



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PRESS RELEASE

GRADES 8 AND 10 NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

This notice is put out to correct some misreporting and clarify the Ministry's intention to abolish Grade 8 and 10 examinations for 'selections' purposes over the next 6 years. "The two national examinations continue to allow high student attrition at grade 8 and 10 exit points. Each year around 100,000 students are pushed out of the education system as a direct result of these examinations," Dr Kombra explained.

Every Papua New Guinean has God given talents and capabilities and must be given the opportunity to reach Grade 12 education. Grade 12 education will be the minimum education for every child. The Tuition Fee Free policy underpins this intent of the government, for our people and our country.

The two national examinations will eventually be phased out to give all children who enroll in elementary preparatory the opportunity to complete a full education up to grade 12, with an improved assessment system replacing the exams. "These examinations will eventually be replaced by a standard based assessment system which will assess students' performances and award certificates of achievement but not for selections into grade 9 or grade 11," Dr Kombra said.

The examinations system we have in PNG and around the world is

an integral part of the educative process of education and training. Examinations are necessary in our schools system to find out the real knowledge, skills and talents of the students. We know the capability and the skill of a student only through examinations. Hence, the learning that takes place in schools will always be assessed through internal school assessment systems guided by internal school assessment policies or external examinations (or standards examinations) at different phases of learning.

In PNG we have primarily used examinations for the aforementioned reasons and for 'selections' and a placement and promotion of a student to the next level of school education. This concept and practice of selections and 'drop outs' is a colonial legacy we have not eliminated since independence. The education system has 'pushed out' students after grade 6, 8, and 10 and labeled them as 'drop outs' because of primarily an inadequacy of classroom space and inadequate number of teachers at different levels of the system. The current legacy 'of drop out' must be stopped to give every student an opportunity to move from Elementary Prep to Grade 12, and this a strategic policy decision that is overdue.

Recently, a Ministerial determination under Section 27 of the Education Act

(1983), directed the Department of Education to consult with provinces and stakeholders including provincial governments, church agencies and District Development Authorities and to plan with the support of development partners to immediately increase teacher training capacity and appropriate infrastructure to 'eliminate the drop out' syndrome and allow every student entering Grade Prep to complete Grade 12.

The Department of Education is undertaking a critical analysis of the abolishment of the Grade 8 and 10 examinations for selection purposes and based on this analysis will establish the detail time frame to implement this direction.

In summary, internal assessment of learning and external national examinations at the end of different learning phases will remain in the PNG education system. "Students must complete and attain Grade 12 education and where possible with grade 12 vocational training. The elimination of grade 8 and then grade 10 examinations for 'selections' purposes will start with some provinces in 2016." Dr. Kombra.

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