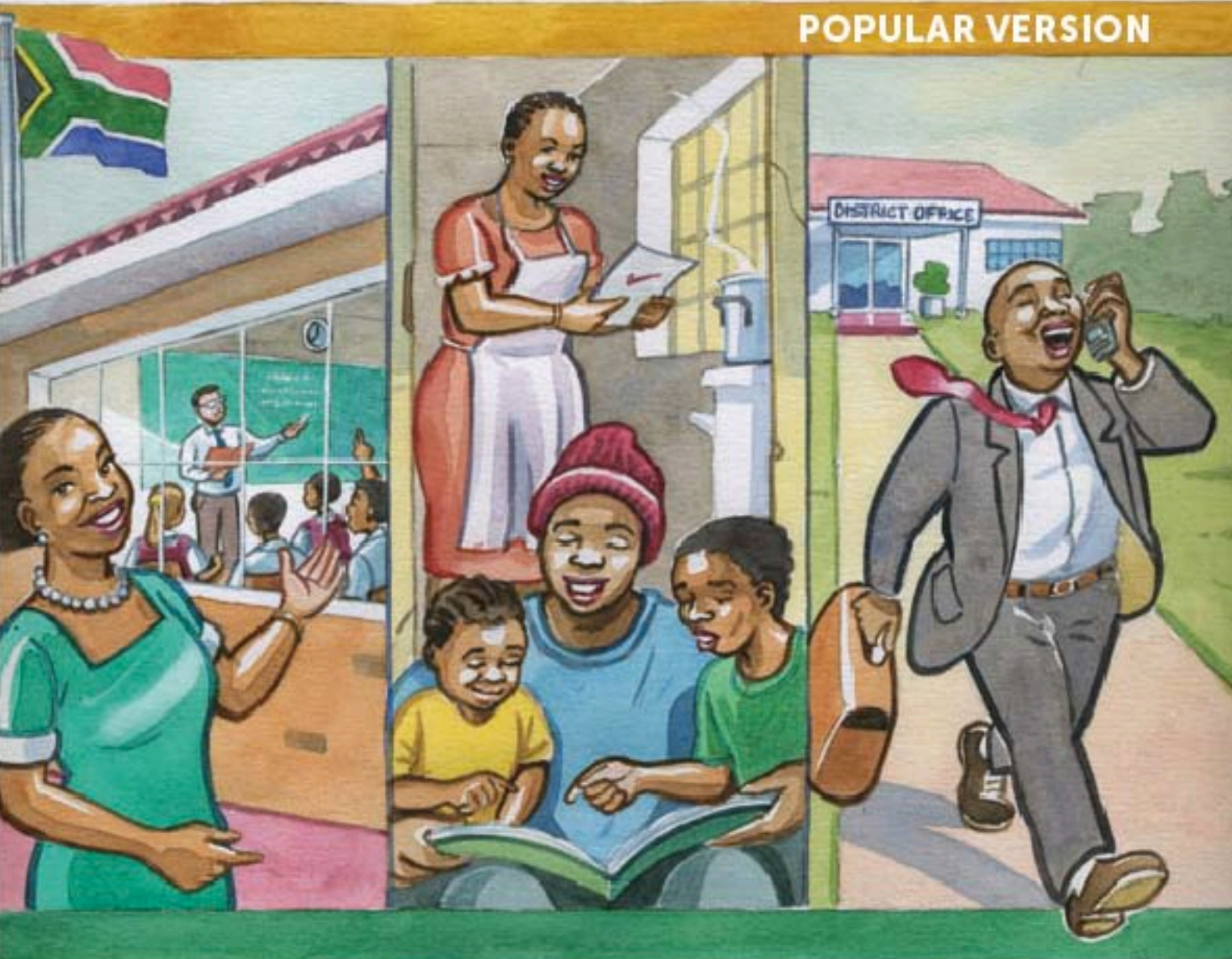


ACTION PLAN TO 2014:

Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025

POPULAR VERSION



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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ACTION PLAN TO 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025

The popular version



basic education

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Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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In this book you can find out about the 27 national goals that government is implementing as part of the *Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025*.

These goals focus on how we should work together to improve the quality of basic education. You are invited to join this collective effort!



Ministerial foreword



The children of our country rely on us to provide them with quality basic education. The schooling system, together with the support of school communities, prepares our youth for full and meaningful citizenship and promising social futures. *Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025* guides us – it focuses our collective effort – towards securing quality education for all.

In 2009, the Presidency prepared a Green Paper on improving strategic planning in the country. Twelve national priorities, in the form of outcomes, were identified. The first of these outcomes is 'Improved quality of basic education'. The release of *Action Plan to 2014: 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 in 2010 by key government stakeholders, including myself and the nine provincial MECs for Education. The Delivery Agreement, in fact, draws from this document. The policy thrust of the two is thus the same. *Action Plan to 2014* helps all of us in the sector to plan in a manner that is more disciplined, professional and accountable.

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

Government has a central role to play in bringing about change, but what happens in schools and during homework time is particularly dependent on the support of parents. We also rely on our collaboration with other stakeholders and I look forward to further strengthening these relationships, partially through our emphasis on a 'social pact' for schools.

This plan forms part of a process which also includes the Foundations for Learning Campaign, improvements made to the National Curriculum Statement, the Quality Teaching and Learning Campaign, 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 during 2009 and 2010.

Join us now in understanding how you and your organisation can support the implementation of *Action Plan to 2014*.

Mr M E Surty
Deputy Minister of Basic Education
31 January 2012

Administerial foreword



The publication of this plan is an important step towards a basic education sector that is more unified, accountable, better informed about itself and more focussed on workable solutions.

The plan identifies the problems that must be solved and the 27 goals that government plans to reach in order to improve the 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 provision. Moreover, it does not repeat all the details found in the Strategic Plans (produced every five years) and the Annual Performance Plans (produced every year) of the nine provincial departments of education, as well as 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.

We urge as wide an audience as possible to engage with the plan. The Department of Basic Education welcomes your support in implementing the plan and your insight into what solutions work best in overcoming the challenges we face.

Although this plan looks forward, it also looks back at developments in recent years. This is deliberate, as we believe effective planning must be rooted in a solid understanding of our recent past. Clearly, the historical parts of the plan must be updated in future versions. We also urge readers to consult our sector reviews, the first of which, covering 2011, will be published shortly.

I would like to thank the many people, inside and outside of government, who helped to make this plan a reality. Together we can focus our efforts to ensure the implementation of our goals and the delivery of quality basic education for all learners in our country.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P B Soobrayan', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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

Introduction

In 2010, the Minister of Basic Education, Ms Angelina Matsie Motshekga, confirmed that there would be a plan for schools in South Africa, called *Action Plan to 2014*, which forms part of a larger vision, called *Schooling 2025*.

Action Plan to 2014 was discussed with teacher unions and the provincial departments of education, as well as representative organisations and individuals. These stakeholders support the goals of the plan.

This **popular (shortened) version** of *Action Plan to 2014* is intended for a wide audience, including all parents, members of School Governing Bodies, the 365 447 educators employed in the 24 365 public schools in the country, as well as the public in general.

The popular version of *Action Plan to 2014* explains the 27 national goals at the heart of the plan. **Thirteen of these goals are output goals**, which deal with better school results and improved enrolment of learners in schools. The **remaining 14 goals deal with the things we must do** for the output goals to be realised.

The 27 national goals do not capture everything we must do, but experience has shown that, for a plan to work, it is important to identify goals. The goals guide our collective effort towards improving the quality of education in our schools.

The popular version of *Action Plan to 2014* explains the national goals at the heart of the plan.

The **full version** of *Action Plan to 2014* is longer, containing more information on how the 27 national goals will be achieved; details on how improvements will be monitored; and what the exact national and provincial targets are for each goal. The full version includes both the 2014 targets and the targets we want to reach by 2025 as part of the *Schooling 2025* vision.



The full version of *Action Plan to 2014* is useful for managers in the schooling system and those involved in monitoring progress in the sector. The full version supports the implementation of *Action Plan to 2014* by officials from the national Department of Basic Education (DBE) and from the nine provincial education departments (including district officials), as well as principals. The full version is also useful for managers and researchers in other key government departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), universities and statutory bodies, such as Umalusi, the Education Labour Relations Council and the South African Council of Educators. The full version of *Action Plan to 2014* is available in hard copy and can be downloaded from the DBE website:
<http://www.education.gov.za>.



The *Action Plan* may have to change before 2014, as new challenges are being identified and lessons learnt. You will be invited to attend stakeholder meetings. Please watch the media for notices of stakeholder meetings for *Action Plan to 2014* and *Schooling 2025*.

If you or your organisation believe that the plan can be improved, you are encouraged to send your input to the DBE. Should your efforts to co-operate with the education departments' or schools' implementation of the plan be frustrated, we ask for you to notify our complaints officers. An explanation of the complaints procedure is included on pages 94-95 of this book.

It is important that you know about *Action Plan to 2014* and the vision for *Schooling 2025*, especially if you are a parent of a learner in a South African public school.

In line with the South African Schools Act of 1996, the term 'parent' covers not only 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.

The Minister of Basic Education is also interested in the contributions from school principals, teachers, School Governing Bodies and organisations representing School Governing Bodies. Higher education institutions, Further Education and Training (FET) colleges, organised business, religious organisations and education NGOs are also strongly urged to become involved.

This popular (shortened) version explains the goals of *Action Plan to 2014* and what the government is doing to improve basic education for learners in Grades R to 12. It also explains how you can contribute to make the goals in *Action Plan to 2014* a reality.



Action Plan to 2014: Other useful resources

The other resources supporting *Action Plan to 2014* include:



The full version provides a detailed analysis of the process of development, and full explanations of each goal.



A brief summary of the main points of *Action Plan to 2014* - available in all 11 South African languages.



A series of three full-colour posters showing the key concepts of *Action Plan to 2014* for classrooms.

Looking back so as to move forward

“Though this plan looks forward, it also looks back because we believe effective planning must be rooted in a solid understanding of our past and present challenges.”

Facing our challenges

Our attention and collective action are needed to overcome the difficulties we still face in our schools.



Safety

Too many schools are plagued by violence, crime and deviant behaviour. This means that these schools are not safe for learners and educators. Safe environments are essential for effective teaching and learning to take place.

Facilities

In too many schools, buildings and facilities are inadequate or in a state of disrepair. These conditions are demotivating for teachers and learners.

Low level of skills

There are many learners who, after many years of schooling, have not yet mastered the required skills. Research has indicated, for instance, that many learners who complete Grade 6 are not yet able to write simple sentences, or do basic arithmetic. This problem of an unacceptably low level of learning can be found across all grades in far too many schools. Unfortunately, learners from poorer communities are more likely not to have acquired these essential basic skills.

Effects of poor quality education

Poor quality education negatively affects individual learners as it becomes more difficult for them to enter FET colleges or university. It also reduces their chances of finding jobs in their adult lives.

Poor quality education also makes it difficult for the country as a whole to prosper. The development of South Africa depends on the skills and education of her people.

Celebrating our achievements

Since democracy was won in 1994, much has changed in South Africa's public schools, giving us cause for celebration.

Legal reform

The laws that divided learners by race in the apartheid schooling system have been removed. This means that race is now a less important factor in determining the kind of schooling a child receives.



Funding and equity

In 1994, government spending on every black African child was on average one-fifth of what it was for every white child. Today there is almost no difference in government spending on all of our children. Furthermore, in historically white schools, approximately 56% of learners are black and 40% are African.

Compulsory schooling

Many more children complete the compulsory years of schooling (i.e. Grades 1 to 9): 75% did so in 1994, compared to 88% in 2010. Our situation now compares very favourably to other countries with similar economies. By 2010, over 98% of children aged 7 to 15 were enrolled in school.

Learning and thinking

The curriculum and learning materials used in schools today help learners to understand their country, Africa and the world, and to think critically in ways that are a far cry from the narrow memorisation requirements for most learners before 1994.

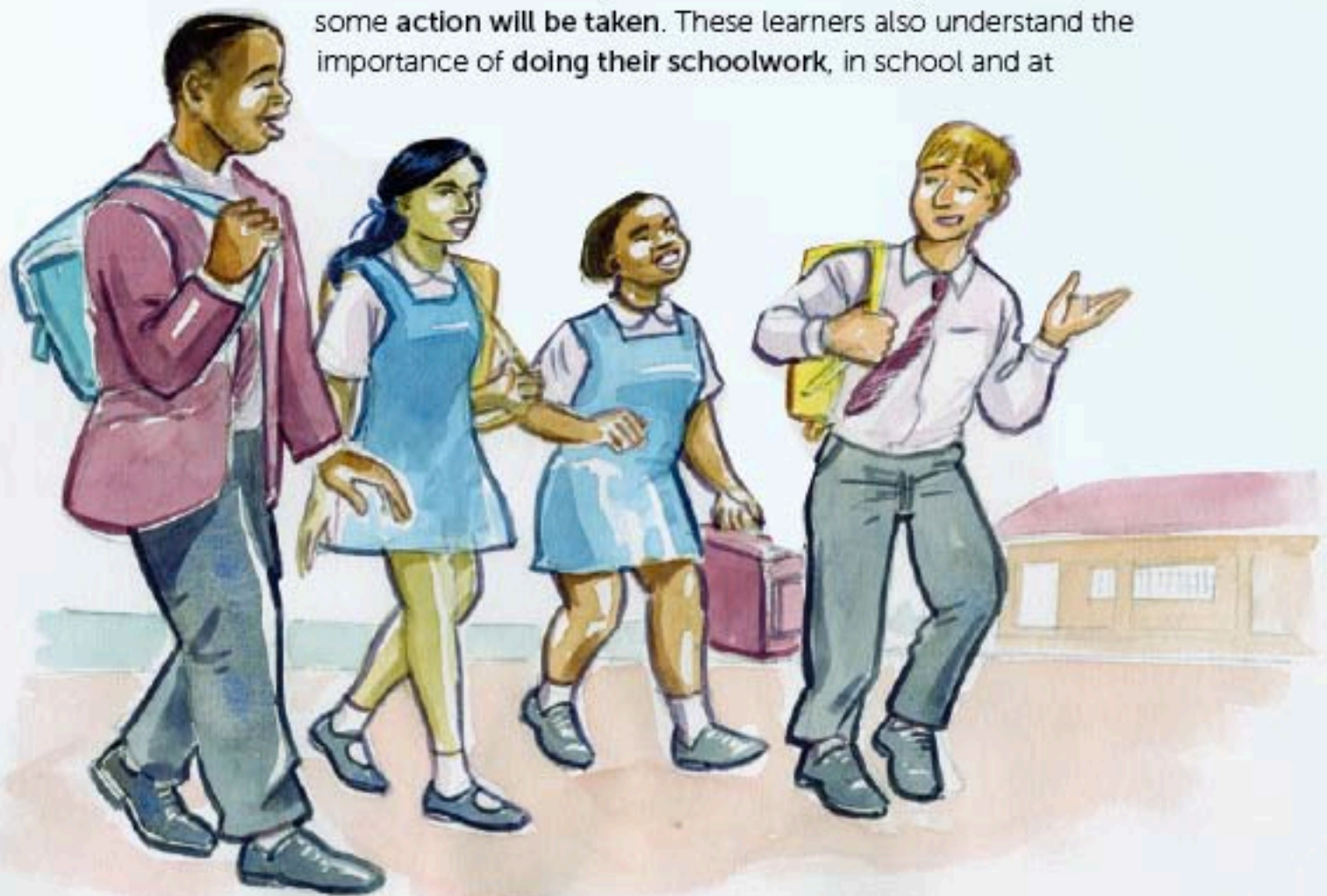
The vision towards the realisation of *Schooling 2025*

Every young South African needs quality schooling.

We need a clear vision of where we want to be in 2025. We must make sure that every year we make positive changes that bring us 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 attend school **every day** and are **on time** because they want to come to school, the **school is accessible**, and because learners know that **if they miss school** when they should not, **some action will be taken**. These learners also understand the importance of **doing their schoolwork**, in school and at





home, and they know their school will do everything possible to help them learn what they should. Learners also want to come to school to **see friends** in an environment where everyone is **respected**, where they know they can **depend on their teachers for advice and guidance**, and where they will be able to **participate in sporting and cultural activities** organised at the school after school hours.

TEACHERS receive 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 generally **satisfied with their jobs** because their pay and conditions of service in general are decent and similar to what they would find in other professions.





LEARNING AND TEACHING MATERIALS are in abundance and of a high quality. The national **Minimum Schoolbag Policy** is widely understood and provides the minimum quantity and quality of materials to which every learner must have access. **Computers** in schools assist learners and teachers in accessing information.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES 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.



SCHOOL PRINCIPALS ensure that **teaching takes place** as it should in schools, in accordance with the **national curriculum**. Every principal understands his or her role as a leader whose responsibility it is to **promote harmony, creativity and a sound work ethic** within the school community and beyond.

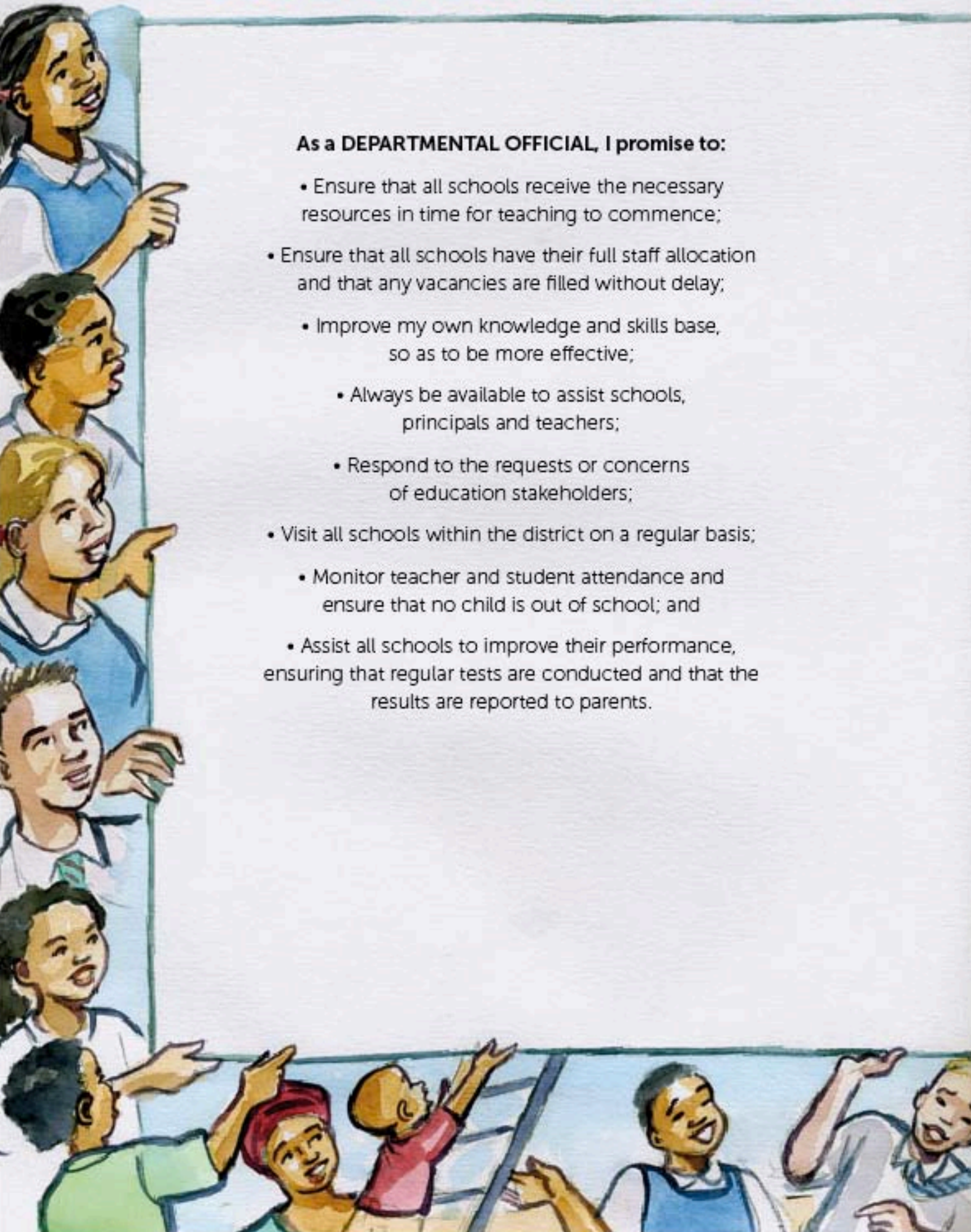


PARENTS are well informed about what happens in the school and receive **regular reports** about how well their children perform against clear standards that are shared by all schools. These parents know that, if something is not happening as it should in the school, the principal or someone in the department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

CODE FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

As a DEPARTMENTAL OFFICIAL, I promise to:

- Ensure that all schools receive the necessary resources in time for teaching to commence;
- Ensure that all schools have their full staff allocation and that any vacancies are filled without delay;
- Improve my own knowledge and skills base, so as to be more effective;
 - Always be available to assist schools, principals and teachers;
 - Respond to the requests or concerns of education stakeholders;
- Visit all schools within the district on a regular basis;
 - Monitor teacher and student attendance and ensure that no child is out of school; and
 - Assist all schools to improve their performance, ensuring that regular tests are conducted and that the results are reported to parents.



THE POWER TO IMPROVE EDUCATION LIES WITH ALL OF US. WE CALL ON ALL DEPARTMENTAL OFFICIALS, TEACHERS, STUDENTS, PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO MAKE A COMMITMENT TO A 'CODE FOR QUALITY EDUCATION'.

As a TEACHER, in line with the SACE Code of Professional Ethics, I promise to:

- Teach and to advance the education and development of learners as individuals;
 - Respect the dignity and rights of all persons without prejudice;
- Develop loyalty and respect for the profession;
 - Be punctual, enthusiastic, well prepared for lessons and of sober mind and body;
- Improve my own knowledge and skills base, so as to be more effective;
- Maintain good communication between teachers and students; among teachers themselves; and between teachers and parents;
 - Provide parents with regular information on their children's progress;
 - Eliminate unprofessional behaviour, such as teacher-pupil relationships, drunkenness, drug abuse, assault, sexual harassment, etc; and
 - Make myself available to provide extra-mural activities.



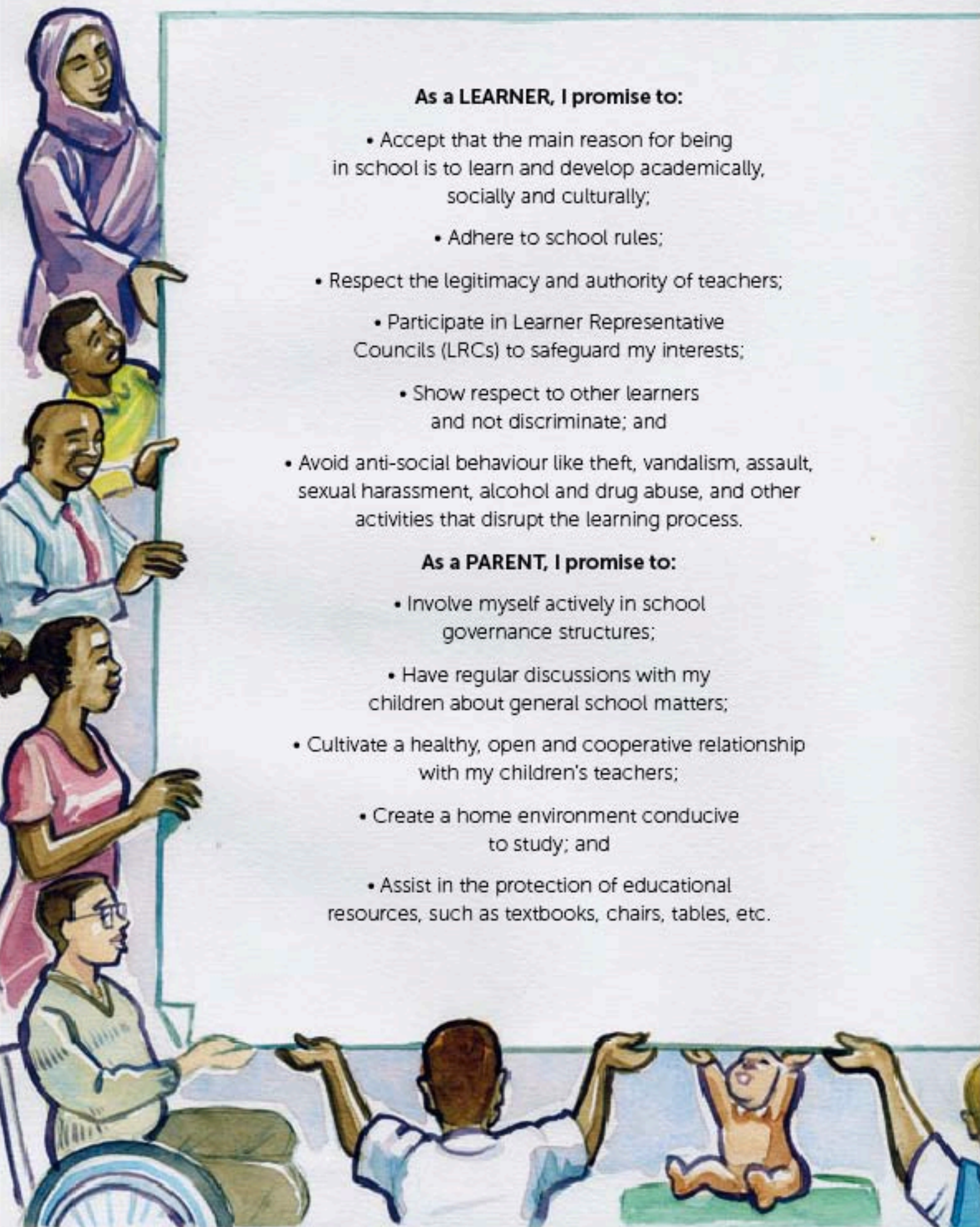
CODE FOR QUALITY EDUCATION


As a LEARNER, I promise to:

- Accept that the main reason for being in school is to learn and develop academically, socially and culturally;
- Adhere to school rules;
- Respect the legitimacy and authority of teachers;
 - Participate in Learner Representative Councils (LRCs) to safeguard my interests;
 - Show respect to other learners and not discriminate; and
- Avoid anti-social behaviour like theft, vandalism, assault, sexual harassment, alcohol and drug abuse, and other activities that disrupt the learning process.

As a PARENT, I promise to:

- Involve myself actively in school governance structures;
- Have regular discussions with my children about general school matters;
- Cultivate a healthy, open and cooperative relationship with my children's teachers;
- Create a home environment conducive to study; and
- Assist in the protection of educational resources, such as textbooks, chairs, tables, etc.





**WALK THE TALK - UPHOLD
THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR
QUALITY EDUCATION.**

As a COMMUNITY, we promise to:

- Ensure that every school-going child is at school;
- Ensure a safe and crime-free environment for schooling; and protect the school and its assets from vandalism; and
- Monitor the performance of schools and report problems to the relevant authorities.

**We pledge to undertake
these responsibilities
to ensure quality
education for all.**



Annual National Assessments

In 2008, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) introduced tests that all learners in South Africa write, and which measure the country's improvement in learning in specific grades and subjects.

These tests are called Annual National Assessments (ANA). The ANA tests assist us in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, and result in better action and planning within government.

The ANA testing programme consists of two parts: **universal ANA** and **verification ANA**.

Universal ANA

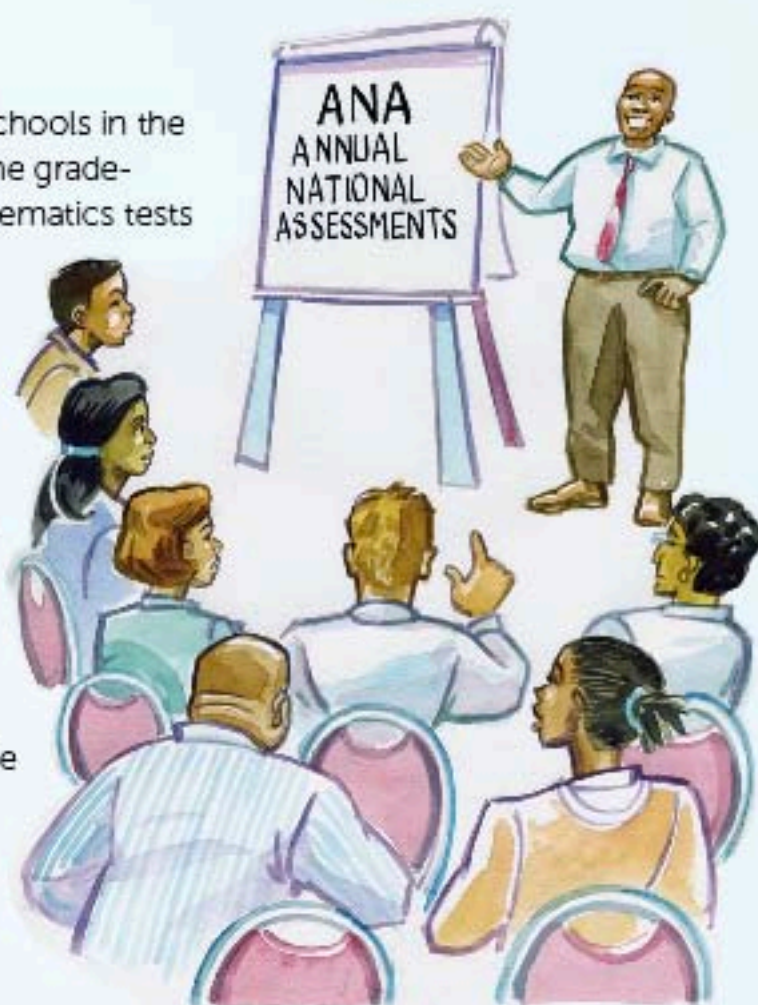
Universal ANA requires all schools in the country to conduct the same grade-specific language and mathematics tests for Grades 1 to 6 and for Grade 9.

The language tests cover the learner's home language and his/her first additional language which, for most South African learners, is English.

As in 2009, all learners in these grades in all schools write the national tests at the end of each school year.

Teachers mark the ANA tests in accordance with instructions provided by the department.

Officials in the provincial departments moderate the marking in selected grades and schools. This ensures that similar standards are upheld across all schools where the universal ANA is written.



Verification ANA

Verification ANA is run directly by the DBE. The DBE takes a sample of schools to check the results of the universal ANA. Learners in Grades 3, 6 and 9 write the same grade-specific tests. Their tests are administered by field-workers who are employed by the national department. The field-workers leave schools with the test scripts and deliver them to a national marking centre.

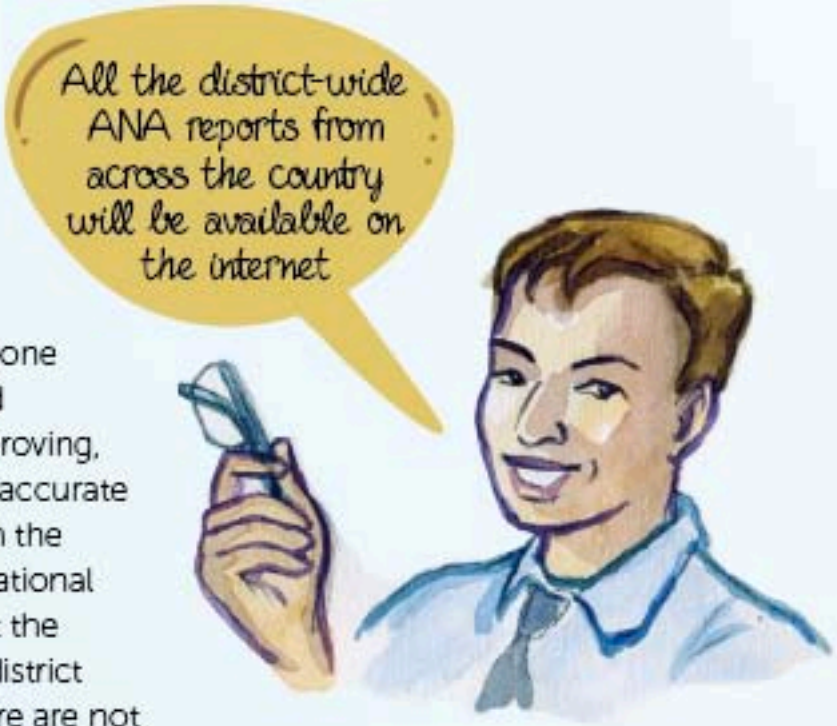
The field-workers also collect background information from schools through questionnaires filled in by teachers, school principals, learners and their parents.

Verification ANA also involves the anonymous testing of teachers in approximately 200 schools during some, but not all, years. The purpose of this testing is largely to establish in which subject knowledge areas teachers need support through in-service training.

ANA results

Parents receive their child's ANA results together with other results in the learner's annual report card at the end of the year.

The DBE produces a report that informs everyone whether the national and provincial results are improving, and which indicate how accurate the results obtained from the universal ANA are. The national report also explains what the national, provincial and district targets are (currently there are not targets for every school). The national report keeps us informed about how well we are succeeding in reaching our goals.



All the district-wide ANA reports from across the country will be available on the internet

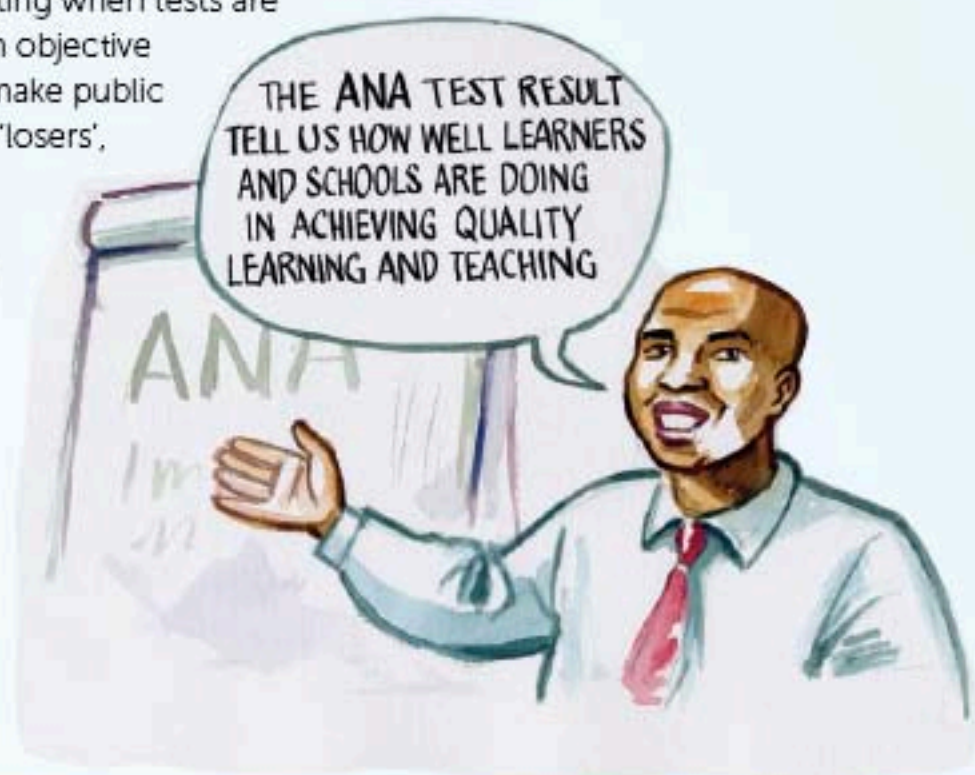
From 2013, the School Governing Body will receive a report from the district office at the beginning of each year. This report, the **district-wide ANA report**, will allow the school to compare its ANA results to those of other schools in the district. It will also indicate what the results are for schools in different quintiles in the district – in other words, schools where more or less the same economic conditions exist amongst the school's learners.

Parents serving on the School Governing Body will be asked to share the district-wide ANA report at a meeting with other parents at the school, and to discuss ways in which parents and the school can work together to improve results, while also recognising achievements.

By 2013, all the district-wide ANA reports from across the country will be available on the internet.

Avoiding competition between schools

The district-wide ANA reports do NOT contain league tables or a list of every school in the district and its average scores. Each school will know its own average scores and will be able to compare these to the average of the district, of each quintile, etc. However, in a system such as ANA, where schools themselves do the marking, research has indicated that, if the system becomes too competitive, this encourages cheating when tests are marked. The main objective of ANA is not to make public the 'winners' and 'losers', but rather to provide schools and parents with a better idea of how well they are doing in comparison to the schools in their area and schools across the country.



Do independent schools participate in ANA?

Eventually, all independent schools will participate in ANA. This will provide a picture of the quality of learning in these schools. We will also be able to compare public and independent schools. The inclusion of independent schools in ANA will take place in phases.

Planned 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, covering the 2011 school year, are published on the national department's website.
 - >** Publicly funded independent schools are included in ANA.
- 2014 **----->** Teacher testing is started in a national sample of 200 verification ANA schools.
 - >** All independent schools participate in ANA.

How is ANA expected to make a difference?

ANA is expected to improve learning in four key ways:

- **Exposing teachers to best practices in assessment.**

ANA exposes all teachers across the country to what national experts consider best practice in assessments. This gives all teachers a clearer idea of how to proceed when they develop their own assessments at critical points in the school year.

- **Targeting interventions in the schools that need them most.**

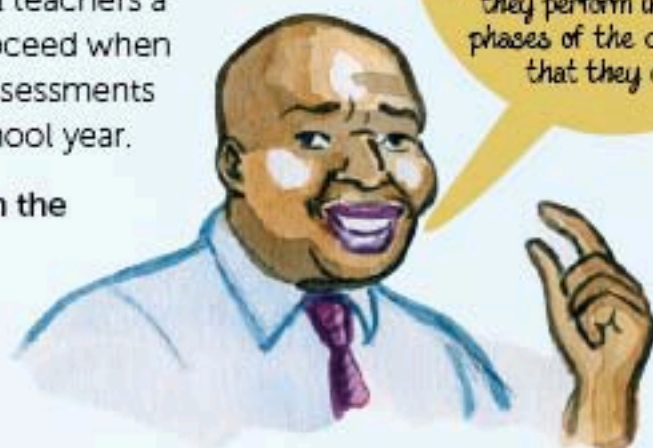
ANA gives districts a standard source of information to establish which schools are most urgently in need of support and what kinds of teacher development programmes are most needed. Poor ANA results can also alert districts to, for example, the fact that critical teaching posts may have been left unfilled or the school may not have received its full funding allocation.

- **Giving schools the opportunity to pride themselves on 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 teaching and learning in the school have paid off. It is important that schools should 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 in 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 a school, but it provides 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.



The goals of *Action Plan to 2014*

The Action Plan has 27 goals.

Goals 1 to 13 deal with the **OUTPUTS** (or **RESULTS**) we want to achieve in relation to learning and enrolments.



- 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 Bachelor's 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 the Grades 1 to 9 phases of school.
- Goal 13** -- → Improve the access of the youth to Further Education and Training (FET) beyond Grade 9.

Goals 14 to 27 deal with **HOW** we plan to achieve our 13 output goals.

- Goal 14** - - - → Attract a new group of young, motivated and appropriately trained teachers into the teaching profession each year.
- Goal 15** - - - → Ensure that the availability and utilisation of teachers are such that excessively large classes can be avoided.
- *Goal 16** - - - → Improve the professionalism, teaching skills, subject knowledge and computer literacy of teachers throughout their entire career.
- Goal 17** - - - → Strive for a teacher work-force 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 in accordance with national policy.
- Goal 20** - - - → Increase learner access 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, partially 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 to learn, and teachers to teach.
- Goal 25 -- →** Use schools as vehicles for promoting learner access to a range of public services in areas such as health, poverty alleviation, psycho-social support, sport and culture.
- Goal 26 -- →** Increase the number of schools that effectively implement an 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 by district offices to schools, partially through better use of e-Education.

The **five priority goals** for the period up to 2014 are goals **11, 16, 19, 21** and **27**. The priority goals are marked with a star (★) in the list above. These priority goals reflect the emphasis in the Minister's Delivery Agreement and the priorities in the basic education sector.



The output 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 things we must do to achieve the desired outputs.

Output Goals 1 to 6 focus on getting learners to meet the *minimum standards* in specific subjects. These goals are thus largely focussed on addressing improvements at the lower end of the performance spectrum. Goals 1, 2 and 3 focus on literacy, numeracy and mathematics. Goals 4, 5 and 6 concentrate on the success of Grade 12 learners in mathematics and science, as well as their admission to tertiary education institutions.

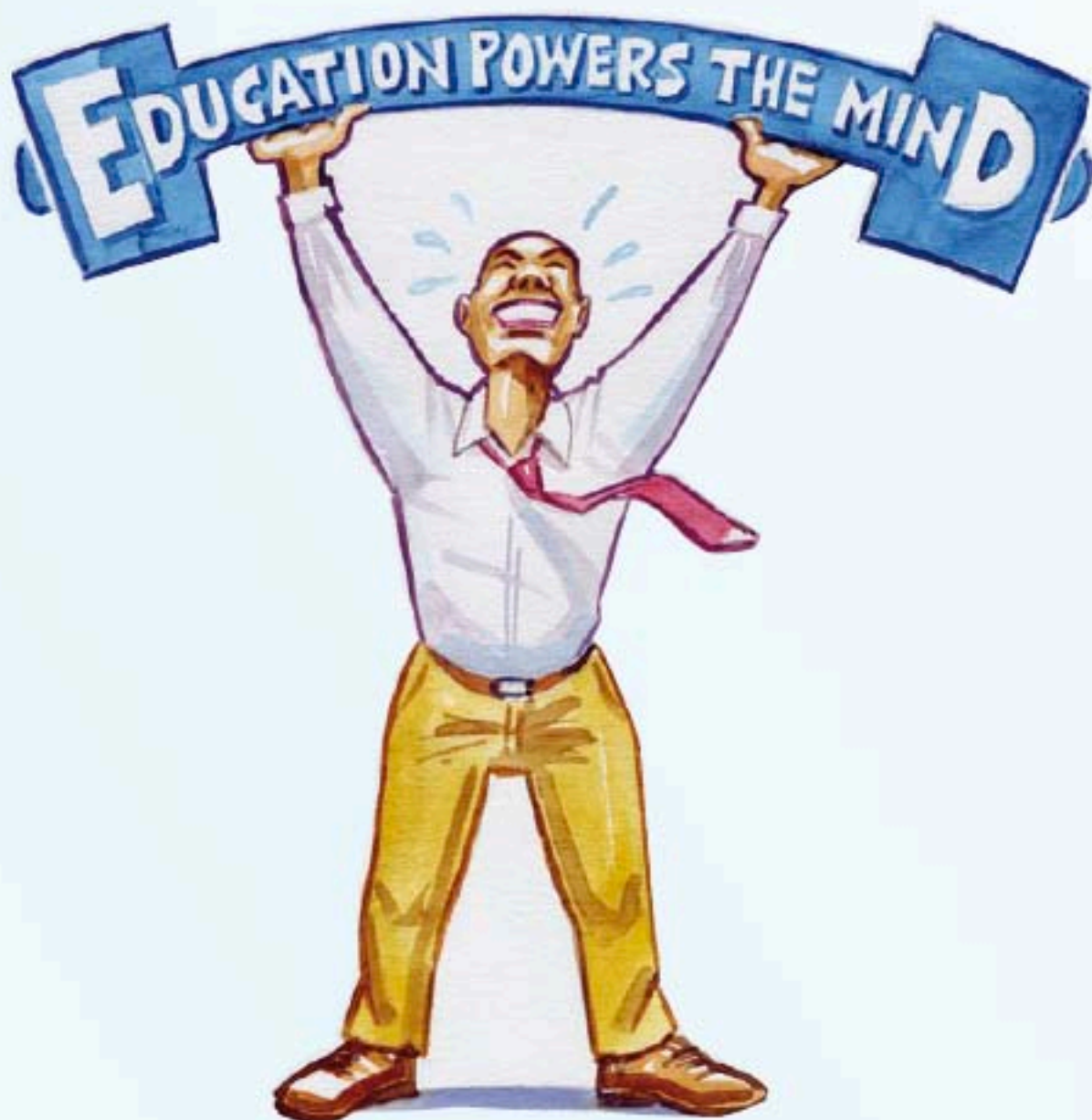
Output Goals 7 to 9 focus on *the average performance* of learners in key subjects. These goals therefore focus on improving performance across the entire performance spectrum. If any learner performs better, then the overall average rises. Every school and every learner therefore has a role to play in terms of Goals 7 to 9.

Output 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 therefore strongly focussed on *access to education*.

Find out more about all 27 Goals

In the pages that follow you will find out more about each of the 13 output goals, and **Goals 14 to 27**. This last group of goals (14 to 27) describe the action that needs to be taken so that Goals 1 to 13 can be achieved.

For each goal, there is a description of the problems we face; what government is doing in response to the problems; what you should do to assist the plan; and what we can expect to see as the situation improves, moving us towards realising the goals.



Goals 1 to 9 deal with learner performance.

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.

What is the problem?

For many years in South Africa, there has been much focus on how learners do in the Grade 12 exams. In more recent years there has been a growing focus on how well learners do in the lower grades. This happened partially because we now know that, if we want to improve the Grade 12 results in future, we need to improve results in all grades. Education experts agree that if a child does not learn the basics in Grades 1 to 3, such a child will experience difficulties in all the other grades. Tests of learners in Grade 3 have shown that results are unacceptably low, especially for learners in the poorest parts of the country. For example, the Systemic Evaluation tests have shown that fewer than 50% of all Grade 3 learners pass their language and numeracy tests.

What is government doing?

In 2008, government launched **Foundations for Learning**, which involves getting more materials to primary school learners and making it clearer to teachers how they should teach the curriculum.



In 2011, government introduced the **national workbooks initiative**, which addresses the quality of learning materials in schools. This initiative provides high quality activity books for learners from Grades 1 to 9. The workbooks are used by Grades 1 to 3 for literacy and numeracy, and by Grades 4 to 9 for mathematics and language.

The **Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)**, produced by the Department of Basic Education, has streamlined the guidelines for teaching and learning across the school system. The document outlines the curriculum for each subject and grade, and defines the expected outcomes and assessment practices.

Government introduced the **Annual National Assessments (ANA)**, which are standardised national assessments in literacy and numeracy for Grades 1 to 3, and for languages and mathematics from Grades 4 to 6, and Grade 9. These assessments comprise question papers and marking memoranda (exemplars) that are supplied by the national department, while the schools manage the running of the tests, the marking, and internal moderation.

What should you be doing to support learning?

If you are a parent, there are a number of things you could do to be a part of your child's development in the areas of literacy and numeracy.

If children play counting games, pretend to run banks where they borrow and lend home-made money, add up numbers they see on number plates and count aloud every day – then their numeracy skills will develop. Read to your child every day and then listen to your child reading aloud.



Once or twice a week, take your child to the library. Regularly play alphabet and word-recognition games, as well as spelling games like hangman.

It is important that you make sure each day that your child attends school and does his/her homework.

If your child is in Grade 3 and he/she is not yet able to read at a basic level, then you urgently need to help your child. It is also important that you talk to your child's teacher, so that you can better understand how best to support your child in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills.

You should also make sure that you know how well your school is doing in ANA compared to other schools in your area. The problem may be that all, or most, of the learners in your school are doing poorly. It may not just be your child's problem. If this is happening, then it is important that all parents, teachers and the school principal meet to discuss what the problem is and to make a plan to improve the situation.

How will we know when things are improving?

At any time during the school year, you can open your child's books to assess whether there is a sufficient amount of class work, and you can see if there have been improvements in the child's literacy and



numeracy levels. You can look at your child's workbooks, see if the exercises were completed and whether the teacher has marked your child's school work.

A learner's report card is very informative, as it provides comments and a rating scale. This rating scale indicates how your child is performing during each term.

Below is an example of a rating code from a learner's school report:

At the end of the year, the education departments assess your school's ANA results. These results tell us how close your school is to achieving Grade 3 language and numeracy targets in relation to other schools. Learners can also share their experiences of writing for the tests. This is vital feedback.

If your child and your school are doing well in the ANA tests, you can rest assured that your child's education is on track. Your school can find out how best to support other schools in the area. In this way, we can all remain committed to working together to improve results in *all* schools in South Africa so that, as a nation, we realise our vision for *Schooling 2025*.

LEARNER'S SCHOOL REPORT

RATING CODE	DESCRIPTION OF COMPETENCE	PERCENTAGE
7	Outstanding achievement	80 – 100
6	Meritorious achievement	70 – 79
5	Substantial achievement	60 – 69
4	Adequate achievement	50 – 59
3	Moderate achievement	40 – 49
2	Elementary achievement	30 – 39
1	Not achieved	0 – 29

Goals 1 to 9 deal with learner performance.

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.

What is the problem?

In Grade 6 there are too many learners who do not learn the basic things that they should be learning. For example, both the Systemic Evaluation in 2004, and the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) programme in 2007, indicate that fewer than one in four Grade 6 learners had passed the minimum standards in mathematics.

What is government doing?

As with Grade 3, Grade 6 is also covered by government's Foundations for Learning programme and ANA. It is important to remember that Grade 6 is the last grade of the three-year Intermediate Phase in the school curriculum, and that there are important things that every learner should have learnt by this stage in his/her education.

What should you be doing?

As a parent you should support your child during homework time. The volume of homework increases dramatically from Grade 4 onwards.

You can help your child in Grades 4, 5 or 6 to see mathematics in everyday situations – for example, making estimations, counting change at the shop, and carrying out mental calculations. Cook with your child, focusing on



measurements, temperature and mass. Ensure that there is a calendar and a working clock in the house. You can also practise multiplication tables and word sums with your child every week.

You can develop your child's language and literacy skills in Grades 4, 5 and 6 by listening to them read. Be a role-model by reading books yourself. You can use a newspaper as a starting point for a discussion. If possible, visit the library every two weeks and let your child select books of his/her choice by showing him/her the different sections of the library. Listen to your child's speeches before he/she presents them at school and regularly test your child's spelling, helping him/her to put new words into sentences. Keep a dictionary close at hand.

How will we know when things are improving?

As parents, you have access to your children's workbooks and exercise books. You can ask yourself questions like: does my child even have a book? Has he/she been given exercises to do? Have these exercises been completed? Thoroughly marked? Re-done? Improved upon?

Parents also receive report cards and feedback from teachers, which should give you a clear idea of your children's progress. The report cards contain the seven-point rating scale that shows how your children are performing (see Goal 1 on page 39 for an example).

The ANA results tell us how close your child is to achieving the Grade 6 language and mathematics targets in relation to other learners and other schools in the district. If your child and school are doing well in the ANA tests, you can rest assured that your child's education is progressing well. If this is not the case, then there is cause for concern and a collective effort will be needed to seek ways of improving the quality of teaching and learning at your school, as well as support for learning in learners' homes.



Goals 1 to 9 deal with learner performance.

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.

What is the problem?

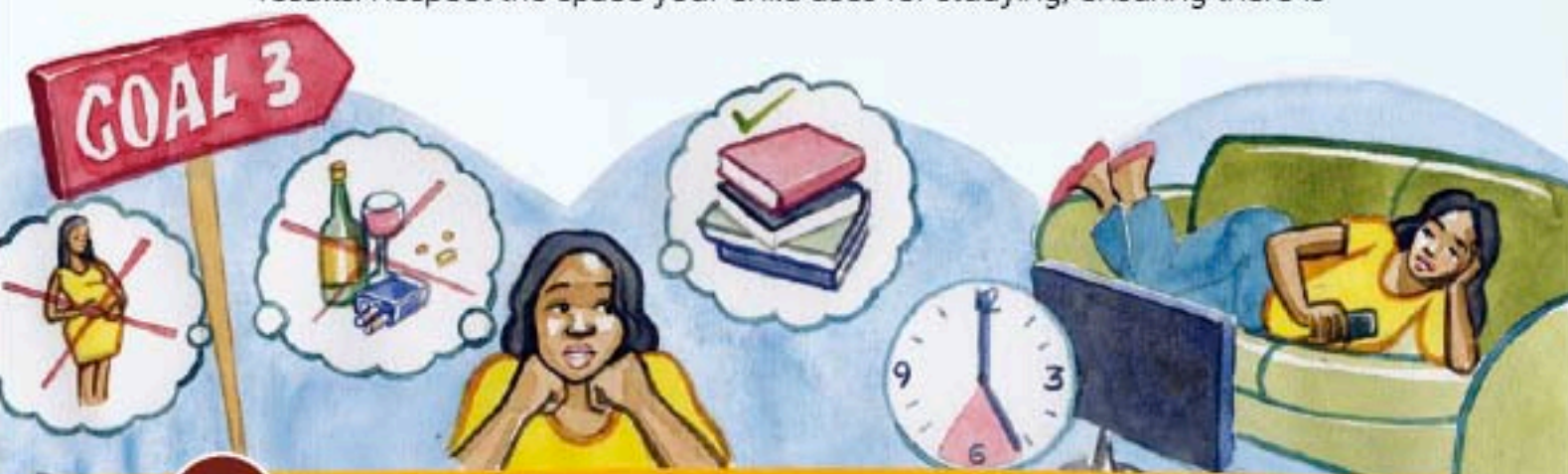
For Grade 9, standardised testing across schools began in 2002, when Common Tasks for Assessment (CTAs) were introduced. In the CTAs all Grade 9 learners went through the same assessments, which were marked by teachers and moderated by school principals. The results from these CTAs showed that there was much room for improvement. The CTAs for Grade 9 are to be replaced by the ANA tests. The Grade 9 ANA began in 2012, and will provide a better picture of Grade 9 learning going forward.

What is government doing?

Grades 7, 8 and 9 make up the Senior Phase of the General Education and Training (GET) curriculum. To improve performance in Grades 7, 8 and 9, government will pay particular attention to improving support to teachers, so that they are able to teach the curricula set for their specific subjects with greater expertise and confidence.

What should you be doing?

Your support is extremely important if your child is to improve his/her results. Respect the space your child uses for studying, ensuring there is

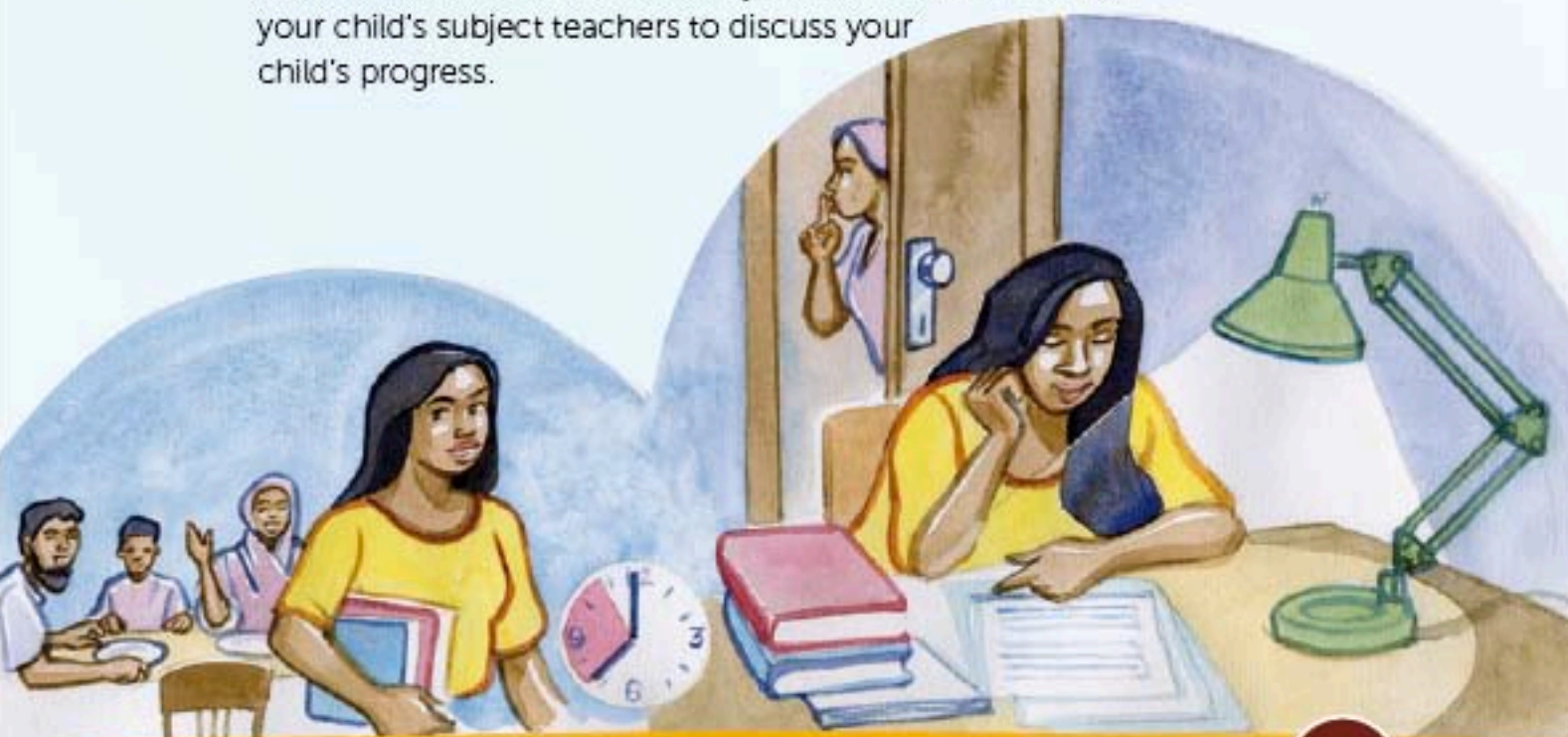


sufficient light and low noise levels in the home. It is important to limit the time your child spends watching television, listening to music, and playing games on computers and cellphones. Parents should also limit socialising during the week, especially during exam time. Help your child to compile a self-study timetable for weekdays and weekends. Ensure that your child is sleeping well, eating healthy food, exercising and socialising with friends who have a good influence on him/her. It is very important that you communicate with your children about problems such as alcohol and drug abuse, and the consequences of unprotected sex and teenage pregnancy. Their future depends on them making sensible choices during their teenage years.

How will we know when things are improving?

In Grade 9, ANA will be used to measure progress in learner results. This will allow parents, educators and administrators to see how the children are performing in standardised tests in relation to other schools.

Parents should assess their child's learning during the term and at the end of the year. A learner's report card is very informative, as it shows his/her progress in all subjects for each term. An increase in percentage deserves to be celebrated; a decrease in marks is cause for concern. You will need to find out what the difficulties are, and what support is required. Take time to talk to your child about what he/she is learning at school and together you can look through his/her workbooks, exercise books and files. Make time each year to meet with each of your child's subject teachers to discuss your child's progress.



Goals 1 to 9 deal with learner performance.

Goal 4:

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

What is the problem?

Presently, approximately one in eight youths in South Africa receives a Grade 12 pass that is good enough to allow him/her to enter a Bachelor's degree programme at a university. This means that only one in eight learners are able to study to become a medical doctor, an engineer, a chartered accountant or a teacher, for example. This figure is not enough and poor results in school and, more especially in Grade 12, explain why South Africa is presently suffering a shortage of people in these and other professions. Government's aim is to increase the number of youths who are able to enter a Bachelor's programme at a university to one in five by 2014, and one in three by 2025.

What is government doing?

Government will step up its efforts to support learners and their teachers in the difficult Grade 12 year through the distribution of study guides and examples of exam questions. This is largely done through newspapers, and materials sent directly to schools. Guidance to Grade 12 learners via radio and television is also available.



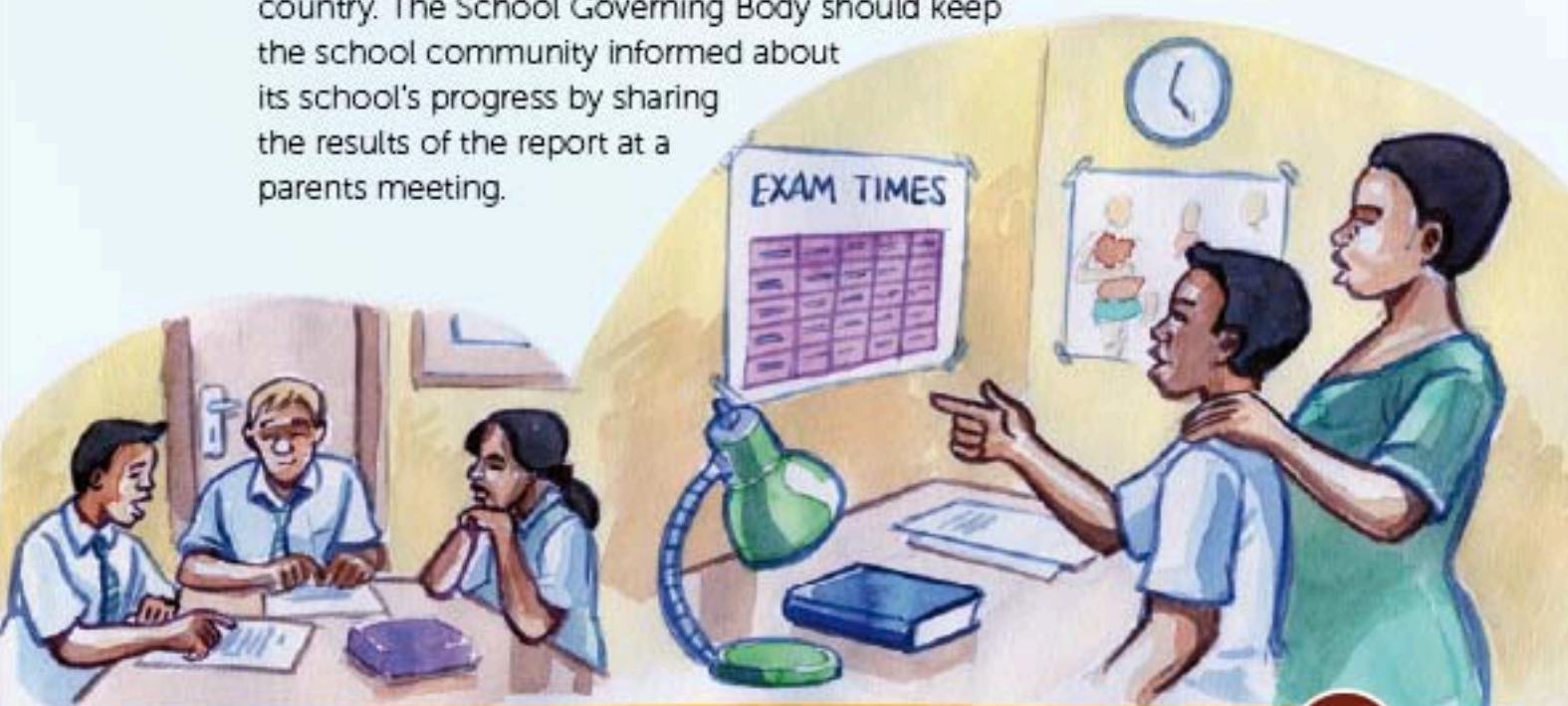
Government also provides support to Grades 10 and 11 learners, so that they can be properly prepared when they reach Grade 12. Making sure that every learner in Grades 10, 11 and 12 has the textbooks and materials that are required is essential.

What should you be doing?

As mentioned in the Code for Quality Education, parents and the families of learners have a special role to play in motivating Grade 12 learners. We need to make sure that they have sufficient time, a space to study, silence and adequate lighting. Time management is vital; therefore your child should make a self-study timetable and you should help him/her to keep to the schedule. Grades 10, 11 and 12 are academically demanding years, and learners also have to find a healthy balance with their other activities. Senior learners also provide academic support to each other by participating in study groups and discussions. Parents should be supportive of collaborative learning.

How will we know when things are improving?

Grade 12 exam results are published in the newspapers, and the Department of Basic Education releases a detailed report on the Grade 12 results each year. Districts will also be producing a district-wide Grade 12 exam report and members of the School Governing Body will be able to see how well the school is performing in comparison to other schools in the district, the province and the country. The School Governing Body should keep the school community informed about its school's progress by sharing the results of the report at a parents meeting.



Goals 1 to 9 deal with learner performance.

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.

What is the problem?

Mathematics and physical science are particularly difficult subjects, not just in South Africa but around the world. In South Africa, approximately one in seven learners leave school with a Grade 12 pass in mathematics. The number is a bit lower for physical science.

The lack of Grade 12 learners achieving well in these subjects has important implications for the professional options open to these youngsters, and for our country as a whole. It has caused a shortage of people who are able to study for professions such as medicine, financial management and engineering. It also limits South Africa's capacity to come up with new technological innovations that can improve the global competitiveness of the country. Government's aim is to increase the numbers of learners achieving in each subject to approximately one in five by 2014, and one in three by 2025.



What is government doing?

Government has been paying special attention to improving mathematics and physical science results in Grades 10, 11 and 12. An important government programme, called Dinaledi, was started in 2001. In 2007, this programme was expanded so that it covered almost 500 schools. Recent evaluations by experts found that the additional training and resources going to Dinaledi schools has made a difference to Grade 12 results, especially in schools in poorer areas. The challenge now is to build on the Dinaledi approach and to include more schools in the programme.

What should you be doing?

Passing mathematics and physical science in Grade 12 involves practising certain things again and again. It is important that parents assist learners to develop the discipline for time-on-task that is needed to improve a learner's marks.

How will we know when things are improving?

The new district-wide examination reports to schools will help school governing bodies to establish how well they are doing in Grade 12 mathematics and physical science, compared to similar schools.



Goals 1 to 9 deal with learner performance.

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.

What is the problem?

While Goals 1 to 6 focus on getting learners to meet the minimum standards, Goals 7, 8 and 9 focus on improving excellence. International tests in which South Africa participates indicate that the top 10% of learners in South Africa do worse than the top 10% of learners in other developing countries, such as Kenya and Chile. We need to improve results at the top end so that South Africa can produce more world-class scientists, designers, analysts, etc.

What is government doing?

Government has been encouraging excellence through the



recognition of outstanding learners and schools in public ceremonies. One area where government needs to do more work is to provide exceptional learners with greater access to focus schools. Focus schools, which have been established in a few provinces, are schools that pay special attention to specific subjects, such as art or mathematics, so that learners who do very well in these subjects can spend more time on them and be taught by teachers with additional training and skills in these subjects.

What should you be doing?

It is important for parents and teachers to recognise who is performing exceptionally well, or who has the potential to do so, and then to make sure that these learners are given the right support to further develop their areas of strength. This could be through placement in a focus school, but this is not the only option.

How will we know when things are improving?

There are two important international testing programmes that South Africa is involved in that will help us to establish how successful we are at achieving the above three goals. SACMEQ, or the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality, involves the testing of Grade 6 learners in 15 African countries in languages (mostly English) and mathematics. There is also the TIMSS assessment, or Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, which tests Grades 4 and 8 learners in mathematics and science.



Goals 10, 12 and 13 deal with learner access, enrolment and promotion.

Goal 10:

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

What is the problem?

The South African Schools Act states that all children should complete Grade 9 or attend school up to the end of the year in which they turn 15. We have been fairly successful in realising this. By 2009, only about 2.5% of children, aged between 7 and 15 years, were not in school. Yet, this 2.5% represents approximately 200 000 children who are not receiving a formal education. There are many reasons why these children are not in school. Some children live very far away from a school. Others are children who need special education and are told that the local school cannot offer them this. Nearly all those children who are not in school are from poor homes – sometimes with no adults living in the home.

What is government doing?

Government has taken a number of steps to ensure that all children aged 7 to 15 years are in school. One of the reasons why no-fee schools were introduced was to make it easier for poor parents to send their children to school. Government will continue to increase the number of no-fee schools, and work hard to ensure that no-fee schools offer quality schooling comparable to fee-paying schools.



In addition, the number of schools offering learners lunches increased – partly to encourage children from poorer homes to come to school. Government introduced full service schools in some districts which, together with existing special schools, make it easier for learners to get access to special needs education. Another recent improvement is the Learner Unit Record Information Tracking System (LURITS). This system, which covers just over 50% of all schools at present, is a computerised system containing the name plus a special school ID number for every learner. This system is designed to make it easier for the authorities to know when a child leaves the schooling system before he/she turns 15 and to follow up on this.

What should you be doing?

Parents and communities have a vital role to play in ensuring that all young children attend school. You must ensure that your own children are enrolled at a school and attend school regularly. If you know of children who are not attending school, you should report this to the nearest education district office. Each district has a duty to make sure that all children are in school – even in the case of children with special needs. Register your child every year on time.

How will we know when things are improving?

Statistics South Africa visits homes across South Africa every year as part of the General Household Survey. The information that Statistics South Africa collects allows us to see how close we are to the target of 100% enrolment of children aged 7 to 15. The 2011 Census will also assist us in finding out just how close we are to our target.



Goal 11 deals with access to ECD.

Goal 11:

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

- * Goal 11 is one of five priority goals identified in the Minister of Basic Education's Delivery Agreement for the period up to 2014.

What is the problem?

Studies from around the world, including South Africa, indicate that schooling below Grade 1 makes it easier for a child to learn at primary school. Yet not all South African children have the opportunity to attend pre-primary classes. The situation has improved, however, 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%. Government's target is that all children who begin Grade 1 in 2015 would have completed Grade R during 2014.

What is government doing?

Spending on pre-primary schooling by government has increased more than spending in any other area of education. By 2011, spending on Early Childhood Development (ECD) will be four times what it was in 2006.



Much of the additional money was transferred to public schools, so that schools themselves can employ Grade R teachers and pay for ECD materials. Some provincial departments also employed Grade R teachers in public schools. Currently, government is focussing on ensuring that all Grade R teachers have the minimum qualifications required. It is important that Grade R teaching and learning in public schools should be of a high quality.

What should you be doing?

It has not been possible for government to introduce Grade R in all public primary schools immediately. The provincial departments compiled a timetable for the introduction of Grade R in public schools, which prioritises schools in poorer areas. As a parent, you can check this timetable and find out when Grade R will be introduced in your local school. Grade R is not compulsory yet, but you should try to enrol your child in Grade R as this makes it easier for your child to learn in subsequent grades.

How will we know when things are improving?

The General Household Survey carried out by Statistics South Africa will help us to establish whether we have reached our target of 100% enrolment in Grade R by 2014. Government will also ensure that more studies are done to find out whether more Grade R tuition in South Africa is resulting in better learning in subsequent grades.



Goals 10, 12 and 13 deal with learner access, enrolment and promotion.

Goal 12:

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

What is the problem?

Fewer learners have been repeating grades in public schools over the years. However, the numbers are still high. In 2009, 9% of all enrolled learners were repeating their grade. Repetition is highest in Grades 1, 10 and 11. The problem with grade repetition is that learners who repeat grades can become discouraged and leave school at an early age. When children repeat grades, the class sizes are enlarged and it also results in over-aged learners in a class. Too many over-aged learners in a class results in discipline and social issues. We also need to avoid a situation where schools attempt to influence the results when national assessments are written (in Grades 3, 6, 9 and 12), by keeping learners back unnecessarily in the earlier grades.

What is government doing?

Government does not think that grade repetition should be prohibited. There are cases where grade repetition is in the best interest of a learner. However, learners may repeat only one year per phase



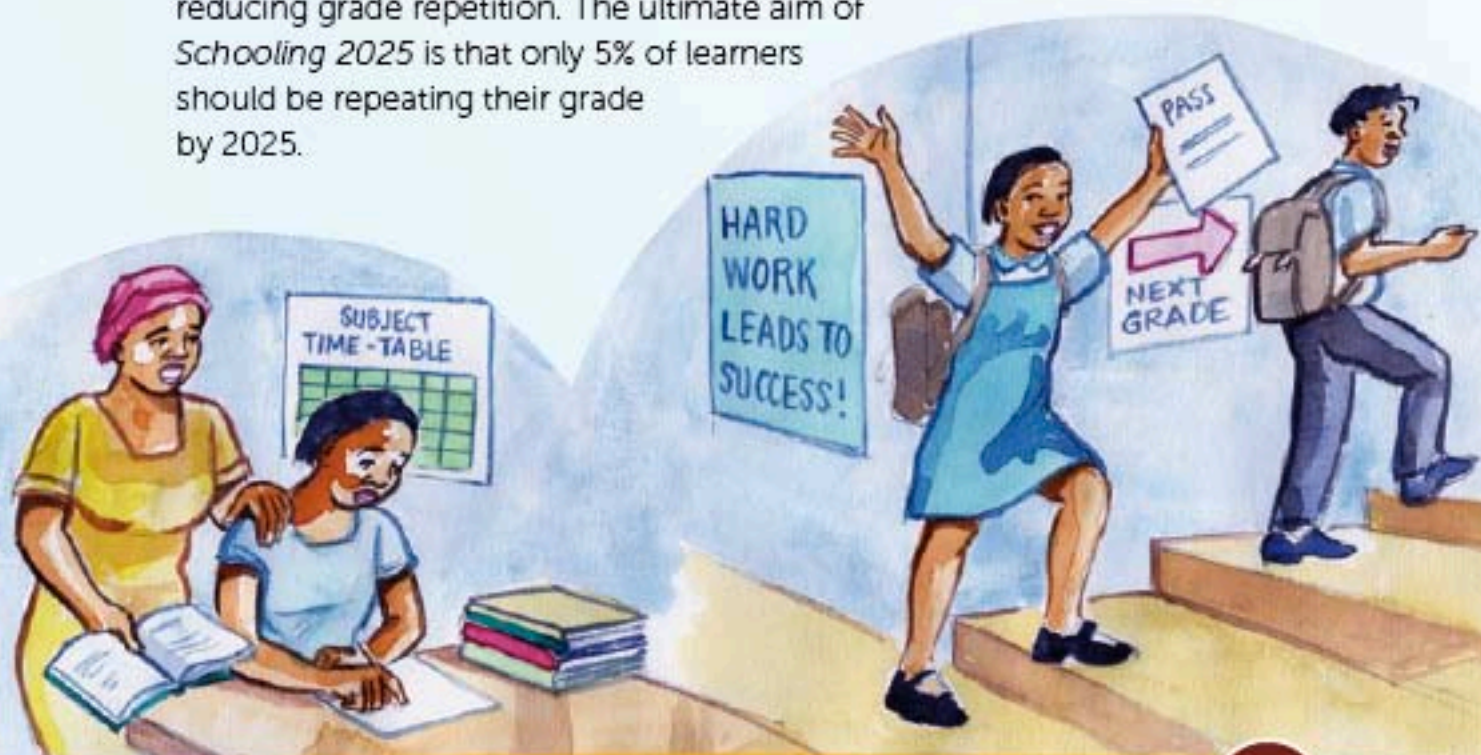
(Foundation Phase: Grades R to 3; Intermediate Phase: Grades 4 to 6; Senior Phase: Grades 7 to 9; and FET Phase: Grades 10 to 12). The best way to reduce grade repetition is to improve teaching so that more learners learn what they should be learning in each grade. District offices will be checking that schools do not use grade repetition to make their school's results appear to be better than is actually the case.

What should you be doing?

By supporting your child at school and with his/her homework, you can improve learning and reduce the chances that your child will repeat a grade. If you believe that the teachers in your school are requesting learners to repeat unnecessarily in order to influence the school's results, you should bring this to the attention of the principal and the School Governing Body. If this does not help, you should report the problem to the complaints officer in the district. You can refer to the explanation of the complaints procedure on pages 94-95 of this book.

How will we know when things are improving?

In 2009, the General Household Survey carried out by Statistics South Africa started measuring grade repetition in schools. This information will be used, together with information gathered from schools through the Annual Survey of Schools, to see how successful we are at reducing grade repetition. The ultimate aim of *Schooling 2025* is that only 5% of learners should be repeating their grade by 2025.



Goals 10, 12 and 13 deal with learner access, enrolment and promotion.

Goal 13:

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

What is the problem?

Presently approximately 40% of South Africa's youth obtain a National Senior Certificate (NSC) from a school, and only about 1% obtain some other post-Grade 9 certificate. This means that more than 50% of South Africa's youth are left without a qualification beyond Grade 9, making it difficult for these learners to obtain a job, enrol at a university or feel that they benefitted from their schooling. Getting more youths to obtain qualifications that serve their needs at the Further Education and Training (FET) level (the level after Grade 9) is a key challenge if we are to address unemployment and disillusionment among the youth. Enrolments beyond Grade 9 are fairly good by international standards. Approximately 75% of learners reach Grade 10, some 65% reach Grade 11 and 50% reach Grade 12. The challenge is getting more learners to obtain their NSC or graduate from FET colleges.

What is government doing?

FET is the responsibility of both the Department of Basic Education (that deals with Grades 10 to 12 in schools) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (that deals with FET colleges). Opportunities for youths in FET colleges have increased recently, with the introduction of the National Senior Certificate (Vocational) (NSC(V)) qualifications.



Government also increased funding for these colleges. One area that must be improved upon is Life Orientation in secondary schools, which guides learners about their options at school, at FET colleges and beyond. It is important for teachers and learners in secondary schools to meet people from FET colleges, as well as from companies and organisations that employ FET college graduates. Government is currently working together with employers, unions and higher education institutions on a new plan to address the challenges of students leaving school and their options thereafter. This new plan will influence the shape of the *Action Plan to 2014 and Schooling 2025*.

What should you be doing?

Parents and learners should make use of the available information to help them in making decisions on subject choices and combinations. These decisions should be based on preference, ability, options available at FET colleges, and what the required grade and age are to move from a school to a college. Government is committed to making clear information available on these matters.

How will we know when things are improving?

Besides monitoring the education attainment levels of youths in both schools and FET colleges, we must also monitor how employers and higher institutions respond to the different qualifications. We know we will have truly succeeded when universities express satisfaction with the readiness of school leavers, and employers are satisfied with the training of school and college leavers.



Achieving our desired **OUTPUTS** through goals **14 to 27**

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.

Goals 10 to 13 deal with 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.

We are committed to achieving output Goals 1 to 13 presented above. The task is a challenging one, and it is helpful to all of us to be informed about how the schooling system works.

Goals 14 to 27 are presented below. These goals describe what must take place for better quality schooling, as well as improved enrolments to be achieved. In other words, Goals 14 to 27 support the output Goals 1 to 13.

The diagram on the next page helps us to understand how different people and actions can contribute towards better schooling.

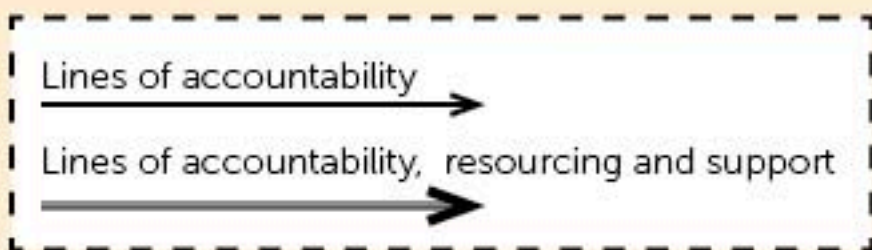
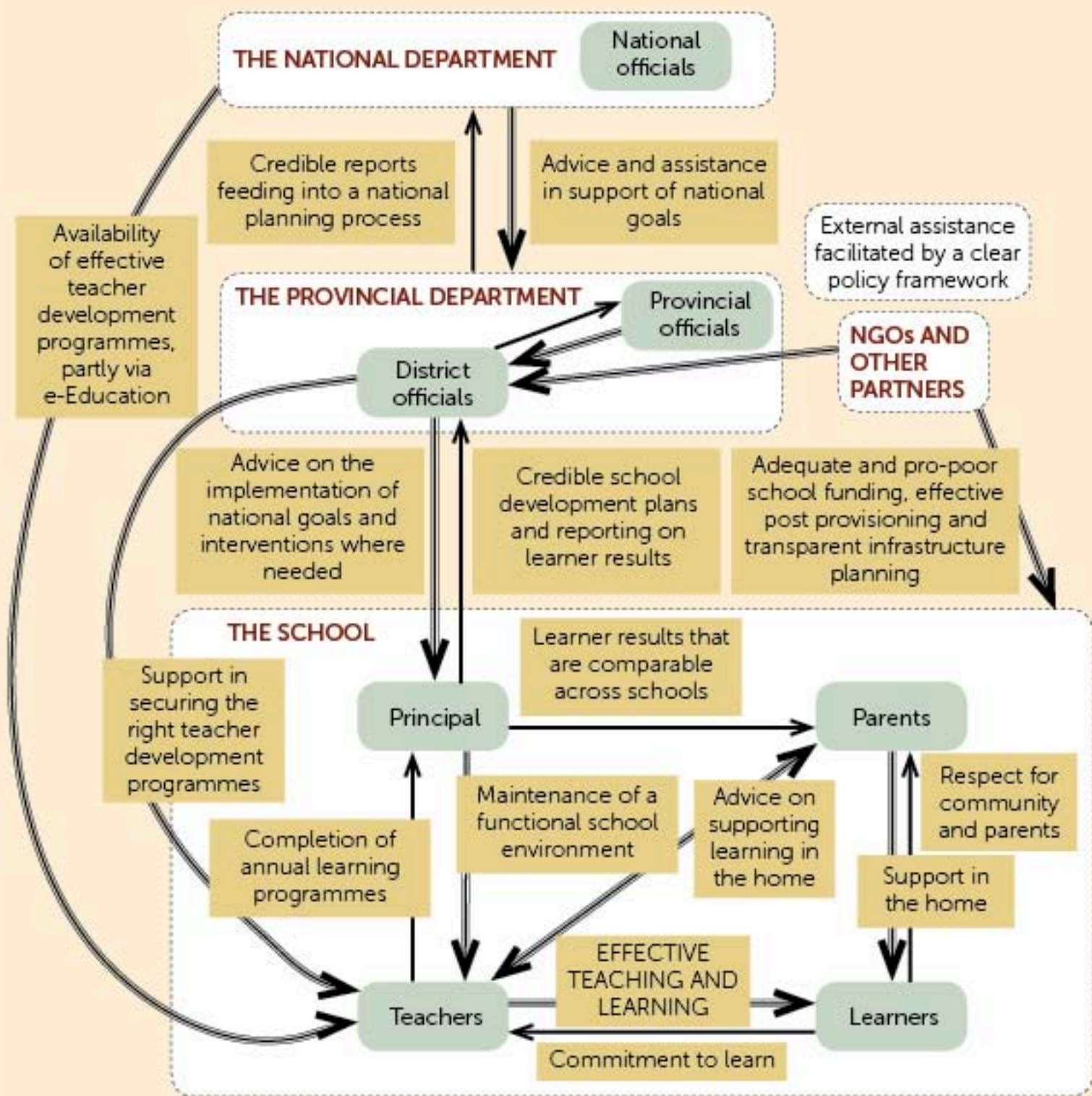


Diagram 1: People and actions contributing towards better quality schooling.

Goals 14, 16 and 17 deal with teacher development.

Goal 14:

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

What is the problem?

For many years, the number of newly qualified teachers joining the teaching profession has been too low. On average, approximately 10 000 teachers leave the public service every year, but on average only 5 000 join the profession annually. 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. There are many reasons why there have not been enough young people joining the teaching profession in recent years. There are many other job opportunities for young South Africans as the economy has grown. Another reason is that the schooling system itself has not been producing enough people who are ready to enter a Bachelor's programme (for example a Bachelor of Education degree). It is vital that sufficient newly qualified teachers enter public schools every year if we are to avoid serious teacher shortages in future.

What is government doing?

The Funza Lushaka bursary scheme for those leaving school and who want to train as teachers was introduced in 2007 to encourage



young South Africans to train as teachers for public schools. Presently, just over 9 000 students training as teachers are receiving Funza Lushaka bursaries. Government has also improved the salaries of teachers in recent years, partly so that the teaching profession can become a more attractive career option. Between 2000 and 2009, the purchasing power of the average 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 on page 60).

What should you be doing?

If you are choosing a future career, or know someone who is, you may want to consider teaching. The conditions for teachers have been changing over the years, so what you have been told about teaching may no longer be true. There are now more options for teachers – for example, promotion options within the classroom for those who do not wish to become school principals or managers.

How will we know when things are improving?

When the personnel records of government show that the number of new graduates entering the public schooling system each year equals the number of teachers who retire or leave the profession for other reasons, then we will know that we are on the right track.



Goal 15 deals with post provisioning.

Goal 15:

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

What is the problem?

Comparisons with class sizes and learner/teacher ratios in other countries suggest that the situation is worse in South Africa than it is in most other middle-income developing countries. Although teaching posts are given to schools more or less in proportion to their enrolments, class sizes vary across different schools. Approximately half of South Africa's public school learners sit in classes with more than 40 learners, and about 15% sit in classes with more than 50 learners. Very large classes make learning and teaching more difficult. There are three main reasons why very large classes exist. One is that it is difficult to attract teachers to certain areas, for instance remote rural areas, and so teaching posts remain unfilled. Another is that the timetable and the use of each teacher's time in some schools are not as good as they should be. Thirdly, many schools still suffer from classroom space shortages.



What is government doing?

In 2007, government passed a policy on additional pay for teachers in remote rural areas. However, various reasons, including a lack of funding, have made it difficult for this policy to function properly. In the coming years, government will pay special attention to the proper implementation of this policy. The policy on the allocation of teachers to schools now makes it clearer to each school how teaching time should be organised. District offices will carefully monitor whether schools are timetabling correctly and will take action when it becomes clear that poor planning in the school is resulting in over-sized classes.

What should you be doing?

Making sure there are enough teachers in a school with the right qualifications, and that teaching time is effectively used, requires a good working relationship between the department, the school principal and the School Governing Body. Parents generally, and parents on the School Governing Body in particular, can assist in making sure that the right decisions are taken.

How will we know when things are improving?

When the Annual Survey of Schools shows that we no longer have learners sitting in classes with more than 60 or 50 or 40 learners, then we will know that we have succeeded in addressing this problem.



Goals 14, 16 and 17 deal with teacher development.

Goal 16:

Improve the professionalism, teaching skills, subject knowledge and computer literacy of teachers throughout their entire career.

- * Goal 16 is one of five priority goals identified in the Minister of Basic Education's Delivery Agreement for the period up to 2014.

What is the problem?

Many of South Africa's teachers did not receive all the training they need. While over 90% of our public school teachers have more than three years training, often this training was not of a sufficiently high quality. SACMEQ and a few other testing programmes have tested not just learners, but also teachers, and found that teachers are often lacking in subject knowledge. Government and the teacher unions agree that this is a serious matter that requires urgent attention.

What is government doing?

This problem has been recognised for a long time, and there have been many initiatives to provide teachers with in-service training. However, we have not trained enough teachers and often the training has not been of sufficiently high standard. An important step in the right direction was the Teacher Development Summit in 2009, involving all stakeholders. The recommendations from that summit were used to



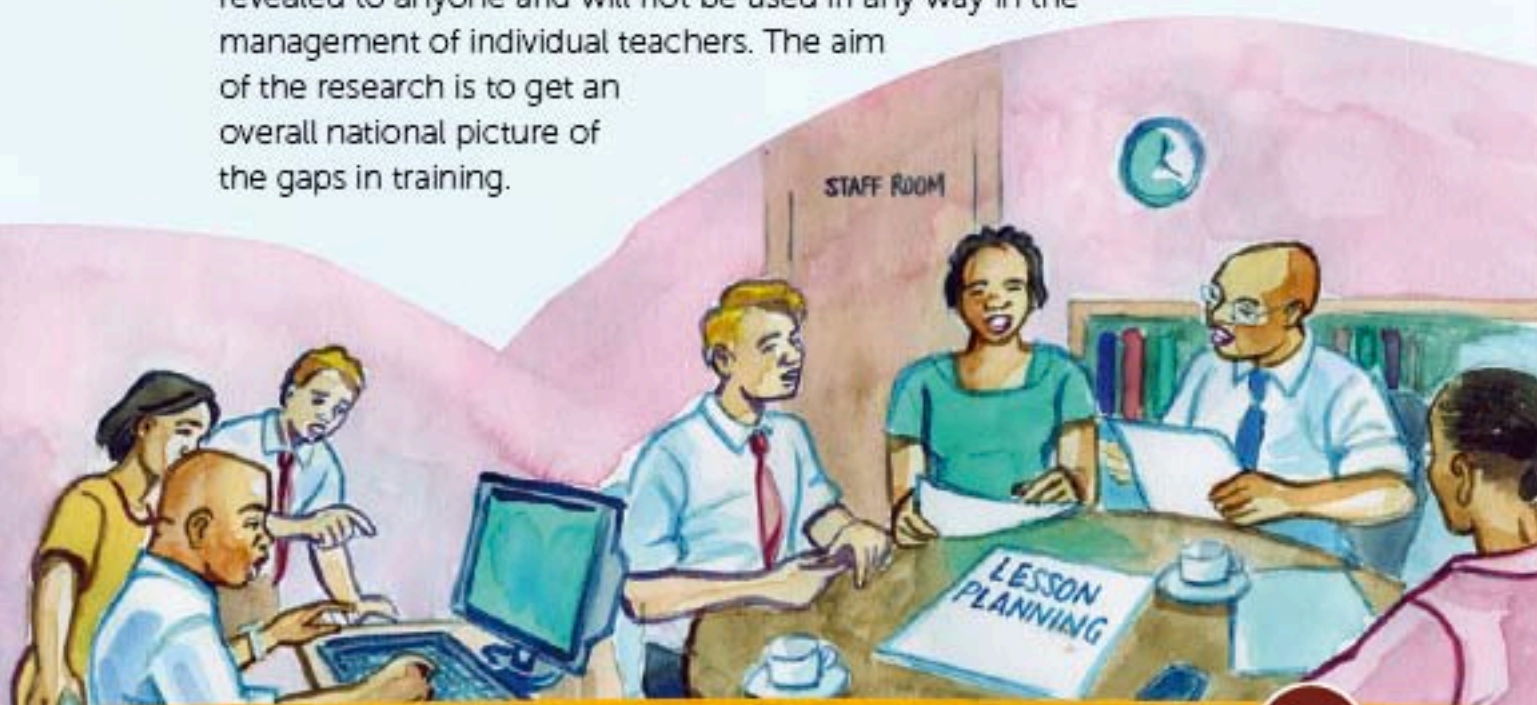
compile a new strategy for teacher development, which will make it easier for large numbers of teachers to receive training. Some of the training they receive will be through distance education on the internet. Government's Teacher Laptop Initiative is another important project aimed at improving computer literacy amongst teachers and school principals. We know that many teachers develop excellent teaching materials. As part of e-Education, the internet will be a way for teachers to share these materials with each other.

What should you be doing?

If you are a teacher, then the actions you take as an individual, as well as in collaboration with other teachers, are vital. Government is committed to making more and better teacher training courses available. However, we will only move forward if teachers show a commitment towards their own development. It is a teacher's responsibility to spend 80 hours a year on improving their skills. Above all, it is important to strengthen the culture of reading and professional debate amongst teachers. Teachers should also make a special effort to improve their computer literacy and to use the internet to access information and interesting classroom materials.

How will we know when things are improving?

Government will continue to support research where teachers' subject knowledge and teaching skills are assessed. The research will respect the dignity of teachers. Results of individual teachers will not be revealed to anyone and will not be used in any way in the management of individual teachers. The aim of the research is to get an overall national picture of the gaps in training.



Goals 14, 16 and 17 deal with teacher development.

Goal 17:

Strive for a teacher work-force that is healthy and enjoys a sense of job satisfaction.

What is the problem?

We will not achieve our goals if teachers are not satisfied with their jobs or if they feel that society does not value the teaching profession. Teaching is a challenging job and almost every teacher experiences frustration of some kind. However, what we must avoid is a situation where teachers feel that the education policies and the curriculum are poorly designed or unfair. Teachers cannot decide on the education policies, but these policies must be sensitive to teachers' experiences. The challenge lies in making our policies, and their implementation, more teacher-centred.

What is government doing?

As mentioned above, teachers' pay has improved in recent years. In 2008, new options for the promotion for teachers were introduced. A key challenge that government and teacher unions are working on is a better system to reward talented and motivated teachers. In 2009, the rules for learner assessment were simplified so that teachers would need to do less paperwork and could focus more on teaching.



This was in response to complaints from teachers themselves. Above all, government is committed to listening more carefully to what teachers need. This will be done both through consultation with teacher unions and through the better use of surveys establishing what teachers regard as the problems and the solutions. Part of the task is to look more closely at the health issues that teachers face, including HIV and AIDS. As part of government's overall strategy on HIV and AIDS, we must be honest and open about these matters and combat all forms of stigma and prejudice.

What should you be doing?

As a parent, you can make a difference by complimenting your child's teacher when you feel that the teacher is making a special effort. School Governing Bodies should acknowledge outstanding performance among the teaching staff, keeping in mind that positive feedback can be as effective as monetary rewards. Teachers and union activists also have an important role to play in providing constructive criticism on our education policies and offering recommendations for how they can be improved.

How will we know when things are improving?

Surveys of teacher job satisfaction will be an important tool for government to establish what the challenges are and what progress is being made.



Goal 18 deals with curriculum implementation.

Goal 18:

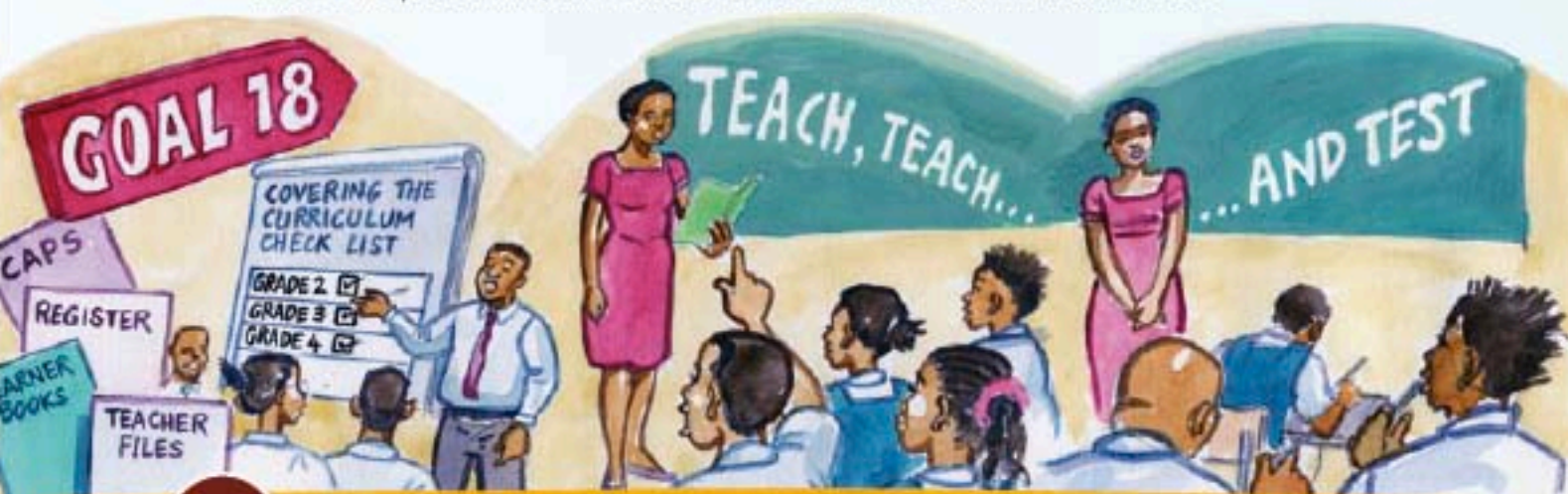
Ensure that learners cover all the topics and skills areas that they should cover within their current school year.

What is the problem?

Recent research indicates that too often teachers reach the end of the year without completing the teaching programme. This causes major problems for the teacher in the next grade, who then finds it difficult to complete his/her programme for the year, and so the problem continues through all grades. The problem is partially caused by insufficient time being spent on teaching and learning during the year. Time is lost because teachers and learners arrive late or leave early. Time is also lost during the school day when breaks are extended and teachers leave classes unattended.

What is government doing?

A new system will be introduced to monitor schools and teachers. It will check to see which teachers do not complete the learning programme for a given year and why not. This new system will involve at least one visit to each school by the district officer every year. District officers will monitor how successful teachers were in completing the previous year's programme and whether or not teachers are on track with the current year's programme. Where there are problems, the district office and the school will have to



find solutions. Furthermore, every two years, in some of the ANA verification schools, ANA officers will spend time checking the schools' work programmes and the learners' workbooks. The ANA officers will provide an overview of the national situation. It is obviously important that schools and teachers should not rush through the year's programme, nor pretend that things have been done when they have not been completely taught. The new monitoring system will have to check not only whether the year's programme was completed, but also how well it was done.

What should you be doing

All School Governing Bodies should pay attention to whether teachers' learning programmes for the year are being well taught and completed as planned. If they are not, members of School Governing Bodies should be aware of this, inform the parent body and assist the School Management Team in finding solutions to the problems.

How will we know when things are improving?

As part of the new monitoring system, district offices will need to submit reports on the situation in the schools under their jurisdiction. This will assist the monitoring of schools by both the provinces and the national department. If these reports suggest that there are requirements in the curriculum that have to change, those changes must be made. Ultimately, all teachers in all schools must finish the year's teaching programmes that they are responsible for to the best of their ability.



Goals 19 and 20 deal with textbooks, workbooks and other educational materials.

Goal 19:

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

- * Goal 19 is one of five priority goals identified in the Minister of Basic Education's Delivery Agreement for the period up to 2014.

What is the problem?

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 stationery they need. We cannot expect proper learning and teaching to take place where learners do not have access to these learning resources. Spending on materials, such as textbooks, has increased in recent years. Information that Statistics South Africa collects from parents indicates that the percentage of parents who complain about a shortage of books for their children at school has decreased from 16% in 2005 to 11% in 2008. The figure of 11%, however, is still too high. In 2007, one in eight learners in Grade 3 did not have their own literacy and numeracy workbooks; and 4% of learners in Grade 6 did not have any exercise books or workbooks.



What is government doing?

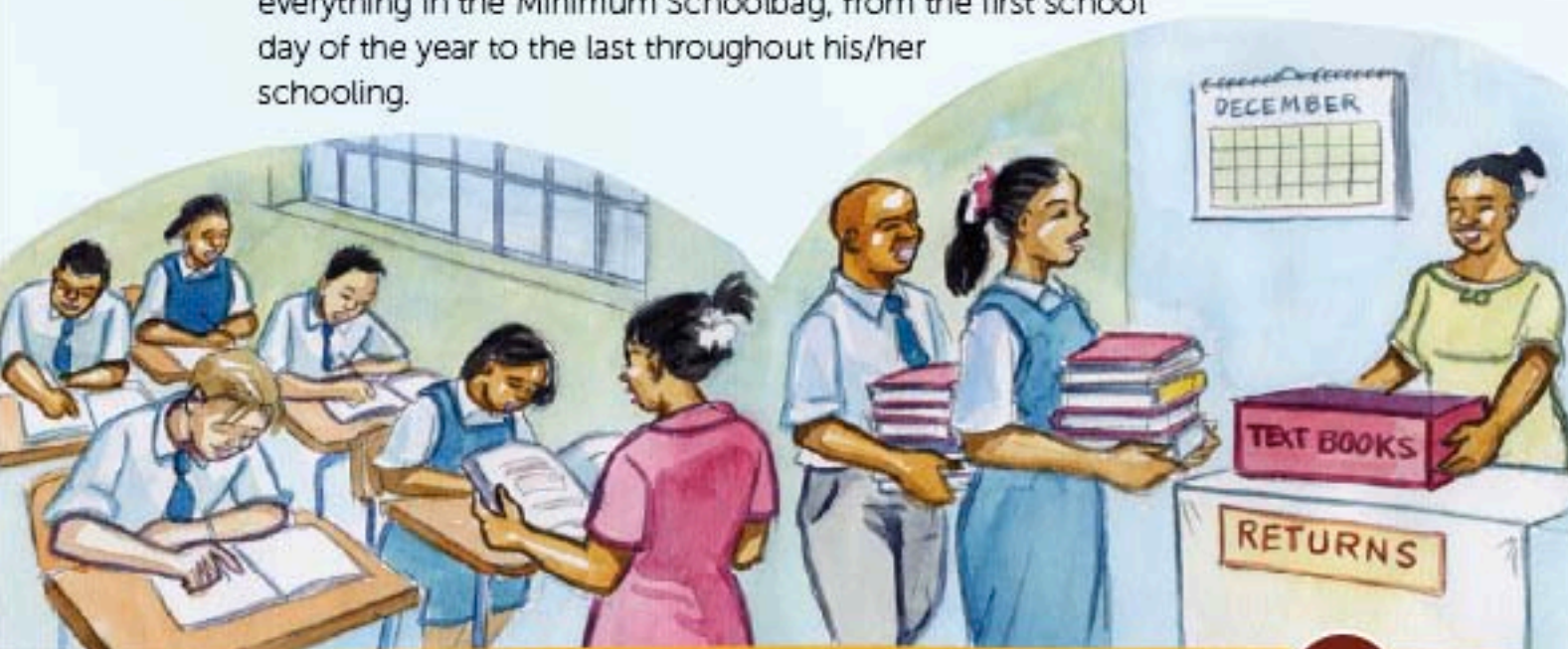
There are many reasons why learners do not have the learning resources that they need. For example, the department may not have delivered the prescribed materials; or the school may not have received the necessary funding from the department; or the school may not have used the funding allocated by the department for learner resources. Materials may not be available because they are not well looked after (so the following year's learners are unable to use them) or because the resources have been stolen. Government is working on all these problems. The national department will be announcing a policy that is clearer about what learning resources each learner should have in each grade. These will be known as the Minimum Schoolbag lists.

What should you be doing?

Parents can assist by making sure that where learners take books and learning materials home, these resources are well looked after. The covering of textbooks and workbooks with brown paper or plastic sheeting also helps in protecting the books from wear and tear. At the end of each school year, parents should ensure that their children have returned textbooks to the school, so that the resources can be used again by other learners in the following year.

How will we know when things are improving?

There will be better monitoring and action to ensure that every child has his or her Minimum Schoolbag for the appropriate grade. We will know that we are delivering in this goal area when every child has access to everything in the Minimum Schoolbag, from the first school day of the year to the last throughout his/her schooling.



An example of a Minimum Schoolbag for a Grade 6 learner:



Six textbooks, one each for the six subjects: mathematics, natural sciences, human and social sciences, general studies, and two languages that are being studied.

Workbooks for the subjects indicated above.

Exercise books for the subjects indicated above.

A one-language **dictionary** (any language).

Stationery: Ruler, pens (five different colours), pencil, eraser, glue.

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

The Workbooks

The national department has introduced Workbooks for Grades 1 - 9. These provide organised work in the form of worksheets for every child in mathematics and language. The aim of the workbook project is to provide every child with two books of worksheets – one for numeracy/mathematics and one for literacy/language in the child's language of learning and teaching. Each book contains 128 worksheets (two pages each) – one a day for four days of the week. In the third term, learners will be provided with another two books – one for mathematics and one for language. Learners will use the books to do written exercises in language and mathematics.



Goals 19 and 20 deal with textbooks, workbooks and other educational materials.

Goal 20:

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

What is the problem?

Every learner must have access to a library of relevant books and materials such as newspapers. Approximately 15 000 schools, or more than half of all the schools in South Africa, have no libraries or insufficient libraries. It is also clear that children who do not have access to computers during their schooling are disadvantaged. Teachers are finding that they need to catch up with their learners' ever-growing experience of using computers outside of school. Statistics from 2007 indicated that 50% of learners in Grade 6 had used a computer out of school, but only 37% of learners had used a computer in school.

What is government doing?

As part of government's new plan to speed up improvements to school buildings (see Goal 24 on page 82), media centres and libraries will be built in schools. Government will also continue to promote mini-libraries inside classrooms, which assist in giving learners access to reading materials while schools equip their libraries.



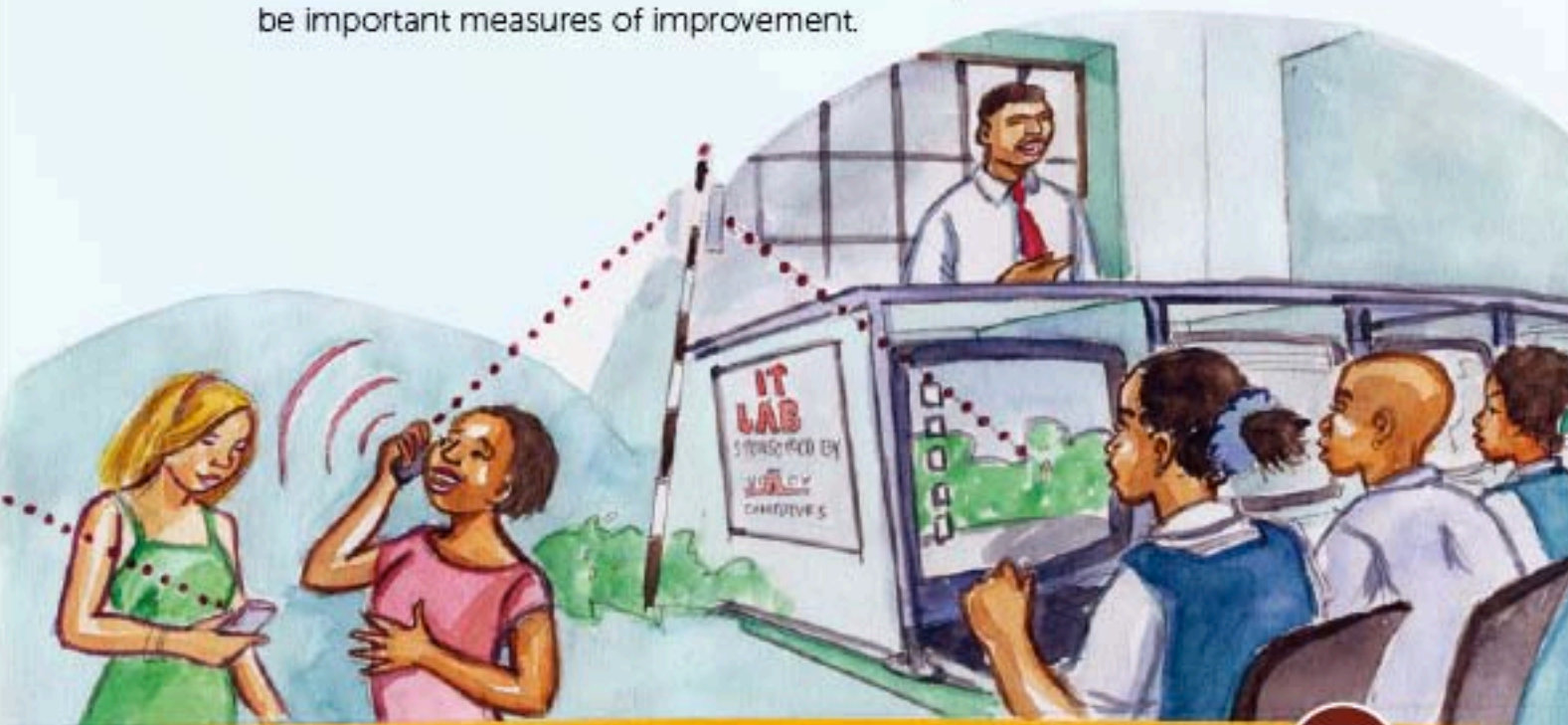
As part of the e-Education strategy, government will continue to support the establishment of computer centres in schools. Schools cannot promote computer literacy among learners if teachers are not computer literate. Better computer literacy amongst teachers is a key aim of government (see Goal 16 on page 58).

What should you be doing?

If you are working in the private sector, your company could consider assisting schools in setting up libraries, media centres or computer centres. Parents should make a regular effort to assist their children to borrow books from their nearest public library. You can also encourage reading as an everyday activity in the home – read, read and read some more! Make time to read together and to discuss the books, newspapers and magazines you all enjoy reading. Increasingly, cellphones allow users to access the internet and e-mail. Teachers and learners should be encouraged to use their mobile devices for study purposes. Keep track of educational television programmes and support your child to view them regularly and to do the learning activities that are published in newspapers.

How will we know when things are improving?

As part of the *Action Plan to 2014*, government will monitor the percentage of learners who have access to library books, media centres and computers that are of an acceptable standard. The number of teachers and learners who are computer literate will also be important measures of improvement.



Goals 21 to 23 deal with school management and governance.

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 21 is one of five priority goals identified in the Minister of Basic Education's Delivery Agreement for the period up to 2014.

What is the problem?

A school where learners learn and where there is a sense of harmony is often a school with an outstanding school principal. However, there are also many principals who need support and training in order to do their jobs properly. To maintain good management and leadership, the school needs a budget; a school development plan; correctly completed learner and staff attendance rosters; schedules of learner assessment scores; annual financial statements; and an annual report. These factors on their own are not enough, but if they are in place it becomes much easier to create a functional school environment.



What is government doing?

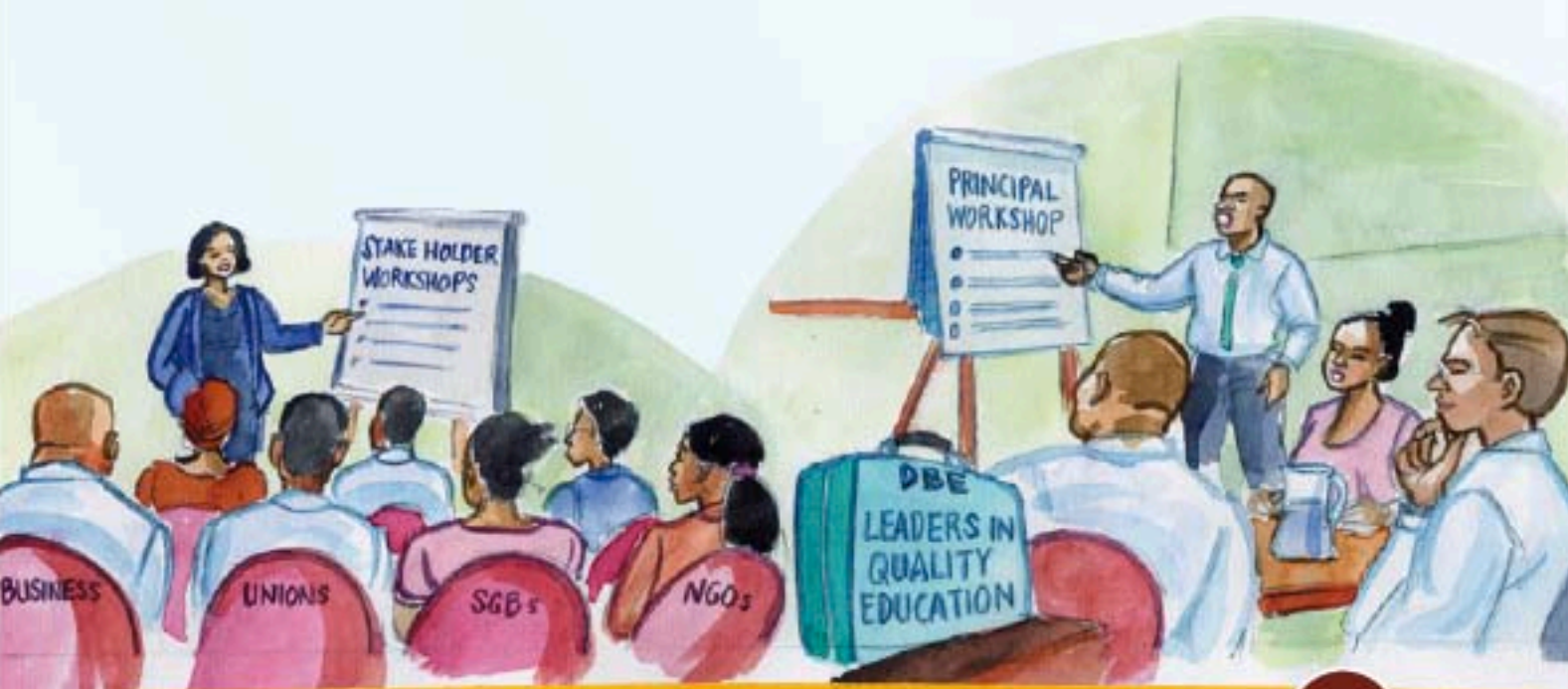
Training and support are offered to most school principals on a regular basis. For example, over 90% of principals say they receive support in financial management on average once a year. The problem is that only 40% of principals who receive this support find the training adequate. Government aims to improve training and support to principals, so as to ensure that they can lead schools more effectively. As more schools gain access to computers and the internet, a greater part of a school's administration will become computerised and levels of efficiency can be expected to improve significantly.

What should you be doing?

School management is another area where schools and the private sector could work more closely together. If you are in the private sector, consider whether your company could organise joint management and leadership workshops for school principals in your area. If you have specialised management skills, then you could volunteer your support where and when needed.

How will we know when things are improving?

Districts will provide some of the information we need to rate the management and basic functionality of schools. The national department will also monitor schools directly to check that improvements are taking place.



Goals 21 to 23 deal with school management and governance.

Goal 22:

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

What is the problem?

Parent involvement in school governance is fairly good, but can be improved. A 2009 study found that two-thirds of parents had, at some stage, voted for School Governing Body members. In 61% of schools, parents are actively involved in deciding what the school budget should entail. Involving parents in school governance is a bigger challenge in poorer areas. Parents in these areas find it difficult to attend meetings and to understand school budgets, policies and reports. Moreover, when parents are not involved in overseeing the governance of a school, it reduces the sense of accountability to the community among the school staff and, hence, a sense of purpose and discipline within the school.

What is government doing?

Parents play a vital role in making sure that learners attend school regularly and complete their homework. ANA results will give parents clearer information about their children's schools.



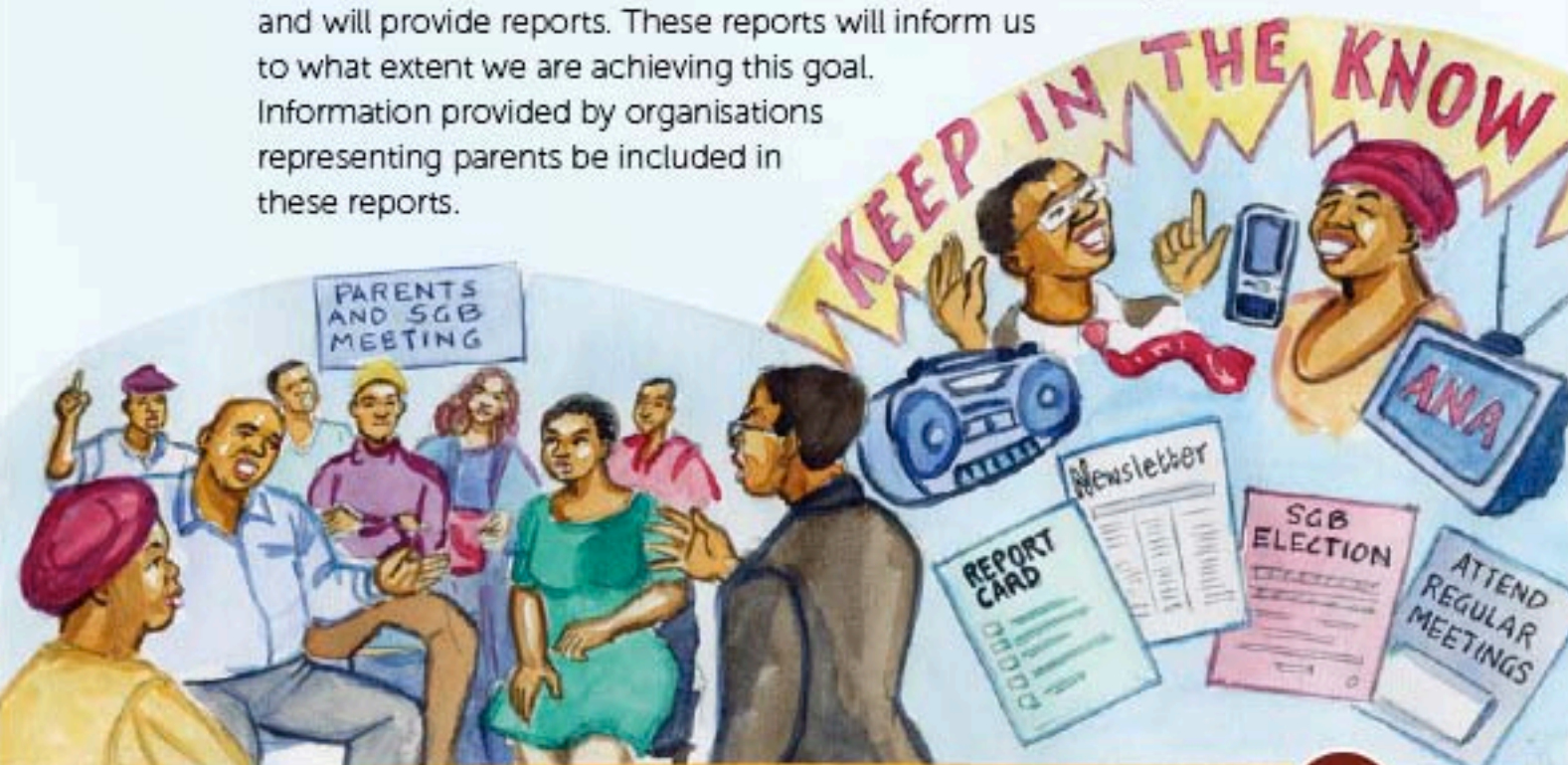
This should motivate parents to participate in discussions on improving learning. Around 77% of parents currently on School Governing Bodies say they have received some training. This training will now have to include training on how to understand ANA and how to take decisions on improving learning. This training should also focus on how e-Education helps parents to access information more easily – particularly parents in poorer communities.

What should you be doing?

Parents should make a concerted effort to understand this *Action Plan to 2014* and the vision for *Schooling 2025*, so that they have a better idea of what to expect from government and schools and how they, as parents, can contribute to the realisation of these goals. If you are serving on a School Governing Body, you can ensure that the members receive the training that is available to assist them in performing their functions competently. Parents should be informed of the school's policies and regulations and, from time to time, participate in the review of policy. Parents can also support the school management by making a point of attending all school meetings when required.

How will we know when things are improving?

District offices and the national department will both monitor parent participation in schools and the success of School Governing Bodies, and will provide reports. These reports will inform us to what extent we are achieving this goal. Information provided by organisations representing parents be included in these reports.



Goals 21 to 23 deal with school management and governance.

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.

What is the problem?

A 2009 study indicates that, although funding for schools had increased in recent years, one third of schools were not receiving their full allocation of government funding. Another problem is that provincial departments' controls over school funding often cause difficulties for schools. For example, when the provincial department spends on behalf of a school, goods often arrive late. Furthermore, when money is transferred to schools, the provincial department's requirements on how the money should be spent may be impractical for the school to comply with.

What is government doing?

The national department is using the 2009 study to see how the school funding policy should be changed for the better. The national department is especially interested in ensuring (i) that no-fee schools work properly; (ii) that concerns about the use of quintiles to classify



schools (as being poorer or less poor) are dealt with; and (iii) that schools, which grant fee exemptions to poorer learners, should receive compensation. Government aims to publish details of the funding that individual schools will receive on the internet. These details will ensure that parents are better informed and that there is a better understanding between schools and the national and provincial departments.

What should you be doing?

Parents and school principals have a right to receive clear information about (i) how much funding the school is supposed to receive; (ii) how much is transferred into the bank account of the school; and (iii) how much the provincial department spends on behalf of the school. If this information is not clear, or if not all of the funds have been paid to the school, the parents have a right to know and to report the matter to the national department.

How will we know when things are improving?

Financial reporting systems in the departments need to be improved so that there is greater clarity on how much is spent on each school. We will know we are achieving this goal (i) when schools receive the whole amount indicated in the national policy; (ii) when schools no longer complain about unnecessary restrictions by provincial departments in the administration of school funding; and (iii) when there are no reports of fraud in departments and schools.



Goal 24 deals with 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.

What is the problem?

In 2008, the national department introduced a new way of classifying the quality of school infrastructure. This makes it easier to decide which schools to refurbish or rebuild. In the new classification system, some schools are classified as having reached a **basic functionality**, whereas others have reached an **optimum functionality**. The goal is for all schools to reach optimum functionality. Approximately 5 600 schools (out of a total of about 25 000) have not yet reached the level of basic functionality. For example, we still have 1 700 schools without water and 700 schools with no toilets. This not only makes learning difficult in these schools, but is very bad for the well-being and health of learners attending such schools.

What is government doing?

There has been much focus over the years on improving school infrastructure and we have seen improvements. For example, since 1996, the number of schools without water has decreased from 9 000



to 1 700 and the number of schools without electricity has decreased from 15 000 to 2 800. The percentage of classrooms with more than 45 learners has decreased from 55% to 25%. Government will continue to work hard at making all schools functional at the basic level by 2014. It will also remain committed to taking more schools to the optimum level. The national department is working closely with the Development Bank of Southern Africa to find better ways of funding new school infrastructure.

What should you be doing?

In many schools the infrastructure issue is not the problem of a lack of buildings or a shortage of desks and chairs, but the *poor state* of the above. Parents, teachers and communities in general can do more to ensure that school facilities are well looked after.

How will we know when things are improving?

Government now has a better reporting system for school infrastructure. This will make it easier to establish where the gaps are, so that they can be filled. The reporting system also shows us how close we are to reaching our goal.



Goals 25 and 26 deal with learner well-being.

Goal 25:

Use schools as vehicles for promoting learner access to a range of public services in areas such as health, poverty alleviation, psycho-social support, sport and culture.

What is the problem?

Proper schooling cannot happen if learners suffer from desperate poverty, malnutrition, illness, psychological or physical distress, or even if they have hearing and eyesight problems. Approximately 90% of enrolled primary school learners have never had an eye test, and yet poor eyesight can explain why learners find it difficult to follow what is happening in class. Approximately 7% of learners do not have Road to Health cards, when all of them should actually have these cards.

Schools have an important role in promoting the overall physical and psychological well-being of learners. This includes promoting a sense of belonging to one's community and one's country through specific sporting, cultural and community involvement activities. Schools should advocate tolerance and condemn prejudice and violence. This responsibility includes combating racism and sexism, and supporting and protecting 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 repeatedly reinforced by principals and teachers.

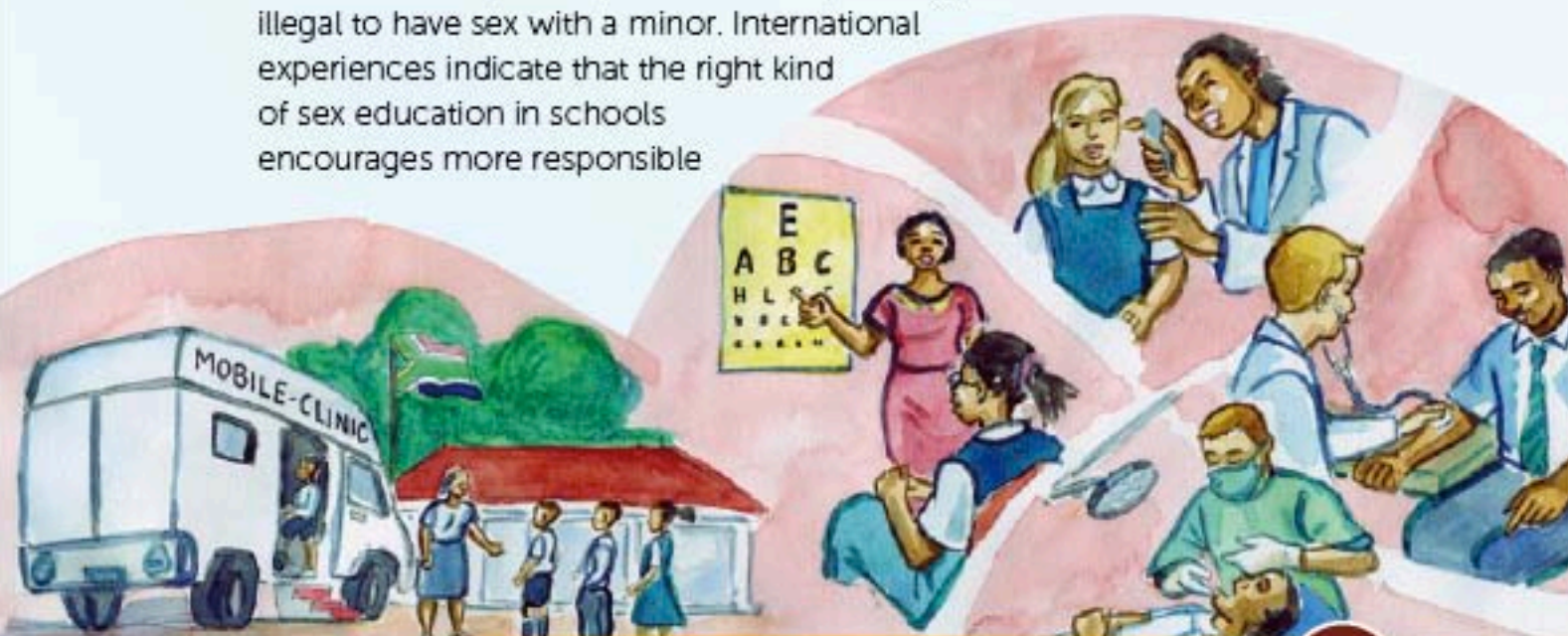


This ideal has been difficult to realise, partly because of the limited capacity amongst teachers in the area of psycho-social support and a shortage of external professionals, such as social workers, psychologists and cultural workers, who are available to visit schools. Interventions to promote physical and mental health through physical education and sport in schools have also been under-funded and disjointed.

What is government doing?

An important initiative of government is the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP). Approximately one quarter of all learners receive food directly delivered to the school, while another quarter receive school lunches paid for by money that is transferred from the department to the school. The aim of government is that, by 2014, a total of 75% of learners should be receiving school lunches. The School Health Survey Programme will be implemented in more schools as part of the co-operation that exists between the Departments of Health and Basic Education. Action will also be taken to ensure that learners who are recipients of child support grants do not pay school fees. This is something that is already captured in policy, but we know that in too many schools this policy is not being followed.

We can expect the regulations related to the prevention and management of teenage pregnancy to be revised in 2012. The regulations will continue to emphasise reducing pregnancies among school learners, the responsibilities 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 more responsible





behaviour. In this regard, the new Life Orientation curriculum documents, introduced in schools in 2012, will make it much clearer as to how sex education should be taught.

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, and that school sporting facilities are improved for the better.

What should you be doing?

Parents should assist in ensuring that children are tested at a local clinic for eyesight and hearing problems. Parents should also understand that if a child receives a child support grant, then the child cannot be charged school fees by a public school. Parents can make an effort to exercise with their children and support their children's participation in sporting and cultural activities on a regular basis. Parents can also ensure that their children are better informed about the risks of HIV and AIDS, substance abuse, sexual harassment and abuse, as well as the negative effects of bullying, sexism, homophobia and teenage pregnancies.

School communities are also encouraged to access the booklets, *Speak Out! Youth Report Sexual Abuse*, as well as *Speak Out Freely* on the Department of Basic Education's website.

How will we know when things are improving?

Information from schools and households will be used to monitor access to school lunches, as well as other health issues affecting learners. An independent review of school safety interventions undertaken during previous years has been completed and informs establishing best practices in the reduction of violence in schools. School sporting activities are taking place. A comprehensive assessment of the implementation of the regulations for the prevention and management of teenage pregnancy has been released to guide future actions with respect to teenage pregnancy and gender issues in general. A reduction in learner pregnancy and bullying at schools will indicate things are improving.



Goals 25 and 26 deal with learner well-being.

Goal 26:

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

What is the problem?

An important reason why approximately 200 000 learners, aged 7 to 15, are not in school is that there are not enough schools able to offer special needs education. There are also many learners in school who do not receive the special needs attention they require. Resources and skills to adequately support learners with learning difficulties – both in special needs and ordinary schools – are lacking. What schools offer learners who are blind, deaf or otherwise disabled is widely described as very basic care, rather than the necessary specialised education.

What is government doing?

Special needs training has been provided to teachers in mainstream schools to assist them in dealing with special needs learners. Approximately 40% of schools have started using the new methods introduced by the national department, which allow teachers to identify the learners who are in need of specialised attention. In 35% of schools, specialists from outside the school have come to assist teachers to take the inclusive education policy forward.



These initiatives need to be expanded so that all schools are included. So far, 20 full service schools have been established in 20 districts. These schools provide special needs support that is difficult to provide in mainstream schools, and are equipped and supported to provide for the full range of learning needs of all learners. Government's aim is to have a full service school in all districts (in 2011 there were 81 districts in the country).

What should you be doing?

If you believe that your child needs special needs support, speak to your child's teacher about this. You should also find out whether your district is one of the districts that already have a full service school.

How will we know when things are improving?

The national department will clearly indicate the minimum staffing requirements and the equipment that a school should have to qualify for implementing inclusive education. The number of schools that fulfil all the criteria will be monitored to ensure that we make progress.



Goal 27 deals with district support and monitoring.

Goal 27:

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

- * **Goal 27 is one of five priority goals identified in the Minister of Basic Education's Delivery Agreement for the period up to 2014.**

What is the problem?

For many of the goals mentioned in *Action Plan to 2014*, the districts carry a lot of responsibility. For example, they are expected to produce the district-wide ANA report and monitor whether schools teach everything they should within the school year. The problem is that many district offices do not have sufficient staff, or find that existing staff do not have all the skills they need to perform their duties optimally. This means that district officials are not able to provide the quantity and the quality of support to, and/or monitoring of, schools that is required.

What is government doing?

Recent statistics indicate that over 90% of schools are visited by district officials at least once a year, and that 35% of schools are visited four or more times a year.



All schools should be visited at least twice every year and some schools, especially those needing more support, should be visited more frequently. The national department, together with the provincial departments, will compile a clear list of the kind of support measures that schools could expect from districts. The list will also include the information that schools need to provide to the districts. This will make it easier for districts and schools to focus on what is really important. When verification ANA takes place, selected schools will be asked to evaluate the support they get from districts. In this way, it will become more clear which support services in which districts need to be improved. Through e-Education, the sharing of information between districts and schools will also become easier and more efficient.

What should you be doing?

As a member of the School Governing Body, you should be aware of what the district office requires of the school and what support the district can give to the school. Parents can assist with the flow of information by responding timeously to requests for information from the school.

How will we know when things are improving?

The number of visits each year by district officials to schools and the rating that school principals give the services of the district will be important measures of how well we are doing in realising this goal.



Going forward – staying informed

For wide participation to be effective, everyone needs to be well informed about what happens in their local school, as well as in the schooling system as a whole. You can stay informed by accessing the national annual report and e-Education information services. You are also able to voice your concerns within your school community, as well as lodge complaints.

National annual report

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) will publish a clear report every year on how the schooling system is doing. The national report will tell us (i) what is happening with regard to teaching and learning; (ii) spending by government; (iii) collaboration between the national and provincial departments and teacher unions; and (iv) complaints in the system. The national report will indicate what complaints are being received by the district, provincial and national complaints officers (these officers are discussed below), and what action was taken or will be taken.

An easy-to-follow version of the national annual report will be made widely available so that stakeholders have the information they need. If *Action Plan to 2014* changes, the DBE will ensure that these changes are clearly communicated to schools and parents so as to ensure that there is no confusion.

e-Education strategy

The DBE's e-Education strategy involves the use of computers and the internet to get things done faster and easier. As part of this strategy, the DBE will make sure that the information that people need to take part in *Schooling 2025* will be readily available on the internet. Even though not all South Africans have access to the internet, this situation is changing. By 2009, people in 25% of households across the country were accessing the internet. We know that internet access, especially among younger people, is expanding fast.

Learners can expect e-Education to deliver the following:

- Exposure to the latest Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and how they operate.
- A greater variety of ways to learn what is in the curriculum.
- Access to a wide range of information through the internet.
- Learning through communication with learners around the world.

Teachers can expect e-Education to deliver the following:

- Access to a wide variety of teaching materials.
- Easy access to professional development courses and modules.
- Tools that facilitate the management of teaching.
- Membership of professional networks where ideas are being shared.

Parents can expect e-Education to deliver the following:

- Better information on the education of their children.
- New channels for communicating directly with the educators in their local school and with the education authorities.

Principals can expect e-Education to deliver the following:

- Easier access to up-to-date education policies.
- Tools that facilitate school management (or district management).
- Membership of forums aimed at sharing experiences and solving problems.
- Better communication of the school's plans to the community and partners.

Complaints procedure

Parents, your participation in realising the goals in *Action Plan to 2014* is very important to the department, districts and schools. Please let us know when you have concerns about, or queries concerning, your child's education.

The diagram below shows the steps that a person should take to lodge a complaint or raise a query.



As the diagram above shows:

The first step you should take is to discuss the matter with a teacher or the school principal.

The second step is to ask for the matter to be discussed at the next meeting of the School Governing Body by contacting the chairperson to request the matter to be placed on the agenda of the next meeting. The School Governing Body (or the principal) may decide to take the matter to the district office on your behalf.

However, if you feel that working through the school does not work, you are free to contact the district office yourself.

If you feel that the district office has not adequately addressed the matter, you are free to contact the provincial department directly.

If you feel the provincial department has not attended to the matter effectively, you are free to contact the national department yourself.

Every district and provincial department must ensure that they have a **complaints office**.

The national department also has a **complaints officer** who will help to address your concern.

The national department will also make sure, as part of its e-Education strategy, that the information you need and details on the steps you can take are easily available on the national Department of Basic Education's website, or by contacting the departmental call centre:

DBE website address

<http://www.education.gov.za/>

DBE Call Centre:

0800 202 933

Glossary

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.

Annual National Assessments (ANA)

The Annual National Assessments are standardised national assessments for languages and mathematics in Grades 4 to 6 and 9; and in literacy and mathematics in Grades 1 to 3.

Black

The term 'black' is used to refer to three of the four population groups identified by Statistics South Africa, namely African, coloured and Indian.

Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)

These are national Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements for each phase and subject for Basic Education – i.e. from Grades R to 12.

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. It is important to note that the boundaries of education districts do not always coincide with local government boundaries.

Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Early Childhood Development refers to the processes by which children from birth to 9 years of age grow, develop and learn. The terms 'pre-school education' and 'nursery school' emphasise education for the ages of 3 to 6 years. The terms 'day care' and 'child care' do not include the educational aspects.

Full service school

A full service school is a school that is equipped and supported to provide for the full range of learning needs among all learners.

Funza Lushaka bursary scheme

This bursary scheme promotes teaching in public schools. Full-cost bursaries are available to enable eligible students to complete a full teaching qualification.

Further Education and Training (FET)

The FET Phase in schools is made up of Grades 10, 11 and 12. There are also separate FET colleges, which provide technical and vocational training.

Learner Unit Record Information Tracking System (LURITS)

LURITS is a nation-wide database to keep track of students who should be in the Basic Education system.

Minister

This term refers to the national Minister of Basic Education.

National department

This term refers to the national Department of Basic Education.

National Senior Certificate (Vocational) – NSC(V)

NSC(V) is a vocational qualification from an FET college, equivalent to an academic matric.

National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP)

NSNP is a school feeding scheme that provides food for learners to improve their nutrition and ability to learn.

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. It is important to note that the curriculum and other policies divide grades into four phases, rather than into primary and secondary categories.

Provincial department

This term refers to a provincial department of education. The term covers district offices and other local offices, such as circuit offices, since such local offices form part of the provincial department.

Quintiles

There are 5 quintiles into which schools are grouped, based on the poverty level of the community in which a school is located.

Road to Health card

This card is given to mothers to record the immunisations, growth and health of their child (from birth to 5 years of age).

The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ)

SACMEQ gives learners standardised tests in numeracy and literacy. Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, the Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania (Mainland), Tanzania (Zanzibar), Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe participate in SACMEQ assessments.

Secondary school

This term refers to schools offering Grades 8 to 12, or more or less this range of grades. It is important to note that the curriculum and other policies divide grades into four phases, rather than into primary and secondary categories.

School Governing Bodies (SGBs)

The South African Schools Act of 1996 mandates the establishment of School Governing Bodies, comprising parents, educators and non-educator members of staff. The School Governing Body is responsible for the school budget; the language policy; discipline; and the appointment and promotion of teaching and administrative staff.

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)

TIMSS provides reliable and timely data on the mathematics and science achievement levels of South African learners in Grade 8, and the data is compared to that of students in 60 other countries.



