



**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
WAIGANI**

Date: 28/01/2013

File: CM2-4-2

SECRETARY'S CIRCULAR NO: 04 /2013

SUBJECT: LANGUAGE POLICY IN ALL SCHOOLS

1. AUTHORITY:

The authority of this Secretary's Circular is Section 28 (a), (h) and (i) of the Education Act 1983. This Circular supersedes Secretary's **Circular 38/99**, and should be read in conjunction with the Ministerial Policy Statement **1/2013** titled "**Language Policy In All Schools**".

2. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Secretary's Circular is to advise all the authorities of all the schools and institutions within the National Education System about the government's policy change to:

- (a) use English as Language of Instruction, and**
- (b) teach English as a subject in Elementary Schools.**

3. APPLICATION:

The Policy is effective as of the date of the Ministerial Policy Statement and applies to all member schools operating under the National Education System, except Elementary Schools in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville.

4. BACKGROUND:

- 4.1 The National Government has directed that a new **Language Policy in All Schools** (2013) be put in place to address the concerns raised by the society including parents, members of the community, teachers, former students under the reformed

curriculum, academics, and political leaders who demanded for the policy change. These people blamed the poor standard of spoken and written English because of the use of vernacular in schools.

It is important to use English for teaching and learning early in our schools as this is the language mostly used for administration and businesses in Papua New Guinea and around the world.

- 4.2 Papua New Guinea is culturally diverse where many children who enter schools and enrol in Elementary Schools may not have prior exposure to English. Therefore in such circumstances, Elementary Preparatory teachers are allowed to use the local vernacular during their lessons to explain difficult concepts.

5. THE NEW POLICY:

5.1 ENGLISH AS LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

The Language of instruction shall be English replacing vernacular or the *lingua franca* including *Tok Pisin* and *Hiri Motu*. All teaching from Elementary Preparatory will be in English.

All member schools operating under the National Education System will use **English as the medium of instruction commencing on Monday the 4th of February 2013**, the first day of the 2013 academic year. English is the official language of instruction and for pupils to speak and write from Elementary Preparatory Grade to Grade 12.

5.2 ENGLISH TO BE TAUGHT AS A SUBJECT

English will now be taught as a subject at Elementary Preparatory grade. Where there is evidence of difficulty by students in understanding English concepts, the teachers may use local vernacular where applicable (but strictly in exceptional cases only).

- 5.2.1 At the Upper Primary (Grades 6–8), all class activities will strictly be conducted in English as the main medium of instruction. Students will develop their oral and written skills and develop English language competency at this level.

5.2.2 There is no change at the Secondary Level. English will continue to be taught in Lower and Upper High/Secondary Schools, National High Schools and Technical Secondary Schools. All teachers in Vocational Centres must use English to teach their courses.

5.3 TEACHING OF PHONICS

To promote quality learning at the elementary level phonics will be introduced to all Elementary Schools and taught as a lesson daily. Phonics is a method of teaching on reading and writing the English language where relationships of sounds and letters are used to decode words. The sounds are represented by specific letters and are grouped together to make more complex groups of sounds to make words. Evidence shows that phonics enables children to be able to read fluently and recognise individual sounds and blend them together to read words.

5.4 PROMOTION OF READING IN SCHOOLS

Students must speak English at all times and read plenty of books to improve their English proficiency. All schools should establish classroom libraries or school libraries and equip them with books for their students learning. Reading will be promoted at all Elementary Schools hence time must be made available for children to read in class.

Authorities and teachers must refer to **Secretary's Policy Instruction 2/2009** on the **Establishment of school Libraries in 2010** to provide quality learning for their students.

Education authorities are urged to dedicate sizeable funding to promote reading in schools through the establishment and resourcing of the school and classroom libraries.

5.5 THE CURRICULUM

The current Elementary Language Syllabus will be used by teachers to plan, program and teach their children. The English Syllabus will be made available.

5.6 TEACHER TRAINING

Support will be provided for the Pre-service and In-service training to prepare teachers to implement the policy effectively. Teacher Education Institutions are challenged to develop training programs for their students to improve practice. All teachers should continue to improve their level of English proficiency.

6. VERNACULAR TO BE TAUGHT AS A SUBJECT:

The teaching of vernacular (not tok pisin) is allowed only if these three requirements are met.

- a. Orthography exists, No orthography, means no teaching of the vernacular**
- b. Endorsed by the Boards of Management and Communities in consultation with Provincial Education Boards**
- c. Availability of a teacher who is proficient in the language within the school.**

7. PARTNERSHIPS:

To bring positive outcomes from the policy shift, the Department of Education (DoE) will continue to establish and strengthen partnerships with Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), the private sector, development partners and funding agencies to support this policy. Schools are urged to source funding from their respective Wards and to equip and resource their schools with materials to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

8. RESPONSIBILITY OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS:

Education authorities at the provincial, district and school levels are urged to support and facilitate the implementation of this very important change in language policy. The Senior Standards Officers and Standards Officers of schools are advised to assist elementary teachers to implement the new policy.

If you need further information on the Policy, you may contact us on the address provided below.

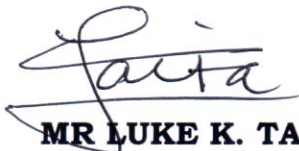
The envelope must be marked as **“Language Policy In All Schools”**.

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9. CONCLUSION:

It is very important for all school communities to be aware of the change in the medium of instruction. The Boards of Management (BOM) and Parents and Citizens Associations (P&C) are requested to support and advocate for English to be used at the elementary level of Education. The communities must be informed of the benefits of this change so that schools will receive support from stakeholders. Education authorities at the provincial, district and school levels are urged to support and facilitate the implementation of this very important change in language policy.



MR LUKE K. TAITA
Acting Secretary for Education

Distribution:

All Members – Secretary’s Staff Meeting
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All Guidance Officers
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