

THE NEW EDUCATION CURRICULUM (2-6-6-3 SYSTEM)

The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development has developed a new curriculum to replace the 8-4-4 system that has been in existence since 1985. The 8-4-4 system has been widely criticized for being heavily loaded in terms of content and too exam oriented, putting undue pressure on students. The new system is known as the 2-6-6-3 system and the pilot, which will involve 470 primary and pre-primary schools countrywide, is being implemented and will run until August, giving stakeholders' ample time to assess its effectiveness. The system places more emphasis on learners' mental ability to process issues and proposes a practical framework that nurtures competencies of learners based on their passions and talents. It places emphasis on Continuous Assessment Tests (CATs) over one-off examinations.

The new structure has three levels: early years, middle school and senior school education. Early years education include pre-primary and lower primary. Pre-primary education is for 2 years made up of pre-primary 1 and pre-primary 2 and for children aged between 4 and 5 years old to be taught language activities, mathematical activities, environmental activities, psychomotor & creative activities and religious education activities whereas lower primary will be for 3 years and subjects to be taught will include all pre-primary activities, language activities, literacy and hygiene and nutrition. Middle school will run for 6 years made up of upper primary and lower secondary whereas senior school will run for 3 years. In Upper Primary, grades four to six, learners will be exposed to subjects inclusive of creative arts, with pupils allowed to study an indigenous language or foreign such as Chinese, Arabic, French and German. Grade six will be the final year in primary school but instead of administering a KCPE-like national test, learners will be evaluated continuously while on course. Graduates of primary school will join lower secondary schools for three years between grades seven and nine. Here, learners are set to begin to specialize based on their interests and competencies with emphasis on career guidance. Learners will also be continually assessed in a process that will account for 70 percent of the final grade. The remaining 30 percent will be determined through a national test set by the Kenya National Examinations Council. Grade nine graduates will then proceed to senior school where 60 percent of learners will be exposed to science, technical, engineering and mathematics fields. Others will train in languages and humanities while the rest will focus on arts and sports science. Tertiary and University education will last for 3 years.

