ACTION PLAN TO 2014

Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025

Full Version

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basic education

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Minister's foreword

In 2009, government stepped up the emphasis on basic education as a prerequisite for full and meaningful citizenship for all South Africans and a better life for all. A Green Paper on improving strategic planning in the country was released by the Presidency. Twelve national priorities, in the form of outcomes, were identified, with 'Improved quality of basic education' being the first outcome. The release of the current document, *Action Plan to 2012: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025*, marks an important part of the process started in 2009.

This plan should be read together with the Delivery Agreement for basic education, signed by key government stakeholders, including myself and the nine provincial MECs for education, in 2010. The Delivery Agreement, in fact, draws from this document. The policy thrust of the two is thus the same.

The current plan will help the sector to plan in a manner that is more disciplined, professional and accountable. It is, in fact, the first time that we have had a sector plan of this scope and depth to guide our actions. In our approach we were guided, not only by the 2009 Green Paper, but also by our past planning experiences in South Africa and the experiences of other countries.

This plan is not the *start* of a process as much as it is a *part* of a process and a momentum that has built up over the years as our focus on improving the quality of basic education improved. This momentum is driven by a number of promising initiatives begun in recent years, including the Foundations for Learning campaign, improvements made to the National Curriculum Statement, the Annual National Assessments, the national workbooks initiative, a phenomenal expansion of Grade R and concerted efforts to improve the Grade 12 pass rate.

I would like to thank the many non-government stakeholders, which include both organisations and individuals, who contributed towards the contents of this plan, either through written submissions or through participation in the series of stakeholder consultations that took place in 2009 and 2010. The realisation of quality schooling for all South Africans will require your continued participation. Government has a central role to play in bringing about change, but what happens in schools is particularly dependent on the support of parents and a large range of non-government organisations. Collaboration with stakeholders was strengthened, partly through our emphasis on a 'social pact' for schools, and I look forward to a further strengthening of these relationships.

Mrs A M Motshekga, MP
Minister of Basic Education
31 January 2012

Director-General's foreword

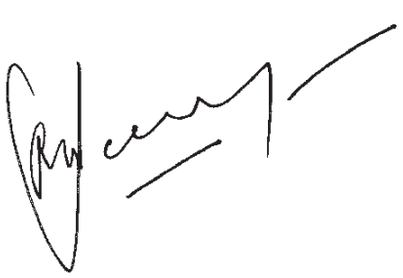
The publication of this plan, previous versions of which have been used within government since 2009, marks another important step towards a basic education sector that is more unified, accountable, better informed about itself and more focussed on workable solutions. Despite the rather technical nature of this document, we urge as wide an audience as possible to engage with it, including non-government stakeholders, such as education researchers, journalists and our international partners.

The Department of Basic Education welcomes critical engagement with the document. Education planners in South Africa have come a long way in gaining a better understanding of the challenges we face and what solutions work best. Yet, there must be ongoing learning by everyone, and robust and informed debate.

It is important to keep in mind what this document does and what it does not do within the overall system of education planning. As explained in the plan, one key focus is on identifying problems that must be solved and solutions that appear to have worked, in South Africa and elsewhere. In this sense the plan provides a high-level statement of how government plans to reach 'Improved quality of basic education'. It is not the intention of this plan to repeat all the details provided in national plans and policies dealing with specific matters, such as teacher development, the curriculum, school funding, infrastructure and Grade R. Moreover, it does not repeat all the details found in the Strategic Plans (produced every five years) and Annual Performance Plans (produced every year) of the nine provincial departments and the national department. Instead, the purpose of *Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025*, is both to provide specific guidance in the preparation of these other plans, and to reflect the best practices described in those plans.

Specifically, through its 36 indicators, this document indicates the speed with which we would like to improve. Targets for each province, while ambitious, are attainable. The indicators are especially important, but they are clearly not the only ones we track. Other documents provide more detail on other indicators. Apart from the 36 indicators, the milestones described in this document provide important signals to government, even to non-government stakeholders, on the kinds of policy and system change we envisage in the coming years.

I would like to thank the many people, inside and outside government, who helped to make this plan a reality.



Mr P B Soobrayan
Director-General of Basic Education
31 January 2012

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Acronyms used

ACE	Advanced Certificate in Education
AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ANA	Annual National Assessment(s)
ASIDI	Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative
ASS	Annual Survey of Schools
CEM	Council of Education Ministers
CTA	Common Task Assessment
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EMS	Education Management Service
ETDP	Education, training and development practices
FET	Further Education and Training
GEC	General Education Certificate
GET	General Education and Training
GHS	General Household Survey
GNP	Gross national product
HEDCOM	Heads of Education Committee
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ICASA	Independent Communication Authority of South Africa
ICT	Information Communications Technology
IDIP	Infrastructure Delivery Improvement Programme
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
LURITS	Learner Unit Record Information Tracking System
MTEF	Medium-term Expenditure Framework
MTSF	Medium-term Strategic Framework
NBETF	National Basic Education and Training Forum
NEEDU	National Education Evaluation and Development Unit
NEIMS	National Education Infrastructure Information Management System

NGO	Non-government organisation
NIDS	National Income Dynamics Study
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NSES	National School Effectiveness Study
NSNP	National School Nutrition Programme
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
QLTC	Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SA-SAMS	South African School Administration and Management System
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SGB	School Governing Body
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

The following acronyms are used for the provinces:

EC	Eastern Cape
FS	Free State
GP	Gauteng
KN	KwaZulu-Natal
LP	Limpopo
MP	Mpumalanga
NC	Northern Cape
NW	North West
WC	Western Cape

Definitions of key terms

Terms of which meaning could be confusing are clarified below.

African	In line with the terminology used by Statistics South Africa, the term, 'African', refers to one of four population groups commonly referred to in South Africa, the other three being coloured, Indian and white.
black	This term is used to refer to three of the four population groups identified by Statistics South Africa, namely African, coloured and Indian.
district	The district office, sometimes referred to just as 'the district', includes subsidiary offices, such as circuit offices. Such subsidiary offices exist in some provinces. Importantly, the boundaries of education districts do not always coincide with local government boundaries.
Minister	This refers to the national Minister of Basic Education.
national department	This refers to the national Department of Basic Education.
parent	In line with the South African Schools Act, this term covers not just biological mothers and fathers, but also any legal guardian or de facto caregiver of a learner. This important definition acknowledges the fact that many South African learners receive primary care from people other than their biological mothers or fathers.
primary school	In line with current practice, this term is used to refer to schools offering Grades R to 7 or more or less this range of grades. Importantly, the curriculum and other policies divide grades into four phases rather than into primary and secondary categories.
provincial department	This is a provincial department of education. The term covers district offices and other local offices, such as circuit offices, given that such local offices are not separate legal entities, but part of the provincial department.
secondary school	In line with current practice, this term is used to refer to schools offering Grades 8 to 12 or more or less this range of grades. Importantly, the curriculum and other policies divide grades into four phases rather than into primary and secondary categories.

The 27 goals of the Action Plan

The Action Plan has 27 goals. Goals 1 to 13 deal with outputs we want to achieve in relation to learning and enrolments. Goals 14 to 27 deal with *how* the outputs are to be achieved. The **five priority goals** for the period up to 2014 appear in bold. These priority goals reflect the priorities in the Delivery Agreement, a negotiated charter concluded in 2010 and signed by, amongst others, the Minister of Basic Education and the President, on what to prioritise in the basic education sector.

GOAL 1	Increase the number of learners in Grade 3 who, by the end of the year, have mastered the minimum language and numeracy competencies for Grade 3.
GOAL 2	Increase the number of learners in Grade 6 who, by the end of the year, have mastered the minimum language and mathematics competencies for Grade 6.
GOAL 3	Increase the number of learners in Grade 9 who, by the end of the year, have mastered the minimum language and mathematics competencies for Grade 9.
GOAL 4	Increase the number of Grade 12 learners who become eligible for a Bachelors programme at a university.
GOAL 5	Increase the number of Grade 12 learners who pass *mathematics*.
GOAL 6	Increase the number of Grade 12 learners who pass *physical science*.
GOAL 7	Improve the average performance of *Grade 6* learners in *languages*.
GOAL 8	Improve the average performance of *Grade 6* learners in *mathematics*.
GOAL 9	Improve the average performance of Grade 8 learners in *mathematics*.
GOAL 10	Ensure that all children remain effectively enrolled in school at least up to the year in which they turn 15.
GOAL 11	**Improve the access of children to quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) below Grade 1.**
GOAL 12	Improve the grade promotion of learners through Grades 1 to 9.
GOAL 13	Improve the access of the youth to Further Education and Training (FET) beyond Grade 9.

Goals 14 to 27 deal with the things we must do to achieve our 13 output goals.

GOAL 14	Attract a new group of young, motivated and appropriately trained teachers to the teaching profession every year.
GOAL 15	Ensure that the availability and utilisation of teachers are such that excessively large classes are avoided.
GOAL 16	**Improve the professionalism, teaching skills, subject knowledge and computer literacy of teachers throughout their entire careers.**
GOAL 17	Strive for a teacher workforce that is healthy and enjoys a sense of job satisfaction.
GOAL 18	Ensure that learners cover all the topics and skills areas that they should cover within their current school year.
GOAL 19	**Ensure that every learner has access to the minimum set of textbooks and workbooks required according to national policy.**
GOAL 20	Increase access amongst learners to a wide range of media, including computers, which enrich their education.
GOAL 21	**Ensure that the basic annual management processes take place across all schools in the country in a way that contributes towards a functional school environment.**
GOAL 22	Improve parent and community participation in the governance of schools, partly by improving access to important information via the e-Education strategy.
GOAL 23	Ensure that all schools are funded at least at the minimum per learner levels determined nationally and that funds are utilised transparently and effectively.
GOAL 24	Ensure that the physical infrastructure and environment of every school inspire learners to want to come to school and learn, and teachers to teach.
GOAL 25	Use schools as vehicles for promoting access to a range of public services amongst learners in areas such as health, poverty alleviation, psychosocial support, sport and culture.
GOAL 26	Increase the number of schools that effectively implement the inclusive education policy and have access to centres that offer specialist services.
GOAL 27	**Improve the frequency and quality of the monitoring and support services provided to schools by district offices, partly through better use of e-Education.**

Overview

This overview explains the relevance of different sections of this document, referred to as the 'Action Plan', for different readers.

This 'full version' of the Action Plan is intended mainly for two groups: managers responsible for implementation and people responsible for monitoring the success of implementation. Insofar as managers monitor success, the two groups overlap to some extent. The first group includes, amongst others, school principals, education department officials, officials from other government departments who are somehow involved in taking the Action Plan forward and people from partner organisations in civil society. The second group includes, amongst others, government officials involved in monitoring and those from non-government organisations involved in monitoring the implementation by government.

The full version of the Action Plan is accompanied by a shorter version intended for a wider audience.

Following an introduction in section 1, section 2 provides an overview of the structure of the South African schooling system, largely intended for those not familiar with this structure. Section 2 also outlines government's view of why educational development is important for South Africa (section 2.3) and provides a high-level overview of what needs to change within the schooling system and how the Action Plan is linked to the Minister of Basic Education's Delivery Agreement (section 2.4).

Section 3 explains the logic of the plan and how it is intended to be used. This section provides key information needed for understanding the rest of the plan. Section 3.1 explains how the plan was developed, including the consultation processes that had been followed. Section 3.2 explains how planning terms, such as 'indicator' and 'milestone' are used in the plan. Section 3.3 describes how the Action Plan fits into the existing annual national planning cycle and how it is intended to influence decision-making and budgeting in that cycle. Section 3.4 explains how partner organisations from within and outside government are given the opportunity to participate in the realisation of the Action Plan

goals. Section 3.5 describes how reporting on successes and failures in terms of the plan will be done and how different organisations carry different kinds of accountability or responsibility for achieving the goals of the plan.

Section 4 provides the vision of a post-apartheid schooling system that informs the Action Plan.

Section 5 describes the Annual National Assessments, or ANA, a key system established in 2008 that serves as a vital tool for the support and monitoring activities described in the plan.

The description of Goals 1 to 13, in other words the goals dealing with the envisaged learning outcomes and enrolment improvements, appears in section 6. This section is of particular importance to those wishing to understand how the Action Plan contributes towards South Africa's overall development.

Section 7 provides a description of 'e-Education', a tool that features in many of Goals 14 to 27. It is the cross-cutting nature of e-Education that explains why e-Education is not a goal on its own.

Section 8 describes Goals 14 to 27, or the goals dealing with the *how* of improving South Africa's schools, in some detail. This section is of particular importance for those managers in the schooling system responsible for bringing about change. Subsections, dealing with specific themes, such as teachers and the teaching process or school funding, are used.

Section 9 lists the indicators of the Action Plan, explains which goals they are linked to and provides baseline and target values at national level. This section also provides an overview of the data sources to be used and key data challenges that need to be resolved.

Section 10 provides a table summarising the implementation the milestones in the Action Plan.

Finally, Appendix A provides provincial breakdowns of the national baseline and medium-term target values.

1.

Introduction

This plan, the 'full version' of the *Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025*, is in many ways the country's first comprehensive long-term sector plan for schools. It has a long-term focus, stretching to 2025, as expressed in the 'Schooling 2025' notion. However, it is also an 'action plan' with a relatively detailed account of what needs to be done within the current electoral cycle, which extends to 2014 – hence the title, 'Action Plan to 2014'.

Importantly, whilst this plan provides many details on the problems facing the sector and what new interventions or changes to existing interventions are needed, this plan does not provide budget details or detailed instructions to managers within the schooling sector. This is due to the way in which the basic education sector is organised. This plan guides the ten education departments dealing with basic education (the national Department of Basic Education and the nine provincial departments). It is within the plans of these ten organisations that details relating to budgets and implementation will be found.

The main focus of the Action Plan is currently on the almost 25 000 schools known as public ordinary schools. Public special schools, of which there were 418 in 2010, are partly covered in this plan, in particular insofar as they provide support to the schooling system as a whole. However, public special schools are not dealt with in detail in this plan. Details on these schools do exist within the plans of the DBE and the nine provincial education departments and it is envisaged that, in future versions of this sector plan, some of these details will receive greater attention. Similarly, government policies and strategies with respect to the country's approximately 1 200 independent schools, many of which receive public funding, will receive closer attention in future versions of the Action Plan. The strong focus on the 25 000 public ordinary schools currently is informed by both the magnitude of this subsector and the especially serious nature of many of the challenges these schools are facing.

The term, 'Action Plan', is used in this document as an abbreviation of the full title of the plan.

1.1 Who this version is intended for

This 'full version' of the plan is accompanied by a 'short version'. The latter is intended for dissemination to a wide range of stakeholders, including educators working in the more than 25 000 public schools in the country, parents and the public in general. In addition, even shorter brochures, in all 11 official languages, explaining the key elements of the Action Plan, have been produced and distributed.

The full version is primarily aimed at managers in the schooling system and at those involved in monitoring progress in the sector. The target audience includes both government and non-government stakeholders. The list of intended users of the plan thus includes officials from the national Department of Basic Education and from the nine provincial education departments (including district officials); managers and researchers in key parastatals and statutory bodies, such as Umalusi, the ELRC and SACE; people in local and international NGOs and development agencies involved in improving South Africa's schools; and researchers at universities and other research organisations. Crucially, the intention is for all of South Africa's more than 25 000 school principals to be familiar with the contents of this plan.

1.2 The purpose of this version

A key purpose of this full version of the plan is to provide a synthesis of the facts and evidence relating to the challenges and solutions within the basic education sector. For this, the plan draws from a variety of datasets and published and unpublished research. The approach is thus one of ensuring that planning is firmly based on sufficiently reliable evidence. This approach is strongly advocated by the 2009 Green Paper on national strategic planning. Not all the data and research available are reliable or usable for planning purposes. Yet, it is important to take the full range of sources into account, partly so that it can become clear what aspects of monitoring and research should improve, but also because imperfect data that provides an indicative picture is often better than no data at all.

The purpose of the plan is thus partly to communicate evidence on the nature of these problems and what solutions appear to work for as wide an audience as possible. The fact that new knowledge about the schooling system is being produced all the time is one important reason why the Action Plan must be updated periodically. It is envisaged that the plan will be updated on an annual basis, either through a complete revision or through an addendum, indicating what has changed.

The purpose of the plan is moreover to guide the way forward through the use of a variety of tried and tested planning concepts, including goals, indicators, targets and milestones. In many ways the plan contained in this document is a synthesis of a variety of other national plans dealing with specific issues, such as curriculum change, teacher development and infrastructure improvements. The intention is not for this plan to replace those other national plans. The schooling sector is too large and complex for everything to be captured within one plan. Rather, this plan places the aims of other national plans within an integrated framework, in order to clarify exactly how the different initiatives in the system support each other. To some extent, it is the purpose of this plan to bring to the fore contradictions between other plans so that these could be resolved.

It is not the purpose of this plan to specify in detail what each of the ten education departments dealing with schools (one national and nine provincial departments) should do. These details are reflected, and will continue to be reflected within the strategic plans and, in particular, in the annual performance plans of the ten departments. However, this plan must guide decisions taken during the annual planning process that lead to the formulation or updating of strategic plans and the related three-year MTEF budgets. It is recognised that the indicators put forward in this plan are different to the nationally standardised set of indicators used in provincial strategic planning even, if to a large degree, the indicators deal with similar issues. It is completely normal for finding parallel but inter-linked monitoring frameworks, and hence sets of indicators, in a multi-tiered system of governance such as the one found in South Africa. The indicators used for provincial strategic planning are, to a large degree, linked to provincial budget programmes, whilst the indicators in this plan, to a large degree cut across budget programmes.

This plan guides those involved in the monitoring of progress in the schooling system, and researchers examining trends and patterns. Specifically, the plan provides a framework for an annual review of the schooling sector, produced by the Department of Basic Education, in which progress will be measured partly in terms of the indicators and milestones put forward in this regard. This annual review will not replace the annual reports that the ten education departments all produce to account for progress against their annual performance plans. Instead, the annual review will provide a synopsis of the sector as a whole, which will complement and draw from the ten organisational reports. In the production of the annual review of the sector, the national department will mostly use data collected through national systems where the national department, or another national organisation, more in particular Statistics South Africa, is involved in the quality assurance of the data.

This plan also provides guidance to researchers outside government on what issues in the system are most urgently in need of analysis.

Finally, the plan constitutes an open invitation to stakeholders to provide inputs during the ongoing process of fine-tuning the plan and reporting against it.

1.3 The core team for the plan

The core team responsible for producing this Action Plan was led by the Director-General of the Department of Basic Education, and included key senior managers and specialists from within the Department. The team depended heavily on various support persons who assisted in facilitating the stakeholder consultations.

The core team was an interim structure that was replaced in late 2011 by a new unit whose responsibility will be to collect inputs on an ongoing basis from government and non-government stakeholders and to maintain the plan through periodic updates. This unit will work closely with a sister unit that will bear the responsibility for producing the sector reports indicating progress that has been made against the goals and targets of the Action Plan. This latter unit will, moreover, be responsible for reporting on progress in terms of the basic education sector's Delivery Agreement. This agreement, as explained in section 3.1 below, covers key elements of the Action Plan and can be considered a subset of the Action Plan.

2.

The Background

2.1 The legacy of colonialism and apartheid

Bringing about a schooling system that offers quality education to all young South Africans clearly requires careful planning and a shared vision of the future we want. However, the task also involves looking back and understanding the history of education in South Africa. It is only through understanding our history that we will truly understand the challenges, the solutions we need and how not to repeat mistakes from the past.

Much has been written about the history of education in South Africa[1]. Unfortunately, a fair amount of what has been written suffers from the biases seen in many South African history books. The perspectives of the colonised have been ignored and the history presented, often explicitly or implicitly, attempts to justify the process of colonisation and oppression. Fortunately, recent decades have seen the emergence of more balanced accounts of our past, including the past of our education system. In particular, we now have access to studies and history books that detail how the education system was used to maintain racial and gender prejudices and stereotypes, and perpetuate inequalities. Understanding this history is obviously important if we are to use education to bring about a society that values equality and rejects prejudice.

There are a few aspects of our history that deserve special mention here because they inform this Action Plan rather directly and should be kept in mind as the debates and planning proceed.

Apartheid brought with it prolonged segregation by race, but also language, with a ferociousness not seen in any other country during the twentieth century. South Africa has been lauded for its ability to realise reconciliation and shared values, partly through its highly progressive Constitution, following the formal end of apartheid in 1994. However, the legacy of division is still strong and is often reinforced by economic inequalities. What this means is that schools and

[1] One resource often used by schools themselves is South African History Online, at www.sahistory.org.za, which includes the 'Amersfoort legacy' section on the history of education in South Africa.

the schooling system must continuously make a conscious effort to heal the divisions of the past, foster a sense of South African nationhood and, above all, provide education opportunities that will break down the deep inequalities that still pervade South African society.

Apartheid, especially following the 1953 Bantu Education Act, was characterised, not only by segregation in schools, but also, most crucially, by segregation in the training of teachers. Different groups of teachers experienced training that was different in terms of its resourcing, its quality and its ideological thrust. Individual teachers, teacher unions, NGOs and government have done much work over the years to erode the apartheid teacher training legacy through, for instance, new in-service training programmes and the promotion of common values through the mass media. Yet, this apartheid legacy will remain present for many years to come. To some extent it will continue to be necessary to address these legacy problems directly in the design of in-service training and in the way training programmes are targeted towards teachers.

Per learner spending by the state under apartheid was highly unequal and differentiated by race and ethnicity. Although these funding inequalities became slightly smaller towards the end of apartheid, in 1994, spending on every white learner was still about 4,5 times as high as for every African learner. It was only around 2000 that public spending per learner became close to being equal and that the apartheid spending legacy, at least in a recurrent expenditure sense, could be said to have ended[2]. However, the legacy of inequality with respect to many years of unequal capital expenditure remains stark, both as far as physical capital (such as school buildings) are concerned and human capital (largely in the form of the training that teachers received in the past). Moreover, the allowance made for the charging of fees in public schools serving the middle class, subject to exemptions in the case of learners from poor households, means that, even as far as recurrent spending is concerned, inequalities remain; though these inequalities are considerably smaller than those that existed under apartheid. Allowing school fees in public schools has often been referred to as the cost of maintaining an inclusive public school system serving a broad range of South African society. Indeed, by developing country standards, the size of South Africa's independent school sector is small. Instead, social inequities are reflected *within* the public school system, as opposed to *between* the public and private school systems (as happens in many other developing countries). These historical factors make South Africa's school funding system complex and, in many ways, unique. A key challenge will continue to be bringing about equality within a public school system that operates within a highly unequal society, while recognising that equality in schooling is an important factor contributing towards a more equitable society.

[2] See for instance the 2006 special issue of *Perspectives in Education* (Volume 24, issue 2).

South Africa's education system can be proud of its contribution towards the struggle against colonialism and apartheid. Schools, from the many missionary schools that, over the centuries, opposed attempts by colonial authorities to stop the education of black South Africans, to the government schools in Soweto and other townships in the 1970s, where students faced the might of the apartheid state, have been at the centre of the struggle for a new South Africa. Many of South Africa's post-apartheid leaders emerged from student and teacher organisations. The protests that began with the 1976 schools uprising and continued almost unabated until the fall of apartheid were necessarily directed at undermining the authority of the apartheid state. They played an important historical role. The cost of this struggle, many have argued, is that in too many schools it became difficult to re-instate authority and discipline, after 1994, in line with the new school policies of a democratic South Africa. This Action Plan fully acknowledges the importance of ensuring that there is discipline and accountability in all schools.

An important aspect of the struggle against apartheid was its grassroots nature and its reliance on local democratic structures. South Africa's school governing bodies (SGBs) are an important embodiment of this tradition and should be upheld as a means of maintaining accountability to local communities. This Action Plan envisages stronger SGBs that will play an increasingly important role in improving the quality of schooling.

The 1913 Land Act set in motion a process of land dispossession and resettlement that has shaped the human geography of South Africa and influenced the location of schools . Schools in former 'homelands' account for just under half of all public school enrolments and face special challenges of poverty and inaccessibility of public facilities and jobs. It has often been argued, for instance in the 2005 Ministerial Report on Rural Education, that the specific needs of schools in former 'homelands', for instance in terms of poverty alleviation and relevant skills development, have not been sufficiently catered for by our education policies. To a large degree quintiles 1 to 3 of the five socio-economic quintiles cover the schools in question,, meaning that many of the quintile-specific interventions by government are attempts to address the specific needs of rural schools.

Around the world, much of the legacy of colonialism persists through the dominance of colonial languages. In South Africa English, though only spoken by about 7% of public school learners as a home language, is the predominant language of the textbooks used in classrooms, as well as in the system's policy documents. The history of marginalisation of the remaining official languages and, in particular, of the country's nine African languages continues, despite the official position of equality between the languages as enshrined in the 1996 Constitution. The schooling system needs to pay special attention to the

promotion of all official languages. Compelling research, indicating that young children learn best if, during the first few years of their schooling, key concepts are taught in their home language, informs South Africa's education policies. But beyond these pedagogical considerations, promoting all languages in the education system is a matter of national pride and of liberation from the legacy of colonialism.

Finally, there is a strong tradition of associating success in education with academic studies at a university after school. Whilst university studies are obviously a noble pursuit, alternatives did not receive the focus they deserve in schools. In particular, vocational training options after school were not sufficiently available and, when available, they were under-valued by many teachers and parents. This is partly a symptom of the history of unequal access to vocational training under apartheid and the legacy of race-based job reservation. Schools, more in particular secondary schools, must play a far more pro-active role in alerting the youth to new training and job opportunities and in moving away from a narrow focus on university studies as the only post-school study option.

2.2 The current structure of the schooling system

The structure of the schooling system is the result of a variety of historical and policy processes, many of which took place after 1994, though some, such as those influencing the grades that schools offer, date from the pre-1994 era. This section outlines key elements of the structure of the schooling system as it existed in 2009. Clearly this structure is not static. However, the Action Plan does not envisage major changes to this structure. Instead, the Action Plan largely focuses on improving the system within the existing structure.

In 2009, the schooling system comprised 24 699 public ordinary schools, 418 public special schools and 1 207 independent schools. The 24 699 public ordinary schools accounted for 96% of learners in the system, or approximately 11,8 million learners.

The following table explains how different schools offer different **combinations of grades**. What is clear is that, although it is popular to think of schools being divided into 'primary schools', or schools offering Grades 1 to 7 and 'secondary schools', or schools offering Grades 8 to 12, the situation is more complex than this. Only 14 461 schools, accommodating two-thirds of all public ordinary school learners, are schools that fit the above-mentioned definitions of primary or secondary perfectly. The remainder offer different combinations of grades. What is especially noteworthy is that almost half of all learners in the Eastern Cape are in schools offering Grades 1 to 9, and that North West is unusual insofar as a relatively large percentage of learners (23%) are in schools offering only Grades 1 to 6.

Table 1: Grades offered by schools in 2009

	Schools	Avg. size	% of all learners in each type of school									
			SA	EC	FS	GP	KZN	LP	MP	NC	NW	WC
Grades 1 to 7 range												
Grades 1 to 7 only	9 875	489	41	18	36	54	45	51	40	34	29	52
Grades 1 to 6 only	2 282	252	5	5	9	3	1	1	9	11	23	1
Grades 1 to 4 only	934	328	3	2	0	1	6	3	2	0	1	0
Grades 5 to 7 only	460	348	1	1	0	1	3	2	1	0	0	0
Other combinations	802	182	1	1	2	0	2	0	2	4	1	2
Grades 8 to 12 range												
Grades 8 to 12 only	4 586	680	26	11	21	32	31	38	26	17	15	30
Grades 10 to 12 only	794	521	3	9	7	2	1	1	3	4	8	1
Grades 8 to 10 only	135	217	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other combinations	143	462	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	3	1	1
Mix across primary and secondary												
Grades 1 to 9 only	3 123	434	11	48	8	1	5	1	6	8	3	7
Grades 1 to 12 only	457	667	3	2	5	1	3	1	4	4	3	2
Grades 1 to 8 only	409	460	2	2	4	1	1	0	1	8	2	4
Grades 7 to 9 only	415	418	1	0	4	1	0	0	3	3	9	0
Other combinations	284	533	1	0	3	0	1	1	3	4	4	0
Total	24 699	479	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: 2009 Snap Survey of schools.
Note: Grade R was treated as Grade 1 for this analysis so, for instance, the count of schools with Grades 1 to 7 includes schools with Grades R to 7 and Grade R learners were included in the learner count.

In 2011, schools fell under one of 81 **districts**. The boundaries of these districts do not necessarily coincide with local government boundaries or the boundaries of service sectors, such as health; though to a large extent they do and the alignment of the various boundaries is considered ideal. Districts all have district offices, which operate independently from local governments, although they all, to some extent, align some activities with those of local government. Many districts have circuit offices falling under them. The boundaries and even the number of districts are currently in a state of flux, due to the ongoing rationalisation process. However, the number and boundaries of districts are not expected to change substantially in the coming years.

Schools are divided into one of five socio-economic **quintiles**, depending on the degree of poverty existing in the community surrounding the school. Quintile 1 is the poorest of the five quintiles. Provinces with greater levels of poverty have a greater proportion of their schools and learners placed in the poorer quintiles. The following table indicates the number of schools per province within each quintile, as well as the spread of learners across the five quintiles at national level. There are several reasons why the number of learners and schools vary across the quintiles. Demographic data were used to determine where to place the cut-off points between quintiles. This, combined with the fact that the age profile of learners and the proportion of independent school learners differ across provinces, forms part of the explanation. Moreover, in the interests of stability, schools are not moved from one quintile to another to cater for changes in the distribution of enrolments over the years. Finally, an appeal process allows provincial departments to change the quintile status of a school if there is sufficient reason to believe that the school is inappropriately classified. The important thing is not that quintiles need to be equal in size, but rather that they should accurately distinguish between schools in poorer and less poor communities. Analyses showed that, on the whole, the quintile system did serve this purpose. This has allowed the education departments to target resources and support towards school communities that are most in need of these. At the same time, the accuracy of the quintile system is not always sufficient. This was, for instance, the conclusion of a 2009 UNICEF review of school funding and management.

Table 2: Schools by quintile in 2009

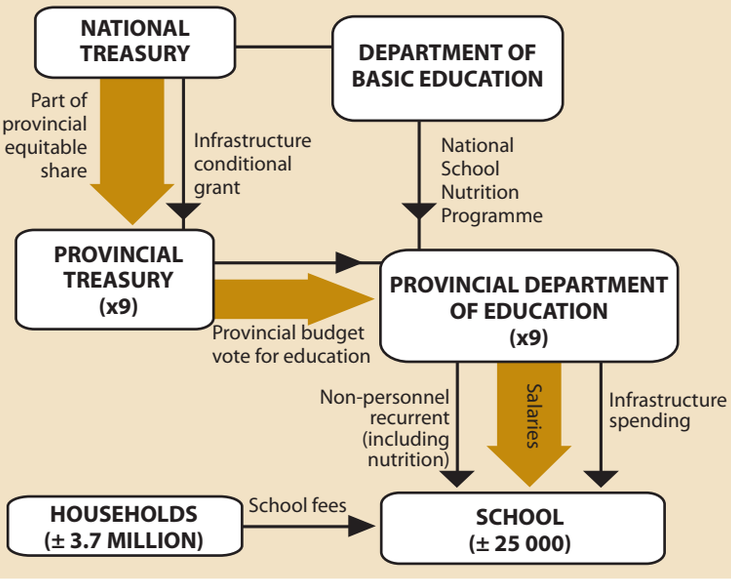
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Total
EC	1 974	1 759	1 150	445	341	5 669
FS	953	200	200	78	100	1 531
GP	214	215	616	517	408	1 970
KZN	2 032	1 389	1 396	632	479	5 928
LP	2 151	687	934	150	66	3 988
MP	486	529	396	255	178	1 844
NC	251	149	89	48	63	600
NW	617	335	691	35	38	1 716
WC	282	123	251	339	458	1 453
Total schools	8 960	5 386	5 723	2 499	2 131	24 699
% of learners	27	19	26	15	13	100

To some extent, the quintiles capture historical categories. For instance, 93% of schools situated in the former 'homelands' are found in quintiles 1 to 3. Of historically white schools, 70% are in quintile 5 and a further 16% in quintile 4. However, the relationship between historical categories and the quintiles is not a straightforward one. For example, there are a number of historically African schools in quintile 5, on the basis of factors such as the income of households found in surroundings of the school.

The relationship between provincial departments of education and the national Department of Basic Education is a crucial one. The Constitution specifies that pre-tertiary education is a concurrent function where the national and provincial governments share the responsibility. The role of the national Minister is outlined in the **1996 National Education Policy Act**. According to this Act, national government is responsible for establishing broad policies and the necessary monitoring systems. Provincial governments and, more specifically provincial departments of education, are responsible for establishing and funding schools in line with provincial needs.

The **1996 South African Schools Act** provides the basis for the public funding of schools. The following diagram provides a simplified illustration of how the key sources of funding for schools are derived. The thickness of the grey lines is proportional to the amount of funding countrywide during the 2009/10 financial year. Many, but by no means all of the changes put forward in the Action Plan, involve budget shifts or increases of one kind or another. It is important that the entire school funding system should be geared towards the activities and interventions of the Action Plan.

Funding of schools (2009)



Key elements in the system that funds schools are the following:

- By far the most costly item is personnel. The provincial departments of education employ educators and other staff members needed in schools according to salary scales that are determined at national level.
- By far the majority funding of schools is public funding. The provincial departments of education fund schools, using an amount of funding determined by the Provincial Legislature, which is transferred from the provincial treasury to the provincial department of education. Provincial treasuries, in turn, receive most of their funding through the provincial equitable share – an amount determined by Parliament. The provincial equitable share is intended to fund a variety of services provided by the province. National government does not dictate what proportion of the provincial equitable share should go towards education. That decision is ultimately taken by the Provincial Legislature.
- Although the Department of Basic Education does not deal directly with the bulk of public funding flowing to schools, it works with the National Treasury and the provincial treasuries in ensuring that sufficient funding flows towards pre-tertiary education. Moreover, it is directly responsible for monitoring the spending of some conditional grant funding that flows from National Treasury, through the Department of Basic Education, to provincial education departments. In 2009, the majority of the conditional grant funding flowing through the national department was earmarked for school nutrition, meaning that this funding could not be used for any other purpose. It is also possible for earmarked conditional grants to flow directly from the National Treasury to provincial treasuries and then to provincial education departments. In 2009, all this funding was devoted to school infrastructure development. Conditional grants constitute a mechanism used by national government to ensure that specific items, such as school nutrition, infrastructure development and HIV and AIDS education are not under-funded.
- Approximately half of all households with learners in public schools were contributing school fees to schools in line with the provisions in the South African Schools Act. School fees accounted for approximately 7% of all school resourcing in 2009/10. This figure would have declined slightly after 2009 with a further increase in the number of schools declared no-fee schools.
- By 2009, approximately 98% of schools were receiving non-personnel recurrent funding transferred to their bank accounts by the provincial department. At the same time, however, the provincial department spends some of the non-personnel recurrent funding on behalf of schools and delivers goods, such as textbooks and stationery, to schools. The South African Schools Act stipulates how decisions should be taken with regard to this flow of funding.

2.3 Basic education and the country's overall development challenges

Millennium Development Goal 1 is to reduce poverty around the world. For the South African government, reducing poverty is also a central concern. In the South African context of high unemployment, coupled with a widely recognised skills shortfall, reducing poverty is, to a large extent, a matter of giving South Africans a better educational start in life. This is why basic education features strongly in the 2008 election manifesto of the ruling party, and why access to quality education has been a priority amongst democratic South Africans for decades, as reflected in, for instance, the 1955 Freedom Charter and the more recent 2007 Polokwane Resolutions of the ruling party, which call for "people's education for people's power". The 1996 Constitution declares basic education a basic right. In 2010, as part of a major overhaul of government's planning systems, improving the quality of basic education was declared 'Outcome 1' out of a total of 12 outcomes representing government's top priorities.

Education is, of course, not the only area where government has a vital role to play in the well-being of citizens. As spelt out in the 2008 election manifesto, appropriate industrial, trade and macroeconomic policies are needed if the country is to prosper. However, without a sound basic education system, success in these other policy areas would be severely limited.

Moreover, in a country like South Africa with its high HIV prevalence rate, basic education plays the additional role of educating the young on how they should strive towards becoming an HIV-free generation. Experiences across the world, including South Africa, point very clearly towards the central role of schools in reducing HIV and AIDS in society.

Apart from improving the economic and health prospects of citizens, a sound basic education is vital for bringing about the informed citizenry needed for building a truly democratic society, founded on the principles of the Constitution. Education should also contribute towards building a South African culture that is free of racism and sexism, which values respect and is able to bring people together through means such as sport and various forms of artistic expression.

It is widely recognised that the country's schooling system performs well below its potential and that improving basic education outcomes is a prerequisite for the country's long-range development goals. Hence, the 2008 election manifesto refers to the need for a major renewal of South Africa's schools. In his 2010 State of the Nation Address, the President referred to the vital role of the education system in improving productivity and competitiveness in the economy. The President also underlined that 'our education targets are simple but critical'. The need is fairly straightforward as far as the basic education

sector is concerned. Our children and the youth need to be better prepared by their schools to read, write, think critically and solve numerical problems. These skills constitute the foundation on which further studies, job satisfaction, productivity and meaningful citizenship are based.

2.4 The key challenges facing basic education

Whilst it seems true to say that there has not been sufficient ongoing monitoring of the schooling system, a number of important reviews of the system were produced over the years and these have played an important role in informing the policy positions of government in respect of schools. These positions are also informed by the experiences, stretching over a decade, of governance in a democratic South Africa; experiences which have seen major successes (for instance with respect to access to schooling amongst the poor) but also disappointments (in particular insufficient quality improvements with respect to the schooling of the poor). This section summarises the key challenges facing the schooling system as expressed in reviews of the sector and in the policy documents of government. More details with respect to each policy area are found in sections 6 and 8.

Improving the quality of education in schools in the sense of improving learning outcomes stands out as the greatest challenge. Without substantial improvements in learning outcomes, the future development of the country will be seriously compromised. This explains the strong emphasis in the most recent policy documents on improving learning outcomes. The Ten Point Plan for schools, produced in the run-up to the 2009 elections and endorsed by the Minister as an important point of departure, emphasises better quality learning and teaching in early childhood development (ECD) and primary schooling. The 2008 election manifesto highlights better learning outcomes in key subjects such as mathematics, science, technology and languages. The 2007 Polokwane Resolutions emphasised the need 'to focus rigorously on the quality of education'.

The 2009 Medium-term Strategic Framework (MTSF), which spells out government's overall strategies for the 2009-to-2014 term, stresses the importance of knowing how well or how poorly we are doing through the ongoing monitoring of education quality and participation in standardised international testing programmes, such as SACMEQ and TIMSS. In his 2010 State of the Nation Address, the President made a commitment towards an ongoing system of standardised testing in Grades 3, 6 and 9. As pointed out in government's 2009 Green Paper on national strategic planning, planning is virtually meaningless unless there is effective monitoring of progress and reliable information obtained with respect to key indicators. Moreover, if people know there is monitoring, for instance through regular assessments of

education quality, a sense of accountability is strengthened. Everyone, from learners to education administrators, needs to feel that his or her good efforts will be reflected in reports that reliably measure progress and, conversely, everyone should know that poor performance will not go unnoticed. The 2009 MTSF advocates measurable targets in education all the way down to the level of the school.

Maintaining a balance between monitoring and accountability on the one hand, and support on the other, is a crucial matter that was raised repeatedly during the consultations leading to this Action Plan. Clearly, one cannot 'make the cow fat' simply by measuring it. Many actors in the schooling system, from departmental officials to school principals to teachers, feel that they do not have the capacity to realise fundamental and positive change in the way teaching and learning take place in schools. Very often, poor capacity is an inheritance from the training methods of the apartheid past. But one may also feel that one's capacity is limited due to factors external to oneself, such as over-sized classes or the levels of poverty amongst learners. Support to individuals and institutions to deal with the full range of factors limiting human capacity is a vital ingredient of the change process. Moreover, accountability systems must take people's capacity into account. They should also take learners' socio-economic background into account, given that this is such a key factor in determining learning outcomes. The focus of accountability systems should be on ensuring that the actors in the system are doing the best they can, given their constraints, and that clearly unacceptable behaviour is detected. They should also continuously be bringing to the fore the support needs of people and their institutions. Support should be understood broadly to include both rather top-down forms of support, such as support by district officials to schools, and more peer-oriented support, such as support offered by school principals to each other or teachers to each other. Part of the challenge is to systematically promote both these kinds of support. Experience has shown that two problems should be avoided when support is planned and carried out. One is investing effort into support of the wrong kind, either because it is not designed to address the needs of those being supported or because those carrying out the support do not have the required capacity themselves. The other is depleting schools of too much capacity in the process of establishing formal support structures. For example, if too many outstanding school principals are brought into the district office to provide support to poorly performing schools within the district, then the schools that lose these principals may suffer unduly. Clearly, a balance must be maintained and, as far as possible, opportunities should be created for talented principals and teachers to provide support to others and to continue with their valuable work within their schools.

The emphasis on improving learning outcomes is not new but, in recent years, it has intensified, more in particular as far as outcomes below Grade 12

level are concerned. A milestone in this regard was the 2008 Foundations for Learning policy document[3], which introduced clearer specifications on what teachers should teach, the materials learners need and how the monitoring of progress should be handled. Much of what is said in the current plan builds on Foundations for Learning.

Recent policy reviews and policy statements acknowledge the considerable successes South Africa has experienced in improving access to basic education. To illustrate: The average highest school grade completed for 20-year-old South Africans improved from 9.5 grades in 1995 to 11.2 grades in 2009[4] (the highest point this statistic can reach is 12.0 grades, which would mean everyone completed Grade 12). By 2009, some 98.5% of children aged 7 to 15, and 98.8% of children aged 7 to 14, were enrolled in a school. (If compulsory schooling were fully implemented, the second statistic would have to be 100% – learners may legally leave school if they are 15 year old, turning 15 in the previous year.) South Africa's performance with respect to access to schooling is close to the best amongst middle-income countries. Whilst there is a small gap that must be closed with respect to compulsory schooling, and while we want to see more learners completing Grade 12 successfully, insufficient access to schooling is not the primary challenge facing South Africa. Rather, it is the quality of learning outcomes, where South Africa's performance is the lowest amongst all middle-income countries (counting only those countries where such statistics are available). Yet, even if enrolments are not the primary challenge facing the schooling system, it is important not to let efforts in this area slacken. Day-to-day attendance of learners is below what it should be, as approximately 200,000 children do not get to attend school at all, while dropping out in Grades 9, 10 and 11 represents lost opportunities for thousands of youths each year. Moreover, pressure to improve learning outcomes, which is necessary, can have the unintended effect that schools pay less attention to enrolling learners who do not perform well. The authorities and communities need to monitor that this does not happen.

Whilst arguments can be made for marginal increases with respect to certain items in the public budgets for schools, the overall picture is that South Africa's total public spending on schooling cannot increase much further, at least not in terms of this public spending as a percentage of the GNP. Public spending on primary plus secondary schooling, as a proportion of the GNP in South Africa, compares well with what happens elsewhere. In South Africa, the figure is 4.0%, against an average of 3.1% for developing countries and 2.9% in sub-Saharan Africa. Absolute spending per learner is also relatively good in South Africa by international standards. At primary level, approximately US$ 1 383

[3] Government Notice 306 of 2008.

[4] Figures obtained from the October 1995 Household Survey and General Household Survey 2009 datasets.

is spent per enrolled learner, against US$ 167 in sub-Saharan Africa and US$ 614 in Latin America[5]. Similarly, large differences are seen at secondary level, where the figures are US$ 1 726, US$ 376 and US$ 594 for South Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America respectively[6]. However, as the GNP (or GDP) increases, we can expect public spending on schooling to improve in real terms. It is obviously important to ensure that additional funding, when it becomes available, is invested in the right things. By far the largest financial need relates to school infrastructure investment. The historical backlog in terms of school buildings and facilities is still enormous, despite increases in annual spending in recent years (for instance an increase of 39% in real terms between 2005 and 2009). In fact, normal budgetary growth is inadequate to deal with the need to repair, upgrade and, in some cases, completely replace existing school buildings and facilities. To satisfy these needs in a satisfactory manner requires supplementary and alternative financing mechanisms.

The five-year period from about 1998 to 2003 saw a massive redistribution in the public funding of schools, away from historically white schools towards historically black schools. By 2003, an almost equal distribution of annual public funding per learner had been achieved, compared to a pre-1998 situation where funding was still skewed in favour of white schools by a factor of approximately 5 to 1. The redistribution was achieved largely through the introduction of a new formula for distributing teacher posts and a pro-poor non-personnel recurrent funding formula. This did not mean that a situation of equity had been achieved by 2003. Far from it, historically black schools still felt the legacy of apartheid in the form of inadequate school infrastructure and the legacy of apartheid teacher training. Yet, the conditions for better learning and teaching had been considerably improved through the elimination of the largest classes (classes of 90 was not uncommon) and more funding for learning materials and school lunches.

If improving learning outcomes is the key challenge facing South African schools, then how could this be achieved? The many different studies that attempted to answer this question tend to point to the same underlying problems. (References to these studies are found in section 8 below.) In particular, it is clear that in many schools and classrooms the way that teaching takes place must change. The Ten Point Plan includes the point, 'Teachers are to be in class, on time, teaching and making use of textbooks'. This echoes the 'triple T' of the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC); a multi-stakeholder campaign that underlines the importance of '*t*eachers, *t*extbooks and *t*ime' in improving learning.

The 2008 election manifesto points to government's commitment to raising the status of teachers in society through better in-service training, resulting in

[5] These values are in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms.

[6] UNESCO, 2009.

more motivated and capable teaching, coupled with further improvements in the Conditions of Service for teachers. The 2009 MTSF restates government's commitment towards in-service teacher training packages that are more flexible and could be adapted to address the specific needs of individual teachers.

With regard to textbooks, the Minister emphasised that, whilst the development of teaching materials by teachers themselves could have positive effects, in general 'the textbook is the most effective tool to ensure consistency, coverage, appropriate pacing and better quality instruction'.[7] Good textbooks must become increasingly available to learners and teachers and should be used to a greater extent.

On the use of time, the 2009 MTSF underlines the fact that time is like any other resource and that there needs to be proper accountability with regard to the use of publicly funded teaching and learning time. In other words, when teaching and learning time is lost, this should be noticed and should be a cause for concern. The MTSF also puts forward a commitment towards a national system to monitor the extent to which the year's teaching programme is completed within the year. This follows research that indicates that programme completion is far too uncommon. If a teacher does not complete his or her programme for the year, then clearly the learner will be disadvantaged in future grades. As pointed out in the 2009 report by the Ministerial Task Team investigating changes needed to the curriculum, part of the programme completion problem arises out of the curriculum. The curriculum, which is currently undergoing crucial changes, imposed too many administrative tasks on teachers and was not sufficiently clear on what the teaching and learning priorities were. At least for Grades 4 to 6 the curriculum required too much to be covered within one year.

Quality early childhood development has the ability to improve learning outcomes throughout primary and secondary schooling and, for this reason, expanding ECD has been a government priority for many years. The 2009 MTSF envisages that, by 2014, the process of universalising access to Grade R should be complete. However, it has become clear that special emphasis needs to be placed on ensuring that Grade R is of an acceptable quality.

Improving learning outcomes requires leadership and vision on the part of government, but international experience showed that this is not enough. There must be a sufficient degree of agreement and commitment amongst the various stakeholders. Plans must be widely consulted and all stakeholders should be involved in interpreting the data emerging from the monitoring systems. The 2009 MTSF refers to the need for a 'social contract' between government, teacher

[7] Speech to the National Assembly by the Minister of Basic Education on the curriculum review process, 5 November 2009.

unions, teacher training institutions, parent and SGB organisations, business and civil society organisations. The Schooling 2025 idea captured in this document (for instance within the long-range targets of section 9) is the outcome of many rounds of discussions between government and non-government stakeholders, and it is an important element of the social contract. South Africa is fortunate in having relatively well developed stakeholder consultation structures, such as the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) and the QLTC. The challenge is to make effective use of these structures.

The above provides only a summary of some of the key challenges facing the basic education sector. More details, relating for instance to management challenges at school and district levels, are provided in sections 6 and 8, where actions are discussed in relation to the 27 goals for the sector. These 27 goals are designed to cover virtually all the work that must be done in relation to schooling. In other words, everyone working for a better schooling system will see that his or her actions relate to at least one but, in many cases, more than one goal. At the same time, the goals are designed not to overlap with each other too much. The Minister agreed with the President on prioritising four over-arching 'outputs', all of which are covered by the 27 goals. The four outputs are as follows:

- Output 1: Improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Output 2: Undertake regular assessments to track progress.
- Output 3: Improve early childhood development.
- Output 4: Ensure a credible outcomes-focussed planning and accountability system.

The four outputs fall under government's 'Outcome 1: Improved quality of basic education'. Output 1, on improving the quality of teaching and learning, is reflected in almost all of the 27 goals of this plan. Output 2 relates to the Annual National Assessments programme, which is explained in section 5 and is required for the monitoring of several of the output goals and indicators put forward in section 6. Output 3 is dealt with specifically under goal 11, which reads: 'Improve the access of children to quality early childhood development (ECD) below Grade 1'. Finally, output 4 is centred around the development and maintenance of Schooling 2025; in other words, the plan contained in this document.

At a fundamental level, a challenge facing the basic education sector is to accept that some things must change in the interests of the future of South Africa and that 'business as usual' is not enough. However, this is not the same as saying that there needs to be fundamental changes to the system of policies governing schools. As the 2008 review of South Africa's education sector by

the OECD points out, South Africa has done relatively well compared to other countries, when it comes to ensuring that the key basic policies needed for quality schooling are in place. Certain policies, such as the national curriculum, required critical changes. But essentially the challenge is one of making the current system run better. Policy change should only take place where this is critically necessary. As the OECD has indicated, there is policy change fatigue in the schooling system. People do not want the rules and procedures to be radically changed, unless there are compelling reasons for doing so.

Several reviews, including the OECD review, the 2009 curriculum review and a 2009 UNICEF review of school financing and management, argued that a large part of the problem with existing policies was that they were not communicated well to the people who should implement them and that occasionally policies contradict each other. The recommendations in these reviews generally emphasise the following regarding policy design and communication:

- As far as possible, someone who must implement a policy should be able to refer to a single document dealing with, for instance, the school funding rules. It should not be necessary to consult several different documents.
- Policy should be communicated using simple and unambiguous language.
- Policy documents should refer to practical examples of how to implement the policy, and ways of dealing with typical obstacles.
- Policy changes should only be made when really necessary, and when changes do take place, it is often best to update the entire policy document, highlighting what has changed and what has been dropped.
- The status of all policy documents should be clear. In particular, it should be clear what documents are discussion documents and which ones have been through all the formal approval procedures.

3.

How this plan was developed and how it will unfold in future

3.1 The development of the initial plan

The development of this Action Plan began in 2009, following the publication of the 2009 Green Paper on national strategic planning by the Presidency. This Green Paper called for, amongst other things, long-term sector plans for the various public service sectors, such as basic education. The Presidency and the Department of Basic Education (DBE) undertook a joint examination of existing policy documents and reached an agreement around key elements that should be included in a basic education sector plan.

In 2010, the DBE undertook a review of the experiences of other countries with respect to education sector plans and formulated an approach for South Africa that was approved by the Minister. In many ways, a long-term sector plan for South Africa's schooling system was an undertaking that had not been attempted before. Whilst the national department, for many years, published an annual strategic plan in line with the requirements of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), this plan always had a medium-term focus and focussed largely on the activities of the national department, as opposed to the activities of the sector as a whole, which included many other stakeholders, such as the nine provincial departments and other government and non-government organisations. Each province, for some years, was producing medium-term strategic plans and the 'Annual Performance Plan', but the key elements of these documents have not been systematically incorporated into a national plan. The national sector plan will not replace the strategic plans of the education departments, nor the Annual Performance Plan of each provincial department. Instead, the sector plan is intended to provide an over-arching plan for the sector that both reflects other plans and guides planning within the various organisations that constitute the schooling sector. Whilst the national Department of Basic Education assumes primary responsibility for maintaining and promoting the Action Plan (in other words the sector plan), this plan is not

the plan of one organisation, but rather of the entire sector. Experiences in other countries with similarly decentralised systems of government suggest that such sector plans could play an important role in strengthening the focus on the right interventions, as well as strengthening monitoring and accountability across the sector.

After an approach for producing the Action Plan had been agreed upon, the DBE produced a basic structure for the plan and indicated where the priorities for the coming years should lie. The result was a draft of the 'shorter version' of the Action Plan, which was published as Government Notice 752 of 2010. Also included in the government notice was a technical background document, focussing on the baseline situation and possible indicators. Both documents were informed by evidence of best practices both from South Africa and beyond. The public was invited to provide comments on the government notice, which could guide the development of a more detailed plan.

Parallel to the government notice process, a proposal on indicators, accompanied by provincial baseline and target values, was circulated to provincial departments. Provinces, on the whole, were satisfied with the proposal, although they expressed concern about some of the target values, which were seen to be overly ambitious. Feedback from the provinces resulted in some modifications. As explained in section 3.2 below, even after the modifications, some targets are arguably still very ambitious. To some extent this reflects political commitments made. As explained in section 3.2, the important thing is that there should at least be reasonable movement each year towards the targets and that any missing of targets should be the result of unavoidable constraints, such as budget shortfalls, and not poor management and planning.

Consultations with stakeholders on what to include in the sector plan, took place throughout 2010. Consultations were held with a large range of non-government groups, including trade unions, faculties of education, service providers, international partners and NGOs. Within government, the development of the Action Plan became a key discussion item in meetings between the DBE on the one hand, and the National Treasury, provincial departments, the Department of Higher Education and Training and the Presidency on the other.

When the Presidency called on the Minister of Basic Education to propose a Delivery Agreement for the sector, key elements from the emerging sector plan were brought together for this important agreement between the Minister and the President. The Delivery Agreement for basic education and for the 12 priority outcomes of government was signed and published during September and October 2010 respectively.

Work on the full version of the Action Plan involved further reviews of evidence (both South African and international) and the incorporation of many of the

inputs received through the process of consultation and public comment on the government notice. Stakeholders tended to be very positive about the fact that a plan for the sector was being developed. They also tended to be positive about the structure and emphasis within the shorter draft version. On the whole, the 27 goals were supported. The approach of bringing about improvements without radically changing the basic policies and institutional arrangements was welcomed. There was a clear sense that people were tired of this kind of radical change. Instead, people wanted radical change in terms of better learning outcomes, a simplification of existing policies, more focussed support to schools and teachers and a greater emphasis on the core business of schools, namely teaching and learning. Nearly all public inputs included proposals on specific things to include in the plan. Many felt that the number of goals should be reduced. The decision on this key point was a compromise in the sense that the 27 goals were retained, but five were given special emphasis for the period up to 2014, in line with the emphasis contained in the Delivery Agreement. It was suggested that some of the 27 goals be reworded. Some of these suggestions were accepted. There was strong interest in the kinds of support that should be included in the plan, with many respondents providing references to new evidence of best practices. These inputs were used to inform the details appearing under the 27 goals. At the same time, it is important to bear in mind that it is not the function of the sector plan to replace other plans, such as the teacher development plan or the infrastructure development plans. Clearly, those plans will contain more details in their specific areas than what is provided in this plan. Some respondents had misgivings about introducing more standardised assessments into the schooling system. This matter receives some attention in section 5.

The timeframes for the production of the Action Plan were very tight. Many other countries that embarked on similar exercises took much longer. As in any policy formulation process, the cost of delaying publication must be weighed up against the cost of not having more research and consultations informing the plan. The DBE does not claim that the current version of the Action Plan is perfect. Yet, there is sufficient confidence that this plan represents a major step forward. Clearly, this version of the plan is not cast in stone. It must be revised periodically in order to capture lessons learnt and new ideas.

3.2 The planning logic and terms used

Government's 2009 Green Paper on national strategic planning explains (pp. 4, 9-10) why a country like South Africa needs long-term planning. Whilst the following extract from the Green Paper is not specifically about planning in education, what it says is completely relevant for the planning of a better schooling system:

> Modern societies face complex challenges. The temptation to respond to these challenges in an *ad hoc* and fragmented way can be quite strong. And yet there could be enormous risks and dangers in *ad hoc* solutions that are not thought through. ... A long-term national development plan that has the support and backing of all sectors of society would help ensure that society shares common broad ideals. That would encourage various social actors to work jointly and severally to attain these ideals.
>
> ...
>
> Countries that grew rapidly over two or three generations often had clear strategies that demanded strategic choices and careful sequencing of policies and implementation. Often, long-run growth and development require a long-term vision of an ultimate goal, corresponding investment in people and infrastructure, and the productive means of sequencing programmes in a way that, in successive periods, gives one objective precedence over others. It means continually identifying the activities that will act as key drivers in reaching the ultimate objective.
>
> To change a society's social and economic structure and culture takes a long time. Policies to bring about such changes often take a long time to bear fruit. Long lead times often require long-term planning.

The following are four important principles that apply to the Action Plan and Schooling 2025.

- **Continually emphasise what it is that we are trying to achieve.** Educating a child takes a long time. Because of the long-term nature of the education process, it is easy to lose focus, to forget why all the time and money are being invested in education in the first place. Many studies indicated that, around the world, schooling systems often do not do what they say they are doing. Children can attend school for years and yet not learn how to read properly, for example. In this plan there is a strong emphasis on what children learn, because that should be the main focus of our schools. Output goals therefore come first – before the inputs and process goals.

- **Make it very clear what actions work in specific contexts.** The plan promotes actions that were proven to work when it came to bringing about better learning outcomes. The actions put forward in the plan are actions that major studies, looking at many hundreds of schools, said should be promoted. They are also actions that many experienced and learned educators, inside and outside South Africa, would recommend. The plan puts forward important steps that government will take, which will affect all schools. But the plan also recognises the fact that different actions might

be necessary in different contexts. What is needed in a large secondary township school in Gauteng would be very different to what is needed in a primary school in rural KwaZulu-Natal, for instance. The plan makes use of Stats SA and DBE data to indicate how situations may be different across schools, and how it could be a bad idea to use a one-size-fits-all approach. This plan can recommend certain actions for certain categories of schools, but ultimately many important decisions must be taken by local people, such as district officials, school principals and chairpersons of school governing bodies. The plan explains actions in simple terms and avoids education jargon that may not be clear to some stakeholders. Finally, the plan follows the principle that the actions we plan must be feasible and realistic. We should be hopeful and optimistic about that which we will achieve but, at the same time, we should avoid planning for the impossible, which will simply end in frustration and create a climate of failure.

- **Use the right means of communication.** Experiences in countries that succeeded in bringing about large improvements in their schooling systems, indicate that good communication is vital. Government and the teacher unions need to communicate with each other; information from government needs to reach the remotest of schools; the voices of parents need to reach government; etc. Communication of the Action Plan and Schooling 2025 needs to take place, using different media, in all our national languages.

- **Use a technically robust but sufficiently simple accountability system.** Information is a powerful tool that is used in virtually every country to improve schooling. If we have good information we can know whether as a country, a province, a district or a school we are making progress. It also means that we can compare for example, class sizes in different schools, or mathematics performance in primary schools across countries. However, information needs to be used carefully. It is never perfect and one needs to know what the problems are with the information before one can, for instance, know if it is possible to make comparisons over years, or comparisons between provinces. There are two ways of ensuring that the information is as reliable as possible. One is to have very clear rules about how the information should be collected. The other is to have sufficient oversight by experts, perhaps from different organisations, when information is collected, so as to reduce suspicions that there were serious errors or malpractices in the collection process. This plan provides clear specifications for the 36 indicators that are used. These specifications are based on the best practices of UNESCO and other leading organisations in this area. Moreover, a variety of structures will oversee the quality of information that is collected and will, if there are problems, make these clear, and make recommendations on how to improve the situation in

future. With regard to Stats SA data collected from households, Stats SA has its own quality assurance processes, which include experts from various organisations. Information collected through the Annual National Assessments (ANA) will be quality assured by experts accountable to the national multi-stakeholder steering committee for ANA. The responsibility for the quality assurance of other information collected from schools is in the hands of HEDCOM's EMIS subcommittee. This subcommittee includes stakeholder representation from non-government organisations.

In what way does information form part of an accountability system? Accountability means that one must explain what one has done with the money and time one had available to improve the situation. For example, a teacher receives a salary and resources to do teaching. At certain points in time, that teacher needs to *account* for what he or she has done, by demonstrating that the learners in the class have learnt something; perhaps through test results or class projects that were produced by the learners. The accountability system referred to above is simply the rules and systems used to provide information on what one has done. There are four key elements in the accountability system of this plan: **goals**, **indicators**, **targets** and **milestones**.

- **Goals.** There are 27 goals in this plan. The first 13 deal with outputs or with getting as many learners as possible to reach particular levels of learning. The other 14 goals deal with ways in which the improved outputs may be achieved. These 14 goals can therefore be seen as dealing with the inputs and processes needed. The relationship between the 13 output goals and the remaining 14 goals is complex. There is not a simple one-to-one relationship between them. One could, of course, identify many more than 27 goals, but too many goals would make the plan too complex. In selecting goals, the emphasis was on issues that a wide range of stakeholders could, in some way, become involved in, and issues that are likely to be important for many years to come. Therefore, more short to medium-term goals, such as the roll-out of the 2011 curriculum reforms, were not included. Moreover, activities in which the general public is unlikely to become directly involved, for instance the development of the new LURITS system for tracking learners, are not referred to in the goals (though obviously such activities feed into the goals). As far as possible, goals that did not overlap too much with each other were selected. Hence, providing e-Education is not a goal in itself, as e-Education is something that features in many of the selected goals and is best not considered as a goal on its own.

- **Indicators.** An indicator is something like the 'Percentage of Grade 3 learners performing at the required literacy level according to the country's Annual National Assessments'. Each goal has one or, in some cases, two indicators. In most cases, an indicator has a national value and nine provincial values for each year. A **baseline** value is the 2009 value, or the value for a year as close to 2009 as possible. This indicates to us the starting point for improvements beyond 2009. Each future year has **target** values, at both national and provincial level. As we move forward, we need to measure what the **actual** values are and see how far these are apart from the target values. In some cases it is not possible to obtain a value for an indicator every year; for example where international testing programmes are not run every year. Here we should set targets for those years in which we know the testing will take place. It is obviously important to do the measuring in the same way in different years and in different provinces. If not, it becomes difficult to make comparisons. Not all indicators will work properly starting from 2009. In some cases part of the challenge lies in getting new indicators to work, by collecting the right information (and, in some cases, for instance the Minimum Schoolbag, confirming what information should be collected). If indicators do not work fully, this does not mean we have no information to do planning. There has been at least some information available on every goal in the plan since 2010, and it is important to make use of this.

  Many of the indicators in this plan constitute percentages, as this makes comparisons more meaningful. However, with regard to a few indicators, such as those dealing with Grade 12 results, raw numbers, for instance numbers of learners, are used because these are commonly used in public debates. The important thing is that percentages and the raw numbers underlying them should both be reported on in the annual reviews of progress against this plan.

  Detailed specifications for all the indicators will be produced beyond the specifications that are already in the plan. However, given that the national department will be responsible for the calculation of all indicators, using national datasets, the need for detailed technical specifications is not as critical as it would be if, for instance, each of the nine provinces were calculating the indicator values separately. Yet, these specifications are important for accountability purposes and to contribute towards more sound monitoring practices in general.

- **Targets.** Targets need to be set very carefully. As mentioned above, if targets are impossible, one makes failure inevitable. What is obviously important is that national targets should equal the combination of all nine provincial targets. This means that one cannot change a provincial target

without also changing the corresponding national target, or by changing the targets in other provinces. The targets indicated in this plan were mostly set nationally first, and then translated to provincial values, using a variety of methods that recognise the different burdens of poverty and levels of capacity found across the nine provinces. In some cases, provincial and national targets were adjusted after consultation between the national and provincial departments of education. For certain targets, values were agreed upon after consultation between the education departments and other organs of government. Clearly, the outcomes of the education system are not only of concern to those inside the system, but to the country as a whole. Not all targets are to everyone's liking and many have indicated that some targets are overly ambitious. This is probably inevitable in a country like South Africa where the education challenges are major and the expectations surrounding quality education are high. There is probably no government in the world that reaches every target it sets for itself. The important thing with regard to the targets in this plan is, firstly, *that there should be continuous movement towards the targets, year after year* and, secondly, *that the improvements we see should be the best that were possible, given the people and resources available.* It is highly possible that some targets in the plan can and should be exceeded. Importantly, targets should not be regarded as a ceiling for future improvements, nor as an excuse for mediocrity where individual provinces, districts or schools find it is possible to progress beyond the targets.

- **Milestones.** Whilst targets are mostly set across many years and take the form of statistics, milestones are generally achievements envisaged for a specific year, and mostly not expressed in statistical terms. For example, having a new teacher training facility up and running in, for example 2013, is a milestone. Whilst targets were generally set over the long term, up to 2025, milestones generally focus on desired achievements in the medium term (up to five years into the future). Moreover, milestones were only set for goals 14 to 27; in other words the goals dealing with the *how* of achieving goals 1 to 13, which deal with outputs.

3.3 Elements of the planning cycle for basic education

This Action Plan assumes that the existing annual planning cycle that the national and provincial departments have maintained for several years will remain in place. However, it is assumed that certain new elements are to be introduced in order to improve planning and accountability against the Action Plan. A synopsis of the envisaged national-provincial planning processes is provided here and in the diagram that follows. Most of this picture is not

new. Much of the challenge lies in improving the depth and rigour of existing planning and reporting processes in a context where the Action Plan both reflects current thinking about the sector on the part of, for instance, provincial planners and, at the same time, provides strategic guidance for the sector. Importantly, the Action Plan does not bring with it a separate budgeting or school funding stream.

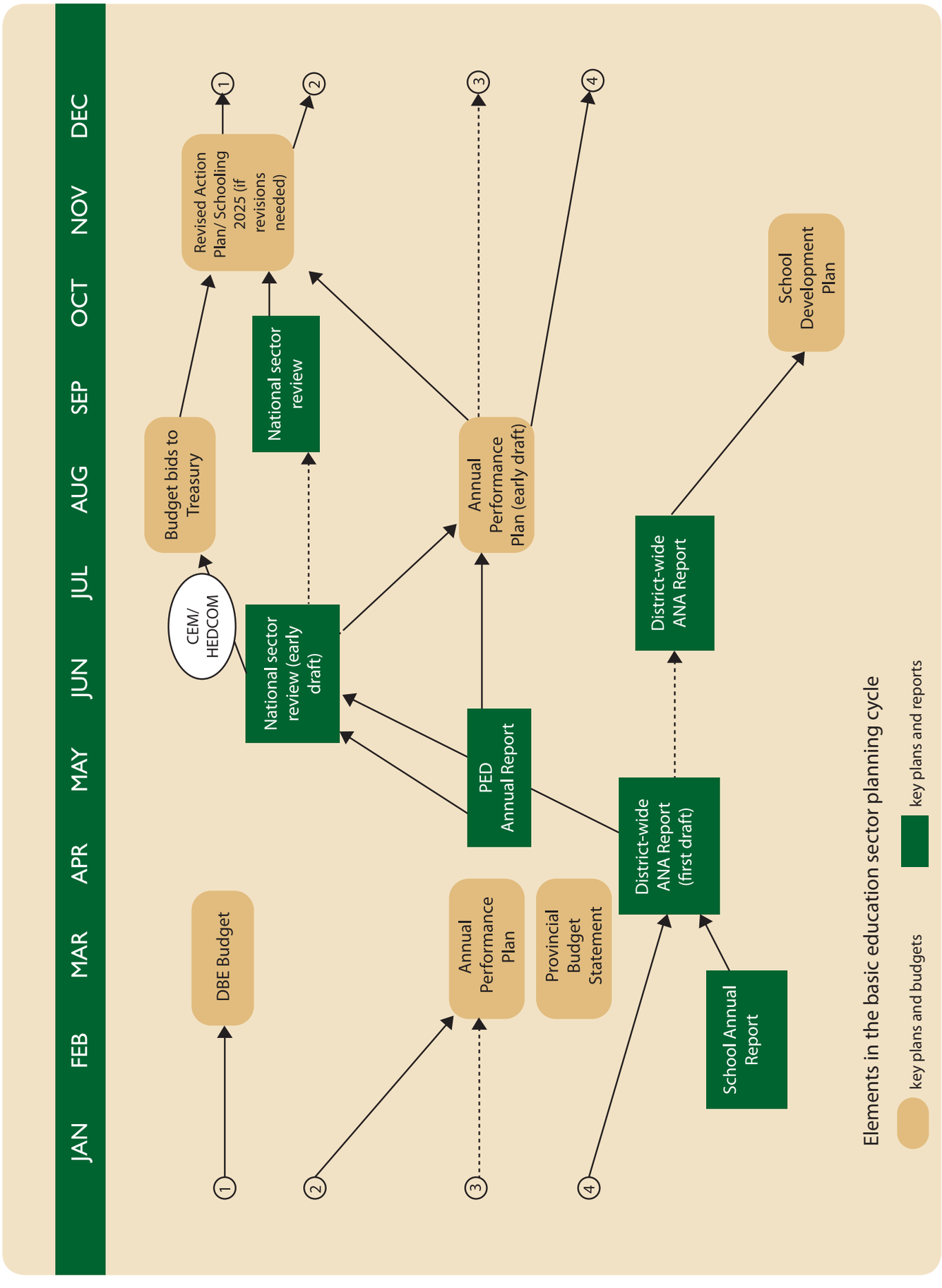
- In **June** of each year, the national department finalises an early draft of the **national sector review**. This is a new element in the planning cycle. This review provides a critical assessment of where the sector stands in relation to the goals, indicators and targets of the Action Plan. It should look backward, using the most recently available data and reports. In particular, it should make use of information from the most recent **annual reports of the provincial departments** and the **district-wide ANA reports**, where the latter are reports that are nationally standardised and represent each district's analysis and interpretation of its schools' ANA results. But the national sector review should also look forward insofar as it should provide recommendations for future action. The national sector review is expected to make it easier for the ten members of the Council of Education Ministers (CEM) and the ten members of the Heads of Education Departments Committee (HEDCOM) to gain a picture of where the key challenges lie and how to respond to them.

- The recommendations from the national sector review should inform the **budget bids to Treasury** made at national and provincial levels around **August**. These bids explain the need for additional funding or for changes in the composition of historical budgets in relation to the new financial year (that begins in April). Whilst by far the greatest part of the budget for schools is allocated by provincial treasuries, at national level two types of bids are made. Firstly, bids in relation to conditional grants that are managed by the national department are made. Secondly, the national department communicates sector-wide priorities to the National Treasury which, in turn, is able to influence the provincial treasuries so that these priorities are budgeted for.

- The national sector review is used to inform the **Annual Performance Plans** for the new financial year, early drafts of which each provincial department produces around **August**.

- In about **September**, the **national sector review** is finalised, partly using inputs made during the CEM, HEDCOM and budget bid meetings. If necessary, the **Action Plan** (in other words this document) is updated around **November**.

- The national department ensures that by **March** of the following year it has a budget for the new financial year, reflecting the priorities in the Action Plan (that may have been recently revised).
- The (possibly revised) Action Plan furthermore influences what is prioritised in the final **Annual Performance Plan** and accompanying **Provincial Budget Statement** produced by each provincial department around **March** for the new financial year starting in April.
- The Action Plan also influences the focus of the **district-wide ANA report**, early drafts of which are finalised around April of each year, following the testing that took place at the start of the school year (in other words January, though possibly also in February). In particular, the district-wide ANA reports should focus on what improvement strategies, emphasised in the Action Plan, have been implemented, the degree to which these strategies have been successful in improving results, and why, as well as evidence of best practices emerging in the district (some of which may influence the next revision of the Action Plan). The district-wide ANA reports should include an analysis of the **annual plans of schools**, partly with a view to identifying the critical factors supporting or impeding learning and teaching improvements.
- The **district-wide ANA reports**, when finalised around **July**, are shared with schools, which use these reports to inform their **school improvement plans** for the next school year.


JAN
FEB
MAR
APR
MAY
JUN
JUL
AUG
SEP
OCT
NOV
DEC
DBE Budget
Annual Performance Plan
Provincial Budget Statement
District-wide ANA Report (first draft)
School Annual Report
PED Annual Report
National sector review (early draft)
CEM/ HEDCOM
Budget bids to Treasury
National sector review
Annual Performance Plan (early draft)
District-wide ANA Report
School Development Plan
Revised Action Plan/ Schooling 2025 (if revisions needed)
1
2
3
4
Elements in the basic education sector planning cycle
key plans and budgets
key plans and reports

3.4 Working with implementation partners

The planning cycle described in section 3.3 is essentially that of the education departments. To some extent, people from other government departments and from non-government organisations participate directly in this cycle. This largely takes place within the subcommittees of HEDCOM. Some key stakeholders were invited to attend these subcommittee meetings on an ongoing basis. For instance, this is the case with teacher unions. Moreover, external stakeholders are often invited to make presentations or participate in discussions in response to specific needs.

There are a number of structures where a range of stakeholders, from inside and outside the education sector, and from inside and outside government, work together at addressing key education planning questions. The inclusion of a range of stakeholders is often a requirement in the governance rules of the structure. The structures in question include, amongst others, the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC), Umalusi, the South African Council for Educators (SACE) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). The Department of Basic Education's involvement in all these structures is strong.

The Minister had identified a need for a national structure, which would include experts from inside and outside government and of which the focus would be on addressing the strategic questions of the basic education sector as a whole. In 2009, the Minister established the National Education and Training Forum for this purpose[8]. Currently, the Minister is focussing on constituting this structure and clarifying its role, following the establishment of two education departments in 2010 – one for basic education and the other for higher education. The new structure is likely to be renamed the National Basic Education and Training Forum (NBETF).

It is clear that there is a need for much stronger collaboration between the many different stakeholders that comprise the basic education sector. Many public comments received during the 2010 development of the Action Plan stressed that opportunities might have been missed in the past through insufficient constructive engagement between stakeholders. The launching of the multi-stakeholder Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC) in 2008, was one important step in the right direction. However, there is room for further improvement in the way the various stakeholders consult with each other and coordinate their actions.

A relationship that needs strengthening is that between the education departments (and government generally) and the faculties of education at universities.

[8] Government Notice 974 of 2009.

Consultations with this latter stakeholder group during the development of the Action Plan indicated that, whilst the relationship had improved in recent years (for instance through the development of the 2011 framework for teacher education), there was room for much improvement, more in particular in the area of research. More research into what factors contribute towards better schooling is needed and faculties of education have a vital role to play in this regard. Access to data and to schools should be facilitated through better protocols between the education departments and education faculties. More formal encounters between researchers and government officials to share ideas and experiences, not just at national level but also provincial and district level, are needed.

The Department of Basic Education is committed to better collaboration with its partners outside government and with government departments outside the education sector. The very valuable process of consultation and public comment during 2010, when this Action Plan was prepared, should be continued beyond 2010. Specifically, the Department of Basic Education will consider all inputs, from any organisation or individual, on future revisions to the Action Plan and the implementation thereof.

3.5 Accountability mechanisms

In a broad sense, all education stakeholders are accountable for achieving the goals of this Action Plan. In other words, all stakeholders should be asking themselves and explaining publicly how they contribute towards the realisation of these goals, which are not new goals but rather widely accepted goals that have existed in various forms for many years.

However, in a more technical sense, it is the national Department of Basic Education and the Minister of Basic Education who must ultimately account for success against this plan. A key accountability instrument of the Department of Basic Education is the annual national sector review, referred to in section 3.3 above. It is in this annual report that the national department must explain what progress was made against the Action Plan and how problems and bottle-necks should be addressed.

The Delivery Agreement for achieving Outcome 1 of government, namely 'improved quality of basic education', contains elements of particular importance, extracted from this Action Plan. For instance, five of the goals contained in this Action Plan feature prominently in the Delivery Agreement, as does maintaining a world-class Annual National Assessments programme. The Delivery Agreement is, in this sense, a sub-set of the Action Plan. The two do not pull in different directions. The Delivery Agreement is an important accountability instrument that assists in bringing about a better planned

schooling system. The strength of the Delivery Agreement lies partly in the fact that analysts in the Presidency, who are external to the ten education departments, will assess the credibility of progress reports against the Delivery Agreement. These progress reports are produced on a quarterly basis. The Presidency will also be assessing progress through scrutiny of this Action Plan and the national sector review.

A key question is where to locate responsibility for calculating the indicator values needed to assess progress against the Action Plan. After careful consideration, it was decided to locate this responsibility within the national department. The national department will work closely with provincial departments in establishing the accuracy of provincial values, and in investigating clear inconsistencies. However, nationally standardised data collection systems, such as the Annual Survey of Schools and the household surveys of Stats SA will be used, meaning that measurement will follow the same procedures across the entire country. Moreover, national responsibility for calculating indicator values will ensure that a standardised methodology will be used.

Parents and communities will, of course, expect their schools, local district offices and perhaps provincial departments to account for progress against the goals of this plan. The shorter draft version of the Action Plan, released in 2010, made reference to the need for 'complaints officers' at district, provincial and national level. These complaints officers should be easy to identify and contact by, in particular, parents who want to escalate a complaint after not experiencing success at their school. For example, a parent who believes that ANA is not being implemented correctly or fairly within the school, and whose complaint has not been dealt with by the school to the parent's satisfaction, should be able to report the problem to the district or provincial complaints officer. This officer would record the complaint, decide on the best action to take and record the decision. The best action might be advice to the parent, a specific intervention relating to the school in question or, if the complaint is a recurring one coming from many schools, the reshaping of district-wide strategies. Some districts and provinces already have people who perform the role of a complaints officer. However, others do not. In making this service available across the system, it is important to ensure that complaints officers form an integral part of the district or provincial office. They should not constitute a separate bureaucratic layer or require a complex policy process for their establishment. A complaints officer should, in fact, be seen as a logical element of effective and accountable service delivery, which is in line with existing policies and strategies such as *Batho Pele*. Complaints officers should be accessible to the public. This means their contact details, including the hours at which members of the public may approach their offices, should be widely publicised.

4.

Our vision of a post-apartheid schooling system

Important steps towards a shared vision of a better schooling system were made in Kliptown in 2008 (the birthplace of the 1956 Freedom Charter), with the adoption by various stakeholders of the Code for Quality Education. This code drives the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC), also launched in 2008. It is also a point of departure for the following vision of where we would like to be in 2025.

Making sure that every young South African receives quality schooling is an urgent need. Yet, we realise that this cannot be realised overnight. We need a clear vision of where we want to be in 2025, or even before then if possible. And we must make sure that every year we move a bit closer to our vision, recognising that a large improvement is actually an accumulation of many smaller changes. By 2025 we must see the following in every South African school:

Learners who attend school every day and are on time because they want to come to school, the school is accessible and because they know that if they miss school when they should not, some action will be taken. These learners understand the importance of doing their schoolwork, in school and at home, and they know their school will do everything possible to get them to learn what they should. Much learning happens through the use of computers and, from Grade 3 onwards, all learners are computer literate. Part of the reason why learners want to come to school is that they get to meet friends in a safe and secure environment where everyone is respected; they will get a good meal; they know they can depend on their teachers for advice and guidance; and they are able to participate in sporting and cultural activities organised at the school after school hours.

Teachers who received the training they require are continuously improving their capabilities and are confident in their profession. These teachers understand the importance of their profession for the development of the nation and do their utmost to give their learners a good educational start in life. They are, on the whole, satisfied with their jobs because they feel their employer is sensitive to their personal and professional needs and that their pay and Conditions of Service in general are decent and similar to what one would find in other professions.

A school principal who ensures that teaching in the school takes place as it should, according to the national curriculum, but who also understands his or her role as a leader whose responsibility is to promote harmony, creativity and a sound work ethic within the school community and beyond.

Parents who are well informed about what happens in the school, are keen to be involved in school affairs and receive regular reports about how well their children perform against clear standards that are shared by all schools. These parents know that if something is not happening as it should in the school, the principal or someone in the department will listen to them and take steps to deal with any problems.

Learning and teaching materials are in abundance and of a high quality. The national **Minimum Schoolbag** policy, which is widely understood, describes the minimum quantity and quality of materials that every learners must have access to. Computers in the school are an important medium through which learners and teachers access information.

School buildings and facilities that are spacious, functional, safe and well maintained. Learners, teachers and the school community as a whole look after their buildings and facilities because they take pride in their school.

5.

The importance of Annual National Assessments

The Annual National Assessments (ANA) programme was first run in 2008. In many ways ANA is a large-scale adaptation of the sample-based Systemic Evaluation programme, which was run in 2001, 2004 and 2007.

In brief, ANA is a testing programme that requires all schools in the country to conduct the same grade-specific language and mathematics tests for Grades 1 to 6 and for Grade 9. Tests are marked by schools, but provincial departmental officials moderate the marking in selected grades and schools in order to ensure that similar standards are upheld across schools. This is **'universal ANA'**. In addition, in a sample of schools selected, learners in selected grades write the same tests, which are administered by nationally employed fieldworkers, who leave schools with the test scripts and deliver them to a national marking centre. This is **'verification ANA'** and is largely designed to verify the results obtained through universal ANA. Verification ANA, moreover, involves the collection of background information from schools through questionnaires filled in by teachers, school principals, learners and their parents. Verification ANA is thus similar to the old Systemic Evaluation. However, verification ANA also involves the anonymous testing of teachers in approximately 200 schools during some, but not all years.

The two-tier ANA approach is similar to what was pursued in a few other developing countries, such as Brazil. However, this approach has been adapted to the circumstances specific to South Africa.

The rest of this section explains the envisaged ANA in some detail. With regard to some of the more challenging aspects of ANA, it will take a few years for them to function as intended. Experiences in other countries showed that getting an

assessment system, such as ANA to serve its purpose well, is not something that happens from one year to the next. The important thing is that each year should see new advances in ANA that contribute towards better learning outcomes in schools. The end of this section refers to envisaged milestones or years by which specific improvements in ANA are expected.

How is ANA intended to make a difference?

Testing on its own is, of course, not a guarantee that learning outcomes will improve. The mechanisms by which ANA will impact on outcomes must be made very clear, partly because this influences the way in which ANA is carried out. ANA is expected to improve learning in four key ways:

- **Exposing teachers to best practices in assessment.** Until recently teachers, in particular teachers below Grade 9 level, were not given much practical guidance on how to assess learners. This, of course, varied across schools and provinces, with some school principals or provincial departments providing more guidance than others. Where the provincial department implemented province-wide standardised assessments, this has been found to change teacher practices for the better[9]. What ANA does is that it exposes all teachers across the country to what national experts consider best practice in assessments. This will give all teachers a clearer idea of how to proceed when they develop their own assessments at critical points in the school year.

- **Targeting interventions to the schools that need them most.** Before ANA, there was almost no information that districts could use to determine which primary schools were experiencing the most serious teaching and learning problems. Even where districts collected pass rates and year-end marks from primary schools, these were not standardised so it was difficult to use this information to determine which schools were performing poorly. With ANA, districts have a standard source of information to determine which schools are most urgently in need of support. Information from ANA should be used to direct teachers towards particular kinds of teacher development programmes and to engage seriously with school principals on what the problems in the school comprise. Poor ANA results can also alert districts to the fact that some things are not working as they should. For instance, critical teaching posts may have been left empty or the school may not have received its full school allocation in line with the funding policy. However, ANA should not be used as a basis for providing more than the normal amount of resources for a school, as this could produce

[9] This was found in a series of case studies of poorly performing schools in the Western Cape conducted by Stellenbosch University in 2010.

a situation where schools deliberately perform poorly in order to attract additional resources. Instead, the current approach of providing more resources to poorer school communities to compensate for a home background disadvantage should be continued.

- **Giving schools the opportunity to pride themselves in their own improvement.** ANA makes it possible for primary schools to do what secondary schools with Grade 12 have been able to do for many years: Take pride in knowing that efforts to improve the teaching and learning situation in the school have paid off. It is important that schools should be in a position to know how well they perform in all the phases of the curriculum that they offer. Moreover, if districts know which schools are successful, it becomes easier to identify model schools in the district, which can be used to guide practices in other schools in the district.

- **Giving parents better information on the education of their children.** Parents invest much effort and money into ensuring that their children attend school regularly and are given support in the home. Parents have a right to know how well the schools they send their children to perform. Obviously, ANA cannot tell parents everything they need to know about their school, but it will provide critical information about two vital areas: results in languages and results in mathematics. It is widely recognised that, if schools fail to provide a good education in these two areas, then the overall education of the child is compromised. The intention is for ANA to assist parents in supporting their children. If the results of individual children are poor, then more encouragement from the home could help. If the average result in the school is below what it should be, then ANA provides a good basis for parents to ask the school questions about what is wrong and to become involved in putting together a plan for the school that will improve the situation.

There are valuable experiences with regard to national assessments, such as ANA, found in both developed and developing countries. The desired impact of ANA as expressed above is partly based on these experiences. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that there are important debates around the degree to which increasing the amount of assessing leads to better teaching and learning. In fact, some of the literature is very critical of excessive levels of assessment, arguing that this detracts from the process of actually educating learners. Moreover, overlaps between assessment requirements put forward by the national department, the provincial department, the district and the school principal can result in assessment overload in the classroom, or insufficient synergy between various assessments. Whilst these criticisms must be taken into consideration, it is also important to recognise that different arguments become applicable in different schooling systems with different histories of

assessing (or lack of assessing). Much, though not all of the literature that argues that current levels of assessment are excessive, is referring to education in the United States and Western Europe. At the same time, much of the literature on developing countries points to a lack of assessment, or at least assessment that is adequately structured and linked to interventions[10].

What has shown to be vital is for the education authorities to work very closely with teacher unions in ensuring that new assessment systems lead to improved learning. Clearly, teachers must feel that the assessment system is credible and that teacher professionalism is enhanced. Assessments that come across as being designed to embarrass teachers are unlikely to succeed. Fortunately, there are good practice cases from the rest of the world that can guide South Africa in ensuring that teacher unions and other stakeholders become co-owners of the assessment system[11].

How does testing take place in universal ANA?

ANA testing takes place in Grades 1 to 6 and in Grade 9. ANA represents the portion of learner assessment that is external and national. In addition to ANA, there are assessments that are determined by schools themselves, in line with the national curriculum. Thus, for instance, assessment in Grades 7 and 8 is schools-based and there is no ANA in these grades. This is also the case in Grades 10 and 11. The reason for having national and external ANA testing for every grade from Grade 1 to Grade 6 is that research supports the use of particularly intensive monitoring in the initial years of basic education.

As its name implies, the Annual National Assessments programme is run annually. In 2011, it was run in February, with the focus being on what learners should have learnt in the previous year. In 2012, it will be run at the end of the school year. The timing of ANA in the school year is a matter on which a final decision must still be taken. Factors to consider include what learners can be expected to know at different points in the year and, very importantly, the capacity of district offices to become involved to the required level, given other responsibilities, such as those related to the Grade 12 examinations at the end of the year.

ANA takes place over the same two days for all schools. On one day all language testing takes place and on the second day all mathematics testing takes place. In the language testing, each learner sits for two tests; one in his or her home language and one in his or her first additional language (for over 90% of learners this is English).

[10] For an example of the argument in favour of more and better assessment practices in developing countries, see Kellaghan, Greaney and Murray (2008).

[11] See for instance Ravela (2005).

Before ANA testing takes place, every school receives the actual tests it needs in sealed packages. The requirements of each school, specifically the number of learners and the breakdown of learners by language, would have been confirmed previously. Each package has a label indicating the contents. In addition to the tests, each school receives instructions for the school principal and teachers on how to carry out ANA in the school. These instructions are similar to the Grade 12 examination instructions with respect to matters such as the use of appropriate classrooms and supervision by the principal and teachers. At the same time, the instructions take into account the fact that testing in different grades is not the same. In particular, the instructions applicable to Grades 1 to 3 learners recognise that these learners require assistance and support, without undermining the purpose of the tests, to ensure that the experience is an enjoyable and not a stressful one.

The instructions focus on achieving an assessment procedure that is credible. They explain what the purpose of ANA is and how ANA should be used as a tool for improving teaching and learning. They also explain how schools should deal with irregularities, such as packages containing the wrong tests or an insufficient number of copies, learners being absent on the day of the test and circumstances that make it impossible for a whole school to participate in ANA on the officially determined day. Instructions sent to schools are public and are published on the national department's website.

In certain respects provinces or districts may follow their own procedures for implementing ANA. In particular, districts may send external test administrators to schools to ensure that ANA is correctly implemented, where this is deemed necessary. Room for different approaches in individual districts or provinces can be accomodated to a limited extent and this is made explicit in the ANA instructions.

How are the tests in universal ANA marked?

Within the packages sent to schools are marking memoranda, which provide instructions on how to mark the tests. Immediately after the testing has taken place, teachers in the school mark their learners' tests. The instructions to schools include specifications on how moderation of marking within the school should be done. Within the school, the school principal is ultimately responsible for ensuring that marking is credible and fair.

Districts may adjust the scores of individual test scripts following a district-driven and sample-based moderation process, taking place outside the school. To some extent, districts are free to organise the district-driven moderation process in a way that is sensitive to district circumstances. However, ANA instructions to districts (which are published on the national department's

website) specify certain minimum procedures that all districts need to adhere to. Every district should, in each year, moderate the marking of tests from at least 20% of schools in the district. At least half of the selected schools should be randomly selected, using a procedure that the instructions specify, whilst the other half can be purposively selected where districts believe that these schools require more intensive monitoring and support. Schools are only told after the test days whether they have been selected or not for the district-driven moderation of marking. In each selected school, either a random selection of tests or all tests are moderated by the district, depending on the capacity of the district and the perceived need for moderation. Special attention goes towards the moderation of Grades 3, 6 and 9 tests, but districts may decide to moderate the marking that was done in the other ANA grades as well. Moderated tests are returned to schools after moderation.

The district-driven moderation process provides an opportunity for district officials, school principals and schools to discuss how assessment (and teaching and learning generally) can be improved. The moderation process should not be a mechanical process whereby schools are simply informed of the result of the moderation. Particularly where districts and schools differ in their marking it is vital that this should be discussed.

Apart from moderation by district offices, the provincial department head offices and the national department conduct quality control of the universal ANA assessment process through, for instance, the examination of samples of test scripts and visits to schools to assess the implementation and impact of the programme.

How is the information from universal ANA used?

Marks determined by the school for each learner's performance in ANA are communicated to parents through the year-end report card. In this report card it is made clear what marks are derived from ANA and which are derived from other assessments.

Every school, whether it is involved in the district-driven moderation process or not, must submit ANA marks to the district. This is done by adding the relevant columns to the mark schedules that schools submit to district offices each year, so that the ANA results per subject of each learner are reflected. This provides enough information for the district to produce an important report, the **district-wide ANA report.** This report, which follows a national format, provides details on the distribution of learner scores within the district and averages per quintile. The purpose of this report is to let individual schools know how well they are performing in relation to other schools in the district, but also in relation to the most recently available provincial and national average scores.

It moreover provides a report on the district-driven moderation process and on the extent to which there was a need for marking in schools to be adjusted. Each district, like each province and the country as a whole, has performance targets; for instance a target that 60% of learners in the district should achieve at least 50% in the Grade 6 mathematics test by 2014. The district performance targets refer only to Grades 3, 6 and 9 and are determined collaboratively between district offices and provincial head offices, but in a way that supports provincial and national targets (which are determined nationally). The district-wide ANA report will indicate how close the district is to achieving its targets. But the report provides not only numbers. It also includes a statement from the head of the district on what action will be taken in the coming years to improve learner performance.

The district-wide ANA report does not include a 'league table', nor a table with the name of every school in the district and its average scores. There are good reasons to believe that such a table would be counter-productive and generate a level of competitiveness for which ANA was not designed. Each school will know its own average scores and will use the district-wide ANA report to compare itself to various district averages. The only way schools will find out the average scores of neighbouring schools, is if they were to ask those schools for this information.

Evidence suggests that Grades 3, 6 and 9 targets, at the level of the school, would be extremely difficult to calculate, as they would need to take into account the socio-economic status of learners in the school. What seems preferable is for districts to promote improvements in all schools, to explain how school results feed into district results, but without attaching actual performance targets to every school.

Schools receive hard copies of their district-wide ANA report. This report is a vital tool for managing improvements. For example, district offices will pay particular attention to supporting schools that have performed poorly in ANA, and to ensuring that these schools have the teachers and materials they should have.

All district-wide ANA reports are published on the national department's website. The district-wide ANA reports are a key source of information in the production of provincial and national ANA reports (though these latter reports also use information from verification ANA – see below).

How does verification ANA work?

Verification ANA involves the national administration of ANA tests in provincial random samples of schools. The purpose of verification ANA is twofold. Firstly, it provides the country with national and provincial average ANA scores that are highly reliable. In this sense the results from 'universal ANA' are verified. Secondly, verification ANA collects sufficient background data to allow the national department to examine in detail what factors appear to lie behind poor learner performance, using internationally employed data analysis techniques.

A week before universal ANA take place in schools, approximately 300 schools in each province are visited by nationally employed ANA officials. These officials spend two days at the school, testing languages (home language and first additional language) on one day and mathematics on the second day. Verification ANA involves the testing of learners in Grades 3, 6 and 9 only. In each of these grades, 25 learners are randomly selected for testing purposes. The approximately 300 schools per province translate into a sample of 200 schools for Grade 3 and 130 schools for each of Grades 6 and 9. Because many schools offer more than one of the three grades, there is no need for an overall provincial sample of 460 (200 + 130 + 130). At the same time, the sampling methodology ensures that learners are not discriminated against on the basis of the combination of grades offered in their school. The larger sample size at the Grade 3 level is made necessary by the fact that lower grades tend to display smaller differences between learners in terms of their scores.

The reason why an approximately equal number of schools is chosen per province, despite the fact that the school populations of provinces vary greatly, is that it is important for universal ANA to produce provincial average scores that are, from a statistical point of view, similarly reliable. In calculating the national average scores from the verification ANA data, provinces with larger school populations are weighted more than those with smaller populations.

The tests used in verification ANA are comparable to the tests used in universal ANA, but they are not identical. Therefore, a 70% score in Grade 6 mathematics in universal ANA for instance, reflects the same level of learner performance as a 70% score in the same grade and subject in verification ANA. Having verification ANA tests that are different but equivalent to the universal ANA tests, means it is not a problem if schools selected for ANA verification have already received their universal ANA packages when they are informed that they have been selected for verification ANA.

All ANA tests are based on an item bank of test items that includes thousands of items. A selection of these items is freely available to teachers through the national department's website and can be used by teachers to prepare assessments that are similar to the ANA tests. Every year universal ANA and

verification ANA tests are compiled, using different combinations of items in the item bank but, in such a way that the two sets of tests measure similar learner competencies and produce comparable scores. Moreover, there is a strong emphasis on ensuring that tests from different years are comparable to each other, so that trends over time can be reliably monitored. Umalusi, the statutory body charged with monitoring standards in schools, plays a vital role in ensuring that ANA test design and the marking process are sufficiently rigorous and that they follow international best practice.

As part of verification ANA, tested learners, teachers of the tested learners, the school principal and parents (or guardians) of the tested learners are asked to fill in background questionnaires. In the case of parents, questionnaires are sent home with learners on the first test day and are returned to the ANA officials on the second day.

Schools involved in verification ANA are also involved in universal ANA about a week later. Learners who sat for tests in verification ANA, generally between 25 and 50 per school, also sit for the universal ANA tests a week later, together with all the other learners involved in universal ANA at the school. Verification ANA results are not given to individual schools and nor are the names of individual schools and their verification ANA results published anywhere. Verification ANA is not designed to provide feedback to individual schools, but rather to provide an overall picture of the quality of learning and teaching at provincial and national level.

How does the testing of teachers in ANA work?

In specific years when verification ANA is run, approximately 200 schools *nationally* participate in the testing of teachers. The 200 schools are schools that also participate in verification ANA. The approach is to alternate between teachers at secondary level and teachers at primary level in different runs of verification ANA. A random sample of teachers in the selected schools is tested, using tests that are specific to the level of the school and the particular subjects. The selected teachers are not necessarily teachers teaching learners involved in the ANA testing of learners. The focus of the teacher tests is on both subject knowledge and knowledge in pedagogics and teaching methodologies.

The tests are anonymous. Not even the teachers who sit for the tests are given their results. The data collected through the tests are used purely for research purposes. Information that links results to individual teachers is destroyed. This ensures that inappropriate use of the test results is avoided, whilst the education department collects valuable data that can inform teacher development policies.

The tests used for teachers are publicly available and published on the national

department's website. The marking memoranda for the tests are also published. This allows teachers to use the tests themselves for self-assessment and to inform their own developmental needs.

In addition to teacher testing, in the 200 schools concerned, additional background information is collected from teachers on issues such as the teacher's socio-economic status, perceived developmental needs, opinions on existing teacher development options, etc.

Do independent schools participate in ANA?

Eventually all independent schools will participate in ANA, partly to provide a picture of the quality of learning in these schools – more in particular those schools receiving public funding, but also to obtain a holistic picture of educational quality in South African schools and to facilitate a comparison of the public and independent sectors. The inclusion of independent schools in ANA will take place in phases.

Envisaged ANA milestones

2011
- » Verification ANA is implemented for the first time.
- » The first national report, based on both universal ANA and verification ANA information, is published.

2012
- » An independent evaluation of ANA activities since 2008 is finalised and published.
- » All Grade 9 learners begin participating in universal ANA.
- » The ANA item bank of test items is placed on the national department's website.

2013
- » Nationally standardised district-wide ANA reports for all 81 districts and covering the 2011 school year are published on the national department's website.
- » Publicly funded independent schools are included in ANA for the first time.

2014
- » Teacher testing is started in a national sample of 200 verification ANA schools. (During 2012, teacher testing would have taken place as part of the international SACMEQ programme.)
- » All independent schools participate in ANA.

6.

Output goals that look at learning outcomes and coverage (Goals 1 to 13)

Goals 1 to 13 deal with the outputs that we want to see. Goals 14 to 27, on the other hand, deal with the mechanisms for achieving the desired outputs.

Goals 1 to 6 focus on the percentage of learners achieving specific minimum levels in specific subjects. These goals are thus largely focussed on addressing improvements at the lower end of the performance spectrum. Goals 7 to 9 deal with the *average* performance in key subjects. These goals therefore focus on improving performance across the whole performance spectrum. If any learner performs better, then the overall average rises. Every school and every learner therefore has a role to play in terms of Goals 7 to 9. Finally, Goals 10 to 13 deal with the attainment of, or attendance in, specific levels of the schooling system, with no reference to subject. These goals are thus strongly focussed on *access* to education.

GOAL 1

Increase the number of learners in Grade 3 who, by the end of the year, have mastered the minimum language and numeracy competencies for Grade 3.

Problem statement

UNESCO's Education for All campaign includes six global goals for schools. The sixth goal focuses on 'Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills'.[12] This reflects the universal recognition that it is not enough to focus on

[12] UNESCO, 2010: 104.

getting all children into school. The learning outcomes achieved in the school system must be of an adequate standard and should, moreover, be measured. This informs many of the goals contained in this Action Plan.

South Africa's Systemic Evaluation programme, which tested Grade 3 learners, using standardised tests, in 2001 and 2007, found that in both years the performance of learners was well below what it should have been. In 2007, only 48% of learners were found to have reached a basic level of competency in language. The figure for numeracy was even lower, at 43%.

Why do learners in South Africa do so poorly in the Foundation Phase (Grades 1 to 3)? The available studies generally point towards similar key problems in the classroom. The capacity of teachers to identify and apply appropriate teaching methods is limited. Very often they had insufficient training on what standards to aim for. Instead, teachers were expected to establish standards in their assessments of learners in relative isolation from other teachers. Pacing, or the speed with which teachers move from one topic to the next, was too slow, which was partly due to insufficient teacher capacity, but also because teachers must often face large classes with many learners experiencing learning difficulties related to difficult home circumstances. In reading and writing, there was too much focus on single words, as opposed to whole sentences. In numeracy, learners were generally given too few opportunities to solve problems on their own.

As pointed out by the 2009 curriculum review[13], school principals and teachers were too often faced by a curriculum that was unclear, partly because the national curriculum was re-interpreted at provincial level and even at district level, leading to a profusion of sometimes inconsistent curriculum documents. Clearly, the policy on what must be taught has to be very clear and should not give rise to confusion. The review also indicated that very little guidance has been given to teachers of multi-grade classes, despite the fact that such classes are a widespread phenomenon. Of all learners in primary schools, 13% find themselves in schools where multi-grade teaching takes place in one or more grades. (The figure is 6% for secondary schools.) Multi-grade teaching exists in all provinces. The percentage of all learners who are in a school that practices at least some multi-grade teaching is over 5% in all provinces. This figure is especially high in the Eastern Cape, however, at 22%[14]. Teachers who do multi-grade teaching need special guidance with the curriculum and in the in-service training they receive.

[13] *Report of the Task Team for the Review of the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement*, available on the DBE website.

[14] Multi-grade figures are calculated from the 2009 Annual Survey of Schools dataset.

Government's response

In 2010, President Zuma announced in the State of the Nation address the target that 60% of learners should attain a basically acceptable level of performance in literacy and numeracy by 2014. The address also indicated that Annual National Assessment (ANA) results of individual learners should be shared with parents. As explained in section 5, assessment results that are comparable across schools are an essential basis for ensuring that the right kind of support flows to the right schools and teachers.

Many different interventions and types of support for schools and teachers are explained under Goals 14 to 27, in order to improve the probability that learning outcomes in schools will improve. In the case of the Foundation Phase, many of the interventions described in the Action Plan are refinements to the Foundations for Learning programme, launched in 2008. This programme represented a major shift towards providing better teaching methodology guidance to teachers and ensuring that learners have the materials they need. One matter that is of particular importance for the Foundation Phase, is the selection of the language used for teaching and learning in the classroom. Extensive evidence points towards the importance of using home language during the first three or so years of a child's schooling, so that a sufficiently solid understanding of key concepts may be established[15]. It is estimated that currently, approximately 80% of learners experience learning and teaching in the classroom in their home language during the Foundation Phase[16]. This figure has risen by a few percentage points in recent years, partly as a result of a strong emphasis in the curriculum on the use of home language in the Foundation Phase. This emphasis should continue. At the same time it is important to establish that the use of home language is indeed leading to better learning outcomes.

Although the 2002 curriculum encourages spending some time on English every week in the case of learners whose home language is not English, starting from Grade 1, this has not been compulsory and the practice has been scarce. Only approximately 1% of learners who are taught in an African language in Grade 1 also devote some time to English. The low level of attention devoted to English as an additional language in Grades 1, 2 and 3 was identified as a problem by the 2009 curriculum review. More in particular, the current situation makes it more difficult for learners to adjust to English from Grade 4 onwards. Thus, whilst there is a need for more widespread and effective use of African languages in the Foundation Phase, there is, at the same time, a need to strengthen the presence of English as a first additional language.

[15] See for instance World Bank (2005).

[16] Annual Survey of Schools data.

Practical steps to support the latter were taken in 2010 and will continue during ensuing years.

As pointed out in some public comments received during 2010, whilst it is important to focus strongly on improving learning outcomes in the Foundation Phase, delivery targets and pressure to improve should not detract from the fundamental need for learning to be fun, and for the Foundation Phase to be used as a time to instil a love for learning in children. It is a passion for education and not a fear of not meeting targets that must ultimately drive education improvement.

Monitoring of progress

The following two indicators will be important for measuring progress with respect to Goal 1. At the same time, other statistics will also need to be tracked, relating to, for instance, the choice of language in the classroom, the age of learners, teaching methods, the contact time between learners and teachers and access to pre-primary schooling.

Indicators 1.1 and 1.2: Percentage of Grade 3 learners performing at the required literacy/ numeracy level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.

Standardised information on Grade 3 learner performance in literacy and numeracy became available for the first time with the 2001 Systemic Evaluation. The 2007 Systemic Evaluation repeated this Grade 3 assessment. Starting in 2008, standardised tests have been run every year in Grade 3 as part of ANA. However, these ANA tests involved schools-based administration and marking of tests, meaning that the results were not as rigorously standardised as those of the Systemic Evaluation. In 2011, an ANA verification sample will involve the same standardisation and controls as is found in the Systemic Evaluation and this will result in sufficiently standardised provincial and national values to make comparisons across time possible. The 'required' level of literacy or numeracy will be a level that would reflect a basic compliance with the standards set out in the curriculum. Competency in literacy will be measured in the learner's language of learning and teaching although, adding an assessment in English for those learners who will begin using English as the language of learning and teaching in Grade 4, is under consideration. After 2011, the ANA verification is expected to be repeated every year. Care will need to be taken when comparing the 2011 ANA verification results to those of the 2007 Systemic Evaluation. If the tests as a whole are not sufficiently comparable, then comparison across similar items would be necessary. These data can, to some extent, be used to

track progress in the years when there is no ANA verification sample. However, because the universal ANA results will not be the product of the same levels of quality control as those from verification ANA, they will have to be treated with considerable caution. More details on ANA can be found in section 5.

GOAL 2

Increase the number of learners in Grade 6 who, by the end of the year, have mastered the minimum language and mathematics competencies for Grade 6.

Problem statement

The Intermediate Phase, or Grades 4 to 6 in schools, presents a number of challenges for both teachers and learners. The greatest is arguably the switch, for close to 70% of learners, from one of the nine African languages to English at the start of Grade 4. The 2009 Annual Survey of Schools indicates that, up to Grade 3, for approximately 70% of learners the language of learning and teaching (as reported by the school principal) is an African language. By Grade 4, this figure has dropped to 8% and by Grades 5 and 6 to 6%[17]. This transition presents a number of difficulties that can be reduced if teachers feel adequately trained to deal with it and if learners have access to high-quality materials in English, but also in the language from which they are making the transition. Researchers have pointed to the need for the African language and English to reinforce each other during the Intermediate Phase in the case of learners going through the language transition. For the approximately 30% of learners who are taught in either English or Afrikaans during the Foundation Phase, the Intermediate Phase is the appropriate point at which to instil multilingualism in the form of exposure to at least one of the nine African languages. Unfortunately, this is far too uncommon. As a result, important opportunities to build a more equitable and cohesive South African society are lost.

The Intermediate Phase, moreover, comes with the challenge of far more subjects than in the Foundation Phase and a need to deal more seriously with civic education matters, including the importance of national symbols and rights and duties with respect to society and the environment.

[17] See also the report, *Status of the language of teaching and learning (LOLT) in South African public schools* on the DBE website.

Government's response

Like the Foundation Phase, the Intermediate Phase has been the focus of the Foundations for Learning programme. This programme resulted in the provision of more learning materials for Grades 4 to 6 learners and clearer specifications with respect to content and methodology for their teachers. Grades 4 to 6 learners have, moreover, participated in the Annual National Assessments programme since 2008.

A key change being introduced in order to improve teaching and learning in the Intermediate Phase, is a reduction in the number of non-language subjects. These are being reduced from the current 7 to 4, with full implementation of the new rules taking place in 2013. This follows the finding of the 2009 curriculum review, that the number of subjects in the Intermediate Phase was causing an unnecessary administrative burden on teachers and preventing sufficient depth of subject coverage in the classroom.

Following the 2009 curriculum review, there has been a shift towards a stronger emphasis on textbooks in schools, particularly from Grade 4 onwards. This is in recognition of the fact that textbooks assist learners to make sense of the sequencing of topics, and inter-relationships between topics relative to, for instance, worksheets.

Monitoring of progress

Indicators 2.1 and 2.2: Percentage of Grade 6 learners performing at the required language/ mathematics level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.

Standardised information on Grade 6 learner performance in language and mathematics became available for the first time with the 2004 Systemic Evaluation. Following 2004, all the available information has come from, and will continue to come from ANA. The details with respect to ANA are virtually the same as those for Indicators 1.1 and 1.2, dealing with Grade 3. However, in Grade 6, assessment in language will take place with respect to both the home language and the learner's first additional language (English for most learners).

GOAL 3

Increase the number of learners in Grade 9 who, by the end of the year, have mastered the minimum language and mathematics competencies for Grade 9.

Problem statement

In 2009, the percentage of learners dropping out at the end of their grade varied from approximately 3% in Grade 7 to 4% in Grade 8; 7% in Grade 9; and 12% in Grade 10. To a large extent this is a reflection of under-achievement, grade repetition and learners being over-aged relative to their peers – all of which contribute to a sense of hopelessness amongst learners and abandonment of school. The Senior Phase, covering Grades 7 to 9, is a critical 'make-or-break' phase for many learners. Teaching and learning at the Senior Phase are made particularly difficult by a range of social and psychological problems that emerge as learners reach early adulthood, and by class sizes which, on average, exceed those of any other phase of schooling.

Given that dropping out becomes a major issue in the Senior Phase, the debate around what assessments and qualifications to have at this phase is a crucial one. Assessments and qualifications can assist those learners who leave school when they must select and apply for post-school studies, for instance at FET colleges. Assessments can also assist in improving accountability and results, and hence the retention of a greater number of learners within the schooling system. The introduction of a General Education Certificate (GEC) at the end of Grade 9 is a matter that attracted much debate. (a GEC applies the adult education stream but not to ordinary schooling.) The 2008 OECD review of South Africa's schooling system warned against allowing the GEC to become a mechanism excluding learners from participation at the FET (Grades 10 to 12) level. Clearly, this is an important risk that must be considered. Lessons need to be drawn from past attempts at strengthening standards and assessments at the Senior Phase. For instance, the common tasks for assessment (CTAs) introduced in 2002, but subsequently discontinued, partly due to the complex nature of their implementation and concerns that they were insufficiently focussed on the learning of basic concepts. Lessons must also be drawn from best practices in other countries.

Government's response

A major step forward in improving the assessment system in the Senior Phase was taken in 2011, when Grade 9 mathematics and language standardised tests were run in a sample of schools as part of a pilot project to assess the

effectiveness of the test design, and explore ways of ensuring that standardised testing will lead to improved results. It is envisaged that all Grade 9 learners in public schools will participate in the Annual National Assessments during 2012. This will, for the first time, provide a reliable baseline for the entire country with respect to performance in languages (both home language and first additional language) and mathematics in Grade 9.

The Dinaledi intervention programme to improve learning outcomes in mathematics and physical science in secondary schools, was introduced in 2001. This programme involved providing support to teachers and learners, through training and supplementary materials, in almost 500 mostly historically disadvantaged schools. Its focus included strengthening the two subjects in Grades 8 and 9 and encouraging learners to continue with these subjects beyond Grade 9. A recent evaluation of the programme by the World Bank revealed that, despite certain design flaws, Dinaledi had been successful in increasing the mathematics and physical science pass rate.[18] Yet, the overall improvements in the Grade 12 mathematics and science results, in particular with regard to historically disadvantaged learners, were disappointingly low. To confront this challenge, the national department is currently improving the design of the Dinaledi programme and ensuring that lessons from this programme are cascaded to non-Dinaledi schools. Though Dinaledi's focus is largely on mathematics and physical science, it is important to bear in mind that improvements in one subject have positive knock-on effects in other subjects, partly because better studying techniques in one subject are fairly easily transferable to other subjects.

It is clear that psychosocial issues need to be dealt with more explicitly within the learning and teaching process in the Senior Phase – a phase where these issues become particularly important. This was a point that was made strongly in a number of public comments on the Action Plan. The national department is paying special attention to aligning the life skills programme towards issues that Senior Phase learners must deal with, such as the consequences and options associated with leaving school before Grade 9, at the end of Grade 9 and beyond Grade 9. It is also improving guidance to teachers on how to deal with learner discipline problems[19].

[18] See Blum, Krishnan and Legovini (2010).

[19] See for instance Mokhele (2006) for an account of best practices.

Monitoring of progress

Indicators 3.1 and 3.2: Percentage of Grade 9 learners performing at the required language/ mathematics level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.

Fully standardised information on Grade 9 learner performance in language and mathematics was never collected before. From 2011, verification ANA will produce fully standardised results, based on the external administration and marking of tests for Grade 9. The details with respect to ANA are virtually the same as those for Indicators 1.1 and 1.2, dealing with Grade 3. Both the home language and the learner's first additional language will be tested in Grade 9 in ANA.

GOAL 4

Increase the number of Grade 12 learners who become eligible for a Bachelors programme at a university.

Problem statement

Currently only about one in eight youths obtain a Grade 12 qualification that fulfils the requirements for Bachelors studies at a university. Comparisons with the situation in other similar countries, and analyses of demand in the South African labour market, indicate very clearly that this is not sufficient. The low number of learners qualifying for Bachelors studies each year is a key reason behind the skills shortfall in the country, including the under-supply of teachers.

Much of the challenge lies in improving the situation in schools serving poorer communities. Whilst approximately 45% of Grade 12 examination candidates in quintile 5 achieve a Bachelors level pass, the figure is 25% for quintiles 3 and 4 and only 15% for quintiles 1 and 2. Examination candidates in the more affluent schools are thus three times as likely to achieve the Bachelors level pass as their counterparts in the poorest schools. Evidence suggests that key obstacles in poorer schools include insufficient access to the right textbooks in Grades 10 to 12, and poor teacher subject knowledge. In fact, there has been no research to establish precisely where the subject knowledge gaps lie at the Further Education and Training (FET) level, or the Grades 10 to 12 level in schools. Such research was conducted only in the case of teachers at primary

level. Yet, it is clear that teacher subject knowledge is particularly important at the FET level. Analyses indicated that one reason why learners fail to succeed in the Grade 12 examinations is that subjects are chosen at the end of Grade 9, with insufficient consideration of where the learner's strengths and weaknesses lie. With better subject choices, the levels of achievement in the examination would improve.

Government's response

The targets associated with this goal imply an increase in the proportion of youths achieving a Bachelors level Grade 12 pass from one eighth to one fifth. Beyond that, it is government's aim that, by 2025, one in three youths should qualify for Bachelors studies. These increases are necessary if the ratio of higher education enrolments in the population aged 20 to 24 is to increase from the current level of approximately 16% to 20% – a target from the 2001 national plan for higher education that has not been achieved as yet. Clearly, the outputs of the schooling system should exceed the desired annual intake of Bachelors students at higher education institutions, given that not everyone who achieves a Bachelors level pass will choose to pursue university studies.

A number of strategies were employed by government over the years, often in partnership with the private sector and the media, to provide support for learners during their final school years. For instance, study guides and examples of examination questions were distributed. During 2010, the DBE made use of the MXit networking medium, which is highly popular amongst youths with access to a cellphone, in order to distribute advice to Grade 12 learners preparing for their examinations. Many of the required interventions relate to ensuring adequate access to textbooks and teacher development, issues which are dealt with under Goals 14 to 27.

Monitoring of progress

The indicator linked to this goal refers to the *numbers* of learners. This is because it is often the raw numbers that are reported on in the media in relation to the Grade 12 results. However, it is also important to track the ratio of Grade 12 graduates at different levels to the size of the youth population cohorts at, for instance, the age of 18.

Universities of technology often use as a minimum requirement a Grade 12 pass at diploma level. It is important that improvements at this level should be monitored as well.

Indicator 4: Number of Grade 12 learners who become eligible for a Bachelors programme in the public national examinations.

Before 2008, eligibility for a Bachelors programme, following the Grade 12 examinations, was commonly referred to as 'matric exemption'. Information on this indicator is highly reliable. It is important to bear in mind, however, that supplementary examinations early in the year generally improve all the Grade 12 results by a small percentage. Results following the supplementary results, should always be used when gauging improvements across years.

GOAL 5

Goal 5: Increase the number of Grade 12 learners who pass mathematics.

Problem statement

It is widely recognised that a shortage of Grade 12 graduates, with a mathematics pass, is a major obstacle in the way of solving shortfalls in a number of professions in areas such as medicine, financial analysis and engineering. Moreover, a critical mass of youths with exceptional results in mathematics is a prerequisite for the innovation needed to sustain niche industries that can improve the global competitiveness of the country. The schooling system is clearly failing the country, both with respect to the number of mathematics passes and the number of learners who excel.

As for Goal 4, much of the challenge lies in improving performance in poorer schools. The percentage of Grade 12 examination candidates, achieving a mathematics pass at the 30% level, is twice as high in quintile 5 as in quintile 1. There is a threefold difference if a mathematics pass at the 40% level is considered. If one considers the excellent level of performance of over 70%, the inequalities are even starker. Quintile 5 learners are ten times more likely to leave Grade 12 with a score of 70% or above, than learners in quintile 1. In fact, 53% of all mathematics passes at this top level came from quintile 5 in the 2010 examinations.

Government's response

Presently approximately one in seven youths obtain a Grade 12 pass in mathematics. Government aims to strengthen mathematics in the schooling system so that the figure can be improved to one in five by 2014, and one in three by 2025. (These ratios refer to a population cohort of youths, not just to examination candidates.)

The desired improvements must be realised through a strengthening of the Dinaledi programme (see Goal 3) and government leadership with respect to Goals 14 to 27 of this plan.

Monitoring of progress

Indicator 5 of the Action Plan is identical to one of the five education indicators of the Presidency's *Development indicators*.

Indicator 5: Number of Grade 12 learners passing mathematics.

This indicator refers only to the subject mathematics, and not the subject mathematical literacy. As with Indicator 4, it is important to use final results after supplementary results have been taken into account. For the purposes of this indicator, a pass at the 30% level is being considered.

GOAL 6

Increase the number of Grade 12 learners who pass physical science.

Problem statement

Like mathematics, physical science is a subject in which performance in schools is well below where it needs to be for the critical skills shortages in the country and insufficient industrial innovation to be properly addressed. Mathematics and physical science are particularly difficult subjects, not just in South Africa but around the world. This, combined with their strategic importance, is why so many countries pay special attention to these two subjects. In the Grade 12 examination results, mathematics and physical science are typically the subjects where the lowest percentage scores are obtained amongst all subjects, with the mathematics value being slightly below the physical science value.

Inequalities in physical science results are only slightly less concerning than those for mathematics. For instance, learners in quintile 5 schools are twice as likely to obtain a physical science pass at the 40% level than learners in quintile 1 schools.

Government's response

To a large extent, the responses required to strengthen physical science at secondary level and, indeed, at all levels of the schooling system are similar

to those needed for mathematics. In fact, it is important that teachers should, as far as possible, experience an integrated approach in government's efforts to improve learning. Interventions should be subject-specific only when this is clearly necessary, as is the case, for instance, when it comes to improving teacher subject knowledge.

The Dinaledi programme forms part of a wider strategy, known as the Mathematics and Science Strategy, introduced by the Department of Education in 2001. This strategy is currently under review so that lessons from past years may be incorporated and the impact of the strategy improved, partly through better monitoring of the various elements of the programme. The 2009 impact evaluation of the Dinaledi programme, completed in 2010 by the World Bank on behalf of the Department of Basic Education, is arguably the most thorough evaluation of its kind ever undertaken in relation to an education intervention programme in South Africa. It is vital that local capacity for this kind of work be strengthened as part of government's efforts to improve the quality of school interventions. On a more general level, the national department started working more closely with education research institutions in the country, so as to strengthen research into secondary schooling. Recent years have seen a welcome expansion in research into primary schools, but similar work at secondary level is still lagging behind.

Monitoring of progress

Indicator 6: Number of Grade 12 learners passing physical science.

As with Indicator 4, it is important to use final results after supplementary results have been taken into account. For the purposes of this indicator, a pass at the 30% level is being considered.

GOAL 7

Improve the average performance of Grade 6 learners in languages.

Problem statement

Goals 1 to 6 above focus on the percentage of learners achieving certain standards. In fact, all of these goals, except for Goal 4, focus on the achievement of a low and minimum standard. Clearly it is important to pay attention to improving the results of those at the bottom of the continuum, particularly

as this will contribute towards breaking the 'cycle of poverty' in South Africa. However, evidence suggests that is it not just at the bottom end that performance needs to improve. Economic and social imperatives require improvements along the whole spectrum of performance. To illustrate, the top 5% of South Africa's Grade 5 performers in reading in the international PIRLS programme performed poorly in comparison with the top 5% of Grade 4 learners in other developing countries, such as Iran, Trinidad and Tobago. (South Africa used Grade 5 instead of Grade 4, which was used by other PIRLS participants.) In order to encourage a focus on the whole range of performance, Goals 7 to 9 deal with the *average* score in South Africa, as opposed to the percentage of learners attaining minimum standards. If the results of any school or learner, even those already doing relatively well improve, this improves the national average.

Government's response

ANA will be used not just to monitor whether learners fall below minimum thresholds, but also to establish whether there is an improvement from one year to the next across the whole range of schools. The DBE is examining the use of ANA to identify individual schools that can be celebrated and perhaps rewarded, not because their scores are exceptionally high, but because they display exceptional and consistent improvement over time. This has been pursued in a number of other countries with some success.

There is a need to provide exceptional learners with better access to focus schools. Focus schools, which have been established in a few provinces, are schools that pay special attention to certain subjects, such as art or mathematics, and allow learners to spend more time on them and be taught by teachers with additional training and skills in these subjects. Focus schools can play a vital role in providing talented learners in poorly performing schools with new opportunities. Clearly a balanced approach is needed towards focus schools. Too many of them can undermine the performance of other schools, as the best learners are 'creamed off' towards focus schools. Focus schools cannot detract from the need to make all schools functional.

The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) programme constitutes an important element of this goal. SACMEQ involves testing a representative sample of Grade 6 learners in each of 15 countries in mathematics and reading. It also involves collecting a large range of background data on schools, teachers and the homes of learners. Not only does South Africa's participation in SACMEQ improve the country's understanding of the dynamics in primary schools, it represents a commitment towards improving education in Africa as a whole.

Monitoring of progress

Though not used for any indicator in the Action Plan, the data collected through the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is important in understanding this goal. Like SACMEQ, PIRLS involves the collection of a large range of background data that assist in clarifying why certain schools and learners perform better than others.

The following diagram indicates where South Africa stood in 2007 and how it ought to progress in future years with respect to Grade 6 reading. The diagram is based on country results from a variety of testing programmes. Results were made comparable using an approach involving 'bridge countries', or countries participating in more than one programme, as anchors. Because different programmes were never designed to be comparable, the 'bridging' process is problematic, yet it produces a sufficiently accurate correspondence between programmes for the purposes of this illustration. The size of the improvements envisaged for South Africa are in line with improvements that have been seen in other developing countries. In other words, the improvements are not impossible, even if they are ambitious.

Illustration of the desired improvements in Grade 6 languages

Desired movement	*PIRLS-like*	*SACMEQ*	*Selected countries at about this level*
	560	…	Russia, Singapore, Italy
	540	…	Netherlands, United States, United Kingdom, Cuba
	520	…	France, Poland, Spain
	500	…	Norway
	480	…	Costa Rica, Georgia
	460	…	Chile, Uruguay
2022	440	…	Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago
	420	580	Seychelles, Brazil, Iran, Colombia
	400	…	Argentina, Indonesia
2017	380	550	Kenya, Tanzania
	360	530	Mauritius, Swaziland, Botswana, Peru, Qatar
2012	340	520	Mozambique, Paraguay
	320	…	Ecuador, Morocco
2007	300	480	Uganda, **South Africa**
	280	…	Dominican Republic
	260	450	Lesotho, Namibia, Zambia
	240	430	Malawi

Indicator 7: Average score obtained in Grade 6 in language in the SACMEQ assessment.

South Africa participated in the last two runs of SACMEQ, in 2000 and 2007. In 2007, the South African sample size was increased to approximately 9 100 learners, compared to 3 200 in 2000, which made it possible to obtain more precise averages at provincial level. Even with this improvement, however, SACMEQ is primarily designed to obtain national statistics and any statistics below that level will necessarily carry a significant margin of error. (This margin of error can be calculated). The reason why the SACMEQ (but also the TIMSS and PIRLS) programmes are so important for South Africa, is that they allow us to confirm the trends seen in the national assessment programme (ANA) through tests that are designed and marked within an internationally standardised system. These programmes also permit us to compare South Africa's performance to that of other similar countries, which is important if we are to determine how well South Africa's schools can realistically be expected to perform in future years.

The SACMEQ scoring system works in such a way that there is no all-correct maximum score, so it is not possible, for instance, to say that a learner achieved a specific percentage in a SACMEQ test. Instead, the scoring is done in such a way that the average for all learners across all countries is 500 points and the standard deviation is 100 points. SACMEQ will next be run in 2012 and South Africa is preparing to participate. It is not absolutely clear what the SACMEQ cycles will be thereafter, but if the five-year gap between 2007 and 2012 is maintained, then subsequent runs could be expected in 2017 and 2022.

GOAL 8

Improve the average performance of Grade 6 learners in mathematics.

Problem statement

The under-performance of South Africa's best performing learners, compared to their peers in other countries, has been particularly noticeable in the SACMEQ mathematics results. Specifically, the top performing one-fifth of South Africa's Grade 6 learners performed worse than the top one-fifth in Kenya and Mauritius.

Government's response

It is conspicuous that, although in the Grade 12 examinations, mathematics is the subject with the lowest average scores, Stats SA's Census at Schools programme found that amongst Grades 3 to 7 learners, the most popular school

subject is mathematics[20]. There seems to be an inability within the schooling system to harness learner enthusiasm for mathematics in a way that produces acceptable learning outcomes. Goals 14 to 27, insofar as they seek to improve mathematics in schools, should be pursued whilst taking cognisance of the fact that it is only through sustaining a passion for mathematics amongst learners that the desired improvements will be brought about. In this regard, the DBE is working in conjunction with the Department of Science and Technology (DST) on joint programmes, aimed at popularising and demystifying mathematics amongst learners.

Monitoring of progress

The following diagram, which works like the one for the previous goal, illustrates the desired future improvements in Grade 6 mathematics.

Illustration of the desired improvements in Grade 6 mathematics

Desired movement	*TIMSS-like*	*SACMEQ*	*Selected countries at about this level*
	600	…	Hong Kong, Singapore
	580	…	Taiwan
	560	…	Japan
	540	…	Cuba, Kazakhstan, Russia, United Kingdom
	520	…	United States, Germany, Australia
	500	…	Italy, Canada, Sweden
	480	…	Czech Republic, Uruguay, Norway
	460	…	Ukraine, Costa Rica
2022	440	…	Mexico, Georgia
	420	580	Mauritius, Chile, Argentina
2017	400	560	Kenya, Iran, Brazil
	380	550	Seychelles, Peru, Algeria
	360	530	Paraguay, Mozambique, Colombia, Nicaragua
2012	340	520	Tanzania, Swaziland, Botswana, Panama, Morocco
2007	320	510	Uganda, Tunisia, Kuwait
	300	490	**South Africa**, Dominican Republic, Qatar
	280	**…**	…
	260	440	Lesotho
	240	430	Zambia, Malawi, Namibia
	220	…	Yemen
	200	…	…

[20] Stats SA, 2010.

Indicator 8: Average score obtained in Grade 6 in *mathematics* in the SACMEQ assessment.

The details for Indicator 7 are also applicable here.

GOAL 9

Improve the average performance of Grade 8 learners in *mathematics*.

Problem statement

The problem of a general under-performance in South Africa's schools, across the whole range of school types, became clear in the mathematics results of the 2003 Grade 8 TIMSS run. (TIMSS also includes Grade 4 testing, but South Africa has never participated in this.) The top 5% of performers in South Africa fared worse than their counterparts in countries such as the Philippines, Egypt and Indonesia. The bottom 25% of learners performed at about the same level as their counterparts in Ghana, but well below their counterparts from all other participating countries. South Africa's inequality of mathematics results was greater than that of any other participating country[21].

On the positive side, despite the inequalities outlined under Goal 5, there are a number of historically disadvantaged schools that perform well in Grade 12 mathematics and, in many cases, offer examples of what could be achieved in other similar schools. For example, in 2010 of the 2,665 public schools with only African learners in quintiles 1 to 3, a total of 785 schools had at least one learner with a score of over 70% in mathematics, 76 schools had more than five such learners and 144 schools saw at least 90% of learners passing mathematics at the 30% level. (Overall, across all schools, only 41% of African learners passed mathematics at this level.)

Although the overall percentage of coloured learners passing mathematics at the 30% level was relatively high, at 62%, the situation in predominantly coloured schools serving poorer communities was similar to the situation in predominantly African schools serving such communities. For instance, of 355 schools with predominantly coloured learners in quintiles 1 to 3, only four schools had more than five learners with a mathematics pass of at least 70% in the 2010 Grade 12 examinations.

[21] See Mullis *et al.* (2004: 34).

Government's response

Government's response to the challenge of improving mathematics at schools has been dealt with under the previous goals. With regard to TIMSS, government is committed to continued participation in this programme (of which the next run is in 2011) in order to benchmark national performance in mathematics, but also in science, at Grade 8 level against trends in other countries.

Monitoring of progress

The following diagram, like the ones under the previous two goals, maps the desired progress in future years.

Illustration of the desired improvements in Grade 8 mathematics

Desired movement	*TIMSS-like*	
	600	Korea, Singapore
	580	Finland, Japan
	560	Switzerland
	540	Belgium, the Netherlands
	520	Germany, United Kingdom, Russia
	500	United States, Australia
	480	Italy, Portugal
	460	Norway, Bulgaria
	440	Thailand, Turkey
2023	420	Uruguay, Tunisia
	400	Iran, Indonesia, Mexico, Egypt
2019	380	Chile, Morocco, the Philippines
	360	Argentina, Botswana, Brazil
2015	340	El Salvador
	320	Saudi Arabia
2011	300	Ghana, Qatar
	280	Kyrgyzstan
2007	260	**South Africa**

Indicator 9: Average Grade 8 mathematics score obtained in TIMSS.

South Africa last participated in the Grade 8 component of TIMSS in 2003. (South Africa did not participate in the 2007 run.) Like SACMEQ, TIMSS uses a scoring approach where 500 is the average for all learners across all countries. The reason why South Africa's scores in TIMSS were so low compared to those of SACMEQ, is largely because TIMSS includes many developed countries with high scores, whilst SACMEQ is limited to our region in Africa. TIMSS covers almost 9,000 learners in South Africa, so relatively precise provincial values are possible.

GOAL 10

Ensure that all children remain effectively enrolled in school, at least up to the year in which they turn 15.

Problem statement

The South African Schools Act requires children to be at school during all the years from when they turn 7 to when they turn 15. Although South Africa is close to realising this goal, there is an important minority of children who are not attending school when they should. There are many indicators that focus on enrolment. The most pertinent indicator for this goal is the age-specific enrolment ratio, which uses household data. The 2001 Census indicated that approximately 95% of children, aged 7 to 15, were enrolled in an educational institution[22]. The 2007 Community Census pointed to a value of approximately 96%, suggesting that there had been a slight improvement. The sample-based General Household Survey, which takes place annually, points to slightly higher grade-specific enrolment ratios for 7-to-15 year-olds. The reasons for this difference are not properly understood. Yet, the GHS confirms that there has been an improvement from 96% in 2002 to almost 99% in the year 2009 [23]. The GHS figures imply that, in 2009, approximately 150 000 children, aged 7 to 15, were out of school. This should be distinguished from the number of children aged 7 to 15 who have *never* been to school. (Those who were not in school in 2009 might have been enrolled during an earlier year.) The GHS suggests approximately 0,6%, or 50 000 of children aged 7 to 15, fell into this category in 2009. Close attention must be paid to the outcome of the 2011 Census to see whether past discrepancies in the age-specific enrolment ratios can be resolved.

[22] See Stats SA (2004: 38).

[23] See the 2011 *Macro indicator trends in schooling* report on the DBE website.

As part of UNESCO's global Education for All programme, South Africa periodically reports on its efforts to ensure that the EFA goals are met. South Africa's 2010 EFA report once again pointed to the importance of ensuring that disabled children have access to appropriate schooling, given the fact that this explains a large part of the out-of-school challenge[24]. Moreover, ensuring that schools are responsive to orphans is vital, considering substantial increases in the number of enrolled orphans during recent years and the possibility that the percentage of children who are orphans will continue to increase for several years.

It is important to note that, whilst the South African Schools Act largely sees compulsory schooling in terms of an age range, EFA is more focussed on the completion of primary schooling. Here there is somewhat considerable room for improvement. Only approximately 94% of South Africans completed Grade 7 in recent years, and only 77% completed Grade 9, or the end of the General Education and Training Band. (These figures are based on the 2009 GHS.) What this emphasises is the importance of not only ensuring that children aged 7 to 15 are enrolled, but that they perform better, repeat fewer grades and get to complete more grades before they leave school.

Government's response

The 2009 MTSF refers to the need to have a learner tracking system in place that is able to detect when learners leave the schooling system, so that appropriate action can be taken by schools and district offices to ensure that no children of compulsory school-going age remain outside school. Government's Learner Unit Record Information Tracking System (LURITS) is at an advanced stage and has already captured the greater majority of enrolled learners. LURITS currently works in such a way that schools with computers can transfer data on learners electronically, whilst schools without computers submit paper lists with learner details, which are then captured onto the system. South Africa is, in fact, ahead of most developing countries when it comes to this type of system. The challenge in the coming years will be to develop proper protocols for schools and, in particular, for the education departments, so that appropriate action may be taken when learners drop out prematurely. Clearly, such action is best taken in collaboration with community organisations.

As alluded to above, special needs education must be strengthened if 100% coverage of learners, aged 7 to 15, is to be achieved. This involves both encouraging inclusive education (see Goal 26) and ensuring that special schools for learners with very specialised needs are available in all districts, with hostels where necessary.

[24] See the 2011 *Education for all* country report for South Africa on the DBE website.

Monitoring of progress

Indicator 10: Percentage of 7-to-15-year-olds attending education institutions.

Data for this indicator has been available for many years through the household surveys of Statistics South Africa. With the data currently available, one simply considers the age of survey respondents and whether they are enrolled in an education institution. Using this approach, it is important for the survey to take place in the same month each year for values from different years to be comparable. If the survey month changes, then this could affect the statistics. The ideal would be to have the birth month and year of survey of respondents. One would then be able to assess whether people who turned 7 to 15 in the current calendar year, have been enrolled during the current year. This would provide a more accurate test of compliance with the compulsory schooling rules in the South African Schools Act. One needs to remember that, strictly speaking, a 15-year-old may be out of school without any law being broken. Specifically, a youth who is 15 but has turned 15 in the previous year, is not obliged to be enrolled during the current year. Discussions are under way with Stats SA to see whether the month and year of birth of respondents can be obtained via the General Household Survey, which is the best source for this indicator. However, even without this piece of information, using simple age provides credible indicator values.

GOAL 11

Improve the access of children to quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) below Grade 1

This goal is one of five priority goals for the period to 2014 reflecting the emphasis in the Minister's Delivery Agreement.

Problem statement

Studies from around the world, including South Africa, showed that good pre-primary schooling below Grade 1 made it easier for a child to learn at primary school level[25]. Yet, not all South African children get to attend pre-primary classes. What is encouraging is that the situation has improved enormously in recent years. Between 2003 and 2008, the percentage of Grade 1 learners, who had received some pre-primary schooling, increased from 60% to 80%

[25] See for instance the 2007 *Global Monitoring Report* for Education for All by UNESCO.

according to both the Annual Survey of Schools and data from the 2008 National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS). The General Household Survey indicates that, by 2009, a total of 85% of children were going through a year of Grade R. The number of Grade R learners enrolled in schools (public and independent) has increased dramatically from approximately 490,000 in 2007 to 710,000 in 2010, which is an increase of 45%. By far the majority of this growth took place in public schools. Evidence on grade repetition indicates that, unlike Grade 1, which has high levels of repetition, Grade R has virtually no repetition, meaning that enrolment figures can be taken as a fairly reliable indication of the number of children who get to participate in Grade R. The goal of the 2009 MTSF is that by 2014 all children should participate in Grade R.

The 2009 MTSF moreover emphasises the importance of ensuring that Grade R is of an acceptable standard, so that the necessary preparation for Grade 1 may be realised. Two reports commissioned by UNICEF during 2009, one dealing with school financing and management generally, and the other with expenditure and service quality in Early Childhood Development, pointed to a number of key concerns in this regard[26]. Both found the preconditions for quality teaching and learning to be uneven across the system and even weak in many schools. Class sizes are slightly bigger in Grade R in schools than in Grade R in community centres. (These centres are often publicly funded but offer no schooling beyond Grade R.) Moreover, limited funding meant that in schools where the education department was the employer, and the salary was thus higher, class sizes were especially high. Some 40% of schools in this category were found to have classes exceeding 40. On the other hand, where the less costly approach was pursued of Grade R teachers employed by the school governing body, using publicly allocated funds, teacher salaries were in many cases so low that it is doubtful that sufficiently qualified people would be attracted to the posts. In fact, it is common practice to refer to Grade R teachers not as teachers but as Grade R 'practitioners'. In general, the status enjoyed by Grade R teachers is clearly not the status that would be enjoyed by, for instance, a Grade 1 teacher. With respect to learning materials, it was found that approximately 25% of Grade R classes in schools did not have any books and that approximately half had no toys. Moreover, schools fared slightly worse than community centres against an index of the availability of learning materials.

Government's response

In Education White Paper 5 of 2001, a key strategic position on the future of Grade R was expressed, namely that Grade R should be offered predominately at

[26] The first report was based on data from a nationally representative sample of schools, whilst the latter was based on data from three provinces. The latter report is titled, 'Tracking public expenditure and assessing service quality in Early Childhood Development: Insights from a survey of three provinces'.

schools and not at centres separated from schools. The evidence in the UNICEF report on ECD in fact supports the correctness of this strategic position, despite the resourcing challenges facing schools mentioned above. More in particular, it was found that more time was spent on numeracy and literacy exercises in public school Grade R classes, compared to Grade R in community centres. For example, in 81% of schools, activities focussed specifically on advancing numeracy were found, against 67% in community centres. This difference is relatively easy to understand. Grade R teachers in primary schools are in constant contact with their peers in the higher grades and are directly exposed to what the cognitive needs are in, for instance, Grade 1. The same cannot be said for Grade R teachers in community centres. An analysis of the 2009 General Household Survey data indicates that by 2009, approximately 75% of Grade R learners were in schools, as opposed to community centres.

Public spending on pre-primary education has increased more than spending on any other area of education. By 2011, spending on ECD will be four times what it was in 2006 in real terms (in other words, after inflation has been taken into account). Importantly, the increase in overall spending exceeded the increase in enrolments, implying that spending per learner had improved. The spending arrangements vary across provinces and, in some cases within provinces. Two approaches are, in fact, permitted by the Grade R funding norms[27], which is largely due to the fact that when the funding norms were formulated there were already a variety of approaches in use. The funding norms thus minimised the amount of adjustment required, but made Grade R funding especially difficult to monitor and, some would argue, allowed for an inequitable treatment of learners within the public system. Disparities largely relate to the fact that approximately 85% of schools with a publicly funded Grade R make use of teachers who are employees of the provincial department, whilst 31% make use of teachers who are employees of the school governing body. (Some schools have teachers from both categories.) The current situation is generally regarded as unsustainable, partly due to the salary and class size inequalities referred to previously. At the same time, it is important that any changes should be sensitive to the needs of schools and should not put systems and approaches, which do work, at risk in the sense that the result is Grade R of an acceptable quality. One area in which there is little policy guidance, is the area of teacher assistants. Currently, the number of such assistants is low. Such assistants, however, can play an important role in enhancing the work of the Grade R teacher, especially when classes are large. Moreover, adding teacher assistants to schools is a relatively easy way for the schooling system to contribute to job creation.

[27] The Grade R funding policy can be found in Government Notice 26 of 2008.

Part of the challenge in improving the quality of Grade R lies in capacity-building directed at teachers and in a gradual improvement in the formal levels of qualifications of teachers. Currently there are very large disparities between the qualifications of different teachers. The UNICEF ECD report (that is based on data from just three provinces) indicates that approximately a quarter of teachers have a degree and that a further one-third hold a diploma. Some 13% have qualifications at the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 5 (the equivalent of Grade 12 plus one year), and 12% have qualifications at NQF Level 4 (the equivalent of Grade 12). Some 38% of teachers do not have a Grade 12 Matric qualification. The pre-service training of pre-school teachers is not well developed in public higher education institutions (nor in FET colleges). Much of this training takes place privately and through the work of NGOs. Whilst the private sector could continue to be an important source of Grade R teachers, creating sufficient capacity requires greater involvement by public institutions. Moreover, standards relating to who is officially qualified to teach Grade R are currently not clear.

Providing Grade R teachers with effective teacher guides and learners with high-quality readers and workbooks, is clearly an important way of promoting quality in Grade R. During 2010, newly developed Grade R resource packs were distributed to schools offering Grade R. During 2011 and in subsequent years, additional resource packs, to top up the existing supply, will be made available, with materials being modified periodically on the basis of research into their effectiveness.

Yet another way of improving the quality of Grade R is to ensure that pre-school enrolment below Grade R is widespread and caters for the developmental needs of children. Public funding of ECD below Grade R is mostly the responsibility of the Department of Social Development. Cooperation between Social Development and Basic Education with respect to policies, quality assurance and the expansion of publicly funded services, is obviously vital. It is moreover important to maintain a strong and vibrant layer of ECD centres run by NGOs and community-based organisations. In recent years, these organisations have increasingly turned their focus to ECD below the Grade R level, in response to the increased availability of Grade R in public schools. Even at the Grade R level, however, non-government organisations should continue to play an important role. Education White Paper 5 envisaged that approximately 10% of Grade R would continue to be offered outside public schools.

Achieving universal enrolment in Grade R requires further expansion in the availability of Grade R in public schools. On the one hand, publicly funded places in schools offering Grade R should be increased. On the other, primary schools that do not currently offer Grade R should introduce this service. The roll-out of Grade R took place according to provincial priority lists. However,

as pointed out by the UNICEF report on school financing and management, there had been insufficient transparency in relation to these lists, with the result that it has been difficult for some schools to know what their future levels of Grade R funding would be. These lists should be made public.

Monitoring of progress

The key indicator used for this goal is explained below. Importantly, specifications relating to many other indicators in the Action Plan are also relevant for Grade R. For instance, it is important to pay attention to the percentage of Grade R learners who have access to the materials they need (indicator under Goal 19) and who enjoy a publicly funded meal at school (indicator under Goal 25).

Indicator 11: The percentage of Grade 1 learners who have attended Grade R.

The Annual Survey of Schools (ASS) asks how many Grade 1 learners in each school have attended pre-primary schooling. Figures from the Annual Survey agree relatively well with figures obtained from the household surveys of Stats SA. One definitional issue that must be taken into account, is that not all enrolment taking place during the year before Grade 1 is actually a formal Grade R, where this can be understood as a Grade R that follows the official curriculum and meets certain minimum standards. Moreover, it must be acknowledged that, particularly in non-public institutions, inconsistent levels of quality monitoring result in a situation where it is not always clear whether an institution fulfils the requirements for a formal Grade R or not. A relatively reliable and clear measure is whether learners attended some form of pre-schooling in the year preceding Grade 1. This must clearly be monitored. In addition, whether the education received before Grade 1 complied with minimum Grade R requirements, must become increasingly clear.

The following are some of the more important future milestones for this goal.

2011 » A report on the impact of new resource packs on the quality of learning and teaching in Grade R is produced to guide the way forward.

2012 » Provincial roll-out plans, indicating which schools will see increases in their Grade R funding, or the introduction of such funding for the first time, and in which year, are made public on provincial departmental websites.

» A revised Grade R funding strategy is released to deal with existing policy and implementation discrepancies, including unacceptable inequities in per learner spending and in Grade R teacher pay.

2013 » New in-service teacher training materials, directed at teachers themselves and those who train teachers are published, following an extensive process of research and pilot projects.

2014 » A new system for periodic and sample-based monitoring of cognitive development amongst Grade R learners is implemented for the first time as part of efforts to ensure that Grade R prepares learners adequately for Grade 1.

GOAL 12

Improve the grade promotion of learners through Grades 1 to 9.

Problem statement

Grade repetition can, in some cases, be an appropriate measure to take in the interests of an individual learner and in the interests of a class as a whole. However, the levels of grade repetition seen in South African schools are clearly too high. Too much grade repetition results in too many over-aged learners in class which, in turn, can result in discipline problems. Moreover, excessive grade repetition has the effect of discouraging learners from continuing with their schooling and thus it increases dropping out. General Household Survey data from 2009 indicates that, in Grade 7, one-third of learners are over-aged in the sense that they are aged 14 or above. (With no grade repetition and no late entry into Grade 1, no Grade 7 learner should ever be older than 13.) Some 9% of Grade 7 learners are age 16 or older; in other words, over-aged by at least three years. The situation deteriorates the higher the grade. In 2009, some 14% of Grade 9 learners were age 18 or older; in other words over-aged by three or more years. Two-thirds of these over-aged learners in Grade 9 were boys, which is indicative of the fact that at least up to Grade 9 both the academic performance and the promotion rates of boys tend to be worse than those of girls.

In South Africa and other developing countries it has been difficult to obtain reliable statistics on the number of grade repeaters in schools. Principals tend to under-report the number of repeaters in the Annual Survey of Schools, for a number of reasons. The DBE has been addressing this problem, partly through more rigorous verification of Annual Survey of Schools data. A key step forward

was the introduction, in 2009, of grade repetition questions in the General Household Survey. Around the world, household surveys showed to provide better grade repetition figures than school surveys. The 2009 GHS indicated that the percentage of learners repeating their grade varied from approximately 7% for primary level grades to much higher values at secondary level; the maximum being 17% at Grade 10 level. Some research pointed to the fact that poor assessment practices in schools often meant that the wrong learners are made to repeat and that a learner's probability of repeating depends too much on the school he or she attends.[28]

Government's response

Many of the interventions described in this plan are designed to improve learning outcomes and thus, by implication, to reduce grade repetition. However, the introduction of more standardised assessments, through ANA, inevitably creates new risks in relation to grade repetition. These risks must be monitored and managed very carefully. More specifically, whilst it is desirable for better assessment practices to inform grade repetition, sudden shifts must be avoided, as this could cause undesirable instability in the schooling system. In other words, a gradual transition towards a combination of better learning outcomes, better informed grade repetition decisions and a reduction in the levels of grade repetition should take place. It was made clear to schools that ANA should not be used in isolation to determine whether a learner should repeat a grade. Instead, ANA and schools-based assessment results should be jointly considered.

The existing grade repetition policy states that no learner should repeat more than once per three-year curriculum phase[29]. Despite these restrictions, it is possible for very high levels of grade repetition to take place without violating the policy. The DBE is considering the introduction of additional grade repetition norms which would specify limitations in terms of the percentage of learners that should be repeating their grade during any year within a school.

Monitoring of progress

A number of indicators are relevant for this goal, including the repeater and drop-out rates as defined by UNESCO, the percentage of learners repeating their current grade and age-specific grade completion rates. Importantly, drop-out rates that are calculated using the UNESCO approach, were found to be highly inaccurate if school survey data were used, due to a number of problems with the repeater values in the data. (This was found in many countries, not

[28] See Lam, Ardington and Leibbrandt (2008).

[29] Government Notice 2432 of 1998.

only in South Africa). In order to clarify the considerable uncertainty in this regard, the Minister commissioned a study of the matter in 2007[30]. It is clear that caution must be exercised when dropping out is analysed.

Indicator 12.1: The percentage of children who turned nine in the previous year and who are currently enrolled in Grade 4 (or a higher grade).

Data on the grade attained and the age of learners has been available for many years through Stats SA surveys, such as the General Household Survey. Arguably, however, not enough attention was paid to the inter-related problems of repetition, dropping out and over-aged learners, and how to deal with them effectively. This indicator, which is very similar to one calculated by Stats SA as part of its Census at School programme[31], is useful insofar as it takes into account three problems within one indicator: late entry into Grade 1, grade repetition and dropping out. If no child entered Grade 1 late, then all children who turned 6 in the previous year would be, as a minimum, in Grade 1. It is possible for such children to be in Grade 2 because the 2002 provisions relating to admission allow for early entrance into Grade 1 for some learners[32]. But no learner who turned six in the previous year should not be in Grade 1 yet. Similarly, if there is no dropping out or grade repetition at the end of Grade 1, then all children who have turned 7 in the previous year, would be, as a minimum, in Grade 2. One can take this logic further and state that all children who turned nine in the previous year would, in the absence of grade repetition and dropping out, be at least in Grade 4 in the current year. This explains the indicator referred to above. It is unlikely that that the value for this indicator would ever be 100%, because some grade repetition is likely to occur for the foreseeable future. However, decreases in this indicator can be expected as fewer children enter Grade 1 late, and fewer children drop out and repeat. Because the indicator deals with all children, whether they are in school or not, it is necessary to use Stats SA household data. As in the case of Indicator 10, it would be ideal to have the month and year of birth of respondents in the GHS. However, even if this is not possible, a less ideal and modified definition can be used, which looks at the percentage of children aged 10, who have reached Grade 4, at the very least. The important thing is that when comparisons across time are made, the same definition should be used.

[30] See the 2008 report, *Learner retention in the South African schooling system*, on the DBE website.

[31] Stats SA, 2010: 40.

[32] Education Laws Amendment Act of 2002 (Act 50 of 2002).

Indicator 12.2: The percentage of children who turned 12 in the previous year who are currently enrolled in Grade 7 (or a higher grade).

This indicator works just like the previous one, except here the focus is on three age years and three grades later.

GOAL 13

Improve the access of the youth to Further Education and Training (FET) beyond Grade 9.

Problem statement

Presently, approximately 39% of South Africa's youth obtain a National Senior Certificate from a school[33]. At least 7% of youths get to obtain some other qualification at the FET level, such as a qualification from a public or private FET college. However, most of these youths also hold a National Senior Certificate. Only approximately 40% of youths get to obtain some qualification at the FET level, meaning 60% of youths are left with no qualification at all beyond the Grade 9 level. This has serious negative implications for youths when they attempt to find jobs and makes enrolling in post-school studies difficult and often impossible. Moreover, the psychological and social implications of having no qualification to show as evidence for what is usually more than ten years of education, is also estimated to be considerable. Getting more youths to obtain at least one relevant FET qualification, either from a school in the form of the National Senior Certificate, or from an alternative institution, such as an FET college, continues to be a major part of the challenge of addressing unemployment and disillusionment amongst the youth.

Despite the problems of insufficient successful completion mentioned above, enrolment levels in schools beyond Grade 9 are good by middle-income country standards. The percentage of youths who get to enrol for Grades 10, 11 and 12 are 88%, 79% and 69% respectively[34]. The percentage of youths who successfully complete each of these grades is, however, lower; for instance 39%

[33] A simple division of the number of successful Grade 12 matriculants emerging from the public system by the size of one age cohort of youths, according to Stats SA, reveals a percentage that is considerably lower than 39%. However, it is necessary to adjust population figures to deal with clear discrepancies between enrolment and population figures (this is evident if one takes into account patterns consistently emerging from the General Household Survey) and to include matriculants from the Independent Examinations Board. This provides a statistic of approximately 40%.

[34] General Household Survey 2009 dataset.

for Grade 12. Successful completion of secondary schooling, which stands at 39% in South Africa, is not good by international standards. Similar countries achieve upper secondary completion ratios of between 50% and 60%. Within the schooling system, the key challenge appears to be to ensure that more of those who enrol in Grade 12 get to pass Grade 12. With respect to those who do not succeed in passing Grade 12, the question of whether to introduce a General Education Certificate in Grade 9, or widely recognised certificates of successful completion of Grades 10 and 11, is a key question. These options are being explored by government as ways of facilitating the transition from school to a post-school institution or the labour market.

It is important to understand the gender dimension of access to an FET qualification. The percentage of young males obtaining some FET qualification is currently approximately 37%, whilst the figure for young females is approximately 41% (the overall figure being 39%, as mentioned above). In this sense, gender inequality in South Africa is atypical, at least in the developing country context. However, closer examination of the figures reveals that, in a number of respects, females lag behind their male counterparts. Above all, there is a need to strengthen the performance of females in subjects such as mathematics and physical science, which have traditionally been male-dominated. To illustrate, though participation by females in mathematics in the Grade 12 examinations is comparable to that of males, pass rates of female learners have been relatively low (44% against 52% for males in the 2010 examinations, for instance).

Government's response

The Further Education and Training level is the responsibility of both the Department of Basic Education, which must establish policy for Grades 10 to 12 in public and independent schools, and the Department of Higher Education and Training, which deals with both public and private FET colleges. Opportunities for youths in FET colleges have improved recently, with the introduction the NSC(V) qualifications; one for each of the three years of FET college training and increased government funding of colleges. Where there is room for improvement, is in the alignment between schools and FET colleges to improve the overall percentage of learners obtaining an FET qualification. Moreover, government is exploring ways of strengthening the regulation and funding of private institutions at FET level, in consultation with the relevant private bodies, where this has clear benefits with regard to the opportunities of youths and, more in particular, those from poorer communities.

Many public comments received during 2010 emphasised the need to improve guidance to learners in secondary schools. This guidance must include better information on the new opportunities now available in FET colleges and how

learners should plan the remainder of their secondary schooling (should they transfer to an FET college before Grade 12, for instance). Better guidance on what FET school subjects to select upon entry into Grade 10 should also be available. Changing one's subject combinations after one has started Grade 10, whilst often not ideal, is sometimes necessary. Clearer guidelines on when and how this should be done are required. In general, the range of subjects available is much wider in more affluent secondary schools than is the case in historically disadvantaged schools. This closes many doors to poorer learners and should be addressed, above all through better availability of teachers with specific subject specialisations. Whilst vocational education is often associated with FET colleges, there are many vocational training opportunities offered by the FET school curriculum. Unfortunately, these opportunities are not widely available to poorer communities. For example, almost half the approximately 50 000 Grade 12 examination candidates in the subject computer applications technology are found in quintile 5 schools, with the remainder is spread across the remaining quintiles. Across all schools, higher participation in strategic foreign languages, such as Chinese, Arabic and Spanish is needed if South Africa is to compete globally. There is room for better enrichment of school subjects through participation in projects that span many schools. For instance, best practices from existing programmes, aimed at building a spirit of entrepreneurship amongst learners taking commercially-oriented subjects, should become more widespread. There should also be further collaboration with the Department of Arts and Culture in order to encourage the participation of learners taking arts subjects and participating in cultural events. Partnerships with the Department of Tourism should be strengthened, for instance, to provide practical experience in the preservation of heritage sites for learners taking tourism as a subject. Teachers often complain that they have problems accessing the information they need in order to guide their learners adequately. Relevant brochures and web-based information must become more freely available and should be updated continuously, given that education and training opportunities, as well as labour market circumstances change continuously. But it is also important for teachers and learners to experience personal contact with people from FET colleges, as well as employers, through activities such as presentations and career guidance fairs.

Public comments received moreover emphasised improving opportunities for re-writing Grade 12 examinations and making these opportunities widely known so that youths who struggle academically can be provided with a sense of hope. One issue that often compromises the FET education of girls is early pregnancy. Here there is a need for better advocacy and education so that youths, both male and female, are able to take better control of their lives. The application of the 2007 national policy on learner pregnancy should moreover be more rigorous, so that unfair discrimination against girls by schools is avoided.

Finally, schools have a special responsibility to guide the right learners towards a career in teaching. Better ways of identifying appropriate candidates and providing them with the necessary information are needed (see Goal 14 in this regard).

Monitoring of progress

Indicator 13.1: The percentage of youths who obtain a National Senior Certificate from a school.

The matric pass rate receives much attention and will undoubtedly continue to be an important measure of success in the schooling system. The problem with this pass rate, however, is that it could go up, simply because learners, who do not perform very well, are prevented from registering as candidates for the examinations in the first place. This tactic of keeping students away from the examinations in order to boost pass rates is, in fact, practised in many schools. The indicator mentioned here is the number of matric passes, or learners obtaining their NSC, divided by the number of youths in one age cohort of the population. The age cohort that will be used here is all youths aged 18, as this is the age cohort with the greatest number of Grade 12 learners. This indicator will be calculated in two different ways and trends, using both calculation methods, will be **analysed.** In the first method, actual NSC passes, as published by the DBE, will be divided by the size of the age 18 population, with the latter being based on Stats SA figures. The disadvantage with this approach is that there are well-known misalignments between enrolment and population figures, which require one to adjust the latter downwards, or else the indicator value becomes lower than it should be. In the second method, only Stats SA data are used and for each age cohort all those who have completed Grade 12 successfully are divided by the population of that specific age. The best percentage (there will be a different percentage for each age) is then selected as the indicator value. The disadvantage with this approach is that respondents in the GHS may provide an incorrect response and, more in particular, they may say that they completed Grade 12 successfully when, in fact, they only attended Grade 12. The two methods provide values that are close but not identical. This indictor is an important example of where data problems are difficult to resolve. (Many countries experience the same problems mentioned here.) However, if we use both methods explained here, and both indicate that the situation is improving, then we can be very certain that this is indeed happening.

Indicator 13.2: The percentage of youths who obtain any FET qualification. (This is an indicator of concern to both DBE and DHET.)

Having some FET qualification, as opposed to having no widely recognised qualification at all, obviously improves someone's chances of finding a job or studying further. By far the most widely issued FET qualification is the NSC. Many youths who obtain the NSC also obtain another FET qualification, for instance a qualification from a public or private FET college. There are also youths who do not obtain the NSC but obtain some other FET qualification. This is obviously better than having no qualification at all. Unfortunately, very few youths who leave school without obtaining the NSC obtain some other qualification outside of school. This leaves approximately half of all South Africa's youths with no FET qualification at all. Why should this concern the DBE, whose focus is on schools? It affects the work of the DBE in two ways. Firstly, if opportunities for studies beyond school for those leaving without the NSC are limited, this strengthens the argument for more enrolments in practical subjects at the FET band of schools. Secondly, part of the challenge for the schooling system is to provide better guidance to learners on what study opportunities exist outside school, for those who do not wish to continue to Grade 12 and the NSC. To conclude, it should be a concern for everyone if so many youths end up having no widely recognised education qualification at all, despite having spent often over ten years being educated. The General Household Survey provides the data needed for this indicator.

The following is important future milestones for this goal.

2012 » The Department of Basic Education, in collaboration with the Department of Higher Education and Training, produces a comprehensive strategy on how to align the various education subsectors in the interests of a better qualified and employable youth.

2013 » Lessons learnt from a series of information and advocacy campaigns, aimed at youths and relating to FET and higher education options, inform the design of a newly launched and comprehensive web-based facility to guide youths and their teachers in this area.

7.

The importance of e-Education

The 2004 draft White Paper on e-Education refers to the potential role of digital information and communication technologies (ICTs) in education as revolutionary. Evidence from around the world does indeed point towards the ability of ICTs to enrich teaching and learning and to take educational outcomes to a new level. At the same time, ICTs present new risks for social cohesion. The White Paper makes reference to the 'digital divide' or the gap between those who enjoy access to these new technologies and those who do not. Ensuring that all learners gain access to ICTs as soon as possible, reduces the dangers of an entrenched digital divide in future.

Not only is e-Education considered a means towards improving teaching and learning, it is also viewed as a tool that can improve education management in a variety of ways, for instance through the computerisation of routine administrative tasks.

Access to ICTs in schools has been improving steadily over the years. By 2007, over 80% of principals in primary schools reported having access to a computer at school[35]. The figure for teachers was 60%[36]. By 2009, 23% of schools had a computer centre, though figures were very different in different provinces, from a maximum of 60% in the Western Cape to 10% in the case of Eastern Cape[37]. At the primary level 37% of learners reported having used a computer at school by 2007, whilst a further 13% reported having used a computer outside school (but not in school)[38]. In the same year, 23% of primary learners had access to a computer within the home[39]. In Stats SA's 2009 Census at Schools, 30% of learners, at both the primary and secondary levels, reported having access to a computer at home[40]. Access to the internet has also been improving, though access rates are still low. By 2007 approximately 20% of primary school

[35] Systemic Evaluation 2007 and SACMEQ 2007 datasets.

[36] PIRLS 2006 dataset.

[37] NEIMS statistics published on the national departmental website.

[38] SACMEQ 2007 dataset. The PIRLS 2006 dataset indicates that 43% used computers in their school at least some of the time.

[39] Systemic Evaluation 2007 dataset.

[40] Stats SA's data query system at http://www.statssa.gov.za/timeseriesdata/crosstabulatedata.asp.

teachers had access to the internet in their school[41]. It can be assumed that the situation would be somewhat better in secondary schools. According to Census at Schools access amongst learners to the internet at home doubled from 9% to 20% between 2001 and 2009[42]. These statistics suggest that the internet remains the preserve of the advantaged few. Schools must play a vital role in making internet access and literacy universal amongst learners as soon as possible.

Improvements in the ICT situation in schools are due to a number of government and non-government initiatives. The volume of education materials that are digitally available as stand-alone packages or resources on the internet, expanded greatly. This encouraged schools to acquire ICTs. Here a key contribution by the national department was the establishment of the Thutong Portal on the internet to facilitate access to, amongst other things, key curriculum documents. Whilst not all schools have access to the internet, virtually all district offices do, meaning that, at the very least, all district officials responsible for training and supporting school staff are able to access Thutong. The SchoolNet project, started in 1997 with the involvement of the national department, continues to promote access to ICTs in schools, largely by means of partnerships with the private sector. Given that private business has a strong interest in the computer literacy of youths leaving school, this is an area where partnerships have been especially fruitful. The Khanya project in the Western Cape, also aimed at promoting ICT access and use in schools, offers models of best practice that have attracted international recognition.

Progress in the area of e-Education is particularly dependent on effective collaboration between a number of different stakeholders, which include, apart from the education departments, the Department of Communications, the Independent Communication Authority of South Africa (ICASA) and the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA). Strong working relationships to advance the goals of e-Education already exist, though there is room for more focussed attention on what is affordable and can be implemented, keeping in mind that the ultimate goal is to improve the quality of learning and teaching, more in particular for the most disadvantaged. The recently created Presidential National Commission on Information Society and Development has started to play a key role in promoting a more focussed approach amongst the various stakeholders.

[41] Systemic Evaluation 2007 and SACMEQ 2007 datasets.

[42] Stats SA, 2010.

Despite significant advances, in many ways e-Education has barely begun to be a reality in the South African schooling system. More in particular, major steps will have to be taken in the coming years if historically disadvantaged learners are not to be left on the wrong side of the digital divide. But what benefits does e-Education entail for the key stakeholders in education? Some of the key benefits are described below.

Learners can expect e-Education to deliver the following:

- **Exposure to the latest ICTs and how they operate.** At the most basic level, the technologies themselves must be made available to learners and demystified. Every learner, no matter what subjects he or she gets to take in the FET band, should become conversant in the essential technologies, such as word processing, spreadsheets, e-mail and the internet.
- **A greater variety of ways to learn what is in the curriculum.** ICTs have the potential to enrich the entire curriculum through access to knowledge beyond what a learner's teachers and textbooks can provide, and through computer-based tools that make the learning process more interesting and enjoyable.
- **Access to a wide range of information through the internet.** Beyond the curriculum, the internet can provide learners with key information they would otherwise not have, on issues such as health, sport and post-school opportunities in FET colleges, universities and the labour market.
- **Learning through communication with learners around the world.** Existing ICT in school projects place considerable emphasis on the creation of national and international networks of learners and it was found that such networks could play an important role in broadening the world view of learners.

Teachers can expect e-Education to deliver the following:

- **Access to a wide variety of teaching materials.** ICTs and, more in particular the internet, provide unprecedented access for teachers to materials they can use in the classroom to improve learning and to bring about variety. Materials produced locally or abroad, by government or non-government organisations, by professional materials developers or fellow-teachers, can all be of interest. In fact, the variety is so large that the teacher can expect some guidance from the education department to ensure that materials do indeed support the national curriculum.

- **Easy access to professional development courses and modules.** The internet provides new opportunities for the education departments, the South African Council for Educators (SACE), universities and others to offer professional development and training to teachers. With the right emphasis on resource development by the relevant institutions, teachers can expect e-Education to greatly expand the availability of in-service training that fits individual needs and can be pursued on a flexible basis. At the same time, training through e-Education can never completely replace more traditional face-to-face training methods. The two approaches should complement each other.

- **Tools that make the management of teaching easier.** It has been a common complaint amongst teachers that the administrative workload reduces time spent on actual teaching and on individualised attention to learners. Current simplifications in the curriculum are being designed to address these concerns, but ICT can further facilitate routine administration and the diagnosis of, for instance, assessment results.

- **Membership of professional networks where ideas are shared.** Professional networks on the internet can assist teachers in making contact with other teachers facing similar challenges or having similar professional interests. Moreover, such networks can be a useful way of keeping alive, over many years, professional networks that are initiated in more traditional face-to-face training environments.

Parents can expect e-Education to deliver the following:

- **Better information on the education of their children.** Obviously the benefits of ICT for parents are dependent on whether parents have access to this technology. Whilst the digital divide is very much a reality amongst parents, increasingly even parents in more remote and disadvantaged communities are making use of, for instance, the internet and e-mail. The education sector can assist in accelerating this trend by ensuring that important general, but also school-specific information needed by parents is made easily available on official websites.

- **New channels for communicating directly with the educators in their local school and with the education authorities.** ICTs and, more in particular e-mail, created a new and powerful channel of communication between parents and those who offer public schooling.

School principals and other education managers can expect e-Education to deliver the following:

- **Easier access to up-to-date education policies.** A common complaint amongst principals has been that policy and curriculum information

too often arrives at the school in a disjointed and unclear manner, after considerable mediation by several layers of the bureaucracy. ICT provides a vehicle for better communication of this information, though obviously much hinges on increasing access to the internet amongst principals and the maintenance of information-rich and up-to-date official websites.

- **Tools that make school management (or district management) easier.** There is already considerable experience amongst principals from a wide range of schools in the use of school administration packages that facilitate processes, such as the production of learner report cards and the school's timetable. In particular, the national SA-SAMS package was distributed free to schools with the capacity to use it. Further expansion and resource improvements in this area are expected.

- **Membership of forums aimed at sharing experiences and solving problems.** In many ways, school principals are even more physically isolated from their peers than teachers. Professional networks on the internet allow principals to share experiences and ideas with each other.

- **Better communication of the school's plans to the community and partners.** Features, such as a school website, provide the school with a window to the world through which the school can communicate its plans, coming events and progress to stakeholders, including parents and local sponsors of the school. It has been shown that the task of constructing and maintaining a school website is in itself a way for the school to unite and define its identity.

How can the above expectations be realised in all South Africa's schools? The White Paper identified the following six areas of action.

- **Development of e-Education content and systems.** It is only if sufficient and appropriate materials and tools exist that expanding the availability of ICTs will result in improvements in education. There is already a considerable stock of locally relevant education materials available through, for instance, the internet. Yet, in this regard, South Africa still lags behind the most successful developing nations. The challenge as far as government is concerned, is to invest directly in materials development, but also to ensure that the right institutional arrangements and incentives exist outside government for a critical mass of educational materials to be generated. The challenge is too great for one institution, for instance the national department, to take on all the developmental responsibility. Yet, a key responsibility for the national department is to provide the right kind of guidance so that schools are able to make the right choices when faced with large quantities of materials.

- **Promotion of access to ICTs, in particular amongst the historically disadvantaged.** The existing momentum whereby an increasing number of schools gain access to ICTs every year should be accelerated through more active and focussed involvement by government. Clearly, the sustainability of any improvements must be considered very carefully, by paying sufficient attention to matters such as hardware and software maintenance, and the securing of physical equipment and networks. In this regard, during 2009, the national department completed an ICT feasibility study of various pathways into the future, based on lessons learnt in recent years.

- **Capacity-building amongst users and potential users.** A variety of approaches, both traditional and unconventional, should be employed to build the capacity to use ICTs amongst, in particular, teachers and education managers. Experience has shown that capacity-building poses a smaller challenge when the right materials and tools are available and when it is clear to users that these will make their jobs easier.

- **Engagement with communities.** The available data suggests that the use of ICTs in communities goes way beyond the school. In fact, only approximately half of the learners in a recent national study indicated that most of their ICT learning was through the school[43]. The expansion of e-Education in schools will provide new opportunities for schools to become centres of community life.

- **Research and development.** ICTs can be costly and could change society in profound ways. It is important that government's strategy for e-Education should be driven by sound research and not just popular fads or marketing drives. Moreover, it is vital that sufficient local development of software takes place and that at least part of this should be funded by government. In particular, government has an important role to play in ensuring that all the country's official languages enjoy a sufficient presence in the materials and software produced.

The following are some of the more important e-Education milestones.

2012 » A new e-Education strategy, which updates and adds detail to the 2004 White Paper and includes future targets for ICT access in schools, is released.

» A user survey of the Thutong Portal leads to a plan on how to take this important e-Education element to a new level effectiveness.

[43] SACMEQ 2007 dataset.

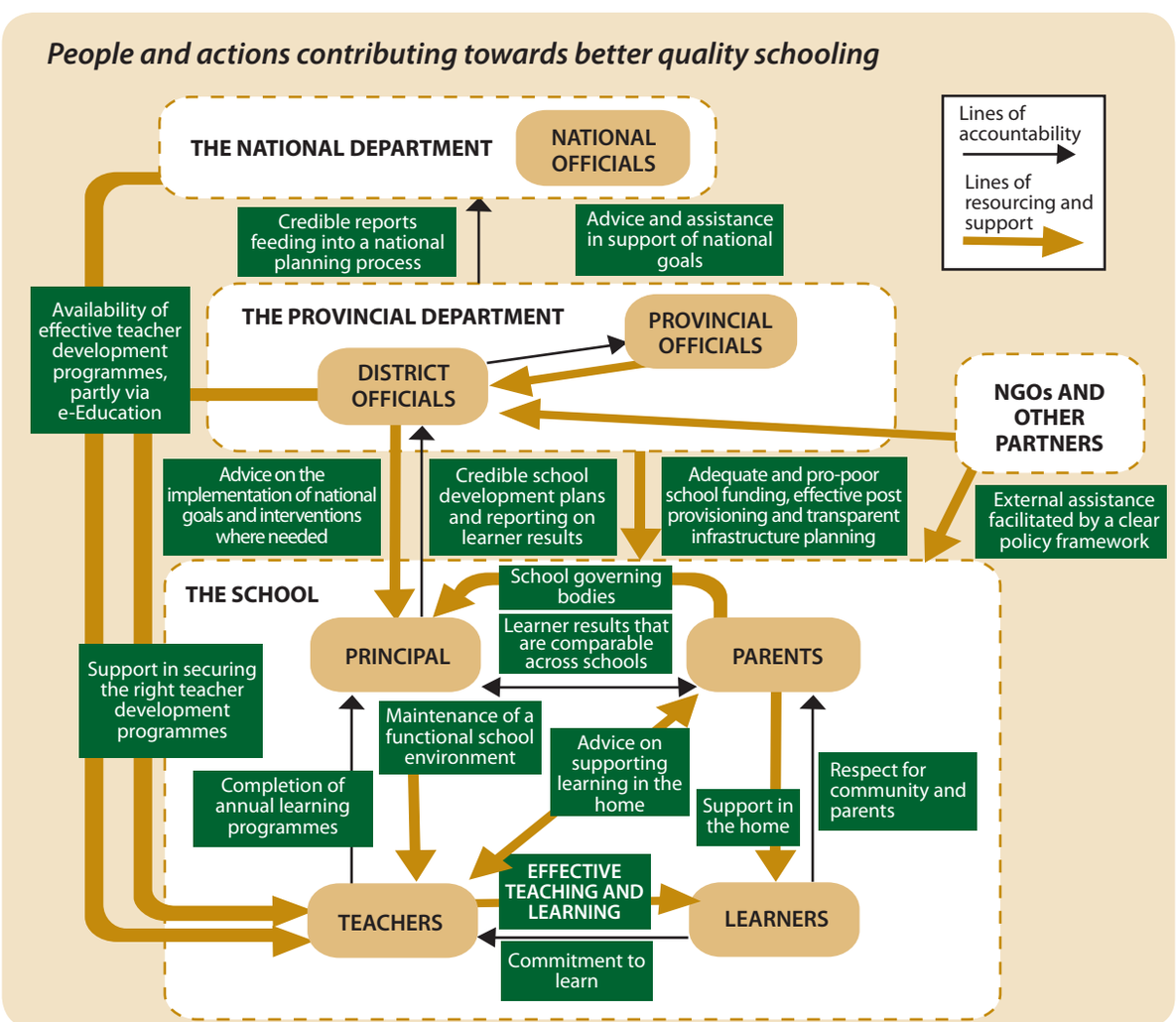
2013
- All school principals have access to a computer and to the internet at school.
- An assessment of the success of the Teacher Laptop Initiative is concluded and the project is adjusted accordingly (if necessary).

2014
- Using ICTs for teaching becomes a mandatory component of all pre-service teacher training.
- A review of the previous year's interventions, aimed at enhancing teaching and learning through ICTs, is released and the national e-Education strategy is adjusted where necessary.

8.

The goals dealing with the how of improving schooling

The following diagram captures the key linkages with respect to *how* the outcome goals discussed above can be achieved. It provides one tool to better understand how goals 14 to 27 contribute towards goals 1 to 13.



8.1 Teachers and the teaching process (Goals 14 to 18)

GOAL 14

Attract a new group of young, motivated and appropriately trained teachers into the teaching profession each year.

Problem statement

For many years, the number of newly qualified teachers joining the teaching profession has been too low. Persal payroll data indicates that, in recent years, approximately 10,100 publicly employed educators have left the public service every year, but that only approximately 5,000 newly qualified teachers have been joining each year. This leaves a gap of approximately 5,000 educators. The main reason why the total number of teachers has not declined is that older people, qualified to teach, have entered the public teaching force, largely from the private sector, and filled this gap. This is clearly not an ideal situation. The aim should be for the number of newly qualified joiners to increase from 5,000 to approximately 10,100. This target applies if the current overall size of the teaching force is maintained. If the number of teachers were to be increased, then even more newly qualified joiners would be needed each year.

The situation has been improving slowly in recent years, partly due to government programmes aimed at boosting the number of youths entering teacher training. In 2005, for instance, the number of newly qualified joiners was approximately 3,000. Since then, there has been a steady improvement with respect to this indicator.

There are many reasons why there have not been enough young people joining the teaching profession in recent years. There were many other job opportunities for young South Africans as the economy grew. Another reason is that the schooling system itself has not been producing enough people who are ready to enter a Bachelors programme (for example a Bachelor of Education degree). Not all those who qualify as teachers seek employment as teachers, or as teachers in the public service. However, the fact that the recent numbers of joiners should be approximately 5,000, whilst first-time teacher graduates from higher institutions should be approximately 6,000, suggests that a large proportion of graduates do in fact seek employment in the public sector[44].

It is important to note that the educator attrition rate in South Africa, which is

[44] Paterson and Arends, 2009: xvi.

essentially the determinant of the number of new joiners needed per year, is not exceptionally high when compared to what is found in other countries. The annual attrition rate in recent years has been approximately 3.5%.

Government's response

The 2009 MTSF reaffirms government's commitment to publicly funded bursaries for those youths wishing to become teachers. The Funza Lushaka bursary scheme for those leaving school who want to train as teachers, was introduced in 2007 to encourage young South Africans to teach in public schools. Funza Lushaka is funded through the Department of Basic Education budget, though its implementation involves close collaboration with the Department of Higher Education and Training. Presently, just over 9,000 students training as teachers are receiving Funza Lushaka bursaries. Unlike most other publicly funded bursary and loan schemes for higher education students, Funza Lushaka is not limited to those whose family income is low, though students from poorer backgrounds are given preference in the application process. Funza Lushaka thus serves as an incentive for youths from all socio-economic backgrounds to pursue teaching as a career. In addition, government is examining the possibility of granting Funza Lushaka bursaries to students who are enrolled in private teacher training institutions and who plan to work in the public sector.

In line with the 2009 MTSF (and the 2007 Polokwane Resolutions), government is examining the possibility of using the facilities of the teacher training colleges, closed in the late 1990s, to strengthen its capacity to offer adequate pre-service and in-service training to teachers. Recreating the situation that had existed before the closure of the colleges is neither a possibility nor desirable. However, options such as allowing the existing providers of pre-service training to establish satellite campuses within the facilities of the former colleges are currently receiving serious consideration. In fact, some universities have already begun pursuing this option as ways of bringing training closer to the homes of students and dealing with a shortage of student accommodation in urban centres.

Government has improved the salaries of teachers in recent years, partly so that the teaching profession can become a more attractive career option. Moreover, the 2008 Occupation Specific Dispensation[45] introduced improved options for salary increases of classroom teachers, in recognition of the fact there had been an over-emphasis on management posts as the only route towards better compensation. Between 2000 and 2009, the purchasing power of the average

[45] See Resolution 1 of 2008 of the ELRC.

teacher improved by approximately 40%. But, apart from money, there are other things that influence teacher satisfaction and it is important that attention is paid to these (see Goal 17 below). Moreover, it is important for government and other institutions, such as faculties of education at universities, to communicate to youths what the career prospects are within education. Youths tend to be influenced by past conditions of service of teachers. When these conditions improve, the information on these improvements tends not to reach prospective teachers unless there is an active programme of information dissemination.

One factor that influences the decision of youths to pursue teaching as a career is that, whilst term time can involve a very intense work routine, school holidays are longer than the vacation leave enjoyed by other professionals. This makes it possible, for instance, for teachers to spend more time with their own children. This could be communicated more clearly to the youth.

Overall, government's approach to recruiting teachers must aim not only to attract the right numbers of young people into the profession, but also the right quality people. There is clear evidence that countries that succeed in providing quality basic education to all are also those countries that pay special attention to attracting especially talented and motivated youths into a teaching career[46].

Monitoring of progress

The following indicator is the core indicator for this goal.

Indicator 14: The number of qualified teachers, aged 30 and below, entering the public service as teachers for first time during the past year.

The number of young and newly graduated teachers entering the public schooling sector is something that has been monitored carefully, given the serious under-supply of such teachers. Recent years have seen the beginnings of an increase, a trend that must accelerate. There have been two distinct groups of new teachers entering public schools each year. On the one hand, there have been those below the age of 30 who are newly graduated. On the other hand, there have been older teachers who may or may not have taught earlier on in their lives. For the school system to be sustainable, the first group must, more or less, double in size. The indicator involves counting any qualified educator entering any educator post in the provincial education systems in the current year, as long as the person was aged 30 or below on the date of employment and has not entered the public teaching force in a previous year. The data source is Persal, government's employee system.

[46] See for instance the 2007 McKinsey report (McKinsey, 2007).

Provincial values for this indicator should be interpreted relative to the overall size of the provincial educator workforce. Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that initial teacher training is a national and not a provincial responsibility. Low values for individual provinces, relative to the provincial workforce would, to a large degree, point to problems in attracting new graduates to that province.

The above indicator should be studied within a proper teacher supply and demand framework that takes into account various factors, such as educator attrition, educator mortality and shortfalls in terms of the demographics of teachers (for instance with respect to languages spoken) and the demands of different phases of the curriculum. Work on such a teacher supply and demand framework has already taken place[47]. Here, collaboration with the Department of Higher Education and Training and the ETDP SETA is crucial. In addition, the challenge is to invest in more research in this area and to make greater use of existing data sources (such as the teacher form in the Annual Survey of Schools).

The following are some of the more important future milestones for this goal.

2012 » A new campaign, with a dedicated web presence, to encourage youths to take up teaching as a career, is launched.

» A report on the success of the Funza Lushaka programme, partly based on data collected through the newly established operational data base of bursary recipients, is released.

2014 » A report on the impact of the campaign, launched in 2012, on the youth's attitude to teaching and on recruitment leads to improvements in this campaign.

GOAL 15

Ensure that the availability and utilisation of teachers are such that excessively large classes are avoided.

Problem statement

Although the formula that allocates teaching posts to schools results in a number of posts per school, which is to a large degree proportional to the

[47] Crouch, 2001.

school's enrolment, the class sizes that learners in the public schooling system experience differ vastly. Moreover, the average class size per school, even when one considers schools of a similar size, differs greatly. Approximately half of South Africa's public school learners are in classes with more than 40 learners, and approximately 15% are in classes with more than 50 learners. Comparisons against the situation in other countries, with respect to class size (using for instance SACMEQ and TIMSS data), and learner/educator ratios (using UIS data), suggest that the situation is worse in South Africa than in most other middle-income developing countries.

It is easy to see why very large classes of more than 40 or even 50 learners would impact negatively on teaching and learning. Above all, teachers become less able to provide individual attention to learners. Moreover, large classes make teaching as a profession less attractive, making it more difficult to attract and retain teachers. Few classrooms are designed to accommodate more than 40 learners at a time. The effect of class size on learning outcomes has been a matter of intense debate. Many studies across the world pointed to class size playing virtually no role in influencing outcomes. However, it is important to bear in mind that these studies tended to focus on differences between, for instance, a class size of 25 and 30 – in other words, levels well below that which is found in most schools in South Africa. There has, in fact, been little analysis of thresholds beyond approximately 35 learners and, more specifically, at what point learning outcomes begin to display a clear downward trend. Researchers in South Africa tend to point to approximately 40 learners in a class being a maximum at primary level, beyond which serious teaching and learning problems are encountered.

In South Africa a relatively low number of teachers, in comparison to learners, is clearly one reason behind large class sizes. The difference between the learner/educator ratios of South Africa and Botswana, a country with smaller classes, illustrates the point. In South Africa, the ratio is approximately 33, whilst in Botswana it is approximately 22. If South Africa were to achieve the same learner/educator ratio as Botswana, an additional 160 000 teachers would have to be employed in the public schooling system. Clearly this is not something that can be achieved in the short or even medium term. However, over the longer term, the aim should be to reduce South Africa's learner/educator ratio.

There are four key reasons why class sizes are as unequal as they are in public schools. Firstly, it is difficult to fill teaching posts in remote rural areas, because teachers find working and living in these areas difficult. Secondly, time management and, in particular, timetabling in some schools, were found to be uneven across schools. Analyses of the Annual Survey of Schools data suggest that, in some schools, there are simply too many 'free periods' for teachers, with the result that classes are larger than they might otherwise have

been. Thirdly, classroom shortages clearly contribute towards large class sizes. Fourthly, historically advantaged schools, which charge relatively high fees, are able to employ additional teachers, thus reducing class sizes in these schools. The percentage of learners in classes with more than 35 learners is 27% in the case of historically white schools, against 75% in the case of historically African schools.

Government's response

Policy responses to the four problems described above received considerable attention. Much of the challenge lies in strengthening the impact of these responses. Reducing classroom shortages is described under Goal 24 and better time management in schools is dealt with under Goal 21.

In response to the challenge of filling posts in rural and remote areas, a policy on monetary incentives to attract teachers to these areas was released in 2007.[48] The incentive comes to at least 10% of the starting salary of a teacher. The implementation of this policy is currently incomplete, which is largely due to budget shortfalls. In some provinces teachers do receive the incentive, but the envisaged reach of the system was much wider. Government is currently examining ways of maximising the impact of the incentive with available funds and is looking into how additional funding can best be utilised to ensure that learners in remote areas have the teachers they need.

Many teachers are discouraged from working in a rural area due to the difficulty of finding appropriate accommodation in such areas. Public investment in accommodation for teachers in remote areas could alleviate this situation and might even make rural schools preferable for some teachers. South Africa, unlike many other African countries, has no policy on the provisioning of public housing for teachers. Comments received during the formulation of this plan suggest that a national policy on this matter should be considered.

The post provisioning norms[49], which determine how many educator posts each school should have, are currently being redesigned in order to take class size into account more explicitly. In particular, the intention is to calculate for each school what its maximum class size should be if curriculum and teaching time policies are implemented correctly. This will then provide a benchmark against which district support staff can assess the extent to which large classes are the result of poor timetabling. The redesigned norms moreover require that an explicit plan should exist within each province for achieving maximum class sizes, ranging from 35 in the case of the Foundation Phase to 39 in the case of Grades 10 to 12.

[48] Government Notice 25 of 2007.

[49] Government Notice 1451 of 2007.

Monitoring of progress

The learner/educator ratio is one indicator tracked in the Presidency's periodic *Development indicators* publication. Clearly, this ratio, which is closely related to class size indicators, should be monitored. A key class size indicator that will be monitored for the foreseeable future, is the percentage of learners *not* in classes exceeding 45. This should not be taken to mean that 45 is regarded as an acceptable class size. However, given the fact that as many as one fifth of learners are currently in classes with more than 45 learners, a first step should be to ensure that no learner should be in such a class.

Indicator 15.1: The percentage of learners who are in classes with no more than 45 learners.

Whilst learner/educator ratios are reported on often, less attention tends to go towards class sizes. It is, of course, the number of learners in the class, rather than the learner/educator ratio of the school, that determines the degree of crowding in the classroom. It is possible for the learner/educator to be at an acceptable level, but for classes to be unacceptably large if problems such as a shortage of classrooms or poor timetabling exist. Using this indicator means that we take into account how well we deal with these other problems. Values for this indicator are obtained by first dividing the number of learners by the number of classes in every grade in every public ordinary school in the country. One then takes the number of learners who are in classes with 45 or fewer learners on average, and divides them by the total number of learners in the schooling system. The Annual Survey of Schools provides the data needed for this. There is one slight problem with this approach though, namely that one assumes that classes in the same grade and school will be of the same size. This may not be true. For example, if a school has, say, 80 learners and two classes in Grade 7, one assumes that there are two classes with 40 learners each and that all learners are in classes with no more than 45 learners. However, if the school has, for some reason, put 50 learners in one class and 30 learners in another class, then of course only 30 learners should be counted in the value for this indicator. However, it is believed that this would be very rare and that the indicator values would not be unduly distorted if one does not take this possibility into account. Importantly, 'class' in this indicator should be understood as what is sometimes called the 'register class' or 'administrative class' that the learner finds himself or herself in. Subject classes may be larger or smaller than the register classes, but these are not the concern of this specific indicator (though subject classes are also an important matter that should be reported on).

Indicator 15.2: The percentage of schools where allocated teaching posts are all filled.

The post provisioning system is equitable insofar as it allocates teaching posts to schools in accordance with enrolments, with some adjustments based on the level of the school, and with a slight favouring of poorer schools, which are less able to finance teaching posts using school fees. However, having the teaching posts allocated to the school is not the same as having teachers. The above indicator is largely designed to gauge the degree to which the system is successful at incentivising teachers to teach in remote rural and difficult urban areas. It also measures how successful the system is in ensuring that replacement teachers are available when teachers go on extended leave – for instance maternity leave. In the past, Persal was used to provide periodic reports on the extent of unfilled posts. However, it is possible for schools to be told that new posts have been created for them, whilst there is a delay in the registration of this on Persal. For this reason it is important to collect supplementary information from schools. The Annual Survey of Schools will begin collecting the data needed for this indicator in 2011. The principal will be asked how many educator posts were allocated to the school according to his or her records and the number of these posts that are filled on the day of the survey.

The following are some of the more important future milestones for this goal.

2012 » A strategy to improve teacher recruitment strategies and reduce teacher shortages in schools is finalised.

» Criteria to combat over-sized classes are incorporated into the national post provisioning norms that distribute teaching posts across schools, following a review of the problem of large classes.

2012 » A first report emerging from the national department's new teacher supply and demand planning model and aimed at guiding teacher training institutions is released.

GOAL 16

Improve the professionalism, teaching skills and subject knowledge of teachers throughout their entire careers.

This goal is one of five priority goals for the period to 2014 reflecting the emphasis in the Minister's Delivery Agreement.

Problem statement

Many, and perhaps most, of South Africa's teachers did not receive all the training they need to cope with the responsibilities of teaching and the curriculum changes that have taken place since 1994. To illustrate, SACMEQ and a few other testing programmes tested not just learners, but also teachers, and found that when it comes to subject knowledge, teachers, at least at primary level, are too often lacking (teacher testing at secondary level has not yet taken place). Yet, over 90% of South Africa's public school teachers have more than three years of training. This compares well with the situation in similar developing countries. However, often the pre-service training of teachers was not of a sufficient quality. It is important to bear in mind that most teachers entered the profession before 1994.

Since 1994, considerable funding and effort have been devoted to the in-service training of teachers. This is reflected in the available data. A little over one third of primary school teachers say that they have received formal in-service training recently and three-quarters of these teachers say that the training has helped them to teach better. However, access to relevant training courses is widely regarded as inadequate. It is also widely argued, for instance by the 2009 curriculum review, that the focus of in-service training has been largely on how to make the transition to the new national curriculum, often to the exclusion of other areas, such as strengthening or updating subject knowledge. This is confirmed by the 2007 Systemic Evaluation data, which indicates that, of the Grade 3 teachers who received in-service training, 40% complained that the training was overly concentrated on the theory of the new curriculum, as opposed to practical ways of implementing the curriculum.

At Grades 10 to 12 level, where the curriculum allows for specialisation in the form of subjects such as visual art and electrical technology, a clear problem that perpetuated apartheid era inequalities was the low numbers of teachers with training in these special subjects in historically disadvantaged areas. The challenge here is both to provide additional training to selected and existing teachers who have the potential to teach these subjects, and to strengthen the presence of these special subjects in pre-service training.

Whilst improvements amongst teachers are needed with respect to the specifics of classroom practice and subject knowledge, what is also important is to strengthen the right values as part of the professional development of teachers. Teachers need to understand the Constitution and should have the ability to promote values, such as human dignity, non-racialism, non-sexism, democracy and the rule of law in the classroom.

Government's response

Teacher in-service training poses an especially major challenge for any government wishing to improve schools. In the developing country context, interventions must typically reach a large number of teachers. Training programmes must be designed to provide relevant support. This means, amongst other things, that they should assist teachers in dealing with classroom situations that exist in reality, and not just deal with ideal situations. Training should moreover be sensitive to the fact that different teachers must deal with different challenges. For instance, the challenges of teachers in urban and rural areas are often quite different. Teachers must be sufficiently motivated to undertake the training they require. Budget limitations make it important to explore options such as the promotion of locally-initiated professional development activities and distance education programmes, and to continuously gauge the impact of different modes of training. The importance of evaluating the impact of teacher training cannot be over-emphasised. Research from around the world indicates that, because teachers themselves tend not to be asked about the training they need, and because the impact of existing programmes on teachers' classroom practices is often not properly assessed, much effort and money get devoted to training programmes that could be better designed.

Government envisages a much greater use of distance education, in particular e-Education, to meet the teacher in-service training challenges. This is a shift that was strongly recommended by the 2008 OECD review of South Africa's education system. The 2009 MTSF also made a commitment to this training mode. Much of the current policy work with respect to teacher development was initiated in the 2009 Teacher Development Summit, a major multi-stakeholder event that aimed to put teacher development on a new footing. This summit emphasised, amongst other things, new ways of stimulating the formation of local 'professional learning communities of practice'. These groups would focus on specific subjects and phases of the curriculum and would provide a vehicle for the sharing of experiences and knowledge amongst teachers. A 2008 survey of teacher development practices indicated that only approximately 6% of teacher development initiatives could be considered as having being started at school level. The scope for expanding approaches, such as local professional communities, seems high. The OECD's recent TALIS survey indicates that, in many countries, more than 30% of teachers make regular use of professional networks, maintained largely by the teachers themselves, and that the positive impact of these kinds of networks on learning and teaching is particularly strong[50].

[50] OECD, 2009: 57 and 117.

In 2011, a new teacher development plan was finalised. This plan encompasses the full range of providers of teacher development services and is the outcome of close collaboration between the two national departments of education. The education departments themselves are major providers and currently account for approximately 70% of development activities that teachers currently become involved in. Higher education institutions are also key providers, with much of the in-service development of these institutions in recent years being organised within the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE), generally issued after part-time studies across two years. The participation by teacher unions as providers of teacher development is a relatively new concept in South Africa, though it is common in some other countries. This option, supported by the Ten Point Plan, will be catered for in the new plan. A number of NGOs played an important role in the development and piloting of teacher development materials and methodologies over the years. These organisations have an important role to play as partners of government in improving the capacity of teachers.

One funding stream that needs to be used more effectively to channel funds to providers who can develop the needed training programmes, is the skills levy, transferred annually from the education departments to the Education, Training and Development Practices (ETDP) SETA. Currently, the total funds transferred come to approximately R65m per annum. Much of the funding currently goes towards bursaries for studies in relatively traditional programmes. This funding stream should be used increasingly for more intensive developmental activities, for instance the design of e-Education modules that can reach a wide audience.

Whilst the emphasis within teacher development needs to shift towards areas such as subject knowledge, it will still be necessary to provide training in the structure and implementation of the curriculum and official assessment standards, especially given the fact that some of these are being simplified and made more specific following the 2009 curriculum review. That review highlighted the need for much greater standardisation in the training of teachers in the curriculum. The e-Education training mode, in fact, provides an ideal way of ensuring that standards laid out in the curriculum are not changed at provincial and district level, whilst training is rolled out. Though it may take some years before all teachers have regular access to the internet, virtually all district offices enjoy this access, meaning that, at the very least the required standardisation can be taken down to trainers within district offices across the whole country.

Ensuring that teachers are trained and updated with respect to national policies governing their rights and responsibilities, but also recent research findings that would be of interest to them, is another area that lends itself to e-Education. For secondary level teachers, it is particularly important to be sufficiently aware of policies and trends relating to post-school opportunities

for the youth, so that learners can be given appropriate advice by their teachers. Career guidance is, in fact, an area that has, to a large extent, been neglected in schools and which requires a much better and dedicated focus, especially in schools in poorer areas where parents are less likely to be in a position to advise learners on their available options. Communication of best practices when it comes to maintaining learner discipline, a matter of great importance to teachers themselves, also lends itself to utilising the e-Education platform.

One key policy that is designed to encourage teachers to engage in the teacher development activities they require, is the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS). The IQMS requires each teacher to assess his or her own developmental needs, partly on the basis of advice from his or her senior and a colleague from within the school, selected by the teacher. Amongst other things, the advisors observe the teacher at work in the classroom. The outcome of the appraisal process is a personal growth plan for each teacher, which is evaluated and updated annually. The self-appraisal process will be greatly facilitated by a new suite of tools that will be made available online and which will allow teachers to assess their own competencies both in subject knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. Moreover, e-Education tools will be developed with the national department's involvement in order to facilitate the sharing of skills and materials between teachers through professional teacher communities. Such an approach has been proven to work well in other countries.

The number of publicly employed educators who undergo the required and annual IQMS appraisal procedures increased from approximately 200,000 in 2005 to 310,000 in 2009; the latter figure representing approximately 80% of the educators who should be participating. The fact that not all educators were participating in 2009 reflects a serious problem. However, it is a diminishing problem. In 2008, IQMS was further strengthened through the establishment of a national team of 'moderators' or experts, whose responsibility it is to monitor and provide support with respect to the IQMS processes, through visits to schools. Currently, the national team comprises 70 moderators, though plans exist to increase this number. During the 2009 school year, it was possible for the moderators to visit 7,800 schools, or just under one third of all schools. The moderators found that, on the whole, IQMS was contributing towards greater professionalism amongst teachers and improvements in the identification of training needs. However, the moderators also highlighted a number of challenges, one of the more serious ones being that over half of teachers were considered not to be receiving the mentoring they required, a problem that points to insufficient capacity amongst heads of department and principals in schools. In 2010, moderators started conducting classroom observations in accordance with new procedures that were being piloted and that had been arrived at after lengthy consultations with teacher organisations, in order to ensure the ethical and professional acceptability of the process to all sides.

Experiences around the world strongly suggest that, where performance-linked increments to individual teachers are used, they should be kept relatively low, in order to avoid accusations of unfairness, given that effective teaching is, to a large extent, the outcome of a collective effort by all the teachers in a school. The IQMS involved relatively low annual increments, amounting to between 1% and 3% per year over and above the general increases that apply to all teachers. In fact, only approximately 0.5% of teachers were barred from these increases each year on the basis of poor performance, according to the IQMS. More high-stakes links between performance and pay increments continue to be explored by the employer and teacher unions. Practices elsewhere suggest that the most effective route to take for larger incentives is to provide once-off rewards to all teachers in those schools that demonstrate an improvement in learner performance from one year to the next.

For some years, the IQMS was under review, largely in order to examine how teacher development decisions could be kept professional and are not unduly influenced by salary matters. This review process has led to a proposal for limited policy changes and for a re-branding of the IQMS. Proposed changes are expected to be implemented starting in 2012.

One relatively straightforward way of incentivising teacher development through financial means, is to pay teachers a bonus for passing, for instance, a subject content examination. This has been implemented successfully elsewhere and is currently being explored as an option for South Africa. The advantage with this approach is that it focuses very directly on the outcome of improved teacher capacity and that it encourages each teacher to pursue whatever learning approach suits him or her best. In the South African context, it would be important to target such an intervention at schools in disadvantaged areas, partly as this is where the greatest teacher development challenges lie, and partly as this could assist in attracting teachers to these areas.

One mechanism for strengthening accountability in the area of teacher development that will be introduced across the profession, is a new points-based monitoring system run by the South African Council for Educators (SACE). This system, developed jointly with government, will require teachers to report on an annual basis what professional development activities they have undertaken. These activities will be translated into points according to a widely publicised schedule in order to provide a better picture of whether investments in teacher development, in terms of time, effort and money, are moving in the right direction. Consistent failure over several years by individual teachers to engage in a minimum level of professional development could result in suspension from the professional body and could place the teacher's right to teach in a public school in jeopardy.

Government's Teacher Laptop Initiative, initiated in 2009, is partly aimed at

stimulating teacher development through improving teachers' access to relevant information and training programmes. The ultimate aim of government is that every teacher should have regular access to the internet and the ability to use this medium for his or her professional advancement.

It is important not to take a narrow view on teacher development. Much valuable teacher development takes place through informal means, such as the reading of books, newspapers and magazines, and discussion and collaboration with colleagues. Policies and the monitoring of their success must take these dimensions of teacher development into account.

Monitoring of progress

Government will continue to support research, such as the SACMEQ programme, where teachers themselves are tested in order to see where the gaps in subject knowledge and teaching skills are. This research provides an important means of gauging whether teacher development efforts are bearing fruit. This research should always respect the dignity of teachers. For instance, teacher unions have, understandably, insisted that tests designed for teachers should not be the same tests as those written by their learners, but rather tests designed specifically to assess the knowledge and skills that teachers should possess. Results of individual teachers should not be revealed to anyone and should not be used in any way in the management of individual teachers. The aim of the research must be to get an overall national picture of what the training gaps are so that policies and plans can be adjusted where necessary.

Indicator 16.1: The average hours per year spent by teachers on professional development activities.

It is widely known that all educators, as part of their conditions of service, should spend 80 hours per year on professional development activities. The time that teachers actually spend is of course not an indication of how useful the development activities are, but clearly, if no time is devoted to development, then development cannot take place. Getting teachers to spend the 80 hours per year, which is comparable to actual practices in OECD countries[51], is an important first step. The Systemic Evaluation[52] simply asked how many hours teachers spend, and it is telling that approximately 30% of teacher admit having spent no time at all during the past year.

[51] OECD, 2009: 53.

[52] Systemic Evaluation 2007 dataset, focussing on Grade 3.

Going forward, the information will be collected through a teacher questionnaire of the verification sample of ANA. The question will not simply be how many hours a teacher spent in total. Instead, the teacher will be asked to specify how much time was devoted to different activities within the key categories of self-initiated, school-initiated and system-initiated teacher development. In many ways, the breakdown of the total hours spent is more meaningful for monitoring and policy-making purposes than the overall total. Moreover, the teacher will be asked to rate the professional development options that are available and to indicate what his or her greatest needs are.

Depending on the roll-out of SACE's professional development monitoring system, it may become desirable to switch from ANA to a SACE dataset as the preferred data source for this indicator, and for the emphasis to shift from time to professional development points obtained. At the same time, given that the OECD's TALIS programme offers a basis for international comparison of time spent on teacher development activities, it seems advisable not to drop the monitoring of the time aspect completely.

Indicator 16.2: The percentage of teachers who are able to attain minimum standards in anonymous and sample-based assessments of their subject knowledge.

The 2007 run of SACMEQ included, for the first time in South Africa within a nationally representative sample, tests for teachers that examined their own reading and mathematics competencies. Data from such tests can be useful in determining the kind of teacher development that government and teachers themselves should pay special attention to. The intention with the tests is not to take action with respect to the individual teachers who wrote the tests, but rather to inform teacher development in general. It is important that the confidentiality of the teachers who took the test should be respected, meaning that test results should be completely anonymous and no one, not even the test-takers themselves, should gain access to individual results. Teacher tests will be conducted every second year in 200 schools, which are a sub-set of the ANA verification sample. As the teacher testing will alternate between primary and secondary levels, for each level fresh data will become available every fourth year. For this indicator, primary level and secondary level values will be analysed separately, but an average of the two will also be calculated.

The following are some of the more important future milestones for this goal.

2011 » A new plan for the in-service training of teachers is finalised.

2012 » A comprehensive guide to available professional development programmes is established on the national department's website.

2013 » Teachers begin uploading their professional development details onto the new points-based system run by SACE.

» A new set of online teacher development modules in critical areas, as well as a suite of self-appraisal tools become available, at no charge, to teachers.

2014 » An evaluation of the teacher appraisal system, including its coverage and the impact of recent changes to its rules and procedures, is completed.

» A comprehensive evaluation of the impact of, and teacher responses to recent teacher development initiatives is released by the national department.

GOAL 17

Strive for a teacher workforce that is healthy and enjoys a sense of job satisfaction.

Problem statement

For the improvements envisaged to be achieved in this plan, it is important that there should be a sufficient sense of job satisfaction amongst teachers. Several studies from around the world demonstrated the strong link between teacher job satisfaction and learner performance in schools. Whilst statistics on job satisfaction in South Africa are patchy, it is generally accepted that job dissatisfaction is a widespread problem that requires focussed attention. At the same time, it is important not to over-state the problem. The percentage of teachers considering a career change is one statistic that was arguably used in the past to create unnecessary alarm. The problem with such statistics is that, in certain situations of high job mobility, all professionals may be considering career changes, though few actually make the change. One cannot view these statistics only in relation to teachers, without also looking at other professions. A few data sources suggest that, whilst the majority of teachers in recent years have been more or less satisfied, a worrying minority have not. For instance, 80% of South African Grade 5 teachers responded 'Agree a lot' to the statement: 'I am satisfied with being a teacher at this school' in the 2006 run of PIRLS.

A similar pattern was found amongst Grade 8 mathematics teachers in the 2003 run of TIMSS, where 80% of teachers said the level of teacher satisfaction in the school was very high to medium (20% said it was low to very low).

Research (from 2005) points to the top two reasons for job dissatisfaction amongst teachers being insufficient remuneration and a high workload[53]. Other key reasons included insufficient opportunities for career advancement and poor learner discipline. The research was largely based on what teachers themselves identified as problems in their jobs. A positive development is that steps have been taken in recent years to address the two factors found to be most important in the 2005 study. Salary increases in the years 2007 to 2010 resulted in an overall rise in the average gross (pre-tax) educator salary of 19% in real terms (or 19% over and above increases in the cost of living). Moreover, the Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD) introduced in 2008[54], provided new avenues for promotion; in particular promotion into senior teaching positions for those not wishing to pursue a career in school management. Research confirmed the widely held belief that the record-keeping requirements in the national curriculum were overly burdensome for teachers and contributed towards a sense of work overload for teachers.[55] Partly in response to this problem, the national department initiated a curriculum review in 2009. Key changes have already taken place, for instance the dropping of individual learner portfolios in 2009. Going forward, it is important to monitor the extent to which recent salary increases and the process of simplifying the curriculum contribute towards greater job satisfaction amongst teachers. It is moreover important to address problems such as insufficient career advancement (see Goal 14) and learner discipline (see for instance Goals 18 and 22).

Teacher development is clearly central to improving job satisfaction. As the latest TALIS study confirms, job satisfaction is difficult to achieve without a sufficient sense of 'self-efficacy', or a belief in one's professional abilities.[56] Moreover, teacher development needs to be about more than just skills. It needs to be designed and implemented in a way that conveys the concept of the professional identity of teachers and promotes pride in the profession.

The *symptoms* of poor job satisfaction are summarised in the TALIS report as being high teacher absenteeism, high teacher turnover and poor learning outcomes. Clearly, all these symptoms must be monitored carefully, but for the purposes of this goal, an indicator on teacher absenteeism was selected. A recent study undertaken by the HSRC for the national department threw new light on

[53] Hall, Altman, Nkomo *et al*, 2005.

[54] ELRC Resolution 1 of 2008.

[55] ELRC, 2005.

[56] OECD, 2009.

teacher absenteeism.[57] Using data from the EMIS Data Quality Audit, it was found that, on average, approximately 8.5% of teachers are away from school on a given day. If one takes into account the presence of substitute teachers, the figure of 8.5% drops by very little to approximately 7.5%. It seems likely that the rate of absenteeism is lower the lower the school grade that a teacher is responsible for. The 2009 UNICEF survey of ECD found 5.8% of Grade R teachers to be absent on the survey day.

There are many reasons why teachers may be away from school on a school day, including approved leave, absence without leave and errands for the school (in the case of remote schools this can involve a day's trip). The teacher may be away from school accompanying learners on a school trip. The HSRC study found teacher absenteeism in South Africa to be more or less in line with patterns in other developing countries, but about twice as high as in affluent countries. This suggests that teacher absenteeism can and should be reduced over time, partly through efforts to make schools a more satisfying place to work in, and by providing teachers with the capacity they need to perform their jobs.

Many teachers complained that their voices were not sufficiently listened to by the education authorities. Achieving a more satisfied teacher workforce cannot be a top-down project driven by the education departments on their own. Whilst the employer must assume a large part of the responsibility for the well-being of teachers, the employer should work with teacher organisations and should base decisions on far better teacher opinion surveys than those that existed in the past.

Government's response

Virtually everything in this plan should, in some way, contribute towards more satisfied teachers. Teachers and learners are central to improving basic education. Thus, frustration amongst teachers should be viewed with the same concern as a lack of materials amongst learners. Both must be combated if learning outcomes are to be improved.

The level of HIV infection amongst teachers was found to be approximately 13%, following a 2005 study[58]. Clearly, any strategy aimed at improving the wellness of teachers must pay considerable attention to HIV and AIDS. At the same time, addressing HIV and AIDS issues should take place within an integrated strategy. HIV and AIDS should not be an add-on. For example, rather than providing separate psychosocial support for teachers to deal with

[57] Reddy, Prinsloo, Netshitangani *et al*, 2010: 21.

[58] Shisana, Peltzer, Zungu-Dirwayi *et al*, 2005.

HIV and AIDS-related matters, it is preferable to provide psychosocial support that deals with the full range of personal challenges that teachers face. The one cannot be separated from the other.

The departments of education worked closely with the Department of Public Service and Administration and teacher unions on a number of different support programmes, dealing with HIV and AIDS and related matters.

A new integrated strategy on HIV and AIDS for the schooling sector is being finalised, following a multi-stakeholder process led by the national department. The strategy articulates the national department's approach to HIV and AIDS over the medium to long term, in line with local and global thinking on the epidemic over the past 30 years. Part of this strategy will provide guidance on how teachers living with HIV and AIDS can be supported. Areas receiving attention in the plan include awareness strategies that encourage prevention of new infections, voluntary testing and counselling that respects the teacher's right to confidentiality, education campaigns that oppose stigma and prejudice (including peer education programmes led by educators living with HIV and AIDS), and access to antiretroviral and other treatment.

The national department is currently planning for a new comprehensive study on teacher experiences of HIV and AIDS, partly in order to assess what has changed since the landmark study of 2005.

Monitoring of progress

Indicator 17: The percentage of teachers absent from school on an average day.

It was difficult in the past to accurately establish the degree of teacher absenteeism. For the purposes of this indicator, teacher absenteeism means non-presence in the educational activities within the school, due to ill health, family matters, studies or other professional development activities, school administrative errands, teacher union activities or some unexplained reason. Only absence where no temporary replacement educator has been hired is counted. There will always be some degree of teacher absenteeism. However, when this is too high, it could be an indication of teacher job dissatisfaction, a matter that should be of concern to everyone. Every year the national department conducts an audit of a sample of schools participating in the Annual Survey of Schools in order to verify the data that schools principals have submitted. The audit involves, amongst other things, counting the learners and teachers present on the day of the audit (which involves an unannounced visit to the school).

The information collected through this audit will be used for this indicator. In a related analysis, this information will be compared to the leave records on the payroll system, Persal, in order to establish how well this system is recording teacher absence.

The following milestone relates specifically to this goal. (Moreover, other milestones in the plan clearly relate to this goal as well.)

2013 » A sample-based teacher opinion survey is run in collaboration with teacher unions in order to assess, amongst other things, factors contributing towards job satisfaction.

GOAL 18

Ensure that learners cover all the topics and skills areas that they should cover within their current school year.

Problem statement

Research indicates that too often teachers reach the end of the year, but have not completed their teaching programme for the year and have not covered all the required topics in the curriculum. The extent of the problem is believed to be significant, though both inherent measurement difficulties and an insufficient research focus on this area make it difficult to pin even a rough figure to the problem currently. One recent study, focussing largely on historically disadvantaged schools in the Western Cape, estimated that approximately one third of primary schools did not complete the annual programme. Non-completion of the annual teaching programme in one grade obviously makes it more difficult to complete programmes in subsequent grades. In other words, the problem is easily compounded.

Part of the problem is that contact time between teachers and learners is lost due to a variety of factors. Often teachers or learners arrive late for class and leave early. Breaks become longer than they should be. A 2007 study by the national department into learner absenteeism found that absenteeism for the entire school day translates into an overall loss of approximately 5% of learner days. Data from the 2009 General Household Survey put the figure at approximately 3%. The overall averages are not extremely high, but individual schools are known to experience learner absenteeism rates that are clearly unacceptable. As discussed under the previous goal, approximately 8.5% of teacher days are lost due to a variety of factors, most of which are legitimate and allowed by policy,

such as vacation leave, maternity leave, official business and training. Yet, this absence of teachers from school often results in a loss of contact time, partly because substitute teachers are not available, either due to budget shortfalls or because no qualified teacher is available for the school and period in question.

Even when learners and their teachers are together in the classroom, learning and teaching time is lost. This is not a uniquely South African problem. Research indicates that even in affluent countries, a large number of schools experience losses of learning and teaching time as great as 30% as a result of disruptions and administrative tasks[59]. In South Africa, time loss in the classroom is commonly related to a shortage of resources. For example, research shows that, in many schools, too much time is devoted to simply giving learners texts through the approach where the teacher writes on the board and learners copy the information. Very often it would have been more effective for learners to use texts in their textbooks, workbooks or worksheets. Yet, these materials are often not available in sufficient quantities. There is also evidence that time is wasted because learners move around the classroom, borrowing stationery from each other, when each learner should have his or her own basic package of stationery items. If there are not enough textbooks at a school for each learner to take a book home, then there are fewer opportunities for giving homework to learners. Clearly, this goal on completing the annual programme is closely linked to the next goal, which deals with learning materials. Moreover, if more classroom time is devoted to teaching and learning, the risk that learners will become bored and ill-disciplined will be reduced.

Finally, the 2009 curriculum review found that, at times, it is the curriculum itself, or assessment requirements, which are to blame for non-completion of the year's programme. In some grades and for certain subjects, the requirements placed on teachers were simply excessive. These problems are being addressed within the current curriculum reform process.

Government's response

As mentioned above, there has been an insufficient focus to date on ensuring that teaching programmes are completed within the year. Government's response is, to a large degree, focussed on evidence of learners having completed the activities they should have completed, and on having learnt what they should have learnt. The related challenge of ensuring that learners and teachers are in class for the required amount of time is obviously also important and should be monitored. However, evidence from other countries suggests that simply focussing on attendance, without also focussing on what is to be achieved in the available time, does not guarantee improved learning outcomes.

[59] OECD, 2009: 122.

Current changes to the national curriculum are partly focussed on ensuring that good teachers are able to get through the year's programme without being unduly burdened by administrative tasks (see the discussion under the previous goal). The reduction in the number of subjects in the Intermediate Phase is also expected to make it easier for learners and teachers to complete the annual programme.

One solution to the problem is that district officials should pay more attention to the pacing of the year's teaching and learning processes in schools, more in particular within those schools that do not perform well in ANA. A new system will be introduced that will make it easier for district officials to effectively monitor and promote programme completion. This system will require districts to make an assessment of all their schools with respect to programme completion on an annual basis. At least one visit per year by the district to the school should focus on this matter. New national tools and specifications will be designed to make this easier for districts, both with respect to the diagnosis of the problem and to providing support. The support should take into account the specific problems of individual schools. For instance, if inadequate access to materials in the classroom is a key problem, then the support should focus on ensuring that the relevant funding and provisioning issues are addressed. If the problem is that teachers do not know how to pace their teaching, then support should focus on remedying this through training. If teaching is made difficult by an exceptionally large spread of abilities in the classroom, a focus on remedial classes and the grade promotion practices of the school may probably be needed. The approach taken should be based on lessons from the past. The Whole School Evaluation (WSE) programme, based on 2001 policy[60] has, through the work of teams of provincially employed supervisors, resulted in in-depth evaluations of over 1,000 schools nationally. These evaluations involve a visit lasting approximately four days by approximately four specially trained supervisors. From this work, valuable lessons have been learnt in how schools can be assisted in becoming more effective, for instance with respect to the management of time. A number of NGOs and universities moreover undertook work in this regard that should be taken into account.

Apart from the district-based system, new approaches are required at provincial and national level. Provinces should use the reports on programme completion produced by districts to inform provincial policies and practices with regard to funding, provisioning, teacher training and time management in schools. At national level, success with regard to this goal will depend partly on a successful national strategy on holistic school evaluations, or 'whole school evaluation'. Following a 2009 report, the Minister established the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU), which will partly focus on the use

[60] Government Notice 695 of 2001.

of in-depth and holistic institutional evaluations of schools to provide feedback to individual schools, to the education departments and to the Minister. NEEDU reports directly to the Minister, partly to ensure that the unit enjoys sufficient autonomy with respect to the national department. A policy position is currently being finalised on the precise areas of responsibility of NEEDU, and on how the work of NEEDU will relate to two programmes that currently involve school visits by experts not based at the district, namely the Whole School Evaluation (which makes use of provincially employed 'supervisors') and the Integrated Quality Management System (which makes use of nationally employed 'moderators').

Monitoring of progress

Of all the indicators in this plan, the indicator described below is arguably the one that is the most difficult to quantify. These difficulties must be acknowledged, for instance when comparisons across provinces and over time are made. In fact, statistics during the initial years are unlikely to be rigorously comparable. Yet, the problem of programme completion is sufficiently serious to warrant this indicator, as well as efforts to improve measurement in this area over the longer term.

Indicator 18: The percentage of learners who cover everything in the curriculum for their current year on the basis of sample-based evaluations of records kept by teachers and evidence of practical exercises done by learners.

Recent studies have shown that too many schools and teachers do not complete the learning programme for the year. This is a serious matter. If not all topics in the learning programmes of one year are dealt with, then learning becomes difficult in subsequent years, as the learner will experience gaps in his or her knowledge or skills. The data needed for this indicator will be collected by experts from the national department, who will conduct in-depth studies of samples of schools on a periodic basis, interviewing teachers, examining the documentation produced by teachers and the workbooks of learners, and relating this to the performance of learners in the Annual National Assessments. These visits, or studies, will be aimed at producing advice for the schools concerned on how to improve teaching and learning and the completion of learning programmes. But they will also be aimed at assessing what is happening in schools generally and providing advice to districts on how support to schools could be improved. Finally, the visits are aimed at verifying information that districts are collecting on a number of issues on an ongoing basis, including the completion of annual learning programmes.

In fact, information collected from districts will form the basis of provincial values for this indicator, whilst national values will be based on information collected by the national department.

It is important to interpret the values for this indicator with care, as there is a clear risk that teachers and schools might comply by simply moving faster through the annual programme without there being a noticeable difference in what learners have learnt. This indicator should not detract from the need for qualitative improvements in teaching and learning.

The following are some of the more important future milestones for this goal.

2012 » A policy statement on how in-depth monitoring of schools will proceed from a 'whole school' perspective, and how synergy between the Whole School Evaluation, the work of the national team of IQMS monitors and the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) will be achieved, is released.

» New tools and specifications to guide districts in monitoring and supporting schools in a more holistic fashion, with a partial focus on completing the required programmes within the year, are developed and tested in selected districts and schools.

2013 » An initial report on the extent to which schools complete their annual teaching programmes is released on the basis of investigations to date.

» Provincial reports on the findings from, and effectiveness of the new district-based system for evaluating and supporting schools are produced. (Part of the focus of these reports will be on the completion of teaching programmes.)

2014 » A national and independent evaluation is completed of the effectiveness of the new tools and specifications for districts introduced in 2011 and 2012.

8.2 Textbooks, workbooks and other educational materials (Goals 19 to 20)

GOAL 19

Ensure that every learner has access to the minimum set of textbooks and workbooks required according to national policy.

This goal is one of five priority goals for the period to 2014 reflecting the emphasis in the Minister's Delivery Agreement.

Problem statement

Although the situation has improved in recent years, there are still far too many learners who do not have access to the textbooks, workbooks, exercise books and the stationery they need. To illustrate, 2008 statistics indicate that 64% of learners in Grades 4 to 7 were in classes where everyone had a mathematics textbook. (The statistic is similar for the different grades in this range.) The remaining 36% of learners were in classes where textbooks had to be shared[61]. Statistics for Grade 6 from the previous year, 2007, and using a different source, provide a substantially worse picture and indicate that only 36% of learners had access to their own mathematics textbook[62]. However, the same source indicates that a further 24% shared a mathematics textbook with just one other learner, meaning that 60% either had a mathematics textbook in front of them or between themselves and the next learner. Several studies have found that a critical threshold to ensure adequate learning is a learner/textbook ratio not exceeding 2,0. Clearly, there are not enough textbooks in schools and statistics on access to textbooks are not sufficiently reliable. Not having enough textbooks at school is the most common reason why schools decide not to allow learners to take textbooks home. Recent statistics indicate that approximately one third of primary school learners are in schools that do not allow textbooks to be taken home.

As recently as 2007, one in eight Grade 3 learners did not have his or her own literacy workbook (the figure for numeracy was the same)[63] and 4% of Grade 6 learners did not have any exercise book or workbook to write in[64].

[61] National School Effectiveness Study dataset.

[62] SACMEQ 2007 dataset.

[63] Systemic Evaluation 2007 dataset.

[64] SACMEQ 2007 dataset.

We cannot expect proper learning and teaching to take place where learners do not have access to textbooks, workbooks, exercise books and stationery during and after school hours. Spending on materials, such as textbooks, has increased in recent years, and information that Statistics South Africa collects from parents indicates that the percentage of parents complaining about a shortage of books for their children at school has decreased from 16% in 2005 to 7% in 2009. Yet, if 7% of parents are complaining, this is still much too high. Complaints about availability of books have been more common amongst parents than complaints about other issues, such as unaffordable school fees, poor school infrastructure and poor quality teaching, according to the Stats SA data. It is worrying that a resourcing problem that is relatively simple to solve (it is easier to supply enough textbooks than to improve the capacity of teachers, for instance) should be regarded as the most serious schooling problem by parents.

There are important differences between provinces when it comes to access to textbooks. In KwaZulu-Natal, an exceptionally low percentage of learners are able to take textbooks home (the figure was 42% in 2008) and complaints from households about a lack of access to school books were the highest in this province in 2009. Figures on schools that ordered textbooks but received nothing in 2007 and 2008 were worst in the case of Limpopo (22% against an average of 4% across the other provinces). A separate data source indicates that, apart from Limpopo, the provisioning of textbooks has been particularly poor in the Eastern Cape.

Government's response

The 2008 OECD review stressed that, providing good learning materials, such as textbooks to learners in sufficient quantities is one of the best ways to realise the aims of the national curriculum. This is a view that is very much shared by government. In fact, access to the full set of required learning materials for every learner can be regarded as non-negotiable. The financial and other difficulties relating to the provision of learning materials are, in fact, low relative to those associated with most other interventions. This strengthens the argument for considering access to learning materials as an intervention that can succeed in making a difference in the short to medium term. Of course learning materials should be understood not only as encompassing the materials that learners themselves should have access to, but also the teacher guides that accompany these materials that assist the teacher to utilise them effectively in the classroom.

There are a variety of reasons why learners do not have the materials they should have. The department may not have delivered the materials it was supposed to deliver or the school may not have bought the materials it was supposed to buy with the funding it received from the department. Funding that was supposed to arrive from the department may not have arrived. It is important to keep

in mind that, because of the way the funding policy works, many schools buy materials themselves, using funds received from the department. For instance 30% of schools buy textbooks in this way. Materials may not be available because they are not well looked after (so next year's learners are unable to use them) or because of crime (which could involve theft between learners). Government is working on all these problems.

One thing that research has shown is that very often there are fewer problems if schools themselves manage the purchasing of materials, using funds from the department[65]. For instance, amongst schools in poorer communities, parent spending on textbooks tends to be higher where the department manages the procurement of textbooks for the school, as opposed to the approach where the department transfers funds to the school so that the school procures the books[66]. It is possible that procurement by the school, as opposed to by the department, reduces the risk of the delivery of the incorrect materials or incorrect quantities of materials or deliveries that are late. Ideally, parents in poorer communities should not have to spend any money on school textbooks. Above all, it is desirable that those schools that do a good job of looking after textbooks and re-using them should reap the financial benefits of this. In other words, these schools should be able to use the financial savings for other items. If this does not happen, schools have little incentive to preserve their textbooks.

Finding an ideal solution is not easy, however, due to a number of complexities. Decentralisation of textbook procurement to schools was found to push the price of books up, as economies of scale are not attained[67]. Centralised procurement of textbooks can increase the risk of corruption if the right checks and balances are not in place. Moreover, it is important to distinguish between the decentralisation of procurement and the decentralisation of choice. A practice that is followed in some provinces is for schools to choose books from a list, but for the department to procure the books.

One option that government is exploring is the recommendation, made in 2010 by the Ministerial Task Team on LTSMs (learning and teaching support materials), that a national procurement agency be established to overcome the problems that have been experienced with province-level procurements. The Task Team also recommended that lists of approved textbooks must all be national (as opposed to the current provincial system), and that the range of options be narrowed down, partly through more stringent selection criteria.

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[65] DBE, 2010.

[66] Specifically, data from the 2009 UNICEF study of school funding, indicate that, in the case of quintiles 1 and 2 (in other words the poorest) schools, 6% of parents spend money on textbooks where schools do not manage textbook funds themselves, against 1% where schools themselves manage these funds.

[67] Genesis Analytics, 2007.

There is, moreover, a need for lists of approved textbooks to include better advice to teachers and those who select textbooks. Different textbooks are appropriate in different contexts and it is important that this information should be communicated through the official lists. These recommendations imply a strengthening of capacity at national level to deal with matters such as textbook evaluations. One possibility that is being explored is the establishment of a national institute for LTSMs which, apart from evaluating materials, would conduct overall monitoring in the area and would facilitate a healthy relationship between government and the publishing industry. This relationship is obviously vital for the education sector and should be one of mutual respect and ongoing sharing of information and lessons learnt. There is, moreover, a need for a much stronger link between the national department and faculties of education at universities with respect to the promotion of effective LTSMs in South Africa. Very often those who currently work as teachers are the best producers of effective LTSMs, because they have intimate knowledge of what works best in a real classroom situation. Greater use needs to be made of teachers with exceptional skills in the area of materials development.

A recent innovation has been the development, by the national department, of workbooks that guide learners and teachers very directly through key exercises. These workbooks will be introduced in schools in 2011 in Grades R to 6.

The national department will very soon be announcing a clearer policy on what each Grade 1 learner should have, what each Grade 2 learner should have, up to what every Grade 12 mathematics learner should have. These lists of things that different learners must have will be known as the Minimum Schoolbag lists.

Monitoring of progress

There will be better monitoring and action to ensure that every child has his or her Minimum Schoolbag. We will know that we have reached our goal when every child has access to everything in the Minimum Schoolbag, from the first school day of the year, to the last.

Indicator 19: The percentage of learners having access to the required textbooks and workbooks for the entire school year.

Considerable attention has been devoted in recent years to ensuring that where the department delivers textbooks to schools, these are delivered on time and according to the requirements of the school. These issues, whilst important, cover only a part of the larger picture of learner access to the right materials. If schools organise the re-use of textbooks from one year to the next well, then access to

textbooks improves. Approximately 30% of schools buy textbooks with funds that are transferred from the department and the challenges experienced by these schools would obviously be different to those experienced by schools who receive textbooks directly from the department. The above indicator focuses on what really counts, namely that every learner should have access to a minimum set of materials. This minimum set has been called the Minimum Schoolbag. The Minimum Schoolbag for a Grade 6 learner is described below as an example. Descriptions of the Minimum Schoolbag already exist for learners in Grades 1 to 6 (these were developed as part of the Foundations for Learning Programme), but these are currently being reviewed. During 2011, specifications will be finalised for all grades. It is, of course, important that each learner should have access to the Minimum Schoolbag from the day that the school opens at the start of the school year. However, to allow for the fact that some schools might not succeed in having everything ready in the first week, a learner is counted for the purposes of the above indicator if everything in the Minimum Schoolbag has been available from the Monday of the week following the opening of school. The annual EMIS verification audit (the Data Quality Audit), as well as the ANA verification sample, will be used to collect the required information, with the first source constituting the primary source and the second source being a back-up and verification exercise. In the case of both sources, learners in Grades 3, 6 and 9 will themselves be asked about their access to the Minimum Schoolbag and the school principal will provide information for all the grades in the school.

The Whole School Evaluation will be used to provide a more qualitative view of the situation surrounding the above indicator.

Minimum Schoolbag for Grade 6 learner:

- Six textbooks, one each for the six subjects: mathematics, natural sciences, human and social sciences, general studies, and two languages being studied.
- Six workbooks for the subjects indicated above.
- A one-language dictionary (any language).
- Ruler, pens (five different colours), pencil, eraser, glue.

It is not the intention that everything should be carried in the schoolbag of the learner at all times. Schools and parents should agree on how leaving some materials at school or at home on some days will ensure that the bag is not too heavy.

The following are some of the more important future milestones for this goal.

2011 » Nationally developed workbooks for Grades R to 6 to support teaching in languages and mathematics are distributed to all public schools with these grades.

2012 » The Minimum Schoolbag specifications are finalised for all grades.

» The national workbooks initiative is extended to include Grades 7 to 9.

» New national textbook lists, with greater levels of advice to teachers and selectors of textbooks, are published on the national department's website.

GOAL 20

Increase access amongst learners to a wide range of media, including computers, which enrich their education.

Problem statement

Apart from the Minimum Schoolbag, learners need access to a wider range of materials, such as books other than textbooks, newspapers, and materials that would typically be found in a library or multimedia centre. This is particularly important in poorer communities, where such materials are not readily available at home. Without access to, for instance, children's encyclopaedias, the learning experience becomes severely limited. In particular, investigative skills are not developed the way they should be. It is worth reiterating the point mentioned under the previous goal, that a lack of books is the school problem that parents complain most about in the General Household Survey. Apart from assisting learners, libraries in schools provide an additional resource base that teachers can draw from when preparing lessons. Learners and teachers should also have access to electronic content and digital teaching and learning resources in line with the e-Education strategy.

Obtaining a good picture of the access that learners have to materials such as library books, has been made difficult both by a lack of data and an absence of standards against which to measure the adequacy of libraries (or even whether a collection qualifies to be called a 'library'). According to the latest NEIMS data, only 5 200 schools have formal libraries and as few as 1 800 can be considered to have adequately stocked libraries. Statistics South Africa's

Census at Schools indicates that improvements have been very limited over the past decade. According to this source, the percentage of learners with access to a school library increased from 20% in 2001 to 25% in 2009[68]. The 2007 Systemic Evaluation indicated that 44% of primary school learners were in schools where the school principal considered the school library to be adequate. The principals of a further 21% of learners reported that they had a library but that it was inadequate. The 2006 PIRLS survey of reading ability, focussing on Grade 5 in the case of South Africa, provided a relatively good set of statistics on libraries. PIRLS indicates that approximately 56% of primary school learners take out a library book from somewhere at least once a month. The international average for all PIRLS countries was 68%[69]. The South African PIRLS data indicates that 40% of primary school learners had access to a school library in 2006 (this is more or less in line with what was found in the 2007 Systemic Evaluation), that 38% of learners had access to a classroom library (also referred to as a book corner), and that 61% of learners had access to either a school library or a classroom library. Clearly, the fact that some 39% of learners have access to neither facility is of particular concern. The PIRLS data also reveals that of those learners with a school library, 40% have libraries with at least three unique book titles per learner. This threshold is regarded as a minimum standard in library norms, which are to be released by the DBE soon. These figures suggest that only 16% of primary school learners have access to a library that would fulfil national minimum standards. An adequately stocked school library is beyond the reach of the vast majority of learners. (That is, 40% of learners have access to a library and of this percent 40% of learners have access to a sufficient number of books.)

As indicated in the section on e-Education (see section 7), a key challenge is to ensure that a digital divide is not entrenched within South African society. Schools have a vital role to play here by ensuring that learners can access a wide range of knowledge and information, partly through the use of modern information and communication technologies. Media such as the internet permit access to a volume of information well beyond what even the best stocked book collections allow. As indicated in section 7, whilst half of primary school learners have used a computer somewhere, only 37% have done so within their school. This suggests that, in some ways, schools are lagging behind in what is available in the world outside schools. The more schools are able to be at the forefront when it comes to the available information technologies, the more attractive schools will be for children and youths.

[68] Stats SA (2010).

[69] Mullis, Martin, Kennedy and Foy, 2007: 231.

Government's response

The new physical infrastructure norms, referred to under Goal 24, specify that smaller schools (up to approximately 600 learners) should have a multimedia centre that includes both a library collection and computers, whilst larger schools should have both a school library and a separate computer centre. However, as suggested by the OECD review of South Africa's schools, there is a need to define a minimum school library package. Such a package has been defined within a set of national guidelines that will be published soon. Importantly, the guidelines will also indicate intermediate steps that should be aimed for, given that an adequately stocked library in every school cannot be realised overnight. A key intermediate step is the establishment of smaller classroom libraries. The guidelines moreover emphasise the importance of having a teacher who is qualified in library science to take responsibility for the school's library collection. Larger schools with larger libraries should have library assistants.

Access to books in poorer communities can be accelerated if the education departments and the departments of arts and culture, at national and provincial level, work in unison and allow school libraries and community libraries to complement each other more. Statistics on the access that households have to libraries of one type or another, are scant. With regard to community libraries, what is known is that the ratio of inhabitants per library varies greatly across provinces, from about 7 000 in the Northern Cape to about 120 000 in Mpumalanga (counting provincial and local government libraries). A greater focus on the actual access of households to libraries of any kind in the household surveys of Stats SA would assist planning and monitoring, and it would strengthen budget bids promoting the establishment and maintenance of libraries.

To promote access amongst learners to the internet and similar information technologies, government must use public resources as effectively as possible, but it should also continue to promote partnerships with business and other stakeholders with a special interest in promoting computer and internet literacy amongst the youth.

Monitoring of progress

The indicator specified below focuses on libraries fulfilling minimum standards. As indicated above, currently very few learners, perhaps as few as 16%, have access to such a library. This indicator should reflect an improvement as we move forward. However, it is vital that this indicator be viewed in conjunction with improvements at various other levels; for instance improvements in access to community libraries and in the presence of small collections of books in

classroom reading corners. Moreover, the availability of technologies in libraries, such as the internet, should be tracked. Wherever possible, the impact of improvements in access to learning materials on learning and, in particular reading skills, should be monitored. If these improvements are not leading to improvements in teaching and learning, then it is important to understand why this is so and to correct the situation.

Indicator 20: The percentage of learners in schools with a library or multimedia centre fulfilling certain minimum standards.

Government's NEIMS data base has made it easier to monitor the buildings and facilities of our schools. During 2011 norms were be released, stating not only what kind of building a library or multimedia centre should be housed in, but also the minimum it should contain in terms of books, computers and other materials. The Annual Survey of Schools will be used to gather information from all schools on what is available, so that the authorities can prioritise certain schools and certain materials. Moreover, the ANA verification sample will gather more detailed information from learners and teachers on how materials over and above the Minimum Schoolbag are accessed and add value to teaching and learning. Ideally, every school should have a proper library or multimedia centre. Schools will be counted as fulfilling the criteria for this indicator if they comply with all the minimum standards in the national policy.

The following are some of the more important future milestones for this goal.

2012 » National specifications on what a school library should ideally contain and what interim arrangements should exist if the ideal cannot be realised yet, are published.

2013 » In conjunction with the Department of Arts and Culture, a strategy is finalised on how community libraries and school libraries can complement each other in promoting access to books and other sources of knowledge.

» The Thutong site is revamped with new materials, including interactive e-learning modules, as part of a strategy to make Thutong a stronger catalyst of educational improvement.

2014 » An accredited library science training module, aimed at teachers and which is available through the e-Education mode, is launched.

8.3 School governance and management (Goals 21 and 22)

GOAL 21

Ensure that the basic annual management processes take place across all schools in the country in a way that contributes towards a functional school environment.

This goal is one of five priority goals for the period to 2014 reflecting the emphasis in the Minister's Delivery Agreement.

Problem statement

Evidence suggests that even amongst schools facing very similar challenges of poverty and human and physical resource constraints, there are often great differences with respect to learning outcomes and the sense of well-being and harmony in the school. What accounts for these differences? The obvious answer, and one that is supported by much research, is that effective school management makes the difference. To a large degree, effective school management means a good school principal. The schooling system has many outstanding school principals who not only produce quality schooling in their own schools, but offer examples to others of what can be achieved. However, there are also many thousands of principals requiring support and training before they can realise their full potential. One can, moreover, not deny that there are a limited number of school principals who are simply not the right person for the job. In such cases the necessary steps need to be taken. The position of school principal is too important to be occupied by someone who is not suited for the job.

Improving school management is a challenge that can be thought of as having four parts to it. Firstly, weaknesses in the current system, whereby principals and deputy principals are hired, need to be addressed. Principals should be educators, not only with exceptional management skills, but they should understand and embrace the core values of the Constitution and education policies. They should, moreover, display the qualities of a leader who can be respected in both the school and the school community as a whole. Related to the matter of school principal recruitment, is the system whereby administrative assistants in schools are hired. A school principal's ability to manage is obviously greatly enhanced by the presence of a suitable administrative assistant. Secondly, nationally and provincially designed management policies and tools are generally considered to be in need of an overhaul, so that the

process of managing a school can become easier and more logical. The need is not so much for a complete reworking of existing policies, but rather the creation of greater synergy between different policies and the simplification of certain processes. Thirdly, the in-service training of school principals, whilst fairly widespread currently, is believed to be poorly focussed in many cases and sometimes of poor quality. To illustrate, whilst the 2009 UNICEF review of school funding and management found that 90% of school principals had received training in financial management, and more than half indicated that this took place on an annual basis, only 40% of principals found the training they had received useful. The mentoring of newly appointed principals is a category of in-service training that has received very little attention. Fourthly, the systems whereby the school principal is accountable to the employer (the provincial department) need to be strengthened. This should happen whilst acknowledging that the school principal is also accountable to the community, through the school governing body, and must therefore balance two lines of accountability.

To the above can be added the challenge of understanding what policies promote effective school management, and monitoring improvements in this area. As recognised by the 2009 MTSF, there is a need for a better set of indicators. Measurement and research in this area are inherently difficult, due to the fact that so much hinges on the leadership qualities of the school principal – qualities that are not easily analysed. The steps needed to bring about effective management in a school cannot be over-simplified. At the same time, there are basic and non-negotiable features of good management that are relatively easy to monitor and are, in many ways, a pre-requisite for a well run school. A large number of schools, often referred to as dysfunctional schools, lack these basic features. It makes sense to place considerable focus on ensuring that this problem is fixed; for instance through ensuring that all schools have an annual plan and other key management documents in place, not because these on their own guarantee effective management, but because schools without these 'building blocks' are unlikely to move forward. An indication of the extent of the problem is the recent finding by the national IQMS monitoring officials that approximately one third of schools do not have a filing system. Further statistics relating to key management tools that should be in place, are provided below.

Government's response

In 2008, detailed proposals on how principals and deputy principals would be placed within the new Education Management Service (EMS) were released[70].

[70] ELRC Resolution 1 of 2008.

The EMS will bring about new conditions of service for these school managers, aimed at strengthening lines of accountability, but also providing new incentives to perform well. A key element would be a performance agreement for each school principal along the lines of such agreements currently applicable to public sector managers working in offices. This recognition of school managers as a specific tier of management professionals is expected not only to improve the incentives for those who are already within the posts concerned, but also improve the likelihood that talented and suitable educators take up these positions in future. On the whole, principals and deputy principals have welcomed the change and negotiations to finalise an agreement are at an advanced stage.

Important developments have taken place in recent years to make the policies and tools used by school principals (and their deputies) more logical and easier to implement. The national computerised school administration system, SA-SAMS, was well received by school principals. By 2009, approximately half of the learners in public schools were in schools that used SA-SAMS. However, it is expected that, for many years to come, a parallel paper-based system of management tools will be necessary, both as a back-up and for schools without computers. It is thus important that both the paper-based system and SA-SAMS move forward in parallel. Yet, the ultimate aim should be for all schools to shift to a computerised school administration, partly so that managers can devote less time to routine administration and more time to solving educational challenges in the school in creative ways.

Policies and guidelines relating to school management processes are obviously crucial. In 2010, the national department released a handbook on human resources management in schools[71] in order to bring together various management requirements within a more logical framework. Further work needs to be done in this area. There is still a sense amongst many school principals, including very capable ones, that there are too many requirements and that different requirements do not always 'talk to each other'. The challenges include recognising that not all schools are the same in terms of size, capacity and context, and that processes should ultimately be aimed at improving learning outcomes. Both the national department and the provincial departments have an important policy development role to play, but the school principal should not have to deal with contradictions between the two. Crucially, in coming years, it will be important to ensure that ANA becomes integrated into the planning and decision-making of the school.

[71] *Human resources management guidelines for schools* (available on the national department's website).

Below, challenges specific to documents that can be considered key 'building blocks' of school management are explained.

- *School improvement plan.* Every school is required to have an annually updated school improvement plan,[72] explaining what the key challenges of the school are and how these challenges are to be addressed. Recent data indicates that we are far from a situation where all schools have this plan in place. One 2008 study found that only 60% of primary schools had a plan,[73] and the national IQMS monitoring officials found the figure for all schools to be approximately 79%. In getting all schools to engage in proper school improvement planning, it is important that the requirements be clarified (for instance, precisely what should be included in the plan), that best practices in training principals be identified and replicated, and that unnecessary duplication be done away with. With respect to the latter, too many schools are under the impression that several different plans should be developed. The aim should be for school planning to be an integrated process, leading to the maintenance of one school improvement plan. This plan should be a guide for teachers in their compilation of their teacher files and, at the same time, a synthesis of what is reflected in these teacher files. (Following the 2009 report on the curriculum, each teacher's annual work schedule, assessment plan, formal assessment tasks, marking memoranda and records of learner marks should be filed in the teacher file.)

- *School budget.* Virtually all schools receive a transfer of public funds into the school fund, the average annual amount per school being approximately R300,000 (95% of schools receive at least R20,000). It is vital that the intended utilisation of these public funds be reflected in a credible school budget. Here basic compliance has been relatively good, with almost 100% of schools producing a budget. A policy challenge in this regard, identified by the 2009 UNICEF review of school funding and management, is for a formal national chart of accounts for school budgets to be approved, so that all schools become legally obliged to use the same format, which is something that will greatly facilitate monitoring, including the tracking of fraud. Importantly, any new standard chart of accounts should not unnecessarily complicate the school budgeting process.

[72] Whilst the term, 'School development plan' (SDP), is still widely used by schools, and although in some provinces the 'School development plan' and the 'School improvement plan' are considered to be separate requirements, duplications in this area are being done away with and the term, 'School improvement plan', is increasingly being used as the standard term.

[73] National School Effectiveness Study dataset.

- *School timetable.* A well-designed school timetable is a key pre-requisite for the management of one of the school's most valuable resources, namely time. As explained in the human resources management handbook for schools, a number of other management documents flow from the school timetable, including educator timetables, class timetables and the annual educator utilisation report. Despite its obvious importance for the day-to-day running of the school, some schools experience serious timetable problems. In a recent study, 5% of primary schools were not able to show evidence that the school had a timetable and the national IQMS monitors recently found that 7% of schools did not have a timetable in place when learners arrived on the first school day of the year. This last statistic was the worst in the case of the Eastern Cape, at 13%. Apart from the obvious need for better accountability and training around the availability and design of timetables, the national department is prioritising the development of an official national timetabling tool within SA-SAMS, which would cater specifically for the South African school context. The reason why this has not been done to date is that good timetabling software is costly to develop. The national department will, amongst other things, tap into the best talent available amongst teachers and learners to ensure that this gap is closed.

- *Daily educator attendance register.* Recent data on primary schools (from eight of the nine provinces) indicates that although 99% of schools use educator attendance registers in some way, 17% of these schools were considered not to have registers that were up to date[74]. Teaching time is the most costly input in the schooling process and it is vital that this be monitored properly in not most, but in all schools. There are no national statistics available for the extent to which the quarterly educator attendance return is duly submitted for scrutiny to the district. Clearly this return is an important link in the school accountability chain and its proper implementation should receive attention.

- *Class register* and *period register.* These registers monitor learner attendance in a school. The class register reflects daily attendance, whilst the period register indicates which learners are absent from a specific period in the day. A 2007 study into learner absenteeism found that, in general, schools do implement daily learner attendance monitoring[75]. Yet, there are critical gaps. For instance, in recent years, national fieldworkers visiting schools as part of the sample-based verification of EMIS survey collections, found that approximately 5% of schools did not have class registers that could be used to verify the enrolment values that the school submits through, for instance, the Annual Survey of Schools. In 2010, a comprehensive policy on learner attendance was published to clarify what the responsibilities of schools and districts are[76]. Going forward, monitoring compliance with this policy will be important.

[74] National School Effectiveness Study dataset.

[75] *Learner absenteeism in the South African schooling system.*

[76] Government Notice 361 of 2010.

- *IQMS instruments.* The Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) involves annual appraisals of each teacher's capabilities by himself or herself (self-appraisal), as well as an appraisal by colleagues and a manager in the school. IQMS is the outcome of many years of negotiations between the employer and unions, as well as investigations and reviews by education experts. It is by no means perfect in its current form and it is presently being improved and rebranded in collaboration with teacher organisations. More specifically, a greater separation between the IQMS elements dealing with the teacher's own professional growth plan and those dealing with the ranking of the teacher for salary purposes, is envisaged. Under the present system, every school should have within its filing system the IQMS instruments: (1) forms where appraisals for each teacher are noted, (2) copies of each teacher's personal growth plan, resulting from the last appraisal, as well as (3) summary documents, such as the school summary score sheet and a snapshot of the educator performance report (reflecting the IQMS performance scores for all teachers in the school), and (4) the internal moderation sheet (indicating the differences between the self-appraisal ratings and the ratings of colleagues). The findings of the national IQMS monitoring officials suggest that, whilst IQMS has certainly contributed towards a better focus on building the capacity of teachers and improving the quality of teaching, gaps include insufficient guidance on how ratings should be handled. The officials found that in about one third of the IQMS instruments examined, ratings given to teachers did not tally with the qualitative comments. The IQMS should also be more explicit about the mentoring responsibilities of the school principal and teachers appointed as heads of department. Only in 45% of schools was the right kind of mentoring found to be taking place. Overall, the national officials found that in the 2009 to 2010 period, only 7% of schools visited could be considered as having fully implemented the IQMS. As performance agreements for school principals are rolled out, it will become important to monitor presence and quality, both at the school and in district offices, of the actual agreements, as well as the supporting documents.
- *Consolidated record of learner marks.* This should bring together, at school level, the records kept by individual teachers on learner marks. Following recent changes to the curriculum, the exact structure of this school-level report is being reworked, with the emphasis on avoiding unnecessary repetition in the recording of information, clarifying how ANA scores will be captured, and ensuring that the right information is submitted to the district for monitoring purposes.

- *Annual financial statement.* The 2009 UNICEF review of school funding and management found that, whilst virtually all schools in eight provinces produced annual financial statements, in the Eastern Cape, only 75% of schools did so. Apart from addressing this problem in one province, there is a need to provide all schools with better guidance on what steps to take in order to ensure that financial statements are duly audited and, in particular, on what to do if the school is not able to easily hire an auditor, either because of the cost or because there are no auditors available in the area. A national chart of accounts for school budgets would greatly assist provincial departments in analysing financial statements submitted by schools.

- *Annual report.* The South African Schools Act requires all schools to produce an annual report and submit it to the provincial department. This report should reflect what progress, as envisaged in the school improvement plan, has been made, and how challenges should be addressed going forward. The annual report is a management tool that has not received sufficient emphasis. Too often school planning, if it happens at all, involves just compiling a plan on an annual basis, sometimes with the same improvement strategies restated year after year, without sufficient reflection on why progress has not been made, and on how things can be done differently. The school's annual report offers a valuable opportunity to engage in the necessary analysis and reflection.

The documents listed above should be produced annually in every school. A school that is unable to demonstrate that it has produced these documents to an acceptable standard is far more likely to be a school that is dysfunctional and requires an intervention by the provincial department. However, in addition to the above documents, there are other documents that some schools should have, depending on their circumstances. Of particular importance is having good documentation on any disciplinary matters, where applicable, so that these matters can be resolved in a manner that is transparent, legal and fair.

A continued focus by the national and provincial departments on strengthening the formal tools and procedures relating to school management is vital. There are a number of systemic improvements that can be made in a relatively short space of time, which will streamline the process of managing a school. However, good systems are only a part of the solution. The capacity of school principals to manage needs serious attention as well. The 2009 MTSF pointed to the need for management training to be more formalised and for quality assurance in training programmes to be strengthened. The 2007 Polokwane Resolutions called for the introduction of a standard course that all principals would be required to take, and which would focus on the basic set of management, governance

and leadership issues that principals should be familiar with. As in the case of teacher development, the national department is paying particular attention to the use of e-Education as a means of getting good training materials to as wide an audience as possible, but also as one way of getting school principals to form information-sharing and discussion groups. In many ways the best source of knowledge about good management practices is school principals themselves. There are many outstanding school principals in South Africa and it is logical to involve them in some way in the training process. Moreover, it should be recognised that the private sector is well placed to provide advice and assistance when it comes to generic management practices and to the mentoring of school principals who are new or who are not new, but require support. There is a need for partnerships in this regard, both at a planning and policy-making level, but also at local level, where improving school management is one of several areas where schools and local businesses can collaborate.

Monitoring of progress

The following indicator, in conjunction with many different sources of quantitative and qualitative information, will be used to track improvements in school management. As explained above, whilst a focus on the 'building blocks' of effective management is by no means adequate on its own, without these 'building blocks' it becomes considerably more difficult for to bring about sound leadership and organisation in schools.

Indicator 21: The percentage of schools producing the minimum set of management documents of a required standard, for instance a school budget, a school improvement plan, an annual report, attendance registers and the record of learner marks.

Many surveys, including the Annual Survey of Schools, collected information on what documents schools produce. However, there has not been sufficient emphasis on the extent to which these documents contribute towards better functioning schools. The ANA verification sample will collect information from principals, but also from teachers, on what documents are being produced and how these help the school. This information, in combination with a set of criteria to be developed during 2012, will be used to determine what percentage of schools meet their basic administrative obligations. More in-depth visits to schools by experts employed by the national department will make assessments of the value and impact of the administrative procedures that schools must follow.

The following are some of the more important future milestones for this goal.

2012
- A detailed proposal on enhancing education leadership, management and governance capacity within the schooling system is released.
- A new set of management guidelines for school principals, with a special focus on using the key 'building blocks' of effective school management, is made widely available through the national department's website and through other means.
- New conditions of services for principals and deputy principals that would place these managers within the new Education Management Services (EMS) tier, are finalised.

2013
- A new set of online school management training modules, aimed at those who train school principals, as well as principals themselves, are made available, following an evaluation of existing and new training practices and tools.
- An investigation into the use of national and provincial school management tools, both computerised and paper-based, is completed.
- A review of the effectiveness of existing policies and procedures to provide administrative and other support staff to schools is completed.

2014
- A national programme to provide induction training for newly appointed school principals is rolled out, following the piloting of relevant training materials during the preceding year.
- A computerised timetabling tool, tailor-made for the South African context, is endorsed by the national department, following a multi-year project in which learners, teachers and others have been able to submit proposed tools for evaluation.
- An impact assessment of the newly introduced performance agreements for school principals is finalised.

GOAL 22

Improve parent and community participation in the governance of schools, partly by improving access to important information via the e-Education strategy.

Problem statement

In any discussion on parent and community involvement in South African schools, it is important to clarify that many learners stay in households where one or both biological parents are absent. According to the 2009 General Household Survey, only 74% of learners have both biological parents alive and only 44% have both parents living in the same household. In the case of 7% of learners, neither biological parent is alive, and as many as 19% of learners live in households where neither parent is present. HIV and AIDS, compounded by the effects of poverty, gave rise to a number of child-headed households. This is part of the reason why for 4% of learners the age difference between the learner and the oldest person in household is 10 years or less. However, for 93% of learners this age difference is 18 years or more; in other words at a more acceptable level from the perspective of adequate adult guidance and supervision at home. All these statistics should be interpreted with care. Many learners are very well cared for at home by adults, often members of the extended family, who are not the learner's biological parents. Yet, for the purposes of policy and the strategies that schools adopt, it is vital that the term, 'parent', be interpreted very broadly. Some of the public comments received during 2010 suggested that the term, 'caregiver', rather than 'parent', be used in the Action Plan. Partly in order to maintain consistency with the South African Schools Act, it was decided to use the term 'parent' here. In this plan, parent and caregiver can be considered to be synonymous.

Parent involvement in school governance is fairly good, but it should be strengthened. The 2009 UNICEF review of school funding and management found that, for approximately two thirds of learners, some adult in the household had taken part in school governing body (SGB) elections. The same study found that in 61% of schools, parents were actively involved in deciding what the school budget should look like. Specifically, in 61% of schools parents believed that they, as opposed to other stakeholder groups, have the greatest influence over budgetary decisions. These figures reveal a relatively healthy situation and suggest that many years of advocacy and training in this area have borne fruit. However, there are still many challenges. Parent participation in the school's budgeting process in poorer communities is considerably lower than the 61% level just mentioned. In fact, the figure for quintile 1 is 46%, against 82% in quintile 5. There are also important inter-provincial differences. The Eastern Cape stands out as being very different from the other eight provinces,

with parent participation in the budgeting process being found in only 18% of schools. Low parent participation in school governance means that schools are less likely to take decisions that benefit communities. Moreover, poor parent oversight often reduces the sense of accountability to the community amongst the school's staff members and hence a sense of purpose and discipline within the school. Special measures must be taken in poorer communities in order to encourage parent participation. The media must be used to disseminate information on what the rights and duties of parents are, in all official languages. Parents are often poorly informed in this regard. Schools need to make a special effort to explain to parents, who may not be literate, what the key school governance issues are.

Government's response

What became very clear in the 2010 consultation process that led to this Action Plan, is that, despite some successes, as revealed for instance in the statistics on parent participation, parent organisations are far from happy with the current state of affairs. These organisations argued that the potential for qualitative improvements in schools brought about by parents and community action had been under-estimated. Parents could play a much larger role in promoting the quality of teaching and learning, but also in addressing social problems, such as school violence and drug abuse. Whilst part of the problem lies in better advocacy and training, parent organisations also pointed to the unwillingness of too many people in the education departments or schools to promote parent participation. What is very clear is that there is room for a much stronger partnership between the education departments and parent organisations.

It is important to emphasise that government remains committed to the principles embodied in the South African Schools Act with respect to parent and community participation in schools. All schools should be centres of community life and should be accountable to communities through mechanisms such as the SGB and the SGB elections. The 2009 MTSF emphasises the importance of better parent oversight in schools. The Ten Point Plan stresses the importance of a 'social pact' between those working in the education sector and society in general. A key element of such a social pact must be strong links between the school and communities at local level.

A relatively high proportion of parents serving on SGBs report having received school governance training. The 2009 UNICEF report indicated that 77% had received such training. What needs to happen is that the quality of this training, in terms of the training materials used and the preparation of the trainers themselves needs to improve. This request came through very strongly from parent organisations. Messages that get sent out to all parents through, for instance the media, need to come out more frequently and should focus on a

greater variety of ways in which parents can make a contribution. Participation in the formal structures of the school should be emphasised, but so should ways in which parents can assist learners to study at home, and the importance of parent cooperation in the handing in of textbooks at the end of the year, so that the following year's learners will have access to the books they need.

As pointed out in section 3.5 above, there is a need for a complaints officer in every district and at provincial and national level, who can initiate appropriate action when parents believe that their right to participation, as well as other rights, are not being respected by their school as required by the South African Schools Act.

One programme that is intended to bring about fundamental change in the way parents interact with schools is the Annual National Assessments programme. A key problem in the past was the fact that parent participation in the key area of learning outcomes was severely limited, due to a lack of reliable information on how well each school actually performs. This has been an especially serious problem at primary level, despite this being the level at which so much of the learner's future is determined. In schools with Grade 12, it has been easier for parents to engage with the school on which subjects need special attention and how satisfactory the overall level of performance of the school is. ANA is expected to do the same for the lower grades in the schooling system. However, for this to happen it is vital that new training and advocacy approaches, which incorporate the use of ANA, be introduced, both with respect to parents serving on the SGB and parents in general.

Another area that must be addressed in the education of parents is e-Education. School information provided through media such as the internet is important, both insofar as parents access information they require and insofar as this can empower parents in terms of their general capacity to use information technologies. Whilst it is true that internet access amongst the most disadvantaged is low, experiences in other countries have shown that if valuable information, made available through the internet, and a critical level of access through public facilities (such as schools) are achieved, the situation, even for the poor, can change rapidly.

Schools play a critical role in deepening democracy in the country. Schools are often used as voting stations during elections and skills obtained through parent participation in school governance can strengthen community participation in local government. With regard to the latter, collaboration between the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (and their provincial counterparts) could be stronger.

Monitoring of progress

There are many indicators of progress with respect to Goal 22, such as the statistics on parent participation referred to above. The following indicator is thus just one of many indicators that need to be tracked.

Indicator 22: The percentage of schools where the School Governing Body (SGB) meets minimum criteria in terms of effectiveness.

Virtually all schools have SGBs, yet not all SGBs are equally good at ensuring that parents have a say in how their children are educated. Through the ANA verification sample, school principals and parents will provide information on whether elections were held as they should, but also on whether SGB meetings resulted in a better run school and a better focus on the learning outcomes of learners. Schools that meet a few minimum criteria will be counted for the above indicator.

The following are some of the more important future milestones for this goal.

2012
- A report on the availability to parents of complaints officers at national, provincial and district level, plus recommendations on the way forward in this regard, formulated partly through consultation with parent organisations, is finalised.
- School governing body elections are held across the country in the context of a national campaign that emphasises the role of parents in promoting quality learning, and revised election guidelines, which will make it easier for parents to become involved.

2013
- An updated and comprehensive training manual, aimed at those training parents in their rights, their duties, participatory school governance and the quality of the education of their children, is released.

8.4 School funding (Goal 23)

GOAL 23

Ensure that all schools are funded at least at the minimum per learner levels determined nationally and that funds are utilised transparently and effectively.

Problem statement

In the South African school policy discourse, the 'school funding norms' are the rules governing non-personnel recurrent funding of schools. The 'school allocation' is the non-personnel funding that the province grants each school every year on the basis of the level of poverty of the community and the number of learners. This goal in the plan deals mainly with the school allocation, but achieving it requires paying attention to the related matter of school fees.

A 2009 UNICEF-funded review of school financing and management, commissioned by the national department, focussed extensively on challenges in the implementation of the school allocation. With respect to the amount of funding, it was found that, although the school allocation had grown considerably over the years, and that this was appreciated by schools, a third of schools were still paid less than the targets applicable to them in the national policy. Under-funding of schools was found to be particularly common in North West and Mpumalanga. With respect to the level of school control over the funding, it was found that there were still too many restrictions and that this made it difficult for schools to utilise the funding effectively. For example, amongst the 87% of schools where at least a part of the school allocation was spent by the provincial department on behalf of the school, a third of school principals reported that goods were delivered too late and the vast majority of school principals and school governing body parents supported the idea of transferring more procurement responsibilities to schools themselves. At the same time, a third of schools receiving at least a part of the school allocation as a transfer into the school's bank account (this takes place in 98% of schools), complained that the provincial department obliged the school to spend particular amounts on particular goods, often in a way that made school management more difficult. These restrictions, in fact, run contrary to the funding norms, which give provincial departments the power to guide and monitor spending in schools, but not to dictate what the school budget should look like. Overall, the UNICEF study recommended additional funding so that

the national targets could be met, as well as allowing schools more freedom in the utilisation of the school allocation (whilst improving the systems whereby provinces monitor school budgets and financial statements).

The UNICEF report confirmed that, in many cases, provincial departments tell schools to use the school allocation for items that the school allocation is not intended for, for instance desks and chairs for learners when enrolment in the school has increased. The school allocation is intended to cover recurrent costs only (such as the replacement of furniture that has recently broken), not costs associated with the expansion of the school, major policy changes, such as the introduction of new curriculum requirements (which often require, for instance, all textbooks to be replaced) or historical backlogs in terms of infrastructure and facilities. Provinces should budget separately for these additional costs. In particular, backlogs with respect to learner desks and chairs are unacceptably high. DBE data indicates that, in 2006, approximately 55% of schools suffered serious furniture shortfalls in the sense that over 10% of learners did not have their own desk and chair. A similar finding emerged from the 2009 UNICEF financing and management review, which indicated that in 30% of schools new desks were needed and that overall, 22% of learners, or approximately 2.6 million learners, either had no desk or a desk that was in such poor condition that it needed replacing.[77]

According to the General Household Survey (GHS), unaffordable school fees was one of the two top issues poor households complain about when it comes to schools (the other was a lack of books). This situation has changed considerably with the introduction of no-fee schools (described below). In 2004, 14% of households were complaining about high fees, against 5% in 2009. The latter figure is still problematic, even if the situation has improved substantially. According to the UNICEF report, a major problem is the fact that the policy stating that recipients of child support grants should not be charged fees is widely flouted. The report estimates that approximately 1.2 million learners in this category, who should not be paying school fees, are paying school fees.

Government's response

A key development in recent years has been the establishment of no-fee schools. The UNICEF report indicated that by 2009, 53% of learners were in no-fee schools.

[77] Clearly the data indicates that the desk and chair shortfall is critical. At the same time, the figure of 4 million learners without desks, which was widely publicised by the press during 2010, seems not to be supported by the evidence. Data from the 2007 SACMEQ survey, which is based on a nationally representative sample of almost 500 schools, indicates that 98% of Grade 6 learners sit on a 'chair' or a 'bench' and also write on a 'desk'. This information is based on responses from learners themselves. Clearly, great care needs to be taken in how this information is collected and how it is interpreted, given the fact that different approaches are resulting in such different statistics.

The 2009 General Household Survey confirms this trend, though it found the value to be slightly lower at 46%. The 2008 election manifesto promises that no-fee school coverage would increase from 40% to 60%. This target is clearly achievable and might already have been achieved by 2010. Importantly, the UNICEF report indicated that, despite some teething problems, the great majority of affected principals and parents are satisfied with the removal of fees from their schools.

Work is currently underway to determine a way forward for school funding in the light of the 2009 study. What seems clear is that current non-compliance with the existing policy must be addressed. In particular, restrictions on the use of the school allocation by schools, which violate the policy, should be removed, and the provision that grant recipients should not pay fees must be enforced. In the interests of transparency, the amount of each school's allocation should be published on the internet so that principals and parents know what the school is entitled to. The recommendation in the UNICEF report that the current system of income quintiles as a means of determining the level of funding be revised and made more accurate is being considered, as is the recommendation that fee-charging schools, which exempt poor learners, should receive compensation for at least a part of their financial losses. It must, moreover, be emphasised to provinces and schools what the school allocation is intended for and what it is not intended for, so that costs, such as those relating to furniture backlogs, are dealt with separately.

There have been calls for greater harmony between the funding norms applicable to Grades 1 to 12 on the one hand, and those applicable to Grade R on the other. This should be investigated by the national department, partly because accountability for the correct distribution and utilisation of public funds becomes compromised when the rules are unnecessary complicated. One area where greater clarity and consistency is needed is the matter of fees charged for Grade R. It should be clear that where a school is a no-fee school, fees cannot be charged for Grade R.

Monitoring of progress

Indicator 23.1: The percentage of learners in schools that are funded at the minimum level.

The 2006 funding norms introduced national per learner spending targets for non-personnel items. This makes it easier for schools to know what to expect from the provincial department. Since 2006, monitoring of what schools actually receive in terms of funds and goods bought for the school by the department

has been relatively good, but it could be improved. Moving forward, each school will fill in basic information on what it received in the previous year and what it has been promised for the current year through the Annual Survey of Schools. This information will be checked against provincial financial accounts. In interpreting the values for this indicator, it is important to bear in mind that the minimum levels specified by the policy will change. In fact, over the longer term. these levels should improve substantially as the country develops and more funding becomes available for basic education.

Indicator 23.2: The percentage of schools that have acquired the full set of financial management responsibilities on the basis of an assessment of their financial management capacity.

Research has shown that if schools are ready to take on financial management responsibilities, then it is best for these responsibilities to be transferred to the school, as this improves the chances that the right resources will be available at the right time. It is important to monitor which schools have formally been given the various SASA Section 21 functions. But it is also important to monitor what rights schools actually enjoy, in particular as far as the transfer of the school allocation is concerned, and the right to take decisions on how this money is spent without unnecessary restrictions. For the purposes of the above indicator, the key question is whether a school receives the full school allocation as a transfer and whether no restrictions other than those permitted by the funding norms are applied. The Annual Survey will be used to gather the required information.

The following are some of the more important future milestones for this goal.

2011 » Amendments to the funding norms, following the 2009 UNICEF review, are finalised and published.

2012 » A media campaign is launched, emphasising that by law, recipients of child support grants should not be charged school fees in any public school.

» A policy clarifying the definition of voluntary contributions by parents to schools is published.

2013 » The amount of public non-personnel funding allocated to individual schools is published on the internet for the first time, together with other information that parents should have access to, relating to school funding and school fees.

» An integrated strategy for addressing fraud and corruption within the school funding system is rolled out.

8.5 School infrastructure (Goal 24)

GOAL 24

Ensure that the physical infrastructure and environment of every school inspire learners to want to come to school and learn, and teachers to teach.

Problem statement

The physical state of public schools varies enormously, from very good, with a great variety of educational and sporting amenities, to very poor, with educational amenities amounting to little more than a few dilapidated classrooms that are barely conducive to learning. The inherited apartheid disparities are glaring, with schools in historically advantaged areas generally being good, and the average in historically disadvantaged areas generally being poor. However, the inequalities are more complex than this. The standard of infrastructure in rural areas often varies greatly, sometimes even within the same district. These inequalities are clearly at odds with the policy imperative of providing an equal educational start in life to all young South Africans.

Focussing on the bottom of the spectrum of infrastructure standards, one finds that in 2010, we still had 1 700 schools without a water supply (needed, for instance, for learners to wash their hands before they eat) and 700 schools with no toilets. (No or poor toilet facilities has been shown to discourage attendance, especially amongst girls.) Not only do these deficiencies impede learning, they pose a health risk to children. In 2010 there were still 400 schools built of mud. These very basic problems are largely concentrated in two provinces, namely the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. In fact, of the 5 640 schools nationally, falling below what is referred to as a 'basic safety' standard (see the indicator described below), 63% of them are in these two provinces. The shortfall of classrooms is estimated to be 63 000 nationally (there are approximately 390 000 classrooms across all public schools). Only approximately 10 000 of the country's almost 25 000 public schools have libraries in the form of a separate room dedicated for this purpose (and only approximately 5 200 schools have structures that were built to serve as libraries)[78].

[78] Information obtained from the Department of Basic Education's NEIMS data base.

The term, 'backlog', is used to refer to the gap between the current infrastructure situation in schools and the situation that is believed to be acceptable for a country of our level of development. Obviously the size of the backlog varies, depending on what is considered an acceptable standard. A recent assessment concluded that the monetary value of the school infrastructure backlog came to between R45bn and R65bn (these are 2010 Rand values). This is a large proportion of the estimated current value of all school infrastructure of approximately R140bn (this excludes the value of land). Approximately 60% of the funds are required to repair and upgrade existing infrastructure, whilst the remaining 40% are required to build completely new facilities, either because existing facilities are beyond repair or because facilities are insufficient to cater for existing school enrolment[79]. To compare, spending on school infrastructure in the 2010/11 financial year was just over R7bn, though less than half of this goes towards addressing infrastructure backlogs, as opposed to maintaining the existing stock of infrastructure at the current level and addressing completely new needs that arise as new settlements are established. Clearly the current rate of spending, whilst an improvement on previous years, is inadequate if we wish to deal decisively with infrastructure backlogs. In fact, the current level of spending implies that the *current* backlogs will only be fully dealt with approximately 20 years from now. This ignores the fact that all the time *new* backlogs are being created as infrastructure comes to the end of its lifespan (or is inadequately maintained).

Government's response

The very visible nature of the physical infrastructure deficiencies in the schooling system has contributed to maintaining this area near the top of the education policy agenda. As budgets grew and ways of utilising funds improved, improvements in school infrastructure accelerated. Following a drop in infrastructure spending in the 1990s, due to overall budget pressures, budgets grew steadily after 2000. By 2010, annual spending in real (inflation-adjusted) terms was six times what it had been in 2000 and three times what it had been in 1996. Infrastructure spending as a percentage of overall spending on schools increased from 1,8% in 2000 to 7,0% in 2010. Cumulative spending between 1995 and 2010 (in 2010 Rand terms) was R53bn – by 2012 this figure would have become R70bn. In 2010, of all the spending on buildings and fixed structures by the national and provincial governments combined, a quarter went towards schools.

Have these improvements in spending made a dent in the infrastructure backlogs? Data on physical facilities shows that there has clearly been an impact

[79] Based on estimates in a report to the Department of Education in 2007, titled *Efficiency Assessment of the School Infrastructure Delivery System in South Africa*.

resulting in better conditions for many thousands of learners. For example, since 1996, the number of schools without water decreased from 9 000 to 1 700, and the number of schools without electricity decreased from approximately 15 000 to 2 800[80]. With respect to these basic indicators, it is possible to say that the system is close to fully eradicating the apartheid inheritance. Indeed, the General Household Survey indicates that poor facilities is one of the schooling problems where complaints from households have been declining since 2004 (9% of households complained about poor school facilities in 2004 against 5% in 2009). The percentage of classrooms used by more than 45 learners declined from 55% to 25%. This happened whilst total school enrolments remained more or less unchanged (better grade attainment was accompanied by lower levels of grade repetition). Moving forward, there is a strong emphasis, for instance in the 2009 MTSF, on eliminating backlogs with respect to water, sanitation and electricity. Moreover, careful and equitable targeting of schools in historically disadvantaged areas to take them up to a level that can be considered generally acceptable, must remain a priority. As pointed out in the MTSF, infrastructure development is needed, not only in schools themselves, but also in institutions that support schools, such as resource centres and district offices. Moreover, the matter of housing for teachers working in remote rural schools is one that must receive greater attention than it did in the past.

A key policy gap for many years was an absence of clear and coherent standards for developing and maintaining school infrastructure. A process that began with the publication of draft norms and standards in 2008, culminated in 2012 with the release of the final regulations. These regulations provide a solid basis for better planning, as well as a vision of where we want to go. The new regulations set three levels of physical infrastructure, expressed in terms of basic safety norms, minimum functionality norms and optimal functionality norms. A school meets the basic safety norms if it has, for instance, drinking water, toilets, electricity and buildings that do not pose a danger to learners. For a primary school with up to 620 learners to meet the minimum functionality norms, it should have 14 classrooms for Grades 1 to 7 (a maximum of 40 learners per classroom is assumed), two Grade R classrooms (30 learners per classroom), a multimedia centre (or library), a science laboratory, a staff room, five offices for staff, two storerooms (one for food), a safe, a kitchen and a sick room.

[80] Baseline figures based on Government Notice 1087 of 2008.

As sporting facilities, the school should have, for instance, a football field and a netball court. Taking the school up from the minimum to the optimal level would involve adding a school hall, a dining hall and a printing room. Clearly, the great majority of schools are far from achieving even the minimum level described here. The immediate challenge is to ensure that all schools meet the basic safety norms. At the same time, the process of bringing all schools up to the minimum level in an equitable and transparent manner, and piloting optimal standards in historically disadvantaged areas, must proceed.

The new regulations provide an important step towards a better national policy framework. However, there are a number of policy gaps that remain and that should be filled in the next few years if infrastructure development is to take place in an equitable and sustainable manner. Specifications for moveable assets, such as desks, chairs and athletics equipment, are required if the right budget motivations are to be made. As pointed out under Goal 23, maintenance and replacement of smaller moveable assets should be covered by the non-personnel school allocation. However, addressing for instance furniture backlogs is a capital expenditure issue that must be dealt with separately from the allocation. Minimum specifications for the maintenance of infrastructure are moreover needed, partly to ensure that provinces and schools set aside sufficient funds for maintenance, thus minimising the deterioration of facilities, which compounds the backlogs problem. There should also be clearer national guidelines on how schools and provinces should respond in emergency situations where infrastructure is suddenly destroyed through, for instance, floods and storms. Such guidelines need to be in line with the protocols of the National Disaster Management Advisory Forum and should recognise the important assistance that was provided by the South African National Defence Force on numerous occasions in the past.

Crucially, there needs to be a fresh approach to the sourcing of infrastructure development funds and the utilisation of these funds. As discussed above, a 'business as usual' approach will not result in an acceptable level of school infrastructure in the foreseeable future. In 2009, the Department of Basic Education began working with key stakeholders on a new approach to infrastructure development, titled the Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative (ASIDI). The principles that guide the new approach were published in the form of a national policy in 2010[81]. Above all, there will be an emphasis on the introduction of complementary mechanisms for sourcing funds and implementing projects, better use of existing mechanisms, and a more holistic approach to planning and monitoring, which takes into account the various mechanisms. Elements of the new initiative include the following:

[81] Government Notice 515 of 2010.

- **New planning and monitoring rules and procedures.** Here the national department must assume a stronger strategic and technical leadership role in relation to the provincial departments (which should retain responsibility over most of the capital investment spending) and other stakeholders, such as the National Treasury (whose Infrastructure Delivery Improvement Programme, or IDIP, should continue to build capacity in the area); the Department of Public Works; the Department of Human Settlements; and the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. Better use must be made of the DBE's National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS), which is designed to provide up-to-date information on the infrastructure of all public schools. Moreover, changes over time in enrolment patterns and human settlements must be taken into account in a more comprehensive manner within infrastructure planning. Methodologies to target infrastructure improvement and to ensure that investments result in value for money and are sustainable over time, must be strengthened, partly through better manuals for infrastructure planners and accompanying capacity-building.

- **More space for innovative model schools, including technical high schools.** Whilst national norms, aimed at providing a uniform level of provisioning for all learners are important, there is also a need for more innovation and experimentation in the schooling system. Norms cannot be considered static. They must change as educationally better and more cost-effective approaches to providing school infrastructure are discovered. They should, moreover, be sensitive to the fact that needs in different geographical areas could be very different. For instance, needs in urban and rural areas tend to differ. Very often the only way to find out whether proposals will work is to carry them out and to assess their impact on the education process. Innovation and experimentation need to become a larger part of the infrastructure development process. A key challenge facing the system currently, is how to support the full range of the FET schools curriculum, which includes a number of subjects with a vocational orientation, through the right kind of infrastructure. Money for this has been earmarked through the Technical Secondary Schools Recapitalisation Grant – a conditional grant to provinces managed by the national department and started in the 2010/11 financial year. This grant is intended for the building of workshops and the acquisition of machinery needed for Grades 10 to 12 subjects, such as computer applications technology, mechanical technology and electrical technology. Lessons from this work will inform possible amendments to the infrastructure norms and the roll-out of facilities for technical subjects to a much larger group of secondary schools.

- **Alternative funding streams.** Even with efficiency improvements in the way provincial infrastructure budgets are spent, the current budget levels are completely inadequate, even for a relatively modest objective, such as making all school infrastructure fit for purpose by 2020. A key element of the ASIDI plan is a focus on alternative funding streams. The National Treasury has approved that additional funding, beginning in 2011/12 to boost the overall level of spending, should flow through the national department in order to strengthen accountability and stimulate innovation. Moreover, the bringing forward of future provincial infrastructure spending through loans, secured either within the public or private sectors, continues to be viewed as an option. At a more local level, partnerships between business and school communities to improve school infrastructure whilst they exist, were insufficiently studied with a view to providing a better enabling environment in this area. Stakeholders indicated that these partnerships are made difficult by regulations that are insufficiently clear or, at times, unnecessarily cumbersome. The education departments need to ensure that partnerships at local level, initiated by schools, businesses, NGOs, faith-based organisations and others are fully supported through the right policies, advice and capacity-building.

- **A greater role for schools.** Unlike many other developing countries, South Africa has pursued a rather centralised approach to improving school infrastructure, with school community involvement in planning, financial management and project management relating to infrastructure development being negligible, although schools are obviously the intended beneficiaries of this development. Yet, in many ways schools are involved in school infrastructure development, even if this is not always within an official policy framework. The 2009 UNICEF review of school financing and management showed that, apart from involvement in 'building maintenance and repairs', where schools clearly do carry much responsibility, approximately 30% of schools across all quintiles are moreover spending money derived from the public school allocation and private contributions on the 'refurbishment of buildings and new buildings'. The total annual value of this investment is only approximately R110m – in other words a tiny fraction of the overall spending on school infrastructure development. Yet, a more pro-active approach to infrastructure development, undertaken by schools themselves on the part of the national and provincial departments, could assist in dealing with glaring backlogs. Instead of the current situation, where spending of the school allocation on capital investments is prohibited, yet schools do this anyway, a better approach would be to recognise that schools do have a role to play,

whilst ensuring that sufficient funding is provided and that minimum building standards are upheld.

- **Better communication with schools in the area of infrastructure development.** Currently it is difficult for schools to access information on when their infrastructure needs will be dealt with by the provincial department and what they can do in the interim to improve the situation. This is partly due to the fact that policies on how schools should be fairly targeted over time are not specific enough which, in some provinces, leads to the use of unclear or *ad hoc* criteria. Moreover, as discussed above, policies on what steps schools themselves can take are currently unclear. The national and provincial departments need to ensure that information is made available to schools through, for instance, their departmental websites.

Monitoring of progress

There are many aspects to the monitoring of infrastructure development that must improve. As mentioned above, individual schools must be in a better position to see where they fit into the larger picture of infrastructure improvement. Amongst the key studies that should be undertaken to improve our understanding of infrastructure development, are the following: (1) A historical analysis of expenditure and infrastructure improvement, with a special emphasis on the degree to which overall spending by province is indeed reflected in physical improvements seen over the years. Such a study would be invaluable for guiding the way forward. (2) An analysis of the extent to which the movement of learners between schools has confounded the backlog problem through over-utilisation of facilities in some schools, whilst other schools are under-utilised. (3) A study of the opportunities and challenges inherent in school-initiated infrastructure improvement.

Indicator 24: The percentage of schools complying with a very basic level of school infrastructure.

The national department used the NEIMS database to establish the number of schools lacking very basic facilities such as water, electricity, proper sanitation and a sufficient number of classrooms. These schools are said to fall below basic safety norms. Altogether 5,640 schools, or 23% of all public ordinary schools, were found not to comply with these norms. In other words, 77% of schools nationally did comply with these standards. This statistic will be used in the coming years as a key indicator of progress. Clearly, as backlogs are addressed, it will become necessary to respecify the indicator, using a higher standard. However, at least for the medium term, the indicator described here appears an important one to focus on.

The following are some of the more important future milestones for this goal.

2011 » Guidelines on minimum norms for physical facilities at schools are finalised and published.

2012 » A new national strategy, the Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative (ASIDI), is released and implementation is re-aligned accordingly.

» The physical infrastructure development plans, with details down to school level, of the national and provincial departments are published on the internet in order to provide schools with a clearer picture of improvements that they could expect.

» The NEIMS data base of physical school facilities is updated with a full audit of all schools.

2013 » National norms for the presence of moveable assets in schools, more in particular school furniture, are promulgated.

» A comprehensive review of past investments in school infrastructure, both centrally driven and school-initiated, with a special emphasis on the equity and efficiency of this investment, is completed as part the overall mission to improve methods of infrastructure development.

2014 » Every school has access to safe drinking water, hygienic and sufficient toilet facilities and electricity.

8.6 Learner well-being (Goal 25)

GOAL 25

Use schools as vehicles for promoting access to a range of public services amongst learners in areas such as health, poverty alleviation, psychosocial support, sport and culture.

Problem statement

Much of this Action Plan focuses on improving learning outcomes. This reflects the serious backlog experienced by the country in this regard. However, schools undoubtedly have an important role in promoting the overall well-being of learners, partly because this contributes to better learning and partly because many aspects of well-being such as physical and psychological health

are important in themselves. This need is particularly strong in the poorest communities. It is important to understand the close relationship between education, well-being and health. Not only are well-being and good health prerequisites for effective learning. Much research has pointed to ways in which good education, for instance being literate and better informed, contributes towards better physical and emotional health. As an example, better reading skills improve a learner's ability to engage with information about the risks of HIV and AIDS and substance abuse, as well as the negative effects of bullying, sexual abuse, harassment and teenage pregnancy.

Many of the public comments on the 2010 initial draft of the Action Plan focussed on specific ways in which schools can promote the overall well-being of learners. Under the notion of well-being we should include a sense of belonging to one's community and one's country. Schools can make an important contribution here, partly through specific sporting, cultural and community involvement activities. Moreover, schools should provide a range of psychosocial support, both on a collective and individual basis. Collective support includes advocating tolerance and condemning prejudice and violence, in all its forms: physical, verbal, sexual and psychological. This responsibility includes combating racism and sexism, and supporting and protecting members of marginalised groups in our society such as girls and women, lesbian and gay people, foreigners, disabled persons and poor people. The message that prejudice and bullying, whether verbal or physical, is wrong and psychologically harmful should be continually reinforced by principals and teachers. This ideal has been difficult to realise, however, due to limited capacity amongst teachers in the area of psychosocial support and a shortage of external professionals, such as social workers, psychologists and cultural workers available to visit schools.

Much of the focus on learner health and well-being in recent years has fallen on nutrition projects, in particular the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP). As a result, considerable successes have been seen in this area. Much of the challenge currently lies in sustaining the current momentum. There are also problems in the current system which must be addressed. Inter-provincial inequalities exist in the sense that similarly disadvantaged learners in different provinces are not necessarily treated equitably. Balancing the need for good nutrition, cost-effectiveness and job creation within the school nutrition industry remains a key challenge. Monitoring systems can also be strengthened.

Health-related challenges other than school nutrition have generally been organised into three focus areas. Firstly, there is a need to strengthen HIV and AIDS education and prevention programmes as part of the larger mission to speed up the realisation of an HIV-free generation. Here a key challenge is to ensure that better knowledge about HIV and AIDS amongst learners translates into less risky behaviour. This has been more difficult to achieve than was

first imagined. Yet there is evidence that prevention strategies have borne fruit insofar as infection rates amongst those aged 15 to 24 appear to have dropped since 2005, reaching around 5% in 2008 for those aged 15 to 19[82]. This trend must be strengthened.

Secondly, tobacco, alcohol and other substance abuse amongst learners, in particular secondary school learners, is a problem that undermines learning and learner well-being through absenteeism, high risk sexual behaviour and violence. The Medical Research Council's 2008 report on youth risk behaviour provided worrying statistics on the extent of the problem. For instance, it was found that amongst Grades 8 to 11 learners, 29% had engaged in binge-drinking (five or more alcoholic drinks within a few hours) during the past month, 12% had at some point in their lives taken a drug such as heroin, mandrax, cocaine or tik, and 9% had been offered an illegal drug on the school premises during the previous six months.

Thirdly, schools have an important role to play in identifying basic health needs such as the need for eyeglasses and hearing aids. Early intervention to address health barriers to learning is critical to enhance children's development and educational gains. Schools are the most viable location for the coordination and delivery of health screening services. Yet in 2008 around 90% of enrolled primary school learners had never had an eye test although poor eyesight can be an important reason why learners find it difficult to follow in class. Around 7% of learners, mostly from poorer communities, did not have Road to Health cards, when they should all have this[83]. These cards are vital insofar as they capture a learner's immunisation history and other key health issues.

Violence in schools has received widespread media coverage and clearly impacts negatively on the physical and mental health of learners. Here again, the 2008 Medical Research Council report provides worrying statistics. For instance, 16% of Grades 8 to 11 learners in 2008 reported having been threatened by a weapon such as a gun, knife, panga or kierrie on school property.

It is widely believed that interventions to promote physical and mental health through physical education and sport in schools have been under-funded and disjointed. The apartheid legacy is still glaring, with learners in historically disadvantaged schools often experiencing very little in terms of sports facilities and coaching. The 2009 Census at Schools collection of Stats SA reveals that despite inequalities with respect to opportunities, participation in one or another sport is relatively high across all socio-economic quintiles, at around 85% (80% for girls and 90% for boys). Across all quintiles soccer and netball emerge as the most popular sports by far for boys and girls respectively.

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[82] Rehle, Hallett, Shisana, Pillay-van Wyk, *et al*, 2010.

[83] National Income Dynamics Study, 2008 dataset.

However, there is much less access to other sports amongst the poor than amongst the rich. Amongst boys, sports with a relatively large following in the richest quintile but low participation rates in the other quintiles include cricket, rugby, tennis, hockey and chess. For girls, the same can be said for hockey, dance and swimming. Clearly it is in these sports that a special effort must be made to correct the historical inequities.

Social grants, in particular the child support grant, play a vital role in combating poverty and promoting the health and well-being of learners. The need to exempt learners from school fees where they are recipients of social grants was discussed under Goal 23. Moreover, linking social grants to school attendance is something that has been on the policy agenda for some years. Whilst the arguments for such linking are often compelling, there is important information that should inform the way forward. In particular, the GHS reveals that attendance rates amongst learners who receive grants, at around 97%, are virtually the same as those of learners who do not receive grants. The opportunities for improving attendance through social grants may not be large. Making social grants conditional may, however, assist in reducing dropping out at the secondary level. Yet even here the evidence indicates that the most effective intervention may be to ensure that secondary school learners from poorer households are not charged school fees, where schools have not become no fee schools.

Government's response

The 2008 election manifesto pointed to the need to expand publicly funded school nutrition to secondary schools serving poorer communities. Here government has been relatively successful due to the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), a programme funded through a Department of Basic Education conditional grant in order to ensure that funds are not diverted to other activities and to strengthen the monitoring of programme effectiveness. The 2009 GHS indicated that 53% of learners were receiving food every day through a nutrition programme, with the figures being 68% at the primary level and 27% at the secondary level. Figures reported by provincial departments of education agree closely with GHS figures if within the GHS figures one includes learners who receive lunches irregularly and not every day. However, if one only counts learners in the GHS receiving food every day, then the provincial figures exceed GHS figures by around 10%. Much of the emphasis must thus be on ensuring that meals are provided regularly and not intermittently. As pointed out by the 2009 UNICEF review of school funding and management, around half of schools offering school nutrition do so using funds transferred to the school for this purpose, whilst another half receive the food itself from outside the school. School principals tend to prefer the

first approach. As school nutrition is expanded further, it is important that the various modes of delivery should be assessed and that the most effective ones should be promoted, keeping in mind that different approaches may be needed in different contexts (for instance in rural and urban contexts). Government's aim is that by 2014, 75% of learners should be receiving school lunches. The aim is also to make nutrition education, and in particular the Department of Health's guidelines for healthy eating, an integral part of the nutrition programme so that healthy practices both at school and at home are promoted.

Much of government's response to the HIV and AIDS challenges of schools has focussed on another national conditional grant programme, the HIV and AIDS Life Skills Education programme, which has existed for over a decade and dedicates resources to training and advocacy materials, as well as actual training and awareness campaigns. A key health development during 2011 was the finalisation of the national strategy for schools on HIV and AIDS, focussing on prevention, treatment, care and support interventions. Part of the emphasis of this strategy will be on better monitoring of the health of learners and the alignment of various health interventions, including the School Health Screening Programme launched recently as a joint initiative of the departments of basic education and health. Lessons need to be drawn from key studies, such as the Medical Research Council's 2007 Healthy Active Kids report card, which used various data sources and a panel of experts to determine where intervention priorities should lie. Current initiatives aim to ensure that schools experience better support in the form of, for instance, visiting health experts who are able to conduct basic health and eyesight checks, provide educational presentations on health promotions and refer learners to the right Department of Health service centres.

Following the 2008 policy on drugs testing in schools[84], awareness and implementation training have been rolled out to schools. The national department is currently finalising a plan, to be released in 2012, on how ethical and sensitive drug testing in schools can be rolled out in a manner that reduces the problem of substance abuse.

The 2007 government policy with respect to learners who become pregnant has to date guided our actions. However, in 2012 a revised set of regulations for the prevention and management of teenage pregnancy will be available. In particular, the emphasis on reducing pregnancies amongst school learners must continue, whilst pregnancy should not be a factor that unduly interrupts a person's schooling. The new regulations will also emphasise the responsibility of paternity and the fact that it is illegal to have sex with a minor. International experiences indicate that the right kind of sex education in schools encourages

[84] Government Notice 1140 of 2008.

more responsible behaviour. In this regard, the new life orientation curriculum documents being introduced in schools in 2012 will make it much clearer how sex education should be taught. School communities are also encouraged to access the booklet, *Speak Out! Youth Report Sexual Abuse*, and *Speak Out Freely*, on the Department of Basic Education's website.

Another thing emphasised by the 2008 election manifesto was the revival of school sports across all schools and taking forward the sporting spirit of the 2010 football World Cup. Interventions need to occur both with respect to physical education and the conventional sporting codes. In the area of physical education, government's focus currently is on introducing physical education into all quintile 1 schools on a sustainable basis during the period 2010 to 2012. Schools in other quintiles are encouraged to do the same, but in terms of direct support, government's focus is on those schools serving the poorest communities. The 2010 draft national policy on school sport provides details on how the various government and non-government stakeholders need to work together to ensure that sporting codes receive better attention in schools. As explained in this policy, a strong presence of regular physical education in a school provides an excellent foundation for strengthening school sport. Clearly the sports infrastructure development referred to under Goal 24 is a vital element in promoting school sports.

There are many cultural and scientific projects involving a variety of government departments and non-government partners that help to enrich the learning process, even if they are not formally part of the school curriculum. Projects aimed at involving learners in the institutional processes of the country include Stats SA's Census at Schools in which learners gain first hand experience in the collection and analysis of social data. Discussions are under way with Statistics South Africa to expand this project. Public comments on the 2010 draft Action Plan referred to the need to improve cooperation between schools and the Department of Home Affairs with a view to ensuring that learners obtain their national identity documents. Of course strengthening a sense of South African citizenship and social cohesion must also involve promoting the values of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights and Responsibilities, including the values of tolerance, respect and service to one's community and country. Tolerance and respect must extend to those in the school and community who are not born in South Africa. Government and society have been relatively successful at combating xenophobia following the tragic events of 2008. Schools have an important role to play in ensuring that history does not repeat itself in this regard.

A number of initiatives have occurred to improve school safety and reduce physical and psychological violence in schools. For example, the April 2011 Implementation Protocol between the Department of Basic Education and the

South African Police Service on prevention of crime and violence in all schools commits government to ensuring that school communities establish and manage Safe School Committees that link every school to its local police station and ensure the implementation of violence prevention and law enforcement programmes. A stocktaking of the various initiatives implemented in recent years is needed in order to improve our understanding of what works best and to maximise the impact of the new 2011 protocol.

Long and tiring trips to and from school every day can undermine learning and expose learners, in particular girls, to dangers. Although scholar transport interventions of some kind exist in all provinces, clearly not all needs are being met. Policy states that a learner's travelling time to school (in other words in one direction) should not exceed 1½ hours[85]. The 2009 GHS data indicate that around 2% of learners, or around 300 000 in total, exceed this threshold. What is especially worrying is that around 200 000 of these learners are enrolled in Grades R to 7. The majority of affected learners are in two provinces, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo. The national and provincial departments must work together to address this problem. The national department is currently examining a possible change to the 1½ hours norm for primary school learners. Clearly, the norm should be sensitive to a learner's age. If the threshold were to be made one hour, then 8% of primary school learners nationally who do not currently receive transport assistance, would need this. One solution that has received insufficient attention is the promotion of bicycle use. Currently only 0.5% of learners use a bicycle to travel to school.

The overall well-being of learners must clearly be tackled from a number of different angles simultaneously. In order to ensure that the various initiatives complement each other as they should, government is currently committed to a process, together with other Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, of developing an integrated strategy to 'care and support for teaching and learning'. In 2010 a major South Africa situational analysis was completed as part of this process[86]. This analysis will feed into an integrated strategy and framework that will provide a better policy basis for dealing with the well-being of learners.

Monitoring of progress

Goal 25 clearly requires the monitoring of a very broad range of health and social indicators. The indicator specified below has been highlighted, but it should be seen as one of many that ought to be studied.

[85] Government Notice 869 of 2006.

[86] See report titled *Situation and response analysis: Care and support for teaching and learning in South Africa.*

Indicator 25: The percentage of children who enjoy a publicly funded school lunch every school day.

Whilst information from the provincial departments is vital in monitoring progress in the National School Nutrition Programme, for the above indicator Stats SA's General Household Survey will be the preferred source. Household data are generally regarded as the most reliable source for information on whether publicly funded lunches are reaching the intended recipients at the required frequency. In 2009 the GHS introduced a question on whether the child receives a free lunch at school every day. For the purposes of this indicator all Grades R to 12 learners in public schools are considered. Provincial targets for this indicator need to take into account that each of quintiles 1 to 5 is not equally spread across the provinces, implying that poorer provinces should be subject to higher targets in order to meet the need[87].

The following are some of the more important future milestones for this goal.

2012 » A study focussing on the role played by nutrition in educational performance at the secondary school level and on strategies for improving government support in this area is conducted.

» The new integrated strategy on HIV and AIDS is launched.

2013 » A funding and implementation strategy agreed to by a range of government and non-government stakeholders is finalised to give effect to the new school sport policy.

» An independent review of a variety of school safety interventions undertaken during the previous years is completed, with a view to establishing best practices in the reduction of violence in schools.

2014 » An independent review of a three-year drive to introduce physical education to every quintile 1 school in the country is completed.

[87] An added complication is that currently it is not possible to distinguish public and independent school enrolment in the GHS. The 2009 national baseline value of 52%, appearing in section nine, is calculated on the basis of both public and independent school enrolment. However, the value would hardly change if only public school learners were counted. Assuming no independent school learners are offered lunches by their schools and using EMIS enrolment data, the 52% figure rises to just 53% if independent school enrolments are removed from the equation.

» A comprehensive assessment of the implementation of the regulations for the prevention and management of teenage pregnancy is released to guide future actions with respect to teenage pregnancies and gender issues generally.

8.7 Inclusive education (Goal 26)

GOAL 26

Increase the number of schools that effectively implement the inclusive education policy and have access to centres that offer specialist services.

Problem statement

Many of the 200 000 learners, aged 7 to 15, who are not in school are learners requiring special needs education. The inadequacy of special needs education continues to be one important reason why compulsory schooling has not been realised yet (see Goal 10). A further problem is that those learners with special needs who are enrolled in schools very often do not receive the specialised attention they require. Resources and skills for this are lacking, both in ordinary schools and in the country's 413 special schools. With regard to the latter, what schools offer learners who are blind, deaf or otherwise disabled is widely described as very basic care, rather than the necessary specialised education. This is especially true in historically black special schools.

It is important that the problem should be viewed within the framework of inclusive education, a philosophy that was spelt out in Education White Paper 6 of 2001. According to this philosophy, providing special support to learners with exceptional needs is not just a matter of supporting these learners, but also of integrating these learners into the mainstream as far as possible and breaking down social prejudices around issues such as disability – prejudices that are an indictment of the whole of society.

Government's response

For several years, guidelines directed mainly at educators on how to identify the needs of special needs learners and how to respond to these needs appropriately, have been piloted. For instance, these guidelines indicate when it is appropriate to place a learner in a mainstream school and when enrolment in a special school should be recommended to the parents. These guidelines were made public and available to all schools during 2011. In order to ensure that parents

understand the issues and make informed decisions with respect to their children, it is important that well-focussed communication strategies, aimed specifically at parents, should exist.

In general, teachers report that they have an inadequate understanding of special needs support for learners. Some support to schools in this area has taken place. The 2009 UNICEF review of school funding and management indicated that in 35% of schools specialists from outside the school came to assist teachers in taking the inclusive education policy forward, and that approximately 40% of schools have started using new methods to identify which learners need what kind of special attention. Some of the teachers enrolled in Advanced Certificate of Education (ACE) programmes opted to focus on special needs education. It is clear that more training of teachers is needed and that the training that takes place should be subject to better quality assurance. Training on an e-Education platform offers the opportunity to reach more teachers, especially as far as shorter courses are concerned.

The capacity of teachers in ordinary schools should be strengthened to provide special needs support. It is also clear that an intervention of fully qualified specialists in the field is also needed. Government's approach has been to locate these specialists at a district level so that they are able to distribute their time across schools according to need. Often the need is for a learner to spend just a few hours per week with a trained specialist, such as a psychologist. In line with White Paper 6, specialist staff and equipment are based at special schools and at full-service schools. Full-service schools are ordinary schools that have been upgraded so that their staff and facilities are able to cater for special needs. Altogether 30 full-service schools in 30 districts were established since 2004 as part of a national upgrading programme. Additional schools assumed full-service status as part of provincial initiatives. KwaZulu-Natal stands out as a province that succeeded in establishing full-service schools in almost every district in the province. With respect to special schools, 30 of these schools across the country were upgraded to allow them to serve as resource centres for surrounding schools. The aim, initially put forward in White Paper 6, of establishing some kind of dedicated support centre within every district in the country remains a priority.

As part of the process of improving the capacity within special schools, a two-year pilot programme, to upgrade the skills of educators in these schools in dealing with learners experiencing visual or hearing impairments, is currently under way. Lessons from this pilot programme will inform future training strategies in these important areas.

The financing of the initiatives described above has come from a variety of sources, including international donors. For many years national norms governing the resourcing of special needs education and inclusive education

have been on the policy agenda. Above all, such norms could assist in bringing about equity in the provision of services across districts and provinces. The difficulty lies in the fact that different districts developed differently, partly depending on the institutional inheritance (in particular whether a special school exists) and on the involvement of external donors. National norms will need to cater for some diversity across the country whilst, at the same time ensuring that unacceptable inequities are eliminated. To a large extent the norms need to focus on how learners and schools become entitled to the services of specialists who serve the whole district, and how sufficient funding for specialist services at district level is achieved. With regard to the latter, it is important that salaries of specialists, such as psychologists, be harmonised across the Departments of Education and Health. Better collaboration with the Department of Health is also needed to ensure that learners from poorer households, who need specialised equipment, such as wheelchairs for children, are properly equipped. The Department of Women, Children and Persons with Disability clearly has an important role to play in ensuring that services offered within the education sector are aligned to services offered by other departments.

Monitoring of progress

The following indicator is one of several indicators that will need to be tracked in monitoring success against Goal 26.

Indicator 26: The percentage of learners in schools where at least one educator has received specialised training in the identification and support of special needs.

For special needs support for learners to be successful within the inclusive education framework of government, it is vital for teachers to know how to deal with special needs. Historically, training has been poor in this area and the education departments are still trying to ensure that in every school at least one educator has received comprehensive training. The ANA verification sample will gather information from the school principal and selected teachers not only on whether at least one educator has attended training, but also on whether the school is satisfied that this training has made it easier for the school to provide special needs support. Only where a school is satisfied will it be counted for the purposes of the above indicator.

The following are some of the more important future milestones for this goal.

2011 » A set of resourcing policies to deal with personnel, non-personnel and infrastructure requirements relating to special needs learning are published.

2012 » The piloting of screening guidelines, which indicate the types of support that different learners need is completed and the guidelines become official policy.

» A formal set of guidelines, directed at parents, together with a budgeted communication strategy, are launched to raise parent awareness of how the education of special needs children should be dealt with.

2013 » An independent review of the impact of the last five or so years of interventions is completed, both at national and provincial level, and institutional changes aimed at offering better special needs support.

» New training courses aimed at assisting teachers in special needs education and based on lessons learnt from recent pilot training programmes are launched, partly through the e-Education mode of delivery.

2014 » Every district has at least one school with a specific focus on special needs education, plus a resource centre to assist all ordinary schools in the implementation of inclusive education.

8.8 Support by district offices (Goal 27)

GOAL 27

Improve the frequency and quality of the monitoring and support services provided by district offices to schools, partly through better use of e-Education.

This goal is one of five priority goals for the period to 2014 reflecting the emphasis in the Minister's Delivery Agreement.

Problem statement

The achievement of many of the goals in this Action Plan depend on well-functioning district offices[88]. Indeed, the plan places new responsibilities on districts, in particular in relation to the system of Annual National Assessments. Yet, it is widely understood that many, if not most districts are not coping with the current set of responsibilities. Capacity constraints in districts have come to be seen as a key bottleneck in the way of a more effective schooling system. It is important to bear in mind the multi-faceted nature of this capacity constraint. Districts suffer staffing shortages, but the existing staff often lack the skills and training needed to carry out their duties. Physical resources, such as vehicles, buildings and office equipment are often in short supply. Crucially, systems to support effective management and models of effective management are often lacking, resulting in a situation where existing resources may be poorly utilised. Lastly, some have argued that, in certain districts, a Batho Pele (People First) attitude amongst district officials is also in short supply. Clearly, the various facets of the district capacity problem must be treated holistically.

Whilst building capacity in districts is vital, the ultimate goal must be to ensure that schools receive the district support they need to function as they should. Often the problem is defined in terms of the frequency of visits of district officials to the school and the quality of support provided. With respect to the former, recent data indicates that approximately 6% of schools were not visited in the course of one year, whilst a further 16% were visited only once. This is clearly not enough[89]. At the same time, it is commonly reported that those schools that are visited do not receive the support they require. The data that are available indicate that only 45% of schools consider the support they receive from the district as good[90].

Government's response

The 2009 MTSF refers to the need to clarify the performance management functions of district offices. The national department has, in fact, led an extensive series of investigations into the optimal design of districts. There is clearly a need to agree on a flexible 'blueprint' for the district that brings together the various national policy imperatives. Such a blueprint should take into account the full range of district responsibilities, including the following: (1) leadership and effective management with respect to school principals, whose line of accountability runs directly to the district; (2) ongoing professional support

[88] Here district offices should be understood as including subsidiary offices, such as circuit offices, where such structures exist in a province.

[89] There was no significant correlation between being infrequently visited and learner test scores, so it was not a matter of the infrequently visited schools being better performing schools.

[90] 2009 UNICEF school funding and management review.

and training to all management and teaching staff in schools; (3) effective provisioning of posts, HR support, funds and infrastructure development to schools; (4) holistic and tailor-made interventions where individual schools are clearly failing; (5) community work, such as advising parents on compulsory schooling; (6) monitoring schools through, for instance, ANA and EMIS surveys. The full set of responsibilities is clearly wide and requires a variety of skills amongst the district staff. Part of the challenge is to recognise that building capacity in districts is a gradual process and that guidelines need to exist on what to prioritise when staff or other resource constraints are experienced. Moreover, it is important to develop multi-disciplinary professionals in the district who are able to advise schools on a variety of matters when they visit schools. Valuable lessons were learnt from partnerships where government collaborated with NGOs, often funded by international donors or local corporate social investors, to design more holistic and responsive ways of supporting schools. It is important that these lessons should inform government policy and that these kinds of partnerships should continue to play a role in exploring innovative approaches to the supporting of schools.

The notion of a national blueprint for district offices should under no circumstances stifle good management at district level, or bureaucratise district work to an unnecessary degree. A national blueprint must add value to district offices, in the sense that it should be a useful tool for district managers wishing to know how national policy imperatives can be made to 'talk to each other' in the district, and what the best practices are in other districts across the country. However, the blueprint must acknowledge that districts are dynamic entities that must often respond to local needs in local ways.

Apart from a blueprint to guide the management and organisation of district offices, there is a need for more investment in tools and computerised systems that can facilitate district management and reduce time spent on routine administration by professional staff. Put differently, e-Education should become a reality in the district. Many districts have implemented effective systems in their offices. Lessons learnt from these developments should be taken into account, yet there are good arguments in favour of investments into district systems by the national department in order to reduce overall development costs and ensure that all districts come on board. Again, it should be emphasised that nationally designed systems should be designed in such a way that they truly assist districts and allow sufficient space for creativity amongst our district managers.

One systems area that requires close attention is accountability within district offices. Research by the national and provincial departments revealed that, in many districts, job descriptions, annual work plans and reports against these plans are too often lacking. The policy point of departure in this regard is in

many ways ELRC Resolution 2 of 2002, which provides a framework and a set of tools for organising accountability within the district office. Some provinces and districts had greater success than others in implementing the policy. Interventions and ongoing monitoring are needed to ensure that all districts run effective systems of internal accountability.

Good systems do, of course, not remove the need for skilled professionals in the district. Considerable effort has gone into the training of district staff in the past. However, the effectiveness of this training has not always been clear. There is a need to take stock of past successes and failures in the training of district staff and to rely partly on e-Education in taking the best training to as many as possible, bearing in mind that all districts have at least some access to computers and the internet.

Available data indicates that approximately 78% of schools are visited two or more times a year[91]. This indicator should become 100%, not because two visits a year are necessarily indicative of quality district support, but because, in the absence of a minimum level of contact between districts and schools, it is unlikely that district support will take place. The quality of district support will be monitored more closely, using two approaches. On the one hand, more quality audits of districts will take place, partly with a view to establishing what additional capacity is needed. The systems described under Goal 18 (which deals with annual programme completion) will play an important role in this auditing process. On the other hand, the 'clients' of districts, namely the schools, will be requested to provide feedback on the quality and relevance of district support as part of verification ANA.

Monitoring of progress

The following two indicators are to be tracked in relation to this goal. In addition, a wide range of other data and qualitative information will be required, for instance from the Whole School Evaluation programme, in order to assess whether progress is being made and how further gains can be achieved.

Indicator 27.1: The percentage of schools visited at least twice a year by district officials for monitoring and support purposes.

Many surveys gathered information on visits to schools by district officials. The information used for this indicator will be collected through the EMIS Data Quality Audit, with the ANA verification sample serving as an additional back-up source. Visits by officials simply to collect or deliver documents will not be counted under this indicator.

[91] National School Effectiveness Study dataset, 2007 and 2008.

Indicator 27.2: The percentage of school principals rating the support services of districts as being satisfactory.

District officials, like everyone else, should be accountable for the quality and relevance of the services they provide. Clearly, schools must be visited and the monitoring and support that district officials provide must be professional and in the interests of the school and the schooling system in general. The Data Quality Audit sample will be used to collect data from principals on an annual basis on how they rate the services of the district. Questions asked to principals in the audit will cover a range of criteria against which the district service should be measured. Moreover, the ANA verification sample will collect similar information as a back-up and verification exercise. Both of these sources fulfil ethical requirements in the sense that district officials do no administer the surveys. Whilst the information gathered is important, it must be interpreted carefully. It is not necessarily the job of district officials to be liked by principals, but it is their job to advance good schooling. The data collection instruments will therefore also be used to examine the reasons why principals may not be satisfied with the district office, and this will be taken into account when trends in this indicator are analysed.

The following are some of the more important future milestones for this goal.

2012
- A national functions and processes blueprint for district offices, explaining how various national policy imperatives can be realised within districts experiencing different levels of capacity is released.
- The national template for the district-wide ANA report is completed and training in its use is rolled out.
- Verification ANA is used to produce a comprehensive set of nationally representative figures on the quality of district support, as seen from the perspective of the school.

2013
- A first round of training in the use of the blueprint for improving district office functionality, partly through an e-Education platform, is completed.
- A national audit of district functionality, viewed in terms of the blueprint for district offices, results in a set of general and district-specific recommendations.

2014
- The first phase of the roll-out of a new computerised system and set of tools to improve district management is completed.

9.

Indicators with national baseline and target values

As can be seen in Appendix A, values that are at least indicative or approximate exist for virtually all indicators. In the table that follows, the extent to which national baseline and target values are filled in depends on the degree of quality of available values, or the extent to which the available values approximate the formal indicator.

	Indicator	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*	*2019*	*2024*
GOALS AND INDICATORS RELATING TO OUTPUTS BEGIN HERE									
Goal 1: Increase the number of learners in Grade 3 who by the end of the year have mastered the minimum language and numeracy competencies for Grade 3.									
1.1	Percentage of Grade 3 learners performing at the required *literacy* level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.	48	50	53	55	58	60	75	90
1.2	Percentage of Grade 3 learners performing at the required *numeracy* level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.	43	50	53	55	58	60	75	90
Goal 2: Increase the number of learners in Grade 6 who, by the end of the year, have mastered the minimum language and mathematics competencies for Grade 6.									
2.1	Percentage of Grade 6 learners performing at the required *language* level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.	37	42	46	51	55	60	75	90
2.2	Percentage of Grade 6 learners performing at the required *mathematics* level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.	19	27	35	44	52	60	75	90
Goal 3: Increase the number of learners in Grade 9 who, by the end of the year, have mastered the minimum language and mathematics competencies for Grade 9.									
3.1	Percentage of Grade 9 learners performing at the required *language* level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.	*Values still to be determined after measurement of baseline. Existing data does not permit an estimate.*					60	75	90

	Indicator	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2019	2024
3.2	Percentage of Grade 9 learners performing at the required *mathematics* level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.	*Values still to be determined after measurement of baseline. Existing data does not permit an estimate.*					60	75	90
Goal 4: Increase the number of Grade 12 learners who become eligible for a Bachelors programme at a university.									
4	Number of Grade 12 learners who become eligible for a Bachelors programme in the public national examinations.	110	123	136	149	162	175	250	300
		Thousands of learners							
Goal 5: Increase the number of Grade 12 learners who pass mathematics.									
5	Number of Grade 12 learners passing *mathematics*.	125	136	147	158	169	180	270	350
		Thousands of learners							
Goal 6: Increase the number of Grade 12 learners who pass physical science.									
6	Number of Grade 12 learners passing *physical science*.	120	130	140	150	160	170	250	320
		Thousands of learners							
Goal 7: Improve the average performance of Grade 6 learners in *languages*.									
7	Average score obtained in Grade 6 in *language* in the SACMEQ assessment.	495			520			550 (2017)	600 (2022)
Goal 8: Improve the average performance of Grade 6 learners in *mathematics*.									
8	Average score obtained in Grade 6 in *mathematics* in the SACMEQ assessment.	495			520			550 (2017)	600 (2022)
Goal 9: Improve the average performance of Grade 8 learners in *mathematics*.									
9	Average Grade 8 mathematics score obtained via TIMSS.	264		300			340 (2015)	380 (2019)	420 (2023)
Goal 10: Ensure that all children remain effectively enrolled in school at least up to the year in which they turn 15.									
10	Percentage of 7-to-15-year-olds attending education institutions.	97.4	97.7	98.0	98.4	98.7	99.0	100.0	100.0
Goal 11: Improve the access of children to quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) below Grade 1.									
11	The percentage of Grade 1 learners who received Grade R.	80	84	88	92	96	100	100	100
Goal 12: Improve the grade promotion of learners through Grades 1 to 9.									
12.1	The percentage of children who turned 9 in the previous year who are currently enrolled in Grade 4 (or a higher grade).	59	60	61	63	64	65	75	85
12.2	The percentage of children who turned 12 in the previous year who are currently enrolled in Grade 7 (or a higher grade).	46	47	48	50	51	52	60	75
Goal 13: Improve the access of the youth to Further Education and Training (FET) beyond Grade 9.									
13.1	The percentage of youth who obtain a National Senior Certificate from a school.	40	42	44	46	48	50	60	70

	Indicator	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2019	2024
13.2	The percentage of youths who obtain any FET qualification. (This is an indicator of concern to DBE and DHET.)	42	47	51	56	60	65	100	100
GOALS AND INDICATORS RELATING TO INPUTS AND PROCESSES BEGIN HERE									
Policy area: Teachers and the teaching process									
Goal 14: Attract a new group of young, motivated and appropriately trained teachers into the teaching profession each year.									
14	The number of qualified teachers, aged 30 and below, entering the public service as teachers for first time during the past year.	5,000	5,600	6,200	6,800	7,400	8,000	12,000	12,000
Goal 15: Ensure that the availability and utilisation of teachers are such that excessively large classes are avoided.									
15.1	The percentage of learners who are in classes with no more than 45 learners.	64	67	70	74	77	80	95	100
15.2	The percentage of schools where allocated teaching posts are all filled.								
Goal 16: Improve the professionalism, teaching skills and subject knowledge of teachers throughout their entire careers.									
16.1	The average hours per year spent by teachers on professional development activities.	35	*Baseline value a rough indication only based on imperfect data. Targets to be set after better baseline data becomes available.*						
16.2	The percentage of teachers who are able to attain minimum standards in anonymous and sample-based assessments of their subject knowledge.	41	*Baseline value a rough indication only based on imperfect data. Targets to be set after better baseline data becomes available.*						
Goal 17: Strive for a teacher workforce who is healthy and enjoys a sense of job satisfaction.									
17	The percentage of teachers absent from school on an average day.								
Goal 18: Ensure that learners cover all the topics and skills areas that they should cover within their current school year.									
18	The percentage of learners who cover everything in the curriculum for their current year on the basis of sample-based evaluations of records kept by teachers and evidence of practical exercises done by learners.								
Policy area: Textbooks, workbooks and other educational materials									
Goal 19: Ensure that every learner has access to the minimum set of textbooks and workbooks required according to national policy.									
19	The percentage of learners having access to the required textbooks and workbooks for the entire school year.		*See indicative values in Appendix A. Formal baseline and target values to be set after better data becomes available.*						

	Indicator	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2019	2024
Goal 20: Increase access amongst learners to a wide range of media, including computers, which enrich their education.									
20	The percentage of learners in schools with a library or multimedia centre fulfilling certain minimum standards.	44	*Baseline value a rough indication only based on imperfect data. Targets to be set after better baseline data becomes available.*						
Policy area: School governance and management									
Goal 21: Ensure that the basic annual management processes take place across all schools in the country in a way that contributes towards a functional school environment.									
21	The percentage of schools producing the minimum set of management documents at a required standard, for instance a school budget, a school development plan, an annual report, attendance rosters and learner mark schedules.		*See indicative values in Appendix A. Formal baseline and target values to be set after better data becomes available.*						
Goal 22: Improve parent and community participation in the governance of schools, partly by improving access to important information partly via the e-Education strategy.									
22	The percentage of schools where the School Governing Body meets minimum criteria in terms of effectiveness.	61	*Baseline value a rough indication only based on imperfect data. Targets to be set after better baseline data becomes available.*						
Policy area: School funding									
Goal 23: Ensure that all schools are funded at least at the minimum per learner levels determined nationally and that funds are utilised transparently and effectively.									
23.1	The percentage of learners in schools that are funded at the minimum level.	62	70	77	85	92	100	100	100
23.2	The percentage of schools which acquired the full set of financial management responsibilities on the basis of an assessment of their financial management capacity.	64	68	72	77	81	85	95	100
Policy area: School infrastructure									
Goal 24: Ensure that the physical infrastructure and environment of every school inspire learners to want to come to school and learn, and teachers to teach.									
24	The percentage of schools complying with a very basic level of school infrastructure.	77	84	88	92	96	100	100	100
Policy area: Learner well-being									
Goal 25: Use schools as vehicles for promoting access to a range of public services amongst learners in areas such as health, poverty alleviation, psychosocial support, sport and culture.									
25	The percentage of children who enjoy a publicly funded school lunch every school day.	52	57	61	66	70	75	85	100

	Indicator	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2019	2024
Policy area: Inclusive education									
Goal 26: Increase the number of schools that effectively implement an inclusive education policy and have access to centres that offer specialist services.									
26	The percentage of learners in schools where at least one educator received specialised training in the identification and support of special needs.	34	43	52	62	71	80	100	100
Policy area: Support by district offices									
Goal 27: Improve the frequency and quality of the monitoring and support services provided by district offices to schools, partly through better use of e-Education.									
27.1	The percentage of schools visited at least twice a year by district officials for monitoring and support purposes.	78	*Baseline value a rough indication only based on imperfect data. Targets to be set after better baseline data become available.*						
27.2	The percentage of school principals rating the support services of districts as being satisfactory.	44	*Baseline value a rough indication only based on imperfect data. Targets to be set after better baseline data become available.*						

The table below summarises key features of each of the indicators described above. The following matters are dealt with.

- *Data source*. The following abbreviations apply:

ANA-V The dataset emerging from the ANA verification sample.

ANA-VC The dataset emerging from the ANA verification schools that were also analysed with respect the completeness of curriculum coverage during the current and previous year.

ANA-VT The dataset emerging from the ANA verification schools which also participated in the teacher assessment module.

ASS The Annual Survey of Schools dataset. Here * indicates that a question, not existing in the 2010 questionnaire, would need to be inserted.

DQA The Data Quality Audit. The dataset emerging from the annual audit of 4% of schools used to verify values filled in by school principals in the Snap Survey and the Annual Survey of Schools. Here * indicates that questions, not existing in the 2010 questionnaire, would need to be inserted.

GHS The General Household Survey dataset. Here * indicates that it would be ideal for a question, not existing in the 2009 questionnaires, to be inserted. Moreover, ** indicates that it would be ideal for the birth month and year of the respondent to appear in the database, rather than just the current age in years.

NEIMS The National Education Infrastructure Management System dataset.

NSC The National Senior Certificate examinations database.

Persal The payroll system of government.

WSE Visits to samples of schools to assess, amongst other things, the extent to which learning programmes are successfully being completed within the current school year and the overall governance and management culture of the school. These visits will, to a large extent, constitute a streamlined and revised version of Whole School Evaluation.

SACMEQ The South African observations from the international SACMEQ dataset.

TIMSS The South African observations from the international TIMSS dataset.

- *2010 data availability.* This provides a grading of the situation with respect to data availability on the issue in 2010. The following applies:

  ★ There is essentially no recent data available at all on this issue.

  ★★ There is recent data available that gives us an idea of the issue dealt with by the indicator, though the data does not fit the definition of the indicator, so we cannot say we have indicator values.

  ★★★ There is recent data available and it fits the definition of the indicator. However, there are certain standardisation or collection problems that must be dealt with.

  ★★★★ The data needed for this indicator is available with sufficient regularity, and is of a sufficient standard.

- *Anticipated frequency.* Here 1 refers to every year, and 2 refers to every second year, and so on.
- *New policy required.* If a new operational policy is required for the specification of the indicator to be complete, then this is indicated here.
- *Earliest year beyond 2010.* If the collection of the required data was not taking place in 2010, then in what year could one expect the required data to become available for the first time?

	Indicator	Data source	2010 data availability	Anticipated frequency	New policy required	Earliest year beyond 2010
1.1	Percentage of Grade 3 learners performing at the required *literacy* level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.	ANA-V	★★★	1		2011
1.2	Percentage of Grade 3 learners performing at the required *numeracy* level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.	ANA-V	★★★	1		2011
2.1	Percentage of Grade 6 learners performing at the required *language* level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.	ANA-V	★★★	1		2011
2.2	Percentage of Grade 6 learners performing at the required *mathematics* level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.	ANA-V	★★★	1		2011
3.1	Percentage of Grade 9 learners performing at the required *language* level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.	ANA-V	★	1		2011
3.2	Percentage of Grade 9 learners performing at the required *mathematics* level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.	ANA-V	★	1		2011
4	Number of Grade 12 learners who become eligible for a Bachelors programme in the public national examinations.	NSC	★★★★	1		Current
5	Number of Grade 12 learners passing *mathematics*.	NSC	★★★★	1		Current
6	Number of Grade 12 learners passing *physical science*.	NSC	★★★★	1		Current
7	Average score obtained in Grade 6 in *language* in the SACMEQ assessment.	SACMEQ	★★★★	5		Current
8	Average score obtained in Grade 6 in *mathematics* in the SACMEQ assessment.	SACMEQ	★★★★	5		Current
9	Average Grade 8 *mathematics* score obtained in TIMSS.	TIMSS	★★★★	4		Current
10	Percentage of 7-to-15-year-olds attending education institutions.	GHS**	★★★	1		Current
11	The percentage of Grade 1 learners who received Grade R.	ASS*	★★★	1		2011
12.1	The percentage of children who turned 9 in the previous year and who are currently enrolled in Grade 4 (or a higher grade).	GHS**	★★★★	1		Current

	Indicator	*Data source*	*2010 data availability*	*Anticipated frequency*	*New policy required*	*Earliest year beyond 2010*
12.2	The percentage of children who turned 12 in the previous year and who are currently enrolled in Grade 7 (or a higher grade).	GHS**	★★★★	1		Current
13.1	The percentage of youths who obtained a National Senior Certificate from a school.	NCS + GHS	★★★★	1		Current
13.2	The percentage of youths who obtained any FET qualification. (This is an indicator of concern to DBE and DHET.)	GHS	★★★★	1		Current
14	The number of qualified teachers, aged 30 and below, entering the public service as teachers for first time during the past year.	Persal	★★★★	1		Current
15.1	The percentage of learners who are in classes with no more than 45 learners.	ASS	★★★★	1		Current
15.2	The percentage of schools where allocated teaching posts are all filled.	ASS* + Persal	★★	1		2011
16.1	The average hours per year spent by teachers on professional development activities.	ANA-V	★★	2		2011
16.2	The percentage of teachers who are able to attain minimum standards in anonymous and sample-based assessments of their subject knowledge.	ANA-VT	★★★	2		2013
17	The percentage of teachers absent from school on an average day.	DQA + Persal	★★★	1		Current
18	The percentage of learners who cover everything in the curriculum for their current year on the basis of sample-based evaluations of records kept by teachers and evidence of practical exercises done by learners.	WSE	★★	1		2011
19	The percentage of learners having access to the required textbooks and workbooks for the entire school year.	DQA + ANA-V	★★	2	Decisions on the Minimum Schoolbag must be made and possibly gazetted.	2011
20	The percentage of learners in schools with a library or multimedia centre fulfilling certain minimum standards.	ASS* + NEIMS + ANA-V	★★	1	Minimum specifications for a library or media centre.	2011

	Indicator	*Data source*	*2010 data availability*	*Anticipated frequency*	*New policy required*	*Earliest year beyond 2010*
21	The percentage of schools producing the minimum set of management documents at a required standard, for instance a school budget, a school improvement plan, an annual report, attendance registers and a record of learner marks.	ANA-V + WSE	★★	2	A set of minimum criteria regarding administrative processes must be finalised.	2011
22	The percentage of schools where the school governing body meets the minimum criteria in terms of effectiveness.	ANA-V	★★	2	A few simple minimum criteria must be agreed upon.	2011
23.1	The percentage of learners in schools that are funded at the minimum level.	ASS*	★★★	1		2011
23.2	The percentage of schools that have acquired the full set of financial management responsibilities on the basis of an assessment of their financial management capacity.	ASS*	★★★	1		2011
24	The percentage of schools complying with a very basic level of school infrastructure.	NEIMS	★★★★	1		Current
25	The percentage of children who enjoy a publicly funded school lunch every school day.	GHS	★★★★	1		Current
26	The percentage of learners in schools with at least one educator who received specialised training in the identification and support of special needs.	ANA-V	★★	2		2011
27.1	The percentage of schools visited at least twice a year by district officials for monitoring and support purposes.	DQA + ANA-V	★★★	1		2011
27.2	The percentage of school principals rating the support services of districts as being satisfactory.	DQA + ANA-V	★★★	1		2011

10.

Table with all milestones by goal and year

The 2011 to 2014 milestones referred to in this plan all appear by year and goal in the table beginning on the following page for ease of reference. It is the goals dealing with *how* to achieve the desired outputs, in other words goals 14 to 27, that have milestones. The five priority goals for the period to 2014, reflecting the emphasis in the Minister's Delivery Agreement, are marked with stars (★).

Goal	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*
Annual National Assessments (This programme is not formally a goal because it cuts across many goals, but it does have milestones.)	» Verification ANA is implemented for the first time. » The first national report based on both universal ANA and verification ANA information is published.	» An independent evaluation of ANA activities since 2008 is finalised and published. » All Grade 9 learners begin participating in universal ANA. » The ANA item bank of test items is placed on the national department's website.	» Nationally standardised district-wide ANA reports for all 81 districts, covering the 2011 school year, are published on the national department's website. » Publicly funded independent schools are included in ANA for the first time.	» Teacher testing is started in a national sample of 200 verification ANA schools. (During 2012 teacher testing would have taken place as part of the international SACMEQ programme.) » All independent schools participate in ANA.
e-Education (This programme is not formally a goal, because it cuts across many goals, but it does have milestones.)		» A new e-Education strategy that updates and adds detail to the 2004 White Paper and includes future targets for ICT access in schools is released. » A user survey of the Thutong Portal leads to a plan on how to take this important e-Education element to a new level effectiveness.	» All school principals have access to a computer and the internet at school. » An assessment of the success of the Teacher Laptop Initiative is concluded and the project is adjusted accordingly (if necessary).	» Using ICTs for teaching becomes a mandatory component of all pre-service teacher training. » A review of the previous year's interventions, aimed at enhancing teaching and learning through ICTs, is released and the national e-Education strategy is adjusted where necessary.
★ **Goal 11: Improve the access of children to quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) below Grade 1.**	» A report on the impact of new resource packs on the quality of learning and teaching in Grade R is produced to guide the way forward.	» Provincial roll-out plans, indicating which schools will see increases in their Grade R funding, or the introduction of such funding for the first time and in which year, are made public on provincial departmental websites. » A revised Grade R funding strategy is released to deal with existing policy and implementation discrepancies, including unacceptable inequities in per learner spending and in Grade R teacher pay.	» New in-service teacher training materials, directed at teachers themselves and those who train teachers, are published following an extensive process of research and piloting.	» A new system for periodic and sample-based monitoring of cognitive development amongst learners in Grade R is implemented for the first time as part of the efforts to ensure that Grade R prepares learners adequately for Grade 1.

Goal	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*
Goal 13: Improve the access of youth to Further Education and Training (FET) beyond Grade 9.		» The Department of Basic Education, in collaboration with the Department of Higher Education and Training, produces a comprehensive strategy on how to align the various education subsectors in the interests of a more qualified and employable youth.	» Lessons learnt from a series of information and advocacy campaigns aimed at youths relating to FET and higher education options inform the design of a newly launched and comprehensive web-based facility to guide youths and their teachers in this area.	
Goal 14: Attract a new group of young, motivated and appropriately trained teachers each year into the teaching profession.		» A new campaign, with a dedicated web presence, to encourage youths to take up teaching as a career is launched. » A report on the success of the Funza Lushaka programme, partly based on data collected through the newly established operational database of bursary recipients, is released.		» A report on the impact of the campaign launched in 2012 on youth attitudes to teaching and on recruitment leads to improvements in this campaign.
Goal 15: Ensure that the availability and utilisation of teachers are such that excessively large classes are avoided.		» A strategy to improve teacher recruitment and reduce teacher shortages in schools is finalised. » Criteria to combat over-sized classes are incorporated into the national post provisioning norms that distribute teaching posts across schools, following a review of the problem of large classes.	» A first report emerging from the national department's new teacher supply and demand planning model and aimed at guiding teacher training institutions is released.	

Goal	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*
★ **Goal 16: Improve the professionalism, teaching skills and subject knowledge of teachers throughout their entire careers.**	» A new plan for the in-service training of teachers is finalised.	» A comprehensive guide to available professional development programmes is established on the national department's website.	» Teachers begin uploading their professional development details onto the new points-based system run by SACE. » A new set of online teacher development modules in critical areas, as well as a suite of self-appraisal tools become available, at no charge, to teachers.	» An evaluation of the teacher appraisal system, including its coverage and the impact of recent changes on its rules and procedures, is completed. » A comprehensive evaluation of the impact of, and teacher responses to recent teacher development initiatives is released by the national department.
Goal 17: Strive for a teacher workforce who is healthy and enjoys a sense of job satisfaction.			» A sample-based teacher opinion survey is run in collaboration with teacher unions in order to assess, amongst other things, factors contributing towards job satisfaction.	
Goal 18: Ensure that learners cover all the topics and skills areas that they should cover within their current school year.		» A policy statement on how in-depth monitoring of schools from a 'whole school' perspective will proceed, and how synergy between Whole School Evaluation, the work of the national team of IQMS monitors and the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) will be achieved, is released. » New tools and specifications to guide districts in monitoring and supporting schools in a more holistic fashion, with a partial focus on completing the required programmes within the year, are developed and tested in selected districts and schools.	» An initial report on the extent to which schools complete their annual teaching programmes, on the basis of investigations to date, is released. » Provincial reports on the findings from, and effectiveness of the new district-based system for evaluating and supporting schools are produced. (Part of the focus of these reports will be on the completion of teaching programmes.)	» A national and independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the new tools and specifications for districts introduced in 2011 and 2012, is completed.

Goal	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*
★ **Goal 19: Ensure that every learner has access to the minimum set of textbooks and workbooks required in accordance with national policy.**	» Nationally developed workbooks for Grades R to 6 to support teaching in languages and mathematics are distributed to all public schools with these grades.	» The Minimum Schoolbag specifications are finalised for all grades. » The national workbooks initiative is extended to include Grades 7 to 9. » New national textbook lists, with greater levels of advice to teachers and selectors of textbooks, are published on the national department's website.		
Goal 20: Increase access amongst learners to a wide range of media, including computers, which enrich their education.		» National specifications on what a school library should ideally contain and what interim arrangements should exist if the ideal cannot be realised yet, are published.	» Together with the Department of Arts and Culture, a strategy is finalised on how community libraries and school libraries can complement each other in promoting access to books and other sources of knowledge. » The Thutong site is revamped with new materials, including interactive e-learning modules, as part of a strategy to make Thutong a stronger catalyst of educational improvement.	» An accredited library science training module, aimed at teachers and available through the e-Education mode, is launched.

Goal	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*
★ **Goal 21: Ensure that the basic annual management processes take place across all schools in the country in a way that contributes towards a functional school environment.**		» A detailed proposal on enhancing education leadership, management and governance capacity within the schooling system is released. » A new set of management guidelines for school principals, with a special focus on using the key 'building blocks' of effective school management, is made widely available through the national department's website and other means. » New conditions of service for principals and deputy principals that would place these managers within the new Education Management Services (EMS) tier are finalised.	» A new set of online school management training modules, aimed at those who train school principals, and principals themselves are made available, following an evaluation of existing and new training practices and tools. » An investigation into the use of national and provincial school management tools, both computerised and paper-based, is completed. » A review of the effectiveness of existing policies and procedures to provide administrative and other support staff to schools is completed.	» A national programme to provide induction training for newly appointed school principals is rolled out, following the piloting of relevant training materials during the preceding year. » A computerised timetabling tool, tailor-made for the South African context, is endorsed by the national department, following a multi-year project in which learners, teachers and others were able to submit proposed tools for evaluation. » An impact assessment of the newly introduced performance agreements for school principals is finalised.
Goal 22: Improve parent and community participation in the governance of schools, partly by improving access to important information via the e-Education strategy.		» A report on the availability to parents of complaints officers at national, provincial and district level, plus recommendations on the way forward in this regard, formulated partly through consultation with parent organisations. » School governing body elections are held across the country in the context of a national campaign that emphasises the role of parents in promoting quality learning and revised election guidelines that make it easier for parents to become involved.	» An updated and comprehensive training manual, aimed at those training parents in their rights, their duties, participatory school governance and the quality of the education of their children, is released.	

Goal	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*
Goal 23: Ensure that all schools are funded at least at the minimum per learner levels determined nationally and that funds are utilised transparently and effectively.	» Amendments to the funding norms, following the 2009 UNICEF review, are finalised and published.	» A media campaign is launched, emphasising that by law, recipients of child support grants should not be charged school fees in any public school. » A policy, clarifying the definition of voluntary contributions by parents to schools, is published.	» The amount of public non-personnel funding allocated to individual schools is published on the internet for the first time, together with other information that parents should have access to, relating to school funding and school fees. » An integrated strategy for addressing fraud and corruption within the school funding system is rolled out.	
Goal 24: Ensure that the physical infrastructure and environment of every school inspire learners to want to come to school and learn, and teachers to teach.	» Guidelines on minimum norms for physical facilities at schools are finalised and published.	» A new national strategy, the Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative (ASIDI), is released and implementation is re-aligned accordingly. » The physical infrastructure development plans, with details down to school level, of the national and provincial departments are published on the internet in order to provide schools with a clearer picture of improvements they could expect. » The NEIMS data base of school physical facilities is updated with a full audit of all schools.	» National norms for the presence of moveable assets in schools, more in particular school furniture, are promulgated. » A comprehensive review of past investments in school infrastructure, both centrally driven and school-initiated, with a special emphasis on the equity and efficiency of this investment, is completed as part of the overall mission to improve methods of infrastructure development.	» Every school has access to safe drinking water, hygienic and sufficient toilet facilities and electricity.

Goal	2011	2012	2013	2014
Goal 25: Use schools as vehicles for promoting access to a range of public services amongst learners in areas such as health, poverty alleviation, psychosocial support, sport and culture.		» A study, focussing on the role played by nutrition in educational performance at secondary school level, and on strategies for improving government support in this area, is conducted. » The new integrated strategy on HIV and AIDS is launched.	» A funding and implementation strategy agreed to by a range of government and non-government stakeholders is finalised to give effect to the new school sporting policy. » An independent review of a variety of school safety interventions, undertaken during previous years is completed, with a view to establishing best practices in a reduction of violence in schools.	» An independent review of a three-year drive to introduce physical education to every quintile 1 school in the country is completed. » A comprehensive assessment of the implementation of the regulations for the prevention and management of teenage pregnancy is released to guide future actions with respect to teenage pregnancies and gender issues generally.
Goal 26: Increase the number of schools that effectively implement the inclusive education policy and have access to centres that offer specialist services.	» A set of resourcing policies to deal with personnel, non-personnel and infrastructure requirements relating to special needs learning is published.	» The piloting of screening guidelines, which indicate the types of support different learners need, is completed and the guidelines become official policy. » A formal set of guidelines directed at parents, together with a budgeted communication strategy, is launched to raise parent awareness of how the education of special needs children should be dealt with.	» An independent review is completed of the impact of the last five or so years of interventions, both national and provincial, and of institutional changes aimed at offering better special needs support. » New training courses, aimed at assisting teachers in special needs education and based on lessons learnt from recent training pilot programmes, are launched, partly through the e-Education mode of delivery.	» Every district has at least one school with a specific focus on special needs education, plus a resource centre to assist all ordinary schools in the implementation of inclusive education.

Goal	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*
★ **Goal 27: Improve the frequency and quality of the monitoring and support services provided to schools by district offices, partly through the better use of e-Education.**		» A national functions and processes blueprint for district offices, explaining how various national policy imperatives can be realised within districts experiencing different levels of capacity, is released. » The national template for the district-wide ANA report is completed and training in its use is rolled out. » Verification ANA is used to produce a comprehensive set of nationally representative figures on the quality of district support, as seen from the perspective of the school.	» A first round of training in the use of the blueprint for improving district office functionality, partly through an e-Education platform, is completed. » A national audit of district functionality, viewed in terms of the blueprint for district offices, results in a set of general and district-specific recommendations.	» The first phase of the roll-out of a new computerised system and set of tools to improve district management is completed.

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The following are a few of the important studies and reports that inform this plan and that the reader may wish to consult to understand education planning and South Africa's schooling system better. Importantly, it was not possible to list all the literature that informs the Action Plan.

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Appendix A: Provincial indicator values

Provincial and national indicator values are provided here for 2009 (which could refer to the most recent figure prior to 2009) and 2014, which is the end of the current electoral cycle. The 2009 value is the baseline value and the 2014 value a key target value. Values for provinces beyond 2014 have not yet been calculated, but these would follow the trends for the national targets beyond 2014, which have been calculated and appear in section 9. Moreover, provincial values for the years between 2009 and 2014 are not provided here, though again these would follow the national pattern for these years (see section 9).

The methodology for calculating provincial values for each indicator is not explained. However, for most indicators an approach of 'a proportionally equal reduction in the gap' is pursued. This approach can be explained as follows, using a percentage of children aged 7 to 15 enrolled in an institution as an example. First, the number of children *not* in school is calculated per province. Let us say this represents 200,000 children nationally and we want to reduce this to 50,000. This means that nationally, the number should be reduced by 75%. This 75% is applied to each province. So, if one province has 40,000 learners not in school, it is assumed that this should be reduced to 10,000. The same method is applied to all provinces. It is also the method applied to most of the indicators in this plan.

1.1. Percentage of Grade 3 learners performing at the required *literacy* level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.

	2009 baseline	2014 target	
EC	45	58	*Baseline values are based on the 2007 Systemic Evaluation results and use a 'partly achieved' threshold of 35% for each learner as the minimum level required.*
FS	67	76	
GP	49	61	
KZN	52	64	
LP	34	45	
MP	37	49	
NC	44	57	
NW	44	56	
WC	75	83	
SA	**48**	**60**	

1.2. Percentage of Grade 3 learners performing at the required *numeracy* level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.

	2009 baseline	2014 target	
EC	45	63	*See comment for previous indicator.*
FS	58	73	
GP	54	70	
KZN	45	62	
LP	22	37	
MP	35	52	
NC	34	51	
NW	29	45	
WC	68	81	
SA	**43**	**60**	

2.1. Percentage of Grade 6 learners performing at the required *language* level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.

	2009 baseline	2014 target	
EC	24	45	*Baseline values use 2004 Systemic Evaluation results and assume that attaining level 4 of eight levels constitutes an adequate level of performance.*
FS	35	57	
GP	64	82	
KZN	32	55	
LP	14	30	
MP	33	56	
NC	67	84	
NW	33	55	
WC	72	87	
SA	**37**	**60**	

2.2. Percentage of Grade 6 learners performing at the required *mathematics* level according to the country's Annual National Assessments.

	2009 baseline	2014 target	*See comment for previous indicator.*
EC	13	47	
FS	25	68	
GP	32	75	
KZN	18	58	
LP	5	24	
MP	14	51	
NC	30	73	
NW	12	47	
WC	45	84	
SA	**19**	**60**	

4. Number of learners who become eligible for a Bachelors programme in the public national examinations.

	2009 baseline	2014 target	*Baseline values are from the official year-end 2009 examination report.*
EC	9,492	21,873	
FS	6,030	10,103	
GP	28,709	38,055	
KZN	26,287	40,392	
LP	10,202	19,508	
MP	6,556	11,956	
NC	1,741	3,241	
NW	6,356	10,644	
WC	14,324	19,229	
SA	**109,697**	**175,000**	

5. Number of Grade 12 learners passing *mathematics*.

	2009 baseline	2014 target	*See comment for previous indicator.*
EC	16,206	24,825	
FS	7,066	9,973	
GP	26,503	33,452	
KZN	33,247	43,108	
LP	19,810	26,011	
MP	9,612	13,364	
NC	1,760	2,852	
NW	7,124	10,204	
WC	12,524	16,210	
SA	**133,852**	**180,000**	

6. Number of Grade 12 learners passing *physical science*.			
	2009 baseline	**2014 target**	*See comment for previous indicator.*
EC	11,119	24,981	
FS	7,870	10,248	
GP	25,998	30,412	
KZN	26,774	38,960	
LP	18,022	24,552	
MP	9,667	13,107	
NC	1,917	3,074	
NW	8,768	10,390	
WC	9,688	14,275	
SA	**119,823**	**170,000**	
7. Average score obtained in Grade 6 in *language* in the SACMEQ assessment.			
	2009 baseline	**2014 target**	*Baseline values are calculated from the 2007 SACMEQ dataset for South Africa.*
EC	448	470	
FS	491	516	
GP	573	602	
KZN	486	510	
LP	426	447	
MP	474	497	
NC	506	531	
NW	506	532	
WC	583	613	
SA	**495**	**520**	
8. Average score obtained in Grade 6 in *mathematics* in the SACMEQ assessment.			
	2009 baseline	**2014 target**	*See comment for previous indicator.*
EC	470	493	
FS	493	518	
GP	545	573	
KZN	485	510	
LP	448	470	
MP	477	501	
NC	499	523	
NW	503	528	
WC	566	594	
SA	**495**	**520**	

9. Average Grade 8 *mathematics* score obtained in TIMSS.

	2009 baseline	2014 target
EC	223	253
FS	265	301
GP	304	345
KZN	255	290
LP	217	247
MP	261	297
NC	333	378
NW	251	285
WC	389	442
SA	**264**	**300**

Baseline values are from Reddy (2006) and from the 2003 run of TIMSS.

10. Percentage of-7-to-15-year-olds attending education institutions.

	2009 baseline	2014 target
EC	97.9	99.3
FS	98.7	99.6
GP	98.9	99.6
KZN	98.3	99.4
LP	99.2	99.7
MP	98.6	99.5
NC	98.6	99.5
NW	97.6	99.2
WC	98.3	99.4
SA	**98.5**	**99.5**

Baseline values are calculated from the 2009 General Household Survey.

11. The percentage of Grade 1 learners who received Grade R.

	2009 baseline	2014 target
EC	86	100
FS	51	100
GP	82	100
KZN	79	100
LP	96	100
MP	85	100
NC	70	100
NW	67	100
WC	72	100
SA	**80**	**100**

Baseline values are calculated from the 2009 Annual Survey of Schools dataset. The percentage includes those who received what was referred to in the survey a as formal and informal Grade R.

12.1. The percentage of children who turned 9 in the previous year who are currently enrolled in Grade 4 (or a higher grade).

	2009 baseline	2014 target	
EC	44	58	*Baseline values are calculated from the 2009 General Household Survey. In order to deal with the fact that exact birthdays are not available in the dataset, the average for nine and ten- year-olds was used. (The GHS takes place in the middle of the year. Of those aged 10 on the survey date, approximately half would have turned 10 in the current year and hence 9 in the previous year.)*
FS	61	59	
GP	67	73	
KZN	64	69	
LP	67	66	
MP	61	64	
NC	59	65	
NW	61	64	
WC	62	64	
SA	**61**	**65**	

12.2. The percentage of children who turned 12 in the previous year who are currently enrolled in Grade 7 (or a higher grade).

	2009 baseline	2014 target	
EC	31	40	*Baseline values are calculated from the 2009 General Household Survey. In order to deal with the fact that exact birthdays are not available in the dataset, the average for twelve and thirty- year-olds was used.*
FS	46	51	
GP	61	61	
KZN	48	52	
LP	43	52	
MP	46	50	
NC	42	54	
NW	45	51	
WC	53	63	
SA	**47**	**52**	

13.1. The percentage of youths who obtain a National Senior Certificate from a school.

	2009 baseline	2014 target	
EC	23	36	*Baseline values were obtained through an analysis of a combination of 2009 Grade 12 examinations figures, EMIS enrolment data and Stats SA household data. Inconsistencies between enrolment figures and population estimates were taken into account.*
FS	39	49	
GP	52	60	
KZN	44	53	
LP	39	50	
MP	38	48	
NC	34	46	
NW	37	48	
WC	48	57	
SA	**40**	**50**	

13.2. The percentage of youths who obtain any FET qualification. (This is an indicator of concern to DBE and DHET.)

	2009 baseline	2014 target
EC	24	54
FS	41	64
GP	56	73
KZN	45	67
LP	44	66
MP	40	64
NC	35	61
NW	38	63
WC	51	70
SA	**42**	**65**

Baseline values were obtained by increasing values from the previous indicator by the percentage of youths with an FET qualification other than the NSC, as suggested by the General Household Survey.

14. The number of qualified teachers aged 30 and below entering the public service as teachers for first time during the past year.

	2009 baseline
EC	529
FS	380
GP	877
KZN	1,256
LP	298
MP	337
NC	100
NW	234
WC	467
SA	**4,477**

N.B. These values are averages for 2005 to 2008 and provide an indication of the true 2009 baseline values. However, the latter, which must still be calculated, are expected to be higher than the earlier figures provided here, given that there has been an upward trend over the years.

15.1. The percentage of learners who are in classes with no more than 45 learners.

	2009 baseline	2014 target
EC	60	78
FS	74	86
GP	72	85
KZN	59	77
LP	53	74
MP	52	73
NC	83	91
NW	67	82
WC	84	91
SA	**64**	**80**

Baseline values are calculated from the 2009 Annual Survey of Schools dataset.

15.2. The percentage of schools where allocated teaching posts are all filled.

	2009 baseline
EC	95
FS	95
GP	99
KZN	93
LP	91
MP	95
NC	95
NW	95
WC	95
SA	**95**

N.B. These values are indicative only. They reflect the percentage of educator posts that were filled at the beginning of 2010 in a sample of schools according to national IQMS monitoring officials.

16.1. The average hours per year spent by teachers on professional development activities.

	2009 baseline
EC	45
FS	36
GP	35
KZN	34
LP	22
MP	32
NC	35
NW	36
WC	39
SA	**35**

N.B. These values are indicative only. They reflect responses of Grade 3 teachers only to a simple question on total hours spent during the year, in the 2007 Systemic Evaluation questionnaire. No target is set, as the baseline will change when better data are available.

16.2. The percentage of teachers who are able to attain minimum standards in anonymous and sample-based assessments of their subject knowledge.

	2009 baseline I	2009 baseline II
EC	38	41
FS	40	43
GP	53	
KZN	42	47
LP	26	43
MP	15	61
NC	50	53
NW	46	64
WC	71	65
SA	**41**	**51**

N.B. These values are indicative only. They reflect mathematics test pass ratios of Grade 6 mathematics teachers in SACMEQ 2007 (first column) and of Grade 4 mathematics teachers in the National School Effectiveness Study[92] (second column). The SA value in the second column excludes GP. No target is set, as the baseline will change when a fully-fledged national testing system is established. Note that 60% was used as a pass mark in the case of the NSES. In the case of SACMEQ, the level of teacher performance statistically associated with the 24th percentile (from the top) of learner performance in SACMEQ 2000 was used. Work by Moloi (2000) suggested that 24% of learners in SACMEQ 2000 could be considered competent in mathematics.

[92] The National School Effectiveness Study (NSES) dataset was obtained from JET Education Services, which designed and managed the study, using a combination of Royal Netherlands Embassy and JET funds.

17. The percentage of teachers absent from school on an average day.

	2009 baseline	2014 target
EC	10.5	9.3
FS	7.2	6.4
GP	9.4	8.3
KZN	10.3	9.1
LP	8.6	7.6
MP	8.0	7.1
NC	8.5	7.5
NW	6.9	6.1
WC	6.2	5.5
SA	**8.5**	**7.5**

The baseline values include independent schools (which cover approximately 3% of all learners). Moreover, they refer to the situation in 2008. The source is Reddy, Prinsloo, Netshitangani et al (2010).

19. The percentage of learners having access to the required textbooks and workbooks for the entire school year.

	2009 baseline
EC	
FS	50
GP	
KZN	65
LP	80
MP	56
NC	54
NW	56
WC	75
SA	**64**

N.B. These values are indicative only. They reflect the percentage of Grades 4 to 7 learners in classes where everyone has access to a mathematics textbook. The source is the 2008 data from the National School Effectiveness Study . The SA value excludes EC and GP. No target is set, as the baseline will change when more comprehensive data are available.

20. The percentage of learners in schools with a library or media centre fulfilling certain minimum standards.

	2009 baseline
EC	30
FS	62
GP	73
KZN	39
LP	14
MP	35
NC	74
NW	49
WC	67
SA	**44**

N.B. These values are indicative only. They reflect the percentage of learners in Grades 1 to 7 who, according to the school principal response in the 2007 Systemic Evaluation, have a library that is considered either 'good' or 'excellent', as opposed to 'poor' or non-existent.

21. The percentage of schools producing the minimum set of management documents at a required standard, for instance a school budget, a school improvement plan, an annual report, attendance registers and a record of learner marks.

	2009 baseline I	2009 baseline II
EC	3	
FS	14	90
GP	16	
KZN	6	76
LP	2	88
MP	6	90
NC	5	69
NW	12	71
WC	6	95
SA	**7**	**83**

N.B. These values are indicative only. They reflect the percentage of schools complying with all IQMS teacher appraisal procedures according to national IQMS monitoring officials (first column) and the percentage of primary schools with properly completed teacher registers according to the National School Effectiveness Study (second column). The SA value in the second column excludes the two missing provinces. Targets are to be set when better baseline values are available.

22. The percentage of schools where the school governing body meets minimum criteria in terms of effectiveness.

	2009 baseline
EC	18
FS	79
GP	80
KZN	77
LP	68
MP	55
NC	74
NW	66
WC	57
SA	**61**

N.B. These values are indicative only. They are based on a 2009 data collection from a sample of 500 schools, with the focus on funding and management. The figures reflect the learner-weighted percentage of schools where the parents on the school governing body believe that parents, as opposed to the principal or teachers or some other group, have the greatest say when it comes to the finalisation of the budget. These values thus provide one important indication of whether the SGB is functioning as it should. An index incorporating a few more effectiveness factors must eventually be used for this indicator.

23.1. The percentage of learners in schools that are funded at the minimum level.

	2009 baseline	2014 target
EC	65	100
FS	54	100
GP	90	100
KZN	81	100
LP	49	100
MP	23	100
NC	80	100
NW	41	100
WC	55	100
SA	**62**	**100**

The source for the 2009 baseline values is a 2009 collection from a nationally representative sample of 500 schools commissioned by the DBE and funded by USAID.

23.2. The percentage of schools that have acquired the full set of financial management responsibilities on the basis of an assessment of their financial management capacity.

	2009 baseline	2014 target
EC	58	82
FS	64	85
GP	76	90
KZN	50	79
LP	82	93
MP	58	82
NC	72	88
NW	83	93
WC	64	85
SA	**64**	**85**

See indicator 23.1 for the data source. The 2009 baseline figures reflect the percentage of schools that have formally been granted section 21 functions and which report that they are not subject to undue restrictions on the spending of their allocation in contravention of the funding norms.

24. The percentage of schools complying with a very basic level of school infrastructure.

	2009 baseline	2014 target
EC	65	100
FS	74	100
GP	96	100
KZN	73	100
LP	82	100
MP	73	100
NC	92	100
NW	88	100
WC	91	100
SA	**77**	**100**

Baseline values are based on 2010 NEIMS values.

25. The percentage of children who enjoy a publicly funded school lunch every school day.

	2009 baseline	2014 target
EC	52	81
FS	38	74
GP	32	62
KZN	55	77
LP	66	86
MP	59	80
NC	78	79
NW	53	76
WC	46	54
SA	**52**	**75**

Baseline values are calculated from the 2009 General Household Survey.

26. The percentage of learners in schools where at least one educator received specialised training in the identification and support of special needs.

	2009 baseline	2014 target
EC	30	79
FS	66	90
GP	46	84
KZN	18	75
LP	10	73
MP	38	81
NC	60	88
NW	46	84
WC	70	91
SA	**34**	**80**

N.B. The baseline values here should be interpreted with caution, as they reflect principal responses to the following question: 'Have special needs specialists from the department or the district office ever worked with learners or teachers from your school?' Clearly this question does not cover all the qualitative elements described in the indicator definition.

27.1. The percentage of schools visited at least twice a year by district officials for monitoring and support purposes.

	2009 baseline
EC	79
FS	96
GP	
KZN	71
LP	65
MP	82
NC	92
NW	66
WC	90
SA	**78**

N.B. These values are indicative only. They reflect responses of school principals in primary schools only, according to 2007 NSES data. No target is set, as the baseline will change when more comprehensive data is available.

27.2. The percentage of school principals rating the support services of districts as being satisfactory.

	2009 baseline
EC	32
FS	49
GP	55
KZN	35
LP	52
MP	59
NC	49
NW	53
WC	52
SA	**44**

N.B. These values are indicative only. They reflect responses of school principals with respect to district support in the area of school funding only (the source is the 2009 UNICEF review of school funding and management). No target is set, as the baseline will change when more comprehensive data is available.

NOTES

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