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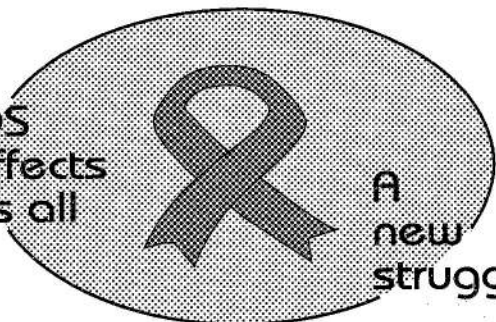
Vol. 423

PRETORIA, 6 SEPTEMBER 2000

No. 21539

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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 No.***GENERAL NOTICE****Education, Department of***General Notice*

3102 National Education Policy Act (27/1996): Call for public comment on the draft document—The National Policy Framework on Whole-school Evaluation.....

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GENERAL NOTICE

NOTICE 3102 OF 2000

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY ACT, 1996 (ACT NO. 27 OF 1996)

CALL FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE DRAFT DOCUMENT – THE NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK ON WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION

The Minister of Education, after consultation with the Council of Education Ministers, hereby in terms of Section 3(4)(f) of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act No. 27 of 1996) relating to the monitoring and evaluation, learning standards, examinations and the certification of qualifications, request any person, society or organisation to submit to me, before or by 6 October 2000 comments on the aforementioned draft document in the schedule hereto.

Copies of this document are also obtainable upon request from Dr N. Mgijima at Tel No. (012) 312 5119 or Fax (012) 326 2191.

Comments should be forwarded to:

The Director-General
(For the attention of Dr N. Mgijima)
Department of Education
Private Bag X895
Pretoria
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Fax Number: (012) 326 2191

Schedule



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**THE NATIONAL POLICY ON WHOLE SCHOOL
EVALUATION**

31 August 2000

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MINISTER'S FOREWORD

Assuring quality of the education system is the overriding goal of the Ministry of Education. This National Policy on Whole-School Evaluation introduces an effective monitoring and evaluation process that is vital to the improvement of quality and standards of performance in schools. The adopted model is radically different from the previous school inspections carried out in South Africa under the apartheid regime. Together with the accompanying Guidelines, this Policy prescribes an approach that is built upon interactive and transparent processes. These processes include school self-evaluation, ongoing district-based support, monitoring and development and external evaluations conducted by the supervisory units.

The Policy places particular emphasis on the need to use objective criteria and performance indicators consistently in the evaluation of schools. Recognising the importance of schools as the place in which the quality of education is ultimately determined, focus is primarily on the school as a whole rather than simply on individuals and their performance. The multi-sources of evidence that are used, enable valid and reliable judgements to be made and sound feedback to be provided both to schools and to the decision-makers. The findings must be used to re-orientate efforts towards improving the quality and standards of individual and collective performance. This makes the model less punitive and more supportive and developmental, with a feedback mechanism that enables schools and their support structures to agree on improvement targets and developmental plans.

Throughout the development of this Policy and its accompanying documentation, the Ministry has enjoyed the co-operation and support of many interest groups, education authorities, organisations and our provincial colleagues. I would like to thank all of them.

Professor Kader Asmal, MP
Minister of Education
June 2000

SECTION 1

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 For several years, there has been no national system of evaluating the performance of schools, and there is no comprehensive data on the quality of teaching and learning, or on the educational standards achieved in the system. As a result, the National Policy for Whole-School Evaluation is being introduced. This complements other quality assurance initiatives, conducted under the aegis of systemic evaluation, namely; accreditation of providers, programme and service reviews, and monitoring learning achievements.
- 1.1.2 The National Policy on Whole-School Evaluation has been designed to ensure that school evaluation is carried out according to an agreed national model. It sets out the legal basis for school evaluation, its purposes, what is to be evaluated and who can carry out evaluations. It also provides guidance on how an evaluation should be conducted. It further sets out how the evaluation process should be administered and funded. The Policy indicates ways in which very good schools should be recognised and very weak schools supported.
- 1.1.3 This Policy is aimed, firstly at improving the overall quality of education in the South African schools. It will ensure that all our children are given an equal opportunity to make the best use of their capabilities. As a process, whole school evaluation is meant to be supportive and developmental rather than punitive and judgmental. It will not be used as a coercive measure, but will ensure that policies are complied with. It will also facilitate support and improvement of school performance using approaches of partnerships, collaboration, mentoring and guidance.
- 1.1.4 Secondly, the Policy offers Guidelines, tools for evaluation, and a built-in mechanism for reporting findings and providing feedback to the school and to various stakeholders, the Government, parents and the society generally, on the level of

performance achieved by schools. As a result, school evaluation is not an end in itself, it is the first step in a long process of school improvement and quality enhancement. This Policy is designed to achieve these goals in partnership with the nation's schools.

1.2 Education Policy and Legislative Context

1.2.1 The transformation of education in South Africa emphasises quality education for all (Education White Paper, 1995). The first intent is to redress the discriminatory, unbalanced and inequitable distribution of education services of the apartheid regime, and secondly to develop a world-class education system suitable to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

1.2.2 According to the National Education Policy Act (Act no.27 of 1996), the Minister is mandated to direct that standards of education provision, delivery and performance in the system be monitored and evaluated by the department annually or at specified intervals, with the object of assessing progress in complying with the provisions of the constitution and with national education policy. This Act also specifies that, should the evaluation reveal problems in complying with the provisions of the constitution, the Political Head of Education in the affected province will have to account to the Minister in writing within ninety days.

1.2.3 Similarly, the Assessment Policy, gazetted in December 1998, provides for the conducting of systemic evaluation at the key transitional stages, viz. Grade 3, 6 and 9. The main objective is to assess the effectiveness of the entire system and the extent to which the vision and goals of the education system are being achieved.

1.2.4 Also, the Further Education and Training (FET) Act (Act no.98 of 1998), makes it obligatory for the Director-General, subject to the norms set by the Minister, in terms of the National Education Policy Act, to assess and report on the quality of education provided in the FET Band.

- 1.2.5 The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act of 1995, requires that Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQA) Bodies be established for the purpose of monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of national standards and qualifications.
- 1.2.6 In line with the above legal provisions, this Policy elaborates on the responsibilities of the Minister with regard to the conduct of whole school monitoring and evaluation as an integral part of the new quality assurance approach that has been introduced.
- 1.2.7 Within this paradigm shift from 'inspection' to quality assurance, whole school evaluation is used to refer to all those services whose main function is to maintain and control standards, evaluate performance, advise and support schools in their continual efforts to improve their effectiveness.
- 1.2.8 The focus is on both internal monitoring and external evaluation i.e. the self-evaluation by the school itself, and the mentoring and support provided by the district-based support teams, and external evaluation by the supervisory units.

SECTION 2:

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE POLICY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The principal aims of this policy also reflect those of the accompanying documents, Guidelines and Criteria. They are to:

- Spell out the criteria that will be employed to evaluate the effectiveness of a school in terms of the national goals;
- Establish mechanisms to strengthen district professional support services to schools;
- Increase the level of accountability within the system;
- Provide feedback for continuous quality improvement;
- Moderate externally, on a sampling basis, the results of self-evaluation carried out by the schools;
- Identify pockets of excellence within the system which will serve as models of good practice; and
- Identify the characteristics of an effective school and improve the general understanding of what factors create effective schools.

2.2 Whole-School Evaluation and Quality Assurance

2.2.1 Whole-school evaluation is the cornerstone of the quality assurance system. The shift is from 'inspections' done to weed out sub-standards of non-conforming practices and services, to improve on an on-going basis the performance and school effectiveness.

2.2.2 This paradigm shift reflects the intention to provide support and development programmes for the improvement of performance. It also enables schools to provide an account of their current performance and to show to what extent they satisfy the expectations of Government and the public and how well they are responding to their accountability for the outcomes of schooling.

2.2.3 This approach forms the basis for acknowledging the achievements of learning sites through commendations and for identifying areas that need attention through recommendations.

2.2.4 Quality assurance allows external evaluations to become effective only when schools have well-developed internal self-evaluation processes.

2.3 Principles

The Policy is based on the philosophy that whole-school continuous improvement is driven by the following principles:

- The core mission of schools is to improve the educational achievements of all learners. The evaluation processes, therefore, must be designed to establish whether the school enables learners to meet or exceed their educational expectations;
- All evaluation activities must be characterised by openness and collaboration. The criteria to be used in evaluating schools, therefore, must be made public;
- Good quality whole-school evaluation must be standardised and consistent. The Guidelines, criteria and instruments have been designed to ensure consistency over periods of time and across settings.
- All members of a school should take responsibility for the quality of their own performance. Whole-school evaluation seeks to measure the contribution of both staff and pupils to the school's and their own performance.
- School improvement should be based on quantitative and qualitative data across the full range of inputs, processes and outcomes. For this reason, whole-school evaluation is concerned with governance, leadership and management, learning and teaching, as well as resourcing, infrastructure, standards of achievement and links with parents and the community.
- Staff development and training is critical to school improvement. A measure used by whole-school evaluation in judging a school's performance is the amount and quality of in-service training undertaken by staff and its impact on learning and standards of achievement.

2.4 Approach

The approach recognises that:

- Key to whole-school evaluation is ensuring that schools are meeting their responsibilities for improving their performance.
- the means of achieving this are through a co-ordinated, effective self-evaluation mechanism, an external evaluation framework, and adequate and regular district support and development programmes. An important distinction in roles is made between the district professional support services that provide on-going assistance and advice to individual staff members to help them improve their performance, and the supervisory services that evaluate the overall quality and standard of performance of the whole school.
- an agreed set of criteria will be used to ensure a coherent, consistent but flexible approach to evaluating performance in the education system.
- a written published report on the school's performance is an integral part of this evaluation process.
- in this manner, whole-school evaluation is designed to obtain valid information about a school's condition, functioning and effectiveness and lead to the provision of support as it seeks to respond to any recommendations for improvement.

2.5 Ethics and Appeals

2.5.1 Through the legal responsibilities bestowed on the Minister of Education, accredited supervisors have the right to enter any school and carry out an evaluation. In doing so, they are expected to observe certain ethical issues and abide by the prescribed code.

2.5.2 The evaluation and monitoring teams need to be fastidious in establishing and observing ethical procedures in their work, in a professional, humane and caring way.

2.5.3 Schools have a right to register with the office of the Head of Department a complaint when they believe that unfair treatment or unjustified action affecting them has taken place during the evaluation.

2.5.4 The Ministry is the final arbiter in any complaint's procedure.

2.6 Areas for evaluation

2.6.1 The following are the key areas of evaluation:

Basic functionality of the school;

Leadership, management and communication;

Governance and relationships;

Quality of teaching and educator development;

Curriculum provision and resources;

Learner Achievement;

School safety, security and discipline;

School infrastructure; and

Parents and community.

2.7 The use of indicators

Evaluation will be based on indicators covering inputs, processes and outputs.

- The input indicators include the main characteristics of each cohort of learners, infrastructure, funding and professional and support staff.
- Process indicators show how well the school seeks to achieve its goals. These include the effectiveness with which schools try to ensure effective governance, leadership and management, safety and security measures, quality of teaching, etc.
- Output indicators show what the school achieves in terms of academic standards, and learners' standards of behaviour and attainment, rates of punctuality, and attendance.

2.8 Performance Ratings/Gradings

When summarising the scores on the various aspects evaluated, the overall school performance will be rated using the following scale:

- | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------|
| 5 | → | Outstanding |
| 4 | → | Good |
| 3 | → | Acceptable, needs Improvement |
| 2 | → | Unsatisfactory |
| 1 | → | Unacceptable |

Where a grade is irrelevant, or inapplicable, such an indication must be made by using 0.

2.9 Evaluation Process

2.9.1 The Whole-School Evaluation cycle includes pre-evaluation surveys/visits, school self-evaluation, detailed evaluation and reviews, and post-evaluation reporting.

2.9.2 The pre-evaluation survey / visit is carried out by an accredited supervisor to build a brief profile about the general level of functionality of the school. Evidence from the visit, the survey instrument, school records and school self-evaluation reports must be used to build up these profiles.

2.9.3 Supervisory teams will comprise of accredited supervisors balanced across the nine Focus Areas to be evaluated to carry out detailed evaluations. Members must have the expertise to evaluate minimally one subject/learning area and have an awareness of the key elements of good provision for Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN).

- 2.9.4 The number of supervisors would normally be within the range of four to six, depending on the size of the school and the resources available.
- 2.9.5 Reviews would normally be conducted between three and four days of the week, depending on the size of school. Three-year evaluation cycles will be introduced beginning January 2001. Where there is an urgent need to set learning sites on an improvement course, follow-up surveys will be conducted within 6 - 9 months of the whole school review.
- 2.9.6 Production of a report at the end of a school review is obligatory. An oral report will be presented in a recorded meeting before the evaluation team leaves the school, while the written report will be submitted to the District Office and the school within four weeks of the evaluation.
- 2.9.7 The District Support Teams must assist schools to implement the recommendations of the evaluation report through school improvement planning that sets clear targets, priorities, time frames and resource allocation.

SECTION 3:

RESPONSIBILITIES AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

3.1 Ministry

3.1.1 The Ministry undertakes to:

- provide, within its annual education budget, funding that will be distributed to all the Provinces as a conditional grant specifically for school evaluation activities.
- be responsible for the development, administration and periodic review of the National Framework on Whole-School Evaluation i.e. policy, guidelines and instruments in response to changing circumstances.
- ensure that the evaluation system is administered effectively by providing professional guidance and support to Provinces on how the evaluations will be organised and conducted. In situations needing emergency interventions, special arrangements will be made between the Ministry and the Province.
- decide on the national sample of schools to be evaluated and determine evaluation cycles.
- be responsible for overseeing the training, accreditation and registration of supervisors.
- remove from the register of school evaluators those supervisors who fail to carry out their responsibilities satisfactorily.
- collect certain raw data gathered through school evaluations from the Provinces in order to enable the Minister to construct an annual report for Parliament. This data will also be used to guide the formulation and review of education policy.

- authorise the Quality Assurance Directorate in the National Department of Education to maintain an accessible national database on Whole School monitoring and evaluation.

3.2 Provinces

3.2.1 The Provinces will be responsible for:

- ensuring that sufficient funds are available within their annual education budget to enable district support teams to carry out on-going monitoring, support, and development activities in schools in accordance with the National Policy and Guidelines on Whole School Evaluation.
- providing a budget to help schools respond effectively to the recommendations made in an evaluation report, putting in place contingency plans for dealing with schools in an unacceptable condition.
- providing competent, well-trained and accredited supervisors and district based support teams, organising their work and ensuring that the on-going monitoring, support and evaluation of schools is carried out effectively.
- putting in place policies designed to provide appropriate administrative support, advice, guidance and resources to all its district professional services to enable them to help schools respond to the recommendations emanating from external evaluations. This includes the provision of an advisory service capable of offering on-going or long-term support.
- ensuring that all schools under their jurisdiction are fully aware of the implications of the National Policy and Guidelines on Whole-School Evaluation and of their responsibilities in relation to it.
- making arrangements for monitoring the quality of professional support services in

their districts and dealing, in the first instance, with any shortcomings displayed by district support teams.

- ensuring that an appropriate database is established. It must be fully accessible and linked to the Ministry's database on quality assurance.

3.3 Supervisory Units

Supervisory units will be responsible for:

- the day-to-day operations of whole-school evaluation under the direction of the Head of the Provincial Department, but within a nationally coordinated framework. The supervisory units will be directly managed by the Quality Assurance Directorate equivalent in the Province in order to ensure synergy and integration of all activities associated with quality assurance.
- providing a team of full-time evaluators, assisted by district based support team members, who will work in districts that are not their regular stations.
- providing a team leader who will take responsibility for the professional conduct of members and for the organisation and co-ordination of the evaluation activities as a whole.
- formulating policies designed to ensure the implementation of recommendations to improve standards in under-performing schools. They will have the corresponding authority to ensure that they can carry out this task.

3.4 District Support Services

Teams comprising expertise in general school management, leadership, governance, curriculum, staff development, and financial planning must be constituted in the districts.

They are responsible for:

- monitoring and supporting schools on an on-going basis for purposes of continuous quality improvement. When a need arises, they must render services to the supervisory units.
- ensuring the availability of adequate transport, travel and subsistence budget for the District Support Teams in collaboration with the Provincial Head-Office and District Office.
- co-ordinating staff development activities that respond to individual need and the needs of local and national policies and initiatives.
- using the reports from the supervisory teams to hold discussions with the schools and guide them in the implementation of the recommendations.
- for setting up and monitoring clusters of schools so that they can better integrate approaches to improving the performance of schools.

3.5 Schools

The authority for the professional management issues of the schools will be vested with the principal of the school, supported by the professional staff. The principal may delegate to an appointee or nominee from the staff, certain functions including quality management matters whenever need arises. Against this background, the school (principal) will be responsible for:

- the undertaking of school's self-evaluation activities in line with the requirements of the National Policy and Guidelines on Whole- School Evaluation.
- co-operating with the evaluation team as professional educators.
- identifying an evaluation co-ordinator to liaise with all the monitoring and evaluation

teams that visit the schools. S/he will participate in the evaluation process by attending meetings, interpreting evidence and clarifying uncertainties but will not be part of decision-making when judgements about the school's performance are made.

- granting full access to school records, policies, reports, etc. during external evaluations conducted by the supervisory units.
- producing an improvement plan in response to recommendations made in the evaluation report within four weeks of the receipt of the written evaluation report. Full consultation with all stakeholders must be part of this process.
- sending the improvement plan to the District Head for approval and working with professional support service members assigned to the school in order to implement it.
- implementing the improvement plan within the stipulated time frames.
- informing the parents about the intended evaluation and distributing the written summary with the main conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation in accordance with the prescribed times.

SECTION 4 :**IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES**

- 4.1.1 In the case of individual schools, the support service must link with the senior management team, the governing body and the staff in order to support the implementation of the quality improvement strategies recommended by the supervisors and identified in the school's improvement plan.
- 4.1.2 The professional support service is responsible for retrieving key information from the reports of different schools in a district in order to plan the support and professional development required. This should lead to the provision of an integrated training programme that could be delivered in co-operation with other schools and other role players, such as Teacher Centres; Colleges of Education; Technikons; Universities; Teacher Unions and NGOs.
- 4.1.3 The support service must support schools through providing a coherent, overall plan of action to address the improvement needs articulated by both school self-evaluation and the external evaluation reports of the supervisors.
- 4.1.3 School evaluation reports and improvement plans should naturally lead to district, provincial, and national improvement plans which address areas needing improvements, within specified time frames. These form the basis for future reviews and serve as an important tool for self-evaluation at all levels.

SECTION 5:**HUMAN CAPACITY AND DEVELOPMENT**

- 5.1 Modular training and induction courses will be offered for all supervisors, including the district-based school support teams, until sufficient members have been registered on the database.
- 5.2 Only supervisors that have been trained and accredited in school reviews will be qualified to evaluate schools. Accredited supervisors will have undergone practical training in the schools, and will have been assessed as competent to evaluate all types of schools. On going in-service training will be provided, so that skills in areas such as LSEN can be developed.
- 5.3 Supervisors must be capable of evaluating a specialist subject and where possible a group of related subjects, as well as one or more of the other eight areas which form the core of whole-school evaluation. Supervisors should also be capable of making general statements about the quality of provision for LSEN.
- 5.4 District support teams should be competent to aid the development of a school. They should be conversant with the evaluation policy, school self-evaluation techniques and school improvement plans. An orientation and awareness programme will be offered, followed by on-going training.
- 5.5 Once they have received training, all supervisors will be registered on the Ministry's database.
- 5.6 Capacity to handle, analyse, interpret data for reporting will be built at all levels of the system.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ABET - Adult Based Education and Training

Accreditation - official recognition, based on agreed standards, of the competencies of supervisors.

Certification - recognition by a certificate of the competencies acquired by a supervisor through successfully completing a supervisor's training course.

Competencies - the specific knowledge and skills required by supervisors, which include their ability to conform to their code of conduct.

Curriculum - planned educational experience provided for learners supplied by schools, mainly in lessons but possibly in other circumstances such as educational visits and extra-curricular activities.

District - encompasses district or regional education authority.

Education for learners with special needs (LSEN) - is used to designate all those forms of education, in ordinary and special school or other settings, which are regarded by their practitioners as constituting explicit means of responding to learners 'special' characteristics and 'needs'.

Ethos - a number of factors, which include the curricular offerings, relationships in the school community, cultural opportunities, leadership etc. which define the school's community spirit.

Evaluation - the means of judging the success of a school's performance based on the criteria in the Evaluation Framework.

Extra-curricular activities - activities, such as trips, visits, school contests, cultural, artistic, sportive and technical-scientific activities provided by the school for learners that are outside the school's normal timetable.

Framework - the Whole-School Evaluation Framework is a package that includes the Policy, Guidelines and Instruments for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the schools.

Improvement Strategies - a planned effort to make better the good and average schools, and to improve the performance of the schools that are performing below the required standards, on an on-going basis.

Judgements - judgements made by supervisors based on evidence collected through using the criteria in the Evaluation Framework.

Leadership - the capacity to guide the school and those associated with it in the right direction.

Learning site - an environment in which learners are given the opportunity to achieve agreed outcomes. Includes all schools and ABET.

Monitoring - systematic observation and recording of one or several aspects of the school's activity.

Planning - systematically establishing the way in which specific objectives are going to be fulfilled. Planning can apply to areas of learning and whole-school projects and activities.

Procedures - specific steps by which policies and plans are implemented.

Progress - learner's progress in school in knowledge, skills, feelings, attitudes, aptitudes and behaviour, which can be measured by comparing their current state with their prior state.

School - a learning site in which learners are given the opportunity to achieve agreed outcomes.

School policy - written statements, which describe the way the school intends to, fulfil its educational purpose.

School development - improvement in the school's activity: for example, in curriculum, ethos, material resources, etc.

School mission statement and aims - a clear statement regarding the purpose of the school.

School self-evaluation - is the process by which the school determines, at a given point, to what extent it is succeeding in attaining its stated aims and objectives, taking account of the priorities set and the full range of available resources.

Supervisor - a person trained and accredited to evaluate a school's performance.

Support Services - those with responsibility to provide advice, guidance and help to schools. These include subject advisors, circuit managers, education support services, guidance and counselling services, and remedial services.

Standards - measurable levels of achievement that learners should reach in their academic, physical and personal development.

Strategy - a way by which the school plans to fulfil its mission and aims.

Systemic Evaluation - a common approach to the evaluation process whereby an education system or an aspect thereof, is evaluated. Systemic evaluation targets quality factors and examines the education process holistically.

Whole-School Evaluation - a way of judging the performance of a school as a whole in which the corporate contribution to improving performance is measured rather than simply the performance of individual members of staff.

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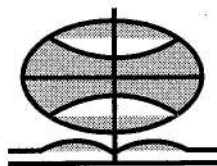
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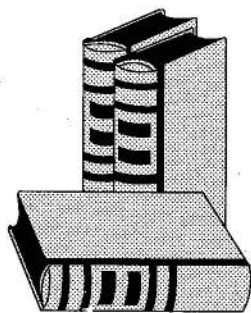
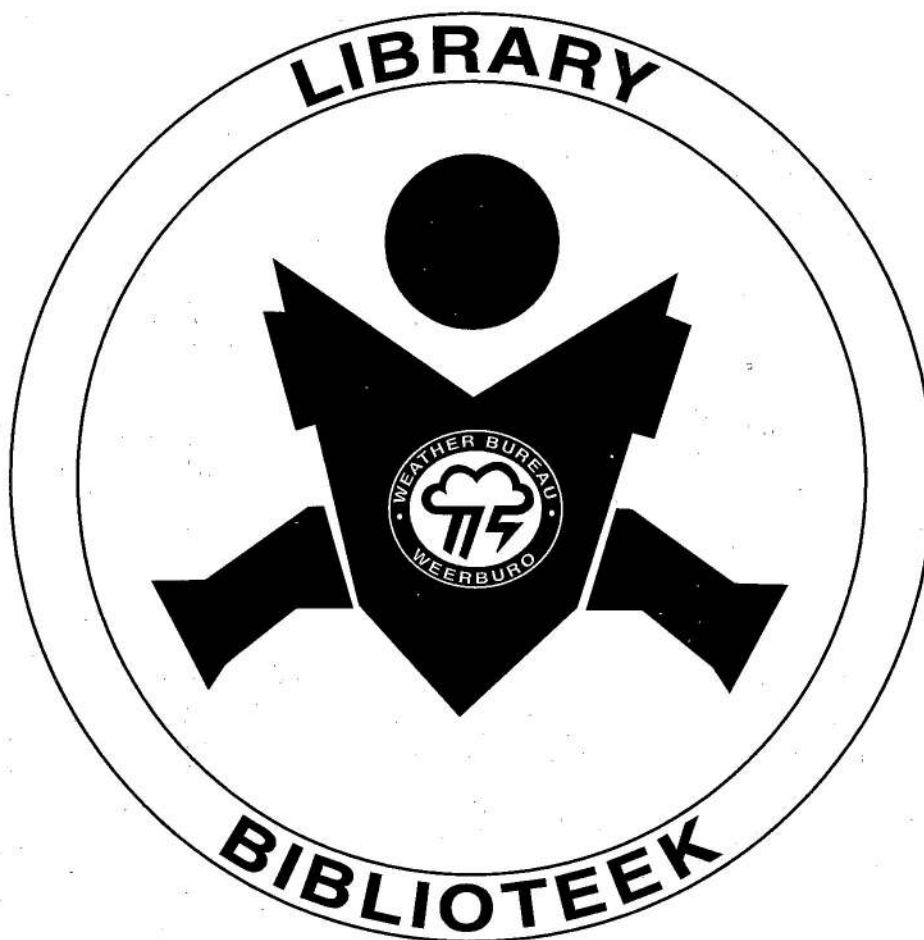
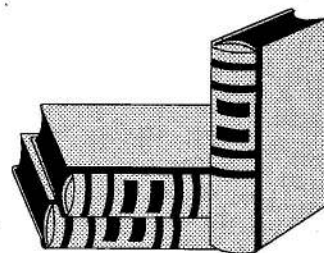
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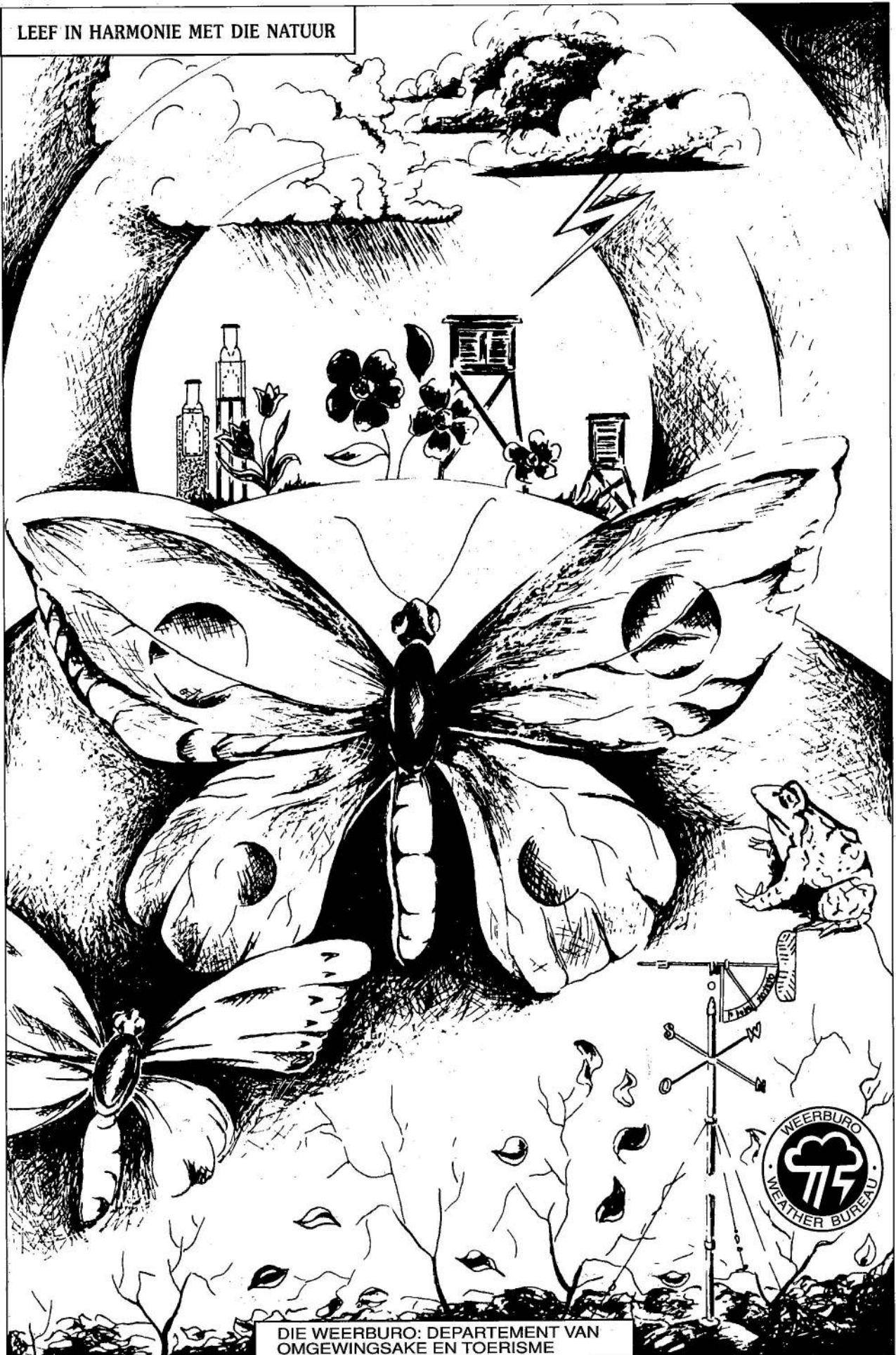
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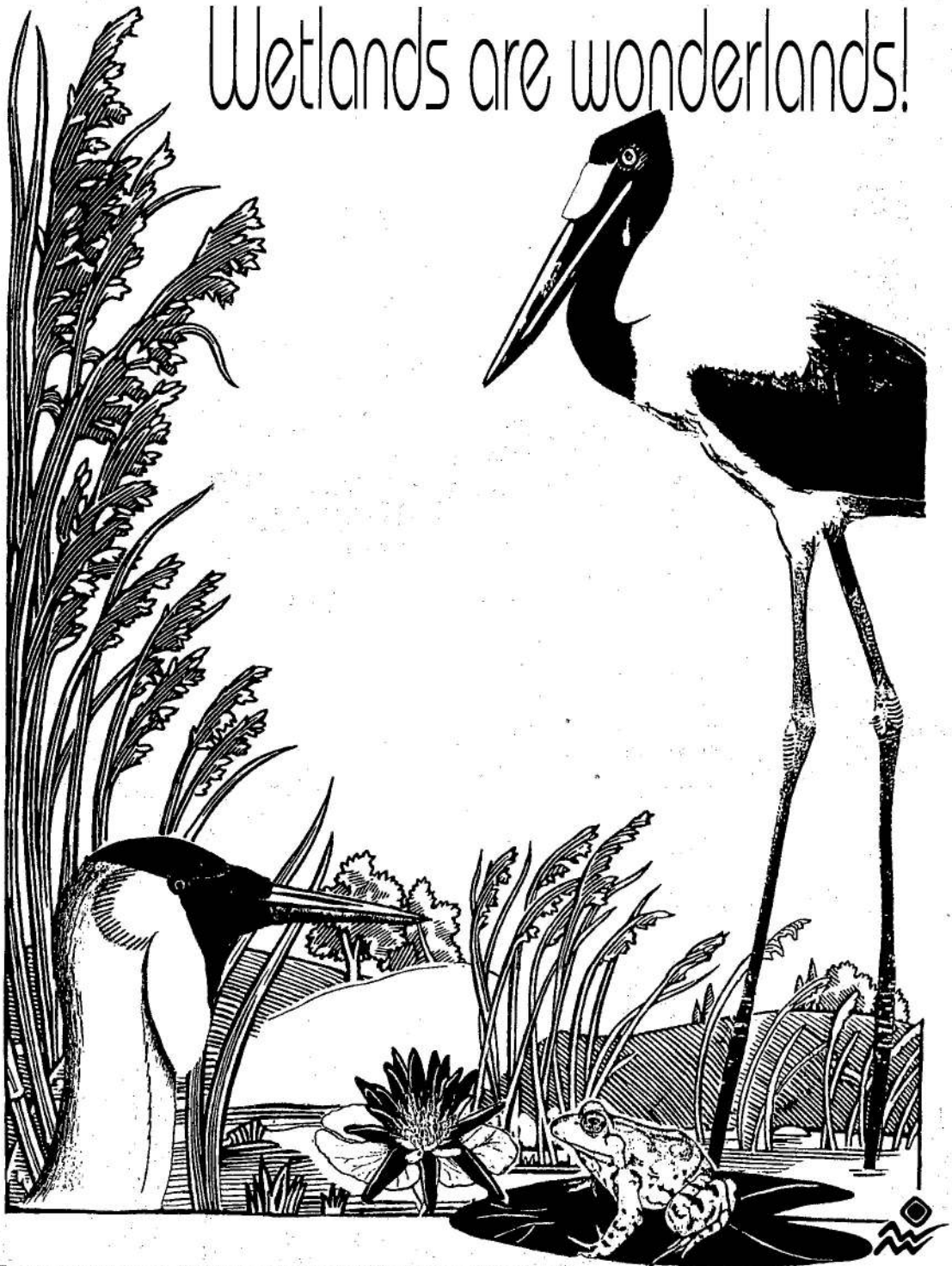
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