

# Diversity in textbooks probe

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SOUTH African school textbooks are due for an upgrade after Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga set up a committee to examine diversity issues in the books.

Last week, Motshekga gazetted the appointment of eight people to serve on the ministerial committee set up to evaluate textbooks and learning and teaching support material (LTSM) as well as develop a policy that promotes diversity.

According to the Government Gazette, the committee will have a year to evaluate textbooks and LTSM across all the schooling phases, to give recommendations on how to eradicate discrimination.

The committee will be reviewing English, maths, social sciences and life orientation textbooks. They are tasked with ascertaining whether the texts and illustrations used in textbooks are inclusive and sensitive to divers-

ity and whether they promote the values of equality and the empowerment of learners, or whether they exclude or cause offence to certain groups.

The committee will also conduct a content analysis to ascertain the type of discrimination, bias and frequency in the books, among others.

The committee, chaired by University of Cape Town deputy vice-chancellor Professor Crain Soudien, will have a year to conclude its evaluations.

Other members of the committee are Professor Linda Chisholm of the University of Johannesburg, Professor Sechaba Mahlomaholo of the University of the Free State, Professor Melissa Steyn of the Wits Centre of Diversity Studies, Dr Thabo Msibi of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Professor Lebo Moletsane, also of UKZN, Professor Yusuf Sayed of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology and Pumla Mdontswa of the Department of Basic Education.

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