



LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Ref No.13/5/P Enq:Rasethaba MR Email: RasethabaMR@edu.limpopo.gov.za Tel No: 015 290 9420 / 082 881 7439

Circular No 07 of 2026

TO: Deputy Director Generals
Chief Directors
Provincial Directors
District Directors
District Governance Managers
Circuit Managers
Principals
School Governing Bodies

SUBJECT: MANAGEMENT OF VACANCIES, CO-OPTION AND ELECTIONS IN SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

1. The Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this circular is to provide uniform guidance on the circumstances under which a member of a School Governing Body (SGB) ceases to be a member.
- 1.2. The circular also regulate the procedures for filling vacancies, replacing executive members and electing learner representatives, in accordance with the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996), as amended, and the Limpopo School Governing Body Election Regulations published under Limpopo Provincial Gazette No. 3489 of 1 March 2024
- 1.3. This circular further seeks to promote consistency, stability and lawful governance within School Governing Bodies by clarifying roles, responsibilities, timeframes and oversight mechanisms applicable to vacancy management and related electoral processes.

MANAGEMENT OF VACANCIES, CO-OPTION AND ELECTIONS IN SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

Cnr 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE. 0700, Private Bag X 9489, Polokwane, 0700 Institutional Governance and Learner Support Sub-directorate Tel: 015 290 9420 / 015 290 7601

The Heartland of Southern Africa – Development Is About People

2. Cessation of Membership of a School Governing Body

- 2.1. In terms of section 31 of the South African Schools Act, read together with the Limpopo School Governing Body Election Regulations, a member of a School Governing Body shall vacate office and cease to be a member when a vacancy arises due to circumstances recognised in law and applicable provincial regulations.
- 2.2. Without limiting the generality of paragraph 2.1., a member shall cease to be a member of a School Governing Body if:
 - 2.2.1. a parent member no longer has a learner enrolled at the school;
 - 2.2.2. a learner member ceases to be a learner at the school;
 - 2.2.3. the member resigns in writing;
 - 2.2.4. the member is removed from office following a disciplinary process conducted in accordance with applicable prescripts;
 - 2.2.5. the member becomes disqualified in terms of section 29 of the South African Schools Act; or
 - 2.2.6. the member is otherwise unable to continue serving, as contemplated in the provincial regulations.

3. Conduct of By-Elections to Fill Vacancies

- 3.1. When a vacancy occurs in a School Governing Body, such vacancy must be filled through a by-election conducted for the remainder of the term of office, in accordance with the Limpopo School Governing Body Election Regulations.
- 3.2. By-elections must be conducted within the prescribed regulatory timeframe following the occurrence of a vacancy and must adhere to democratic principles, including fairness, transparency, inclusivity and accountability.
- 3.3. The Circuit Manager shall formally appoint a suitably qualified official to act as Electoral Officer for purposes of by-elections and related processes.
- 3.4. The Electoral Officer is responsible for: -
 - 3.4.1. issuing a written notice of the by-election to the school community.
 - 3.4.2. determining and communicating the date, venue and timeframes for nominations and elections in accordance with the regulations.

MANAGEMENT OF VACANCIES, CO-OPTION AND ELECTIONS IN SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

Cnr 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE. 0700, Private Bag X 9489, Polokwane, 0700 Institutional Governance and Learner Support Sub-directorate Tel: 015 290 9420 / 015 290 7601

The Heartland of Southern Africa – Development is About People

- 3.4.3. ensuring that adequate notice is given to all eligible stakeholders; and
- 3.4.4. overseeing the entire electoral process to ensure compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements.

4. Filling Vacancies through Cooption

- 4.1. In circumstances where the number of parent members falls below the required majority as contemplated in section 23 of the South African Schools Act, the School Governing Body must temporarily co-opt parent members with voting rights, pending the conduct of a by-election within the prescribed period.
- 4.2. In terms of section 23(12A) of the South African Schools Act, 1996, read together with applicable provincial regulations, where a vacancy occurs on a School Governing Body, the governing body may co-opt a person from the relevant category to fill the vacancy and such co-opted member shall have full voting rights.
- 4.3. Where a vacancy occurs on the School Governing Body, the governing body must initiate the process to fill the vacancy without delay, and co-option must be finalised within a period not exceeding ninety (90) days from the date on which the vacancy occurred, pending the holding of a by-election where required in terms of the applicable prescripts
- 4.4. In terms of section 23(12) of the South African Schools Act, 1996, a School Governing Body may co-opt one or more persons who possess specific skills, knowledge, or expertise to assist the governing body in the performance of its functions.
- 4.5. Such co-option is intended solely to strengthen the capacity of the School Governing Body and does not confer voting rights on the co-opted person. A person co-opted in terms of this section may participate in deliberations of the School Governing Body but may not vote on any matter before the governing body.

5. Replacement of Executive Members of the SGB

- 5.1. Only members of the relevant category, namely parents, educators, support staff or learners, as applicable, may nominate and elect a replacement to fill a vacancy in that category.
- 5.2. Where an executive member of the School Governing Body, including the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Secretary or Treasurer, ceases to be a member of the School Governing Body, such member shall automatically cease to hold the executive office with immediate effect.

MANAGEMENT OF VACANCIES, CO-OPTION AND ELECTIONS IN SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

Cnr 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE. 0700, Private Bag X 9489, Polokwane, 0700 Institutional Governance and Learner Support Sub-directorate Tel: 015 290 9420 / 015 290 7601

The Heartland of Southern Africa – Development Is About People

- 5.3. In such instances, the principal of the school must convene a properly constituted Governing Body meeting to elect a replacement executive member from among the remaining eligible members.
- 5.4. The election of a replacement executive member must be conducted through a transparent and democratic process and must be accurately recorded in the official minutes of the meeting.
- 5.5. A replacement executive member elected in terms of paragraph 4.3. shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term of the outgoing executive member.

6. Election of Learner Representatives to the SGB

- 6.1. In accordance with section 23 of the South African Schools Act, all public schools offering Grade 8 and higher must ensure learner representation on the School Governing Body through the Representative Council of Learners (RCL).
- 6.2. Learner representatives to the School Governing Body must be democratically elected by the Representative Council of Learners in accordance with applicable legislation and provincial regulations.
- 6.3. Where a learner representative ceases to be a member of the School Governing Body, the Representative Council of Learners must elect a replacement to serve for the remainder of the term of office.
- 6.4. School management must facilitate and support the election processes of learner representatives while respecting the autonomy and democratic rights of learners

7. Roles and Responsibilities

- 7.1. Principals are responsible for ensuring that all vacancies, by-elections, co-options and replacement processes are managed in strict compliance with legislative and regulatory prescripts.
- 7.2. Circuit Managers must provide oversight, guidance and support throughout the processes of filling vacancies and replacing executive members, and must ensure that Electoral Officers discharge their duties effectively.
- 7.3. School Governing Bodies are reminded of their obligation to uphold principles of good governance, accountability, stability and continuity in the best interests of the school.

8. Implementation


- 8.1. This circular must be read in conjunction with Circular No. 14 of 2025, dated 20 January 2025, which provides guidance on the election of School Governing Body office-bearers and the filling of vacancies on School Governing Bodies.

MANAGEMENT OF VACANCIES, CO-OPTION AND ELECTIONS IN SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

Cnr 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE. 0700, Private Bag X 9489, Polokwane, 0700 Institutional Governance and Learner Support Sub-directorate Tel: 015 290 9420 / 015 290 7601

The Heartland of Southern Africa – Development Is About People

8.2. The provisions of this circular take effect immediately and must be communicated to, and implemented by, all School Governing Body members.



Mr. Seshibe M.V
Head of Department

22/01/2026
Date