efficiency in rationalization of resources.

8.    School Clustering Policy is an important part of implementing the Sindh Education Sector Plan & Roadmap(SESP&R) 2019-2024 which focuses on early childhood education, primary, middle and secondary levels (up to grade X). This is a critical area of focus due to the daunting challenge of a large number of Out of School Children and poor learning outcomes.

## 8. POLICY FRAMEWORK

9.    This Policy outlines management structures that will be put to manage, supervise and monitor the Cluster Based School Management System (CBSMS). The policy framework comprises eleven central themes as follows:

10.   This Policy framework outlines following central themes and educational priorities which will be addressed through the Cluster Based School Management System (CBSMS), such as development of school management and performance, ensuring quality learning outcomes, increase education access, equity and transition; facilitate mainstreaming out of school children and promote community participation for education.

## 9. CLUSTER BASED SCHOOL MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE & PROCESSES:

11.   Under the CBSMS policy framework, following structures and processes are laid out for the Schools Clusters' functioning.

A. SCHOOL CLUSTER
B. CLUSTER HUB SCHOOL
C. HEADTEACHER, CLUSTER HUB SCHOOL
D. GUIDE TEACHER(S)
E. SCHOOL CELL
F. CELL HUB SCHOOL
G. CELL HUB HEADTEACHER

H. SUBJECT COORDINATOR(S)

I. FEEDER SCHOOL

J. FEEDER SCHOOL HEADTEACHER

K. CLUSTER BASED SCHOOL MANAGEMENT (CBSM)

# A. SCHOOL CLUSTER

12.    School Cluster is a group of geographically neighbouring interconnected schools working in a certain area and characterized by common activities. It is a group of schools located in close proximity to each other whose staff meet regularly to build their capacity to improve quality of their schools.

### a. Characteristics of School Cluster

13.    Some of the prominent characteristics of School Clusters are as under:

  i.    It provides opportunities for professional learning through peer learning and support.

  ii.    Sharing of resources takes place amongst the schools.

  iii.    It is a decentralized administrative unit under the overall supervision of TEO/DEO and will be led, managed and guided by Cluster Hub School Headteacher.

  iv.    Through School clustering, schools of varied capacities complement each other

  v.    Through school clustering local resources are identified, capacitated and recognized.

  vi.    It encourages decentralized financial & material resources.

  vii.    It encourages Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

  viii.    It encourages community participation.

### b. Composition of School Cluster

  i.    **Rural Areas**:

    a. The cluster will comprise of schools in a Union Council.

  ii.    **Urban Areas:**

    a. The cluster will comprise of schools in Municipal Committee, Town Committee & Union Committees as provided in Appendix-A to the policy.

    b. There may be multiple clusters in a Union Council, a Union Committee, a Municipal committee (MC)/a Town committee (TC) depending on number of schools; one or more municipal wards may constitute one cluster. Likewise multiple wards in MC/TC two or more Union Committees in Metropolitan Corporation may be notified as one cluster with several schools as determined under this policy and the guidelines issued thereunder.

### c. Identification of School Cluster

  i.    Each cluster will consist of a given number of schools determined through Sindh Education Management Information Systems (SEMIS) and Geographic Information System (GIS) data available with Reform Support Unit (RSU) and field verification processes to achieve the purpose of clustering in accordance with this policy, the

guidelines, and the Standard Operating Procedure to be issued separately for the purpose by School Education & Literacy Department Sindh.

ii. The identified clusters will be verified by the Taluka Education Officers, according to the criteria and categories set forth in Appendix A to this policy and recommend those to District. Cluster Committee, which will notify with the prior approval of SELD.

### d. Functions of a School Cluster

i. To effectively coordinate academic, administrative, and financial matters for quality education and improved learning outcomes.

ii. To identify schools' and clusters' needs and such as schools' repair & maintenance, schools expansion, CPD for academic transition and missing facilities and share with district education offices.

iii. Promoting Continuous Professional Development of headteachers and teachers to meet contemporary needs of schooling.

iv. Sharing human resource among schools to cater instructional needs of the cluster without interrupt as per government/ SELD policy.

v. Strengthening of different levels of schools to retain enrollment, control drop out, ensure the transition of primary school pupils to post primary grades.

vi. Cluster Hub School to act as the focal point to communicate day to day instructions of the Government to schools.

vii. To act as a centre for collection of information regarding enrolments, staffing, infrastructure & resources.

viii. To share facilities i.e., libraries, science practical laboratories, auditoriums, sports equipment and playing grounds etc amongst schools in the cluster.

ix. To get community support to bring out of school children in the school.

x. Better framework of school inspection.

xi. Any other function as may be assigned by the Government or the SELD.

### e. Categories of Schools Clusters

**There will be four types of school clusters categorized as follows:**

i. **Primary Cluster:** School cluster with all primary schools.

ii. **Elementary Cluster:** School cluster with one middle or elementary school.

iii. **Secondary Cluster:** School cluster with one secondary/Higher Secondary school.

iv. **Campus School Cluster:** School cluster with one Campus School.

## B. CLUSTER HUB SCHOOL (CHS)

14. There will be a CHS for each cluster. The CHS will have following features:

### a. Features of Cluster Hub School (CHS)

15. The CHS will ideally be as central and accessible point as may be possible within the UC/TC/MC to its feeder schools; it should have adequate facilities and ideally be situated in or

closer to a town center where other social and transport services are available. The CHS will provide academic, administrative, financial leadership and will lead Continuous Professional Development activities of teachers in cluster schools. The competent authority may create cost centre if not available and provide SNE to the school. The CHS shall have separate cost Centre for incurring expenditure as per delegated authority. The Cluster Hub School will also act as a Cell Hub School with feeder Schools in accordance with the set criteria of Cell Hub School.

### b. Composition of Cluster Hub School

16.    CHS will be at least one level higher grade school (at least a middle/elementary / secondary / higher secondary or campus School) having provision of grade VI and above. If there is no middle/elementary / secondary/ higher secondary or campus school in the cluster then the most resourceful primary school, located at the central place, will be designated as CHS and upgraded to elementary level in future by following due process as per Government policy.

### c. Identification of Cluster Hub School

17.    The CHS will be identified keeping in view the following factors and in accordance with the Appendix-A of this policy.

   i.  It should be a well-resourced school in the UC/TC/MC in terms of the number of teachers, enough subject teachers should also be available, along with number of classrooms and other facilities.

   ii. It has enough rooms so that school may be able to allocate at least one room for cluster CPD activities;

   iii. It will be notified by the Chairperson of District Cluster Committee headed by District Education Officer after getting recommendations/proposals from the Taluka Education Officers in accordance with this policy, the guidelines / Standard Operation Procedure to be issued separately for the purpose by Secretary School Education & Literacy Department and;

   iv. In case all schools in a Cluster are of primary level, one of these will be upgraded to elementary level as per government policy for provision of grade-VI education and declared as Cluster Hub School.

   *Note: Two one-roomed schools  may also be counted as one school for the purpose of counting  schools in making a School Cluster only.*

## C.    CLUSTER HEADTEACHER (CHT)

18.    Two heads will be posted in Cluster Hub School (CHS).

   (a) The Head Master will be responsible for managing the Cluster Hub School (CHS) itself.

   (b) Whereas; the Cluster Headteacher (CHT) is an overall administrator of his/her Cluster Hub School and overall in-charge of all schools in that Cluster

19.    The headteacher will be an administrative, financial and academic in charge of the Cluster schools.

### a. Functions & responsibilities of Cluster Headteacher (CHT)

20. The Headteacher of Cluster Schools will have to perform following functions:

## 1. Administrative

i. The Headteacher will have the administrative powers to transfer teachers within cluster if given under the Teacher Transfer Policy of the Government.

ii. The Headteacher will have the powers to temporarily assign a teacher to a school, which is within the cluster, on need basis, especially single teacher where the teacher is un-available on account of leave, etc., to ensure continuity of academic activities subject to the teacher transfer policy.

iii. The performance of the teacher in cluster will be assessed and made part of the ACR/PER as deemed appropriate by the reporting officer.

iv. The headteacher will furnish data for the cluster to the monitoring officials as well as in Annual School Census conducted by Sindh Education Management Information System (SEMIS).

v. Any other administrative function as may be entrusted by the SELD but that should not be in conflict with notified rules, policies, etc.

## 2. Financial

i. The CHS Headteacher will have DDO powers.

ii. The CHS Headteacher will prudently and faithfully utilize funds provided at Cluster level schools in accordance with the applicable financial rules.

iii. He/ She will estimate budget to support Guide Teachers' training/mobility and other expense pertaining to CPD activities.

iv. The Headteacher will manage relevant budget for cluster schools in a rationale manner.

v. Any other function as may be entrusted under financial rules by the respective competent authorities.

## 3. Academic

i. The Headteacher of cluster in coordination with Guide Teachers will lead teachers for cluster-based teacher professional development as envisaged in the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) model as notified by the Government of Sindh; and ensuring National Professional sStandards for teachers in Pakistan.

ii. He/she will arrange training resources for schools falling within the cluster.

iii. The Headteacher of Cluster will ensure the availability of the National Curriculum with the cluster schools.

iv. The Headteacher of Cluster will ensure to implement the academic policies of the government.

v. The Headteacher of Cluster will supervise cluster with the help of Guide Teachers and subject coordinators to prepare and execute academic plans of the cluster and report to high ups.

vi. Headteacher will be the focal person to coordinate with other schools to ensure ECCE/Kachi/Primary/ Elementary/Secondary/ Higher Secondary enrolment & transition of pupils within cluster. He/She will be accountable to increase enrolment, transition and reduce dropout.

vii. The Headteacher will assist to the scrutiny committee notified by the government for selection of Guide Teachers and Subject Coordinators for the school clusters and cells.

viii. The Headteacher will represent his/her cluster as and when required at the district cluster committee level matters.

ix. Any other function assigned to him/her by the government or SELD from time to time.

### 4. Cluster-based Planning:

i. Cluster Headteacher will develop cluster level activities annual plans, including forecasting of budget required to implement cluster activities i.e. schools improvement and expansion, capacity building training for cluster staff, financial and administrative cluster school management and CPD implementation.

### 5. Coordination:

ii. The CHS headteacher will coordinate with Taluka / District Education Officer as well as other education offices i.e., DEO SEMIS and DEO (Literacy) on the various initiatives and programs i.e., of school up-gradation, mainstreaming of NFE learners, etc. and provision of required resources.

### 6. Monitoring & Reporting

iii. Headteacher will oversee the planned activities progress, as assigned within the declared cluster will also undertake monitoring visits of schools within the cluster and share monitoring reports to TEO/DEO in addition to the regular monitoring mechanism.

### b. Assistance to the Cluster Hub School (CHS)

21.     The Headteacher of Cluster will be assisted by the Guide Teachers, the Subject Coordinators, and the heads of the Cell Hub Schools and the higher hierarchy of School Education and Literacy Department to resolve common issues of primary and post primary schools at all levels within the cluster. The above teachers shall meet on monthly basis or even before in case of any emergency at Hub school.

## D. GUIDE TEACHER

### a. Qualification

22.     The number of Guide Teachers notified for school cluster will depend on the size of cluster and its varying needs. There will be at least five Guide Teachers nominated for each cluster, covering the academic activities or function as provided by the CPD model notified by the SELD. The Guide Teachers will be trained teachers with higher qualification in relevant subject with minimum professional qualifications to be determined in the Selection Criteria as per Continuous Professional Development model.

### b. Selection Process for Guide Teacher

23.     Selection of Guide Teachers will be done through the recommendations of a Scrutiny Committee (to be notified by the Secretary School Education and Literacy Department) comprising of experts from Sindh Teacher Education Development Authority) (STEDA), Provincial Institute of Teacher Education (PITE) & Teacher Training Institutes (TTIs) through a devised mechanism in that regard.

*Note: During scrutiny for selection of Guide Teachers & Subject Coordinators female teachers will be encouraged to participate in competition.*

### c. Functions and Responsibilities of Guide Teacher

24.  A Guide Teacher will have the functions and responsibilities to perform as per Continuous Professional Development Model as approved by the government. The School Education and Literacy Department will also issue necessary guidelines and SoPs for the Guide Teachers from time to time. The Guide Teacher will also maintain movement register for all field activities

### d. Capacity Building of Guide Teachers:

25.  The Guide Teachers will be provided initial training by PITE/TTIs or through any other appropriate arrangement by the School Education and Literacy Department for the purpose, prior to his/her selection, covering teacher professional development enabling them to effectively coordinate and mentor teachers at cluster schools. During his/her posting as Guide Teacher will undergo ongoing professional development at specialized teacher education institutions as per standards set by STEDA.

## E. SCHOOL CELL:

### a. Purpose of School Cell:

26.  The purpose of school cell is to group together a small number of schools that will provide the continuous pathway of schools for the smooth transition of pupils of cluster schools to post-primary education and controlling enrollment dropout as well as to ensure retention of students all primary, elementary and secondary schools.

### b. Features of School Cell:

27.  A 'School Cell' is a group of schools that are geographically compact, near and accessible to each other preferably within a radius of three kilometers in a Cluster. The distance may be varied, in exceptional cases as per on ground situation as provided in Appendix-A to this policy and in accordance with the guidelines and SoPs to be issued by the School Education and Literacy Department from time to time. To exercise the exception the School Cell identifying, recommending, and notifying officer should record his reasons / justification in writing thereof.

### c. Composition of School Cell:

28.  There will be multiple school cells in a Cluster. The number of schools in this group have been provided in Appendix-"A" and may vary from one cell to another.

### d. Identification of School Cell:

29.  Each school cell will be identified through GPS coordinates by SEMIS/GIS data and will be verified in the field in accordance as provided in Appendix-A to this policy and in accordance with the Guidelines / SoPs may be issued by the School Education and Literacy Department from time to time.

30.  No school in Sindh will be left out of the school cluster and School Cell.

*Note: 1) Initially, the number of School Cells and the entrustment of all the powers and privileges will depend on the number of potential schools for making a School Cell. The details have been provided in Appendix-A to this policy.*

*2) Two one-roomed schools may also be counted as one school for the purpose of counting schools in making School Cell only. However, the One Roomed School will have its own/same privileges and function as an independent school for the activities in the cluster.*

## F. CELL HUB SCHOOL:

### a. *Features of Cell Hub School*

i. There shall be a Cell Hub School that will offer, ordinarily, the post primary education to students of feeder schools falling within a cell; it will serve for transition of pupils passing grade V from primary feeder schools. Cluster Hub School may also act as Cell Hub School.

ii. The Cell Hub School will ideally be the school already imparting Class VI or higher-grade education. In case all schools in cell are primary, one of these will be upgraded to next higher level i-e elementary.

iii. The competent authority may create cost center and provide SNE to the school for the recurring expenditure, however, the salary and development budget including maintenance and repairs will be the responsibility of the respective authorities as per existing arrangements till any arrangement is made by the government.

### b. *Composition of Cell Hub School*

31.     Existing Higher Secondary/Secondary /Elementary / Middle School in the cell after identification of Cluster Hub School, will be declared as Cell Hub School for the purpose of transition of pupils from grade V/VIII and X to next higher grades in accordance with the policy of the government. If no such school is available, then centrally accessible potential primary (girls or boys) school be upgraded to next level and declared as Cell Hub in accordance with the up-gradation policy of the government. While forming the School Cell the Girls schools may also be assigned priority and relaxation in the selection criteria as provided in the Appendix-A and in accordance with the up-gradation policy of the Government. The SELD may also issue Guidelines and SoPs from time to time in that regard by recording reasons and justification thereof.

### c. *Identification of Cell Hub School*

32.     The Cell Hub School will be identified as per following criteria:

i. In case all schools in the cell are of primary grade level; one of these with overall more enrollment; especially sufficient pupils in class V and space for expansion & accessible to its surrounding feeder schools will be upgraded to elementary level to provide local population the facility of lower secondary & secondary education in accordance with up-gradation policy of the government.

ii. The Cell Hub School will be identified through GIS/SEMIS and verified by TEO/DEO and recommend to the Chairman of District Cluster Committee in accordance with the guidelines and SoPs issued by the School Education and Literacy Department, who will notify the same with prior approval of Secretary School Education and Literacy Department accordingly.

## G. CELL HUB HEADTEACHER:

33.     The Cell Hub School Headteacher may preferably be a grade-17 Headteacher as determined by the School Education and Literacy Department. In all other cases the existing teacher below grade-17 will continue to head the Cell Hub School till the availability of gazetted Headteacher (BPS-17) (whether filled by way of initial recruitment or through promotion or by transfer). The cost centers and DDO codes will be created for the Cell Hub School Headteachers in order to bring efficiency in budget execution and will provide a clearer need for a non-salary budget on the recurrent side for the primary schools The Cost Centers to the Cell Hub School and the DDO Powers to the Head of Cell Hub School will only be provided once a BPS-17 head is

made available in the Cell Hub School, till then the existing arrangements will continue to be in force.

### a. Functions & responsibilities of Cell Hub School Headteacher:

i. The Cell Hub School Headteacher will coordinate with Cluster Headteacher, Guide Teachers and Subject Coordinators on the CPD training plan for teachers' training and learning assessments both for teachers and students

ii. He/ She will assist in identifying subject teachers and resources available at Cell Hub Schools and Feeder Schools, may be shared with other cluster school.

iii. He/ She shall exercise the DDO Powers in respect of the recurring expenditure if he/she is a gazetted Headteacher of BPS-17.

iv. The Cell Hub School Headteacher will keep record of the students studying in surrounding feeder schools also.

v. The Cell Hub School Headteacher will support cluster Hub Headteacher in retaining enrolment of students in the schools and control the dropout & will submit reports to Cluster Head and will be responsible for retaining enrollment and controlling dropout.

vi. The Cell Hub School Headteacher will coordinate with Guide Teachers and Subject Coordinators under overall supervision of Cluster Headteacher for Continuous Professional Development activities.

vii. Any other function as may be assigned by SELD.

## H.     SUBJECT COORDINATOR (SC)

34.     The Subject Coordinator will be a teacher, selected in accordance with set criterion, from the same school or nearby school, who will support his/ her peers in implementing the learnt knowledge and skills through professional development activities as mentioned in the CPD model notified by the SELD. The further process and details are as under:

### a. Selection of Subject Coordinator

Selection of Subject Coordinator will be done through the recommendations of a Scrutiny Committee to be notified by the SELD comprising of the experts from PITE, TTIs through a devised mechanism under the CPD Model in this respect.

At least one subject coordinator (SC) for each subject of language (Sindhi, Urdu & English), science & mathematics will be deputed in each school cell.

### b. Functions & responsibilities of Subject Coordinator

The Subject Coordinator will perform functions as per Continuous Professional Development Model/Policy as approved by the government/SELD. Subject coordinator will also maintain movement register for all field activities.

## I. FEEDER SCHOOL:

35.     It is a school within a cluster or cell not being declared as Cluster Hub or Cell Hub School. It is a school from where students' progress to a higher-level school preferably in the same Cell or the cluster to continue their education. This does not include permanently closed/non-viable schools.

## J. FEEDER SCHOOL HEADTEACHER:

36.     A senior teacher of any grade who is teaching in feeder school and is also responsible to manage and supervise his/her school as per criteria set forth by the SELD.

### a. Functions and responsibilities of Feeder School Headteacher:

37.     The head of Feeder School, in addition to other normal functions assigned to him by the government and SELD, will perform following functions:

   i. Managing academic and other activities of his/her school as per policy of the government.

   ii. Guide other teachers of the feeder school to perform their duties efficiently.

   iii. Coordinate with Subject Coordinators and Guide Teachers to pay visits to feeder school to observe classes and meet teachers for peer learning.

   iv. Any other function as may be assigned by the SELD.

## 10. IMPLEMENTATION

38.     The policy implementation stage is the backbone of policy process. Fundamentally, policy implementation is the process of translating a policy into actions and presumptions into results through various interventions. The implementation of the School Cluster policy will be carried out through a well-established System as under:

## 11. CLUSTER BASED SCHOOL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CBSMS):

39.     The Implementation oversight Committee constituted under this policy will coordinate with Director Schools, District Education Officer for implementation of the School Clustering Policy through a Cluster Based Management System.

40.     The CBSM System shall consist upon the School, Taluka, District and Divisional Education Officers overseen by the School Education & Literacy Department through Reform Support Unit.

### a. School Cluster Committee

41.     There will be School Cluster Committee headed by the Headteacher of the Cluster and comprising of all the Guide Teachers, the heads of Cell Hub Schools, two Subject Coordinator and Chairmen of the SMC (on rotation basis) from the cluster to be nominated by the concerned Taluka Education Officer for one academic year.

42.     The respective School Cluster Committees will be required to coordinate and make decisions as per assigned mandate, allocate resources, plan, and carry out cluster-wide activities in line with the government policies.

43.     The Cluster Committee may meet on monthly basis. The head of School Cluster Committee i.e., the Cluster Headteacher may take decisions in cases of emergency and bring those in the next meeting to the Cluster Committee for ratification/endorsement. The code of conduct of the meetings will be issued separately by the School Education and Literacy Department.

### b. District Cluster Committee

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44. The District Cluster Committee will be headed by District Education Officer. The other members include the Executive Engineer (Education works) concerned, TEOs Male/Female, one headteacher of Cluster from each Taluka to be recommended by the District Cluster Committee on rotation basis for six months, the District Coordinator LSU, representative of TTI, prominent SMC chairperson, one Head Mistress of Girls feeder Schools from each Taluka and one prominent personality who has rendered services in the field of education will be members. District Cluster Committee may co-opt any member from the departments working in the district.

45. The District Cluster Committee will be notified by the Secretary SELD. The Committee will perform various functions which include:

    i.    To resolve common issues of the cluster schools in the district.

    ii.    To notify school clusters.

    iii.    Transfers of teachers /headteachers from one cluster to another cluster within district below BPS-17 (This power should strictly be taken in accordance with the government rules and policy).

    iv.    To coordinate with relevant authorities, institutions on CPD and other activities.

    v.    To provide required support for various cluster level activities.

    vi.    To recommended the cases of maintenance & repair, new schemes for construction/ rehabilitation, additional class rooms and missing facilities of schools.

    vii.    To hold monthly meetings of the committee in the second week of the month to review the performance of school clusters and report to the Director and Secretary SELD.

    viii.    The District Cluster Committee may hold special meetings before the schedule in case of any exigency.

    ix.    The head of District Cluster Committee may take decisions in cases of emergency and bring those in the next meeting to the District Cluster Committee for ratification/endorsement.

    x.    Any other function as may be assigned by SELD.

## 12. ROLE OF REFORM SUPPORT UNIT

46. A Program Manager of Reform Support Unit, with his team will be assigned the job to oversee performance of the clusters on daily basis through the Dashboard Monitoring and place the same before secretary SELD in the second week of every month.

47. The Secretary SELD having access to the Dashboard will issue directions from time to time for better implementation of the School Clustering policy.

48. All the heads of respective Cluster Committees from the Cluster to district shall be registered on the Dashboard and kept updated regularly on any progress /issue to respond in time.

## 13. ROLE OF STEDA, PITE and TTIs

49. The STEDA, PITE and TTIs will support SELD in Continuous Professional development activities including training to the Master Trainers/ Guide Teachers/ Subject Coordinators throughout CPD cycle/policy of the government/SELD.

## 14. SCHOOL CLUSTERING IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING.

    *a.  Role of Director Schools, DEO & TEO*

50. Primarily Directors Schools, DEOs & TEOs will be responsible for the overall monitoring and reporting of School Clustering Policy implementation processes. School Clustering Policy implementation's monitoring mechanisms and processes will be developed and placed at regional Directors to provide first hand feedback to School Clustering Technical Working Group. Additional roles and responsibilities of implementation, monitoring and reporting will be added into respective ToRs of Directors, DEOs and TEOs.

### b. Dashboard Monitoring:

51. The regular, system surveillance over processes, policy and comparing performance against expectations will also be the taken into consideration as secondary source in addition to the regular monitoring mechanism through Monitoring and Evaluation and the supervising officers-Director, DEO,TEOs. The Director Schools will report progress on IM-SESP dashboard regularly with support of RSU. After the introduction of the dashboard at the district level i.e., IM-DEP, the similar activities will be carried out at District level.

52. The progress of the clusters shall be reviewed on quarterly basis based on field officers monitoring reports by the Secretary School Education and Literacy Department. The concerned nominated Program Manager of Reform Support Unit will present the progress of the school clustering before the Secretary School Education and Literacy Department for review and getting necessary guidelines for the improvement, if need be and resolve the issues encountered by any of the implementing agency/officer/teacher during the implementation of the school clustering Process.

53. During quarterly meetings, the role of cluster committees and cluster level personnel will also be reviewed for any intervention/improvement.

54. The Executive Director Sindh Teachers Education Development Authority and Provincial Institute of Teacher Education should take responsibility for identifying new capacity-building needs among cluster-level staff and planning accordingly.

55. A Team would be constituted at Reform Support Unit, headed by a Senior Program Manager School Education and Literacy Department to assist the Oversight Committee.

### c. Oversight Committee

56. An Oversight Committee will be constituted at SELD level, stationed at RSU with following composition:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | CPM Reform Support Unit | Convener |
| 2. | Additional Secretary (E/Sec/HS) | Member |
| 3. | Additional Secretary (Primary) | Member |
| 4. | Director General Monitoring and Evaluation | Member |
| 5. | Managing Director Sindh Education Foundation | Member |
| 6. | Director General PD&R, | Member |
| 7. | Director General HRMIS and Training | Member |
| 8. | Executive Director STEDA | Member |
| 9. | Director General PITE | Member |
| 10. | Director DCAR | Member |
| 11. | Director TTI | Member |
| 12. | Program Manager School Consolidation Clustering, Reform Support Unit Concerned | Member/Secretary |

**Terms of Reference of committee:**

i. To oversee the implementation of School Clustering Policy (Revised) 2021 in the province.

ii. To approve formation of clusters, Cluster Hub Schools and Cell Hub Schools for issuance of final notification of cluster with the formal approval of Secretary SELD.

iii. To constitute any sub-committee under this committee for specific task regarding clusters level issues.

iv. To review quarterly performance report of clusters at Refrom Support Unit and submit it to Secretary SELD with its recommendations.

v. To draft and submit to the Secretary School Education and Literacy Department, the guidelines/SoPs/ Code of Conduct for meetings for proper implementation of the School Clustering Policy (Revised) 2021

vi. The committee will identify the bottlenecks and take efforts & remove /resolve issues at any level.

vii. To issue guidelines/advice for proper implementation of the School Clustering Policy (Revised) 2021.

viii. Recommend transfers of teachers /Headteachers/ Head Masters from cluster of one District to another District and submit it to competent authority concerned.

ix. To liaise with development partners and other line departments on the issues related to their interventions and recommend to the School Education and Literacy Department/government the best course to be adopted.

x. Any other functions to be entrusted by the SELD time to time.

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## A. SCHOOL CLUSTER
### RURAL

### i. One Cluster Union Council

As far as possible, the entire Union Council shall be made a cluster where the total number of schools are not more than 40 and minimum of 15 (Two One roomed schools may be counted as one school for the purpose of Cluster Hub School/ Cell Hub School).

### ii. Multi Cluster Union Council

Where number of Schools in a union council exceeds from 40 there would be formed an extra cluster-each one does not contain less than 15 and more than 25 school depending on the need and other factors to be recorded in writing by the cluster identifying/recommending authority and to the satisfaction of the approving authority.

### iii. Cluster consisting upon two Union Councils.

a. Where a Union Council has less than 15 Primary or Middle Schools and the adjacent Union Council has more than 30 Schools, then there may be formed two clusters one of its own Union Council and some of its schools adjacent to other Union Council may be combined and made a separate cluster in accordance with the features of a cluster. The number of schools in each cluster should not be less than 15.

(This is restricted to the Union Councils which have smaller number of the schools and those are otherwise attached to the adjacent Union Council geographically, socially, and economically.)

> *Note: The Union Councils where there are no schools or less than 05 schools or where all schools are closed having no teacher or enrollment and it is not possible to have another bordering Union Council to be joined and made the cluster, then those Union Council shall be added to any of the neighbouring Union Council for the purpose of Clustering irrespective of the total number of schools otherwise accessible to it and have cultural linkages and access there to.*

### URBAN

### i. One Cluster Town Committee/Union Committee

As far as possible, the school in a Town Committee Cluster or a Union Committee Cluster should not exceed 15 and minimum of 10 schools.

### ii. Mixed Cluster Town Committee

#### a. Consisting upon One Town Committee and adjacent Union Council.

where the Town Committee has less than 15 schools and the adjacent Union Council possessing urban characteristics with a transition trend to the town Committee Schools, then the school within distance of 02 kilometers of the outer limit of the Town Committee may be added to the Town Committee, subject to the condition that it will not disturb the standard formation of the Union Council Cluster, from where the schools are detached and added to the Town Committee.

### b. Consisting upon Two Union Committees

Where there are less than 10 schools in a Union Committee, then adjacent Union Committee schools may be added to form cluster for the two union Committees.

### c. Consisting upon One Municipal Committee/Union Committee Cluster and adjacent Union Council.

Where the Municipal Committee or Union Committee has some schools left after meeting the minimum Cluster Criteria and if the nearby Union Council possessing urban characteristics as well as having transition trend to the Municipal Committee or a Union Committee in a Municipal Committee, Municipal Corporation or Metropolitan Corporation, as the case may, then the school within distance of 02 kilometers of the radius of the Union Committee may be added to the Union Committee, subject to the condition that it will not disturb the standard formation of the Union Council Cluster, from where the schools are detached and added to the Union Committee.

### iii. Multi Cluster Municipal/Town/Union Committee

There may be more than one cluster in a Municipal Committee, Town Committee or Union Committee as the case may be. Where number of School exceeds from 15 in each Municipal or 15 in a Town Committee or Union Committee as the case may, there may be formed more clusters depending on the need and other factors to be recorded in writing by the cluster identifying/recommending authority and to the satisfaction of the approving authority.

**Note:**

i) *The exceptions will be effective after the permission of SELD and the reasons/justification to be recorded in writing.*

ii) *The Cluster Identifying Committee shall identify and enlist all such permanently closed non-viable schools and send to the Secretary School Education and Literacy Department for subsequent deletion as per government policy-This is also in line with the recommendations/report of the Education Committee submitted in the Honourable court on 6.5.2021 in Suite No. 1243 of 2015 Ms. Mashaal Vs. province of Sindh and others and endorsed by the Honourable Court vide its order dated 6.5.2021.*

## B. SCHOOL CELL

A 'School Cell' is, ordinarily, a group of schools that are geographically compact, near and accessible to each other preferably within a radius of three kilometers in a Cluster. The distance may be varied, in exceptional cases as per on ground situation. Some of the exceptions are enlisted below:

### a. Normal Conditions

A 'School Cell' will be composed of 05 to 07 schools of different level that are geographically compact, near and accessible to each other.

The schools will preferably be located within a radius of three kilometres in a Cluster in Rural area.

### b. Urban Areas

In urban areas the radius may vary according to the number of schools i.e., 05 to 07 schools will form a School Cell irrespective of distance.

### c. *Riverian Area( Kacho)/Mountainous (Kachho)/Coastal areas*

In case of Riverian Area (Kacho)/Mountainous (Kachho)/Coastal areas, where the schools are sparsely located, the distance may be relaxed up to the limit of 07 kilometers, subject to the justifications and reasons to be recorded in writing for such composition. It must also be ensured that the schools in cell must be socially, economically, and geographically as well as in accessibility are linked to each other.

## C. EXTRAORDINARY EXCEPTIONAL CONDITIONS

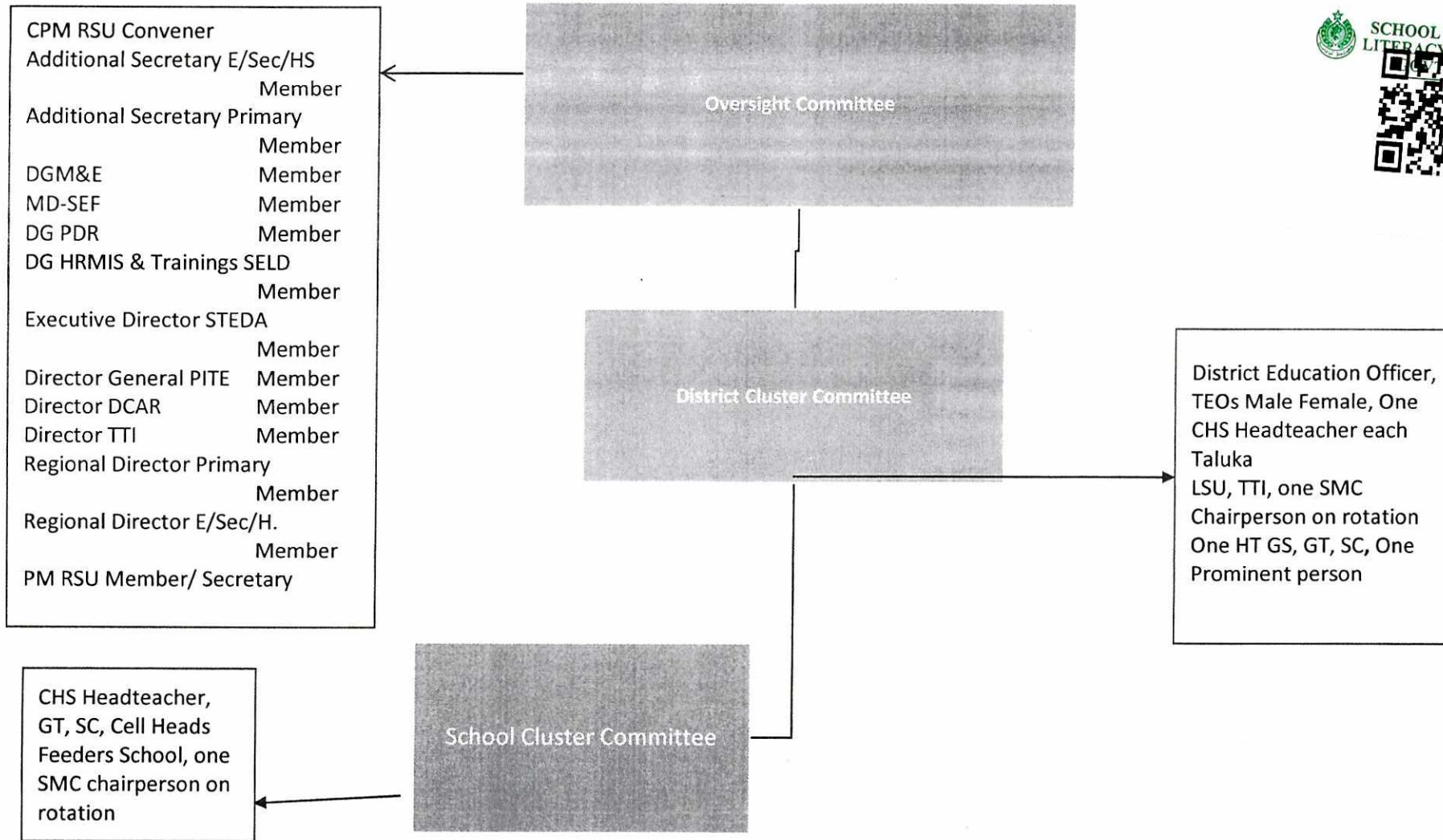In case any School Cluster or School Cell cannot be formed by applying above exceptions in respective cases, then the special arrangements will be made by the School Education and Literacy Department on the recommendations of the District Cluster Committee. The recommendations must be supported by substantial evidence and justification.

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CPM RSU Convener
Additional Secretary E/Sec/HS
Member
Additional Secretary Primary
Member
DGM&E            Member
MD-SEF           Member
DG PDR           Member
DG HRMIS & Trainings SELD
Member
Executive Director STEDA
Member
Director General PITE    Member
Director DCAR            Member
Director TTI             Member
Regional Director Primary
Member
Regional Director E/Sec/H.
Member
PM RSU Member/ Secretary

**Oversight Committee**

**District Cluster Committee**

District Education Officer, TEOs Male Female, One CHS Headteacher each Taluka
LSU, TTI, one SMC Chairperson on rotation
One HT GS, GT, SC, One Prominent person

**School Cluster Committee**

CHS Headteacher, GT, SC, Cell Heads Feeders School, one SMC chairperson on rotation

SEF=Sindh Education Foundation, G.T= Guide Teacher, SC=Subject Coordinator, G.S= Girls School, CHS=Cluster Hub School, LSU=Local Support

Unit, PM=Program Manager, TTI=Teacher Training Institute, DCAR= Directorate of Curriculum Assessment & Research

# Appendix-C
## Organogram of School Cluster
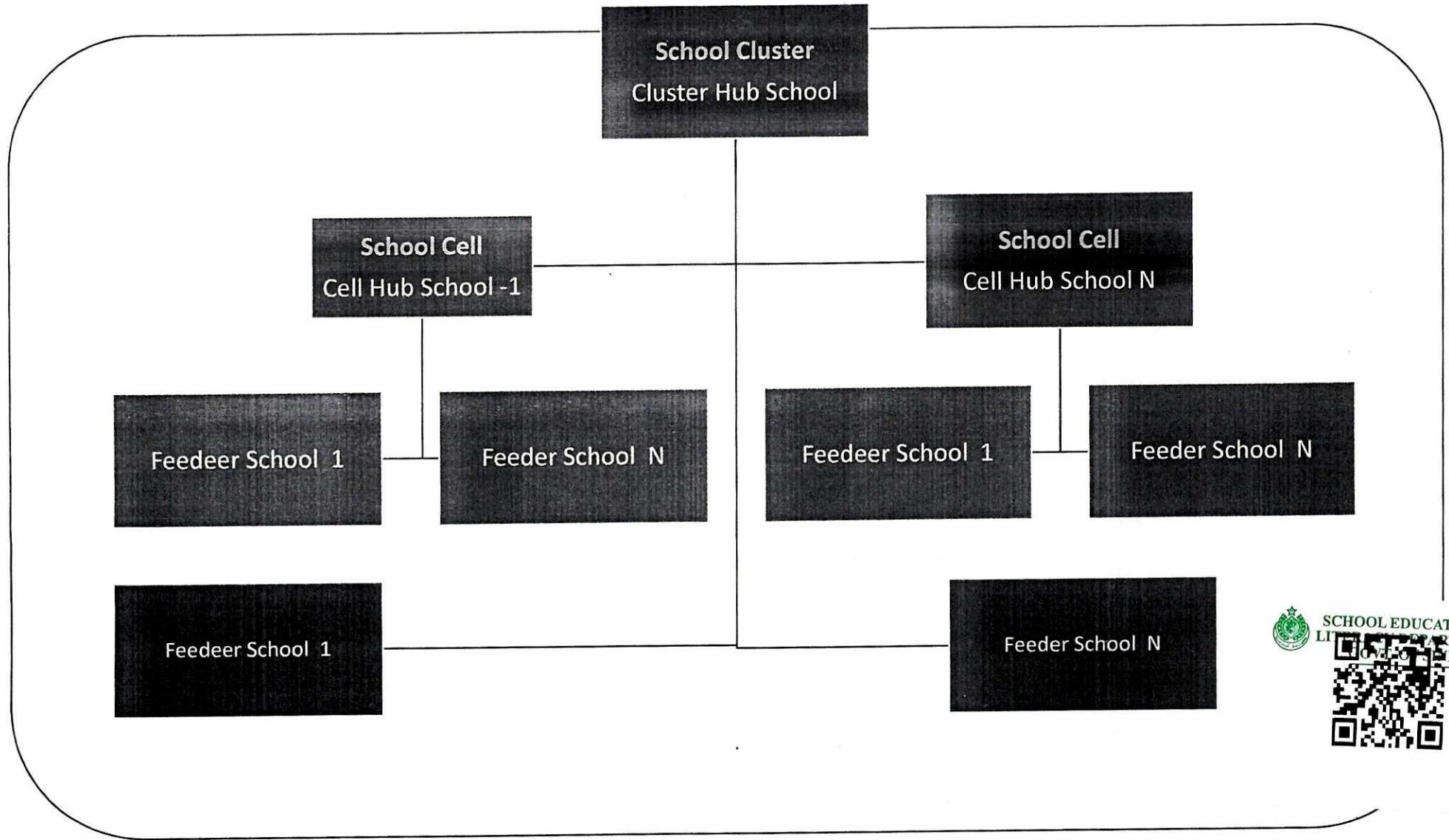
```
                          ┌─────────────────────┐
                          │   School Cluster    │
                          │ Cluster Hub School  │
                          └─────────────────────┘
                                     │
            ┌────────────────────────┴────────────────────────┐
   ┌─────────────────┐                              ┌─────────────────┐
   │   School Cell   │                              │   School Cell   │
   │ Cell Hub School-1│                             │ Cell Hub School N│
   └─────────────────┘                              └─────────────────┘
            │                                                │
   ┌────────┴────────┐                            ┌──────────┴─────────┐
┌──────────┐  ┌──────────────┐              ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
│ Feedeer  │  │ Feeder       │              │ Feedeer      │  │ Feeder       │
│ School 1 │  │ School  N    │              │ School  1    │  │ School  N    │
└──────────┘  └──────────────┘              └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘

┌──────────────┐                            ┌──────────────┐
│ Feedeer      │                            │ Feeder       │
│ School  1    │                            │ School  N    │
└──────────────┘                            └──────────────┘
```

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## (Abbreviations & Definitions)

| | |
|---|---|
| *CBSMS* | *Cluster Based School Management System* |
| *CHS* | *Cluster Hub School* |
| *CMO* | *Chief Monitoring Officer* |
| *CPD* | *Continuous Professional Development* |
| *DCAR* | *Directorate of Curriculum, Assessment & Research Sindh* |
| *DDO* | *Drawing and Disbursing Officer* |
| *DEO* | *District Education Officer* |
| *DG* | *Director General* |
| *DSE* | *Director School Education* |
| *ECCE* | *Early Childhood Care and Education* |
| *E/Sec/HS* | *Elementary/Secondary and Higher Secondary* |
| *GIS* | *Geographic Information System* |
| *HRMIS* | *Human Resource Management and Information System* |
| *MC* | *Municipal Committee* |
| *M&E* | *Monitoring and Evaluation* |
| *PITE* | *Provincial Institute of Teacher Education* |
| *PM* | *Program Manager* |
| *RSU* | *Reform Support Unit* |
| *SELD* | *School Education & Literacy Department* |
| *SEMIS* | *Sindh Education Management Information System* |
| *SESP&R* | *Sindh Education Sector Plan & Roadmap* |
| *SMC* | *School Management Committee* |
| *SPM* | *Senior Program Manager* |
| *STEDA* | *Sindh Teachers Education Development Authority* |
| *TC* | *Town Committee* |
| *TEO* | *Taluka Education Officer* |
| *TTI* | Teacher *training Institute* |
| *UC* | *Union Council / Union Committee* |