DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

STRATEGIC PLAN
2020 - 2024

MARCH 2020

basic education
Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Read to Lead

A Reading Nation is a Leading Nation

NDP
2030

Contents

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List of Acronyms

ANA	Annual National Assessments
ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ASIDI	Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative
BBBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CCL	Centre of Child Law
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CPTD	Continuous Professional Teacher Development
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DCDT	Department of Communications and Digital Technologies
DDD	Data-Driven Districts
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DPME	Department of Planning Monitoring and Evaluations
DSL	Digital Subscriber Line
DTPS	Department of Telecommunications and Postal Services
EEA	Employment of Educators Act
EC	Eastern Cape
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EGRS	Early Grade Reading Study
ELNA	Early Learning National Assessment
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FAL	First Additional Language
FET	Further Education and Training
FS	Free State
GEC	General Education Certificate
GHS	General Household Survey
GITOC	Government Information Technology Officers Council
GP	Gauteng Province
HEDCOM	Heads of Education Departments Committee
HRM	Human Resource Management
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LP	Limpopo Province

LTSM	Learning and Teaching Support Material
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
MP	Mpumalanga Province
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
MTSF	Medium Term Strategic Framework
NC	Northern Cape
NDP	National Development Plan
NECT	National Education Collaboration Trust
NEPA	National Education Policy Act
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NSNP	National School Nutrition Programme
NW	North West
PEDs	Provincial Education Departments
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SAFE	Sanitation Appropriate For Education
SIAS	Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
SASA	South African Schools Act
SA-SAMS	South African School Administration and Management System
SCMP	Second Chance Matric Programme
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SGB	School Governing Body
SITA	State Information Technology Agency
SMT	School Management Team
SoNA	State of the Nation Address
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
SWOT	Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
TBD	To Be Determined
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
WCPSE	Western Cape Provincial School Education
WC	Western Cape
WSE	Whole School Evaluation

Executive Authority Statement

The process of developing the new Strategic Plan 2020–2024 involved unpacking and analysing the National Development Plan (NDP), NDP 5-Year Implementation Plan, government priorities, the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) and the State of the Nation Address (SoNA). The analysis led to the process of contextualising all priorities into education sector priorities.

The Council of Education Ministers has approved the sector priorities to lay a solid foundation for quality education as well as to contribute towards providing permanent solutions to the architecture of the education and training system of our country. During the next five years, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) will work on implementing the following priorities, which are linked to the NDP and the 2019 SoNA to address sector priorities on improved reading and learning outcomes: the ECD function shift; Early Grade Reading; ICTs in Education; Assessments; Violence and Social Cohesion in schools; and the Sanitation Appropriate For Education (SAFE) initiative.

In support of the 2019 SoNA, Early Childhood Development (ECD) and compulsory ECD for all children before they enter Grade 1 are key priorities. The DBE has also developed plans to ensure that pro-poor programmes, such as the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), are strengthened to eliminate the hunger affecting millions of children in our country. The implementation of no-fee schools, wherein learners in Quintile 1–3 schools are exempted from paying school fees is bearing fruit, although the inequalities in outcomes are still considerable. The number of learners in no-fee schools achieving Bachelor passes in 2019 was 96 922, an increase of 14.4% from 2018.

As announced by the President in the SoNA, the sector has been innovative in developing subjects and curriculum content related to coding and robotics which will equip learners with "skills for a changing world"[1]. These efforts will ensure that South African children do not get left behind with regards to acquiring the basic skills required in the digital age.

Foundation Phase reading and, by implication, writing, remains a concern for the sector. Although there has been a notable improvement in the Progress in International Literacy and Reading Study (PIRLS) results, South Africa still performs lower than most African countries. Research shows that interventions should target the Foundation Phase to effect significant change in reading and learning outcomes.

For the past ten years, the NSC pass rate has consistently increased, going up from 60% in 2009 to above 70% pass rates in recent years. The Class of 2019 maintained this trend. The 2019 NSC overall pass rate, with the progressed learners included, stands at a new record of 81.3%, a 3.1% improvement from the 78.2% achieved in 2018. A record 409 906 candidates passed the 2019 NSC examinations.

The Second Chance Matric Programme (SCMP) introduced in 2016, responds to the NDP's injunction that retention rates should be improved and drop-out rates reduced. The programme provides support to learners who are upgrading or who did not meet the pass requirements of the National Senior Certificate Examinations. This is done by providing access to quality resources.

The sixth administration of the democratic South African government brings a new dawn for a trajectory of hope and progress. The focus of this administration is to tackle the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment which remain racially entrenched, through improving economic growth, creating more jobs and consolidating the provision of social services to the people of South Africa. In line with the vision of the sixth administration, the Department has committed to accountability and consequence management for non-performance and non-delivery. Implementation, accountability and service delivery will be our main foci.

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1   President Ramaphosa: "We also have to prepare our young people for the jobs of the future and sector priority on skills for the changing world, the Department is introducing subjects like coding and data analytics at a primary school level." SoNA, 13 February 2020.

The mandate of the DBE as expressed in the National Education Policy Act (NEPA) (Act 27 of 1996) includes policy development, monitoring the implementation of policy and the oversight role in provinces. COVID-19 has affected budgeting and planning of education sector activities in the current year well into the future. The impact of the pandemic will have lasting effect on society and the economy in South Africa and beyond.

COVID-19 has affected the learners, the educators and the schools in our education system, and these effects are not just felt by South Africa. We have had to reprioritise our budgets in the current year, and rearrange the way the schools have traditionally functioned. We have had to balance health concerns around Coronavirus and our concerns around schooling and learning loss especially amongst vulnerable children in our country. This has not been easy but our commitment is to reduce education inequality in our country in the coming years. This has not changed.

We are increasingly prioritising interventions, improvement programmes and policies that target improved quality of learning and teaching, and implementing accountability systems to ensure that quality outcomes are achieved throughout the basic education system.

Mrs AM Motshekga, MP
Executive Authority of the Department of Basic Education

Accounting Officer Statement

The previous strategic plan of the Department focused on MTSF 2014–2019 and sector areas of focus known as 'non-negotiables'. The vision and mission of the Department have been revised to respond to the evolving education environment and emerging priorities. The Basic Education function is a shared responsibility between the National Department of Basic Education and the Provincial Education Departments (PEDs). The DBE is responsible for the development of policies, oversight and monitoring of all activities to ensure quality basic education, as expressed in the NEPA, and the PEDs are responsible for enacting policies and making funding decisions towards quality basic education.

COVID-19 has brought with it the biggest shocks to global education systems since the Second World War. The DBE has reprioritised considerable amounts of its budget towards responding to infection control, school rearrangement, curriculum recovery and emergency space and sanitation requirements. It has become necessary to re-examine our priorities as a sector in our contribution to the reduction of poverty and inequality. The DBE has provided emergency water and sanitation assistance, as well as guidance to provinces on the need for digital oversight and monitoring of activities. Some activities have had to be suspended and some performance expectations amended. We however continue to commit the department to improving learning outcome through the expanded provision of books, quality teaching, infrastructure and support towards early grade reading.

The DBE assumes some of the services delivered such as the provision of workbooks to the PEDs, State-developed textbooks and the building of schools to address the school infrastructure backlog through the Accelerated School Infrastructure Delivery Initiative (ASIDI).

During the previous planning period, the Department doubled its efforts at oversight monitoring of the PEDs to drive the implementation of key curriculum initiatives. Oversight monitoring has been in the form of provincial and district engagements, school readiness visits, exam readiness and other subject and programme-specific monitoring. The third annual Basic Education Sector Lekgotla convened from 22 to 24 January 2019 under the theme 'Equipping Learners with Knowledge and Skills for a Changing World'. The aim is to ensure that our learners and teachers are exposed to the evolving technological world.

The NDP recognises districts as a crucial interface of the basic education sector for identifying best practice, sharing information and providing support to schools. The continued growth in the performance of districts is closely monitored and evaluated by both the provincial and national Basic Education departments. It is encouraging to note that none of the 75 districts attained pass rates lower than 60% in the 2019 NSC examinations.

There have been severe budget cuts over the MTEF even before COVID-19. However, I have confidence in the DBE personnel that new ways of monitoring and oversight can increasingly be introduced to achieve the mandate the department is expected to deliver.

Mr HM Mweli
Accounting Officer of the Department of Basic Education

Official Sign-Off

It is hereby certified that this Strategic Plan:

✓ Was developed by the management of the Department of Basic Education under the guidance of Mrs AM Motshekga, MP;

✓ Takes into account all the relevant policies, legislation and other mandates for which the Department of Basic Education is responsible;

✓ Accurately reflects the impact, outcomes and outputs which the Department of Basic Education will endeavour to achieve over the period 2020–2024.

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Deputy Director-General: Planning and Delivery Oversight Unit and Acting Deputy Director-General: Office of the Director-General

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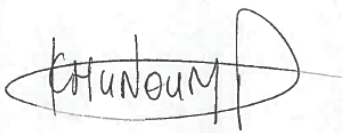
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Deputy Minister of Basic Education

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Part A: Our Mandate

1. Constitutional Mandate

Table 1: Constitutional Mandate

Constitutional mandate	Responsibilities
The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.	The Constitution requires education to be transformed and democratised in accordance with the values of human dignity, equality, human rights and freedom, non-racism and non-sexism. It guarantees basic education for all, with the provision that everyone has the right to basic education, including adult basic education.

2. Legislative and Policy Mandates

2.1 Legislative Mandate

Since 1994, a number of policies have been implemented and legislation promulgated to create a framework for transformation in education and training. A summary of key policies and legislation follows below.

Table 2: Legislative Mandate

Act	Brief description
The National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act 27 of 1996) (NEPA)	The NEPA inscribes into law the policies, the legislative and monitoring responsibilities of the Minister of Education, as well as the formal relations between national and provincial authorities. It lays the foundation for the establishment of the Council of Education Ministers as well as the Heads of Education Departments Committee (HEDCOM) as inter-governmental forums that would collaborate in the development of a new education system. NEPA, therefore, provides for the formulation of national policy in both the general and further education and training bands for, *inter alia*, curriculum, assessment, language and quality assurance. NEPA embodies the principle of co-operative governance, following the determination in Schedule 4 of the Constitution.
South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996), as amended (SASA)	SASA provides for a uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools. It ensures that all learners have the right of access to quality education without discrimination, and makes schooling compulsory for children aged 7 to 15 years.
Employment of Educators Act, 1998 (Act 76 of 1998)	The Act provides for the employment of educators by the state and for the regulation of the conditions of service, discipline, retirement and discharge of educators. This Act and the resultant professional council, the South African Council for Educators (SACE), regulate the teaching corps.
Public Service Act, 1994 (Act 103 of 1994), as amended	This Act provides for the organisation and administration of the public service as well as the regulation of the conditions of employment, terms of office, discipline, retirement and discharge of members of the public service.
The National Qualification Framework Act, 2008 (Act 67 of 2008) (NQF Act). This Act has repealed the South African Qualifications Authority Act (SAQA), 1995 (Act 58 of 1995)	The NQF Act provides for the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The NQF is a comprehensive system, approved by the Minister of Higher Education and Training, for the classification, registration and publication of articulated and quality-assured national qualifications and part-qualifications. The South African NQF is a single, integrated system comprising three coordinated qualifications Sub-Frameworks for General and Further Education and Training, Higher Education, and Trades and Occupations.

2.2 Policy Mandate

In addition to the national education legislative mandates, the following education White Papers and policies guide South African institutions in the delivery of quality education.

Table 3: White Papers and Policies

Policy	Brief description
Education White Paper 1	The fundamental policy framework of the Ministry of Basic Education is stated in the Ministry's first White Paper, *Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa: First Steps to Develop a New System* (February 1995). This document adopted as its point of departure the 1994 education policy framework of the African National Congress. After extensive consultation, negotiations and revision, it was approved by Cabinet and has served as a fundamental reference for subsequent policy and legislative development.
Education White Paper 5	The *Education White Paper on Early Childhood Development* (2000) provides for the expansion and full participation of five-year-olds in pre-school Reception Grade education by 2010, as well as for an improvement in the quality of programmes, curricula and teacher development for 0 to 4-year-olds and 6 to 9-year-olds.
Education White Paper 6	*Education White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education* (2001) describes the intention of the Department of Education to implement inclusive education at all levels of the system by 2020. Such an inclusive system would facilitate the inclusion of vulnerable learners and reduce barriers to learning through targeted support structures and mechanisms that will improve the retention of learners in the education system, particularly learners who are prone to dropping out.
Education White Paper 7	*Education White Paper 7* elaborates on e-education and the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to accelerate the achievement of national education goals; connecting learners and teachers to one another and to professional support services; and, providing platforms for learning. It seeks to connect learners and teachers to better information, ideas and one another via effective combinations of pedagogy and technology in support of educational reform.
Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS)	The purpose of the Policy on SIAS is to provide a policy framework for the standardisation of the procedures to identify, assess and provide programmes for all learners who require additional support to enhance their participation and inclusion in school.
National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy	This policy aims at transforming Early Childhood Development service delivery in South Africa, in particular, to address critical gaps and to ensure the provision of comprehensive, universally available and equitable Early Childhood Development services. The policy covers the period from conception until the year before children enter formal schooling or, in the case of children with developmental difficulties and disabilities, until the year before the calendar year they turn seven, which marks the age of compulsory schooling or special education.

2.3 South Africa's Education Legislation

Three key Acts of Parliament constitute the cornerstones of the legislation governing basic education in South Africa and are discussed below. The focus is on aspects of the legislation which may require change or special emphasis in the light of current policy priorities, for instance those expressed in the National Development Plan (NDP).

Notices and regulations referred to elsewhere in the Strategic Plan are listed below their parent Act. Though legislators do not participate directly in the formulation of these policies, they may do so indirectly through amendments to the Acts and through consultations in, for instance, Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Basic Education.

National Education Policy Act of 1996 (NEPA)

This Act elaborates on the concurrent responsibilities of the national and provincial levels, in line with the Constitution. Section 8 of the Act points to an important strategic goal, that of monitoring the sector as a whole, which has arguably not been realised as fully as it should have been over the past two decades:

The Minister shall direct that the standards of education provision, delivery and performance throughout the Republic be monitored and evaluated by the Department annually or at other specified intervals, with the objective of assessing progress in complying with the provisions of the Constitution and with national education policy.

The Department shall undertake the monitoring and evaluation contemplated by analysis of data gathered by means of education management information systems.

The Department shall fulfil its responsibilities with a view to enhancing professional capacities in monitoring and evaluation throughout the national education system.

The original NEPA of 1996 was amended through Amendment Acts in 1997, 1999, 2007 and 2011. The quoted extracts from section 8 above have remained unchanged since 1996.

The following were promulgated in terms of the NEPA:

- Notice 2432 of 1998: Admission policy for ordinary public schools.

- Regulation 1718 of 1998: Assessment policy in the General Education and Training band, Grades R to 9 and ABET.

- Notice 710 of 2002: National policy regarding General Education and Training programmes: Approval of the Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R–9 (schools).

- Notice 306 of 2008: Foundations for Learning campaign: 2008–2011[2].

- Notice 722 of 2011: Approval of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R–12 as national education policy.

- Notice 1115 of 2012: Draft amendment policy pertaining to the National Curriculum Statement Grade R–12 as set out in the policy document, *National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R–12.*

- Notice 323 of 2016: Policy on the South African standard for principals.

South African Schools Act of 1996 (SASA)

This Act establishes the responsibilities and rights of schools, in particular those of the school governing body and the school principal. It also describes the duty of parents to send children to schools from the year the child turns seven to the year the child turns fifteen, the duty of the relevant provincial Member of the Executive Council (MEC) to provide schools in communities, and the duty of the national Minister to promulgate equitable school funding norms. The rights of the school and parents with respect to the charging of school fees and rules relating to the management of the 'school fund' are described. The Act emphasises strongly the nature of post-apartheid schooling, which should be free from discrimination and corporal punishment.

The original SASA of 1996 was amended through Amendment Acts in 1997, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2005, 2007 and 2011.

The 2007 additions to the Act are particularly significant in terms of the current focus on improving learning outcomes in schools. Principals are required to produce an 'annual report', which must include information on academic performance relative to nationally promulgated minimum standards. They should also produce an annual 'academic performance improvement plan', which the PED will approve or return to the school with recommended changes. Notwithstanding the good intentions behind these requirements, there are practical difficulties as discussed in section 7. The 2007 amendments moreover imply that where a school principal faces conflicting instructions or requests from the school governing body and the education department, the requirement of the department prevails.

The following were promulgated in terms of the SASA:

- Notice 869 of 2006: Amended National Norms and Standards for School Funding.

- Notice 723 of 2011: Determination of minimum outcomes and standards and a national process and procedures for the assessment of learner achievement as stipulated in the National Curriculum Statement Grades R–12.

- Notice 1116 of 2012: Determination of minimum outcomes and standards and a national process and procedures for the assessment of learner achievement as stipulated in the National Curriculum Statement Grades R–12 (Identically titled, Notice 723 and Notice 1116 differ in content).

- Notice 1495 of 2016: Approval of an amendment to the regulations pertaining to the National Curriculum Statement Grades R–12.

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2   This Notice is, unusually, not explicitly issued in terms of any Act, though it seems linked to the NEPA.

Employment of Educators Act of 1998 (EEA)

This Act establishes the national Minister's right and duty to determine national salary scales, and the provincial MEC's duty to declare a set of educator posts or 'post establishment' per school, and to allow for posts to be filled with suitably qualified educators. The PED is the employer of publicly paid educators, although School Governing Bodies should make recommendations to the PED regarding who to appoint. Where educator posts move between schools due to the growth or shrinkage of school enrolments, school governing bodies may be forced to select new appointees from a list that includes only 'excess' educators from other schools.

The original EEA was amended through Amendment Acts in 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2005 and 2011.

A Bill was drafted in 2014 focusing on reducing the powers of the School Governing Body and strengthening those of the employer (the PED) to appoint school principals, deputy principals and schools-based heads of department. The proposed amendment was largely aimed at introducing more professional criteria into the process whereby school managers were appointed.

The following was promulgated in terms of the EEA:

- Notice 1451 of 2002: Amendment of regulations for the distribution of educator posts to schools in a Provincial Department of Education.

There are important policies relating to the employment of educators which are not directly linked to the EEA. These are mainly resolutions of the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) dealing with matters such as the rights of educators, school governing bodies and the employer when it comes to the moving of educators across schools.

Other Acts

Other Acts impacting on the basic education sector include the Children's Act of 2005, which includes responsibilities of schools to protect children; the National Qualifications Framework Act of 2008, which establishes the basic framework within which the school curriculum operates; and the Electronic Communications Act of 2005, which establishes the 'e-rate', a cheaper internet rate that schools should enjoy.

3. Institutional Policies and Strategies over the Five-Year Planning Period

Several policy documents, Acts of Parliament, related notices and regulations and policy statements by the executive and ministerial levels of government provide the overall strategic direction that informed the genesis of the current five-year strategic plan of the DBE. The five key contributing sources with regard to strategic planning are discussed below:

- The **National Development Plan** (NDP), released in 2012 and titled *National Development Plan 2030: Our future - make it work*.

- The **five-year plan of government,** the *Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2019-2024*. Although the MTSF had not yet been finalised when the Strategic Plan 2020–2024 was drafted, the DBE was closely involved in its formulation and could reflect on it.

- The **five-year basic education sector plan**, titled *Action Plan to 2024: Towards the realisation of Schooling 2030.* This plan was also not finalised when the Strategic Plan was being drawn up but informs the Plan.

- Recent **budget speeches of the Minister of Basic Education**.

- **State of the Nation Address (SoNA)** by the President. The recent addresses by the President, read along with the Minister's budget speeches, communicate the education resolutions of the governing party to the country and thus are critical inputs to strategy.

It is noted that international resolutions regarding basic education, including those South Africa agreed to within the ambit of the United Nations, are relevant to the Strategic Plan but, as they are reflected in the documents listed above, it is not necessary to discuss them separately here.

3.1 The National Development Plan

The NDP is the blueprint for tackling South Africa's challenges and serves as a long-term vision and plan for the country. Chapter 9 of the NDP, titled 'Improving education, training and innovation', deals with the entire education system from ECD to advanced post-school studies. Other parts of the plan, in particular Chapter 13, titled 'Building a capable and developmental state' and Chapter 14, 'Fighting corruption', are relevant for the government as a whole and for the DBE's strategic plan.

Chapter 9 stresses the importance of learners, especially the historically disadvantaged, improving skills in key subjects such as languages and Mathematics, starting from the earliest grades. It also emphasises the importance of monitoring progress in this area, in part through participation in rigorous international assessment programmes such as the TIMSS[3].

The NDP sees better outcomes in Grade 12, driven by improvements in lower grades, as crucial for national development. It is envisaged that by 2030, 80% to 90% of youths should complete twelve years of education, either in a school or a college. The aim to more than double the number of students entering university for some form of study by 2030, with a special emphasis on expanding participation in scarce skills areas such as engineering and financial management, provides a sense of the quantitative and qualitative improvements which should occur in Grade 12 outcomes.

The importance of improving the quality of pre-Grade 1 education is emphasised, including the provision of better public services to cater for the physical, emotional and cognitive development of children before they reach Grade 1. Two years of compulsory pre-schooling are envisaged, although the NDP is silent on the relative roles of schools and pre-schools in the required expansion. These goals are of special relevance for the DBE's strategic planning, given that the NDP shifts key ECD responsibilities from the social development sector to the basic education sector. With the expansion of compulsory pre-schooling, the problem of malnutrition and stunting said to affect one-fifth of children, becomes directly relevant to the DBE's nutrition programme as it did in the introduction of Grade R.

In terms of building human capacity, the NDP emphasises innovative in-service training for teachers which makes use of modern technologies; incentive systems and career pathways that better motivate teachers; changes to the school principal appointment procedures to ensure the right educators occupy these posts; innovative ways of collaborating with teacher unions; and the empowerment of school principals as key agents of change in the system. The NDP also underlines physical infrastructure development and the rolling out of broadband to all schools.

The NDP also refers to a 'results-oriented mutual accountability' system. wherein the Department, particularly the district offices, should be accountable to schools and schools should be more accountable to the administration, including as far as academic outcomes are concerned. The latter requires careful use of assessment results. While the NDP was formulated before the halting of the Annual National Assessments (ANA) in 2015, and hence it pays much attention to the ANA, there remains the important question of how the gap left by the ANA is to be filled. Moreover, the NDP envisages better accountability between schools and communities and between schools and parents, including a clearer flow of information to parents of how individual learners and the school perform academically.

Given the responsibilities of the DBE in terms of the NEPA, the NDP's discussion of priorities and communication between stakeholders not only clearly implies a requirement for critically important policy work led by the DBE, but a need for complex and politically sensitive systems development where the DBE has a large role to play.

3.2 The Five-Year Plan of Government

The 2019–2024 MTSF provides a framework for other national, provincial and local government plans. It provides guidance on what NDP priorities are relevant in the medium term and how progress in their delivery should be monitored. The plan puts forward around 25 indicators of progress for ECD and basic education, of which roughly half are statistical and half deal with the development of policies and systems.

In support of the NDP's strong focus on improving the quality of schooling, the MTSF foregrounds early grade reading as a critical enabler for all other learning. The MTSF is clear that the shift of ECD services to the basic education sector should come with a clearer national policy framework for pre-schools, and better monitoring systems, including systems to gauge the school-readiness of children when they enter Grade 1. These changes have major implications for the work of the DBE in the coming years.

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3   Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study.

The MTSF elaborates on certain aspects of the NDP's support and accountability goals. Better support to Foundation Phase teachers is needed, some of it in the form of individualised coaching, drawing from the lessons of the DBE's Early Grade Reading Study (EGRS) project begun in 2015. Foundation Phase classes should all have access to relevant graded readers and Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) tools. EGRA is now used in many countries. A key challenge is to ensure that all 11 official languages are catered for in the EGRA toolkit. Strengthening school-level professional learning communities (PLCs) to advance teacher capacity also receives attention.

The MTSF recognises the importance of the new sample-based Systemic Evaluation, a new national assessment to track progress in languages and Mathematics in Grades 3, 6 and 9. It is also recognised that workable learning metrics, using the latest psychometric innovations, will have to be developed to gauge progress. This is, in many ways, more appropriate than the NDP's focus on a 50% mark threshold.

An important MTSF priority not appearing in the NDP is the introduction of a General Education Certificate (GEC) at the end of Grade 9. In part, this is needed to facilitate flows between schools and TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) colleges. Again, this points to a requirement for critical policy and systems work by the DBE.

The Grade 12 targets in the MTSF are largely aimed at facilitating anticipated growth in the outputs of universities. The number of learners obtaining a Bachelor's pass in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) should rise to 190 000 by 2024, and those achieving at least a 60% mark in Mathematics should rise to 35 000, with a similar target for Physical Science. Moreover, the MTSF envisages more equitable access to vocationally-oriented subjects in Grades 10 to 12, particularly computing and engineering subjects.

The importance of introducing subjects such as Coding and Robotics below Grade 10 to prepare children for the 21st century is acknowledged in the MTSF as is the need for sufficient curriculum stability to ensure that the recent trajectory of improvements in key subjects such as languages and Mathematics continues.

Finally, the MTSF emphasises more schools meeting minimum infrastructure standards, and in particular, standards relating to decent sanitation.

3.3 The Basic Education Sector Plan

The *Action Plan to 2024: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2030* is the basic education sector plan. The Action Plan is based on 27 national goals that are intended to improve basic education across all levels. Thirteen of these goals are output goals, dealing with better school results and better enrolment of learners in schools. The remaining 14 goals deal with what must happen for the output goals to be realised.

The Action Plan also clarifies issues relating to the steady and relatively good improvement, off a low base, in the quality trends seen in South Africa's scores in the international testing systems. Five likely contributing factors are identified: clearer curriculum guides for teachers; better access by learners to high-quality books; better assessment practices; improved subject knowledge among newly graduated teachers; and better access to both Grade R and pre-school below Grade R. While preserving these effects is emphasised in the Action Plan, it emphasises that continued quality improvements are not guaranteed. Part of what is needed to sustain the momentum is innovation in the key areas of the teaching of early grade reading, assessments and e-Education.

3.4 Recent Budget Speeches of the Minister of Basic Education

The 2018 budget speech was made in the context of increasing budget constraints in government and hence special attention was devoted to improving financial monitoring, costing and budgeting. The DBE has a vital role to play, for instance, in assisting PEDs making difficult budget choices and managing the wage bill. The Minister mentioned three major spending areas of the DBE – the NSNP, the Funza Lushaka bursary scheme for new teachers and national Workbooks – which were protected from cuts in real terms, showing that these interventions remain levers through which the DBE directly drives progress in the system and advances the aims of the NDP.

In the context of budget constraints and demographic shifts which have exacerbated the problem of large classes at the primary level, the Minister's 2018 announcement that grade repetition in the Foundation Phase should be eliminated is significant. While interventions focusing on early grade reading present opportunities to reduce class sizes, changes to the rules governing promotion and repetition would need to be carefully planned so that all the consequences, including those relating to public perceptions, are fully understood.

The 2018 budget speech also paid considerable attention to the importance of strengthening the DBE's monitoring systems in all areas, including school infrastructure development.

The Minister's 2019 budget speech referred to the need for greater coherence with respect to early grade reading interventions and proposed that the Primary School Reading Improvement Programme should serve as an umbrella structure. The 2019 speech also indicated that piloting of the Grade 9 GEC would begin in 2020; new National Schools of Specialisation, also referred to as Focus Schools, would be established to facilitate specialisation and the realisation of the Three-Stream Curriculum Model consisting of the academic, technical-vocational and technical-occupational streams; and plans to pilot Coding and Robotics in Grades 1 to 3 and 7 in 2020.

All these initiatives clearly require detailed strategic planning work on the part of the DBE in relation to policy, budget reprioritisation and consultation with relevant stakeholders inside and outside government.

3.5 State of the Nation Address by the President

President Ramaphosa's 2018 State of the Nation Address (SoNA) reaffirmed Government's commitment to improving the quality of schooling and especially mentioned the Funza Lushaka bursary programme.

In 2019, the President delivered two SoNAs, one in February and one in June. Both reiterated Government's commitment to improving reading in the Foundation Phase. The February SoNA refers to the need for widespread access to a 'dedicated package of reading resources, expert reading coaches and lesson plans' and made a commitment to e-Education, to 'provide every school child in South Africa with digital workbooks and textbooks on a tablet device' within six years. The June SoNA mentioned the goal that in 10 years, 'every 10-year-old will be able to read for meaning'. It included a commitment to the introduction of coding and data analytics at the primary level and the conversion of more ordinary schools to technical high schools.

4. Relevant Court Rulings

4.1 KENMONT SCHOOL AND ANOTHER V DEVERAJH MOODLEY AND OTHERS

The Constitutional Court handed down judgement in October 2019 judgement in an application for confirmation of an order by the High Court of South Africa, KwaZulu-Natal Local Division, Durban, declaring section 58A(4) of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (Schools Act) constitutionally invalid. Kenmont School and the Kenmont School Governing Body (school respondents) applied for leave to appeal against the judgement of the High Court.

The applicant, Mr Deverajh Moodley, successfully challenged the admission policy of Kenmont School in the High Court which ordered the school respondents to pay his legal costs. The school respondents took the matter on appeal to the Supreme Court of Appeal, which dismissed the appeal and, like the High Court, made a costs order in favour of the applicant.

The applicant's taxed bill of costs amounted close to R600 000, excluding interest. After unsuccessfully seeking satisfaction of his costs award from the school respondents, the applicant obtained a warrant of execution against the school and attached the school's bank account as well as a motor vehicle belonging to the school. The school respondents approached the High Court, on an urgent basis, seeking a court order setting aside the warrant of execution and relied on section 58A(4) of the Schools Act, which protects the assets of public schools from attachment as a result of any legal action taken against the school. The applicant filed a counter-application seeking, among others, an order declaring section 58A(4) of the Schools Act unconstitutional. The High Court granted the applicant's counter-application and declared the section constitutionally invalid.

The Applicant then approached the Constitutional Court for confirmation of the declaration of invalidity. The Head of Department, Department of Education, KwaZulu-Natal, the MEC for Education, the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services and the Minister of Basic Education (government respondents), the third to sixth respondents, argued that it was misconceived to contend that the applicant's costs must be paid by the State as no costs order was awarded against the State. They further submitted that the school respondents were cautioned against engaging in the litigation. The government respondents took the view that section 58A(4) ought not to be declared constitutionally invalid.

In a unanimous judgement penned by Justice Madlanga, the Constitutional Court declined to confirm the High Court's declaration of constitutional invalidity. The Court held that although section 58A(4) limits the rights to equality and dignity, in light of the right that it seeks to protect – the right to basic education – the limitation is reasonable and justifiable under section 36(1) of

the Constitution. It concluded that the purpose of the limitation brought about by the prohibition in section 58A(4) is to avoid any adverse effects that could be caused by the attachment of school assets, thereby protecting the right to basic education and ensuring that the children's best interests are afforded paramount importance. The limitation is therefore well-tailored to its purpose and there are no less restrictive means to achieve this purpose.

With regard to the fate of the Applicant's costs awards, the Court held that despite its prohibition of the attachment of assets of a public school, section 58A(4) does not outlaw the grant of orders sounding in money, including costs orders, against public schools.

The Court found that implicit in a public school's legal capacity to sue and be sued in its own name is the power to pay the opposing side's costs if so ordered by a court. Public schools cannot be empowered to sue and be sued, but be immune to adverse costs orders. In terms of section 37(6)(c) of the Schools Act, the governing body of a public school is empowered to pay legal costs. The Court, therefore, concluded that the Kenmont School Governing Body had the statutory mandate to settle the applicant's bills of costs. It further ordered that the members of the Kenmont School Governing Body must, individually or collectively, take the necessary steps to ensure that the payment does take place.

4.2 CENTRE FOR CHILD LAW V MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION AND OTHERS

The Applicants in this matter are the Centre for Child Law (CCL) and the School Governing Body of Phakamisa High School. The Respondents are the Minister of Basic Education, MEC for Education Eastern Cape and Superintendent General of the Eastern Cape Department of Education.

The Applicants applied for, amongst others, the following orders:

i.   That a circular issued by the Eastern Cape Education Department be set aside. The circular indicated that norms and standards, post provisioning allocation and National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) transfers to schools in the Eastern Cape will be based only on learner numbers where valid identity, permit or passport numbers have been captured in the South African School Administration Management System (SASAMS);

ii.   Directing that no learner may be excluded from a public school on the basis that he or she does not have an identity, permit or passport number.

iii.   Directing the Respondents and all public schools to admit a learner who does not have a South African identity number, passport or permit number, provided that such learner provides valid proof of identity and where such proof is not obtainable, a sworn statement or an affidavit in a format prescribed by the Respondents that may be acceptable.

This matter was heard in court on 18 September 2019. Judgement was delivered on 12 December 2019

(iv)   The court amongst others made the following orders:

(a)   Clauses 15 and 21 of the admission policy were declared to be inconsistent with the constitution and therefore invalid;

(b)   Clause 15 provides that when a parent applies to an ordinary public school for admission of a learner the parent must present an official birth certificate of the learner. The learner will be conditionally admitted of the parent is unable to present such birth certificate and the parent must finalise the admission of the learner within three months of the conditional admission of the learner;

(c)   Eastern Cape Education Department Circular 6 of 2016, dated 17 March 2016, was declared to be inconsistent with the Constitution and therefore invalid and was set aside. This circular deals with the payment of Norms and Standards funding, School Nutrition and post provisioning to public schools and provides that payment of such funding will be based on learners with valid identity numbers on the SASAMS system;

(d)   The First to Third Respondents are directed to admit all children not in possession of an official birth certificate and where a learner cannot provide an official birth certificate the principal of the relevant school is directed to accept alternative proof of identity such as an affidavit or a sworn statement deposed to by the parent, care giver or guardian of the learner wherein the learner is fully identified;

(e)   Sections 39 and 42 of the Immigration Act 13 of 2002 do not prohibit the admission of illegal foreign children into schools and do not prohibit the provision of basic education to illegal foreign children.

(f)   The First, Second and Third Respondents are interdicted and restrained from, in any manner whatsoever, removing or excluding from schools, children, including illegal foreign children, already admitted, purely by reason of the fact that the children have no identity document number, permit or passport, or have not produced any identification documents.

4.3   ROSINA KOMAPE V MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION AND OTHERS

The case is about the tragic death of a grade R learner, Michael Komape, who drowned when he fell into a pit latrine toilet at his school which is located in the province of Limpopo. Michael's parents and siblings (the Plaintiffs), assisted by Section 27, instituted action proceedings in the High Court of Limpopo for damages arising from the death of Michael Komape.

The Plaintiffs case consisted of five claims (Claims A-E). Claim A was for emotional trauma and shock that each of the family members had experienced. Claim B was for the grief suffered by the Plaintiffs as immediate family members and in the alternative to claim B constitutional damages based on a breach of their constitutional rights as set out in sections 9(2) and (3),10, 24, 28 and 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (the Constitution). Claim C was for past and future medical expenses as a result of their impaired mental health suffered because of the death of Micheal Komape. Claim D was for funeral expenses and Claim E was for loss of earnings in respect of the first Plaintiff. In addition the Plaintiffs also sought a declaratory order that the Defendants have breached their constitutional obligations in respect of the rights contained in sections 9, 10, 11, 24, 27, 28 and 29 of the Constitution. Claims C, D and E were settled during the trial for R135,372.65.

The case was heard in the High Court of Limpopo on several dates spanning from 13 to 17 November 2017 and again on 20, 23, 27-28 November 2017 and 1-2 February 2018. Judgement was delivered on 23 April 2018.The Plaintiffs claim was dismissed in respect of claims A and B. In respect to the alternative to claim B, a structural interdict was granted by the court that the Defendants file a plan on affidavit on how they will eradicate pit latrine toilets in the province. The plan had to be filed on or before the 31 July 2018. In respect to claim C the court granted an amount of R 6 000 each to the minor children Maria and Enoch Komape for future treatment.

The Plaintiffs applied for leave to appeal. The application was dismissed. The Plaintiffs filed a petition with the Supreme Court of Appeal to request the court to grant them leave to appeal. The Supreme Court of Appeal granted leave to appeal. The matter was argued in the Supreme Court of Appeal on 2 September 2019.

The Supreme Court of Appeal overturned the High Court decision and ordered the Defendants to pay the first and second Plaintiffs in respect of   emotional shock and grief an amount of R350 000 each and the third and fourth Plaintiffs an amount of R200 000 each and R100 000 each for the minor children Maria, Onica and Moses Komape.The judgement amounts were paid by the Limpopo Education Department.

Pending Cases

4.4   SADTU AND OTHERS V MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION AND OTHERS

The Applicants in this matter is SADTU. The Respondents are the MEC for Education WC, National Minister of Basic Education, Speaker of the Provincial Legislature: WC Province, the Premier of the Western Cape, and the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development.

SADTU brought an application that the Western Cape Provincial School Education Amendment Act, 2018 (WCPSEA Act) be declared unconstitutional and amongst others raised the following issues:

i.   declaring sections 9A,11A,11B,11C,11D,11E,11F,11G,11H, of the Western Cape Provincial School Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 12 of 1997) (WCPSE Act), as amended by the Western Cape Provincial School Education Amendment Act, 2018 (Act No. 4 of 2018), to be inconsistent with the Constitution and invalid to the extent that they provide for the monitoring and support of curriculum delivery and the establishment of a Schools Evaluation Authority;

ii.   declaring sections 12C and 12D of the WCPSE Act as amended by the WCPSEA Act to be inconsistent with the Constitution and invalid to the extent that they provide for the establishment of Collaboration and Donor-Funded Public Schools;

iii.   declaring section 12E of the WCPSE Act as amended by the WCPSEA Act to be inconsistent with the Constitution and invalid to the extent that it provides for the establishment of intervention facilities;

iv.   declaring section 45B of the WCPSE Act as amended by the WCPSEA Act to be inconsistent with the Constitution and invalid

to the extent that it provides for an exception to the prohibition of alcoholic liquor on school premises or during school activities; and

v.   suspending the declaration of the constitutional invalidity for 12 months in order for the third Respondent to remedy the defect in accordance with the Court's judgement in the matter.

4.5 PESTALOZZI TRUST AND OTHERS V MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION AND OTHERS

The Applicant in this matter is the Pestalozzi Trust. The Respondents are the Minister of Basic Education and the Director-General Basic Education.

The Applicant applied for an order that the Home Education Policy of the Department be set aside. The Applicant in their court application raised amongst others a number of procedural and substantive grounds for challenging the policy. The procedural issues include the following:

vi.   The Department did not meaningfully consult with stakeholders on the policy.

vii.   The Department used the incorrect empowering provision in declaring the policy and did not fully comply with the provisions of the National Education Policy Act when the policy was declared.

The Applicant also raised a number of substantive issues with regard to certain clauses of the policy. In this regard the Applicant alleged that these provisions are vague, unworkable, irrational and in some instances unconstitutional.

Part B: Our Strategic Focus

5.   Vision

To contribute to a South Africa in which all our people will have access to lifelong learning, education and training opportunities, which will, in turn, contribute towards improving the quality of life and building a peaceful, prosperous and democratic South Africa.

6.   Mission

To provide leadership in the establishment of a South African schooling system for the 21st century.

7.   Aim

To provide basic education for all and lead the establishment and development of a South African schooling system for the 21st century.

8.   Values

The Department of Basic Education adheres to the following values:

Children
Placing the interests of our children first.

People
Upholding the Constitution, being accountable to the Minister, the Government and the people of South Africa.

Excellence
Maintaining high standards of performance and professionalism by aiming for excellence in everything we do, including being fair, ethical and trustworthy in all that we do.

Teamwork
Co-operating with one another and with our partners in education in an open and supportive way to achieve shared goals.

Learning
Creating a learning organisation in which staff members seek and share knowledge and information while committing themselves to personal growth.

Innovation
Striving to address the training needs for high-quality service and seeking ways to achieve our goals.

9.   Situational Analysis

The analysis of the external and internal environment should be read with section 3 in Part A, as the policies, strategies and plans described generally affect both the external and internal environment relevant to basic education.

9.1 Situational Analysis: External Environment

9.1.1 Introduction

This section begins by considering the longer term-historical context which remains an important backdrop for planning going forward. A Theory of Change for how educational improvements will happen is presented. This serves to highlight a number of critical areas to focus on during planning. Thereafter, a situational analysis of the various phases of schooling is provided: Early Childhood Development, the Foundation Phase, the Intermediate and Senior Phases, and the Further Education and Training Phase. The themes of redress, access, quality, equity, inclusivity and efficiency are used to focus the discussion of each phase. Key areas of innovation are also considered. Lessons from research and evaluations are incorporated throughout the analysis throughout.

Since March 2020, majority of countries in the world have been under lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Important note on the COVID-19 pandemic

The five-year plan was formulated before the COVID-19 pandemic. By May 2020, the reality of the enormous costs of the pandemic for society, the economy, and education were clear. The effects of the pandemic will remain for years. At the same time, the pandemic provided **an opportunity for South Africans to prove their resilience** and ingenuity at a time when the nation faced a common enemy.

The **pandemic does not remove any of the priorities** outlined in the plan. However, it delays the point at which certain milestones can be reached, for budgetary and other reasons. Moreover, the pandemic reshapes to some extent existing priorities.

The overall goal of the various actors in the basic education sector must remain to improve the quality of learning outcomes, and reduce educational inequalities. We should not lose sight of this. South Africa has been on an upward trajectory in terms of the skills acquired by learners for around two decades. This has profound and positive implications for South Africa's future. **The momentum of this improvement cannot be lost** as a result of the pandemic.

In fact, we can think of illiteracy among our primary school learners almost in the way we have learnt to think about the coronavirus. It is a scourge which must be eliminated, by **identifying 'hotspots' where children are not learning as they should**, and intervening to ensure that people's futures are not compromised.

COVID-19 is unlikely to disappear quickly, and beyond that there is a high likelihood that we could be struck by another pandemic. In future, the basic education system should be better prepared for this risk. **Good nutrition and hygiene are the backbone of effective learning**, especially for younger learners. The National School Nutrition Programme needs to be better prepared to ensure that food continues to be available to learners from poor households, even during school closures. Understanding pandemics, and basic hygiene needs to feature more strongly in the Life Orientation curriculum. There need to be emergency plans which school managers are familiar with, and which can be put into effect at relatively short notice. School infrastructure needs to support hygiene. Here an uninterrupted supply of water, which has not been a reality for all schools, needs to be prioritised.

Lastly, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the fore the weakness of **Information and Communication Technologies** (ICTs) infrastructure in many schools, and gaps with regard to digital content for learners and educators. South Africa is behind many similar countries in this regard. This gap must be closed. Learners, particularly those at the secondary level facing important national examinations, should become more accustomed to using online resources. If teachers are accustomed to using these resources, it becomes easier for this to be realised among learners. Technology innovation is important whether we are faced with a health crisis or not.

9.1.2   Historical Context

The Apartheid legacy of division by race and language is still strong and is reinforced by economic inequalities in the democratic era. The schooling system has a critical role to play in healing the divisions of the past, fostering a sense of South African nationhood and, above all, providing education opportunities that will break down the deep inequalities that pervade South African society.

It is increasingly being recognised that part of the current challenge relates to what has been referred to as the work of decolonising education. Decolonising the system as a whole, and the curriculum in particular, will involve understanding the harm done to nationhood and the psychology of both the oppressed and the oppressors. This understanding should guide a process of healing that affirms equality, undoes the marginalisation of African culture and privileging of values brought about by colonisation and apartheid, and moves beyond the confines of a Eurocentric world view and curriculum.

Apartheid education was characterised not only by the racial segregation of learners, but also segregated education for learners with disabilities and, for the majority of black learners with disabilities, education only up to the equivalent of Grade 7. Segregated education also characterised the training of teachers, where different 'racial' groups of teachers experienced training that was different in terms of its resourcing, quality and ideological thrust. Individual teachers, teacher unions, universities, NGOs and governments have done much work over the years to erode the apartheid teacher training legacy through in-service training programmes and the promotion of common values. Yet this apartheid legacy persists and will need to be considered in the design of in-service training and in the way training programmes target teachers for many years to come.

Per learner spending by the state under apartheid was highly unequal and differentiated by race and ethnicity. Even towards the end of apartheid, in 1994, spending on every white learner was still about 4,5 times higher than on a black African learner. Public spending per learner was only fully equalised around 2000. However, the legacy of inequality with respect to many years of unequal expenditure remains, both as far as backlogs in physical capital (such as school buildings) and human capital (largely due to the unequal teacher training legacy mentioned above) are concerned. Allowing school fees in public schools has often been referred to as the cost of maintaining an inclusive public school system serving a broad range of South African society. Indeed, by developing country standards, the size of South Africa's independent school sector is small. However, allowing the charging of fees in public schools has advantaged the middle class and reinforced still large inequalities in school resources reflected within the public school system, as opposed to between the public and private school systems, as in many developing countries. These historical factors make South Africa's school funding system complex and, in many ways, unique. A key challenge will continue to be improving equality within a public school system that operates within a highly unequal society. Reducing inequality in basic education, especially with respect to the skills learners leave school with, is fundamental to bringing about a more equal society. A priority is also to provide inclusive education that enables everyone to participate effectively in a free society.

The legacy of land dispossession and forced resettlement has shaped the human geography of South Africa and influenced the location of schools. Schools in former 'homelands' account for just under half of all public school enrolments and face a particular form of poverty characterised by the inaccessibility of public facilities and jobs. To a large degree, Quintiles 1 to 3 of the five socio-economic quintiles cover the schools in question, meaning that many of the quintile-specific interventions by government are attempts to address the specific needs of rural schools.

The legacy of colonialism persists through the dominance of colonial languages. In South Africa, English, though only spoken by about 4% of public school learners as a home language[4], is the predominant language of the textbooks used in classrooms, as well as in the system's policy documents. There is compelling research indicating that young children learn best if, during the first few years of their schooling, key concepts, especially literacy and reading skills, are taught in their home language. But beyond these pedagogical considerations, promoting all languages in the education system is a matter of national pride and of liberation.

Finally, South Africa has inherited a tradition of associating success (and value) in education with a university qualification. While university studies are obviously valuable, alternative educational pathways have not received the focus they deserve. In particular, vocational training options within schools and beyond basic education were not sufficiently available and, when available, were undervalued by many teachers and parents. This is partly a symptom of the history of unequal access to both university and vocational training under apartheid and the legacy of race-based job reservation. Today, in the National Senior Certificate examinations, white learners are six times as likely as black African learners to take one or more of the four key technical subjects[5]. Going forward, there is a need to provide learners with better access to vocationally-oriented subjects and for schools to play a more proactive role in alerting the youth to new training and job opportunities so as to move away from the notion of university studies as the sole post-school study option.

9.1.3   Our Education Theory of Change

In developing our plans, our assumptions of improvement in learning outcomes over the last 2 decades have been disrupted as a result of COVID-19. However, our commitment to quality education and to reducing inequality through schools remains the same. Therefore, this theory of change below is provided. Schools safety, health and nutrition are now more important than ever before. Effective teaching and maintaining Early Childhood Development participation and learning outcomes are extremely important to overcome the effects of COVID-19 in our sector and in our county. We know that the social and economic impact of the pandemic will affect communities, teachers, learners and parents alike. We have to improve learners opportunities in life and in the future in spite of COVID-19

Developing a theory of change can be an extremely detailed and complex process, even when only looking at a single programme or policy. Therefore, a theory of change for the entire basic education system will inevitably be a simplification of reality, and also a useful tool to understand and explain important processes that facilitate educational change. The diagram below depicts the DBE's understanding of how better quality schooling will be brought about.

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4   Analysis of 2016 Community Survey microdata.
5   Engineering Graphics and Design, Civil Technology, Electrical Technology, Mechanical Technology.

Figure 1: Theory of Change

A THEORY OF CHANGE FOR QUALITY BASIC EDUCATION

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

SOCIAL PROTECTION
Includes nutrition and health interventions, school safety.

PARENTS AND SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

LEARNERS
Arranged in classes of particular sizes, and with a range of individual special needs.

INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION (ITE)
Also known as 'pre-service training'.

LEARNING AND TEACHING SUPPORT MATERIALS (LTSMs)
With 'hardware' (e.g. book or tablet) and 'software' (content) elements.

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TEACHER DEVELOPMENT (CPTD)
Also known as 'in-service training'.

TEACHER
With his or her subject knowledge, linguistic background, teaching skills, professional identity, level of job satisfaction, view of society.

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY STATEMENT (CAPS)
Includes supplementary policies and guidance relating to teaching methods, assessment tools, and grade promotion.

SYSTEM OF TEACHER DEPLOYMENT
Includes incentives to teach in disadvantaged schools.

LANGUAGE POLICY

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE
Includes career pathways.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND SMT

SCHOOL-SPECIFIC POLICIES AND ETHOS

PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT AUTHORITIES

SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK
Draws from School Improvement Plans, annual reports, school report cards, SA-SAMS, Matric examinations, IQMS, WSE.

NATIONAL STRATEGY
Includes this 'theory of change', effective plans and reliable reports, maintenance of a lively and constructive policy discourse, alignment with international commitments.

The theory of change is about improving learning in a manner that improves the learner's opportunities in life through the acquisition of foundational language and numeracy competencies, and beyond that, specific subject knowledge and life skills.

Figure 1 is deliberately a simplification of what is clearly a far more complex system. The following points will assist in understanding some of the complexities either simplified or omitted from the diagram.

Direct change factors

- School infrastructure was excluded, partly because the evidence on the impact of specific classroom designs on learning is mixed and partly because basic elements of school infrastructure such as decent toilets have relevance beyond the matter of effective learning, as they also involve the fulfilment of basic human rights.

- Early Childhood Development (ECD) is intentionally at the top of the diagram, reflecting increasing evidence of the

importance of health and psychosocial interventions during a child's earliest years for subsequent learning in school. For example, at the most basic level, around one-fifth of children have suffered stunting due to poor nutrition, which could result in lasting impairments in the ability to learn.

- Once in school, a learner's chances of learning are strongly influenced by three key classroom factors: the capabilities of the teacher, the availability of Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) and class size. Moreover, particularly for learners from poorer households, a nutritional meal provided by the school plays a major role in learning ability.

- Initial Teacher Education (ITE) is meant to provide teachers with the professional grounding needed for effective teaching. There is some evidence to suggest that this element of the system has improved in the last two decades. However, around two-thirds of teachers currently working in public schools received their initial professional training before the reforms of the early 2000s, and it is only around 2038 that we expect all teachers to have a post-reform ITE background. This makes it especially important to offer Continuous Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) to enable teachers to update their skills, in part because teaching methods evolve as new technologies emerge.

- The availability of effective LTSMs relies in part on investments in the development of good content and in part on funding, distribution systems and technologies that make texts accessible to learners The development of LTSMs is not a straightforward matter, and clearly not all LTSMs are equally effective in different linguistic, socio-economic and cultural contexts. The positive impacts of LTSMs are likely to be enhanced if learners can take materials home. It is also important for teacher support strategies to help teachers to integrate the effective use of LTSMs into their lessons.

- While there is important research from around the world showing that changing average class sizes only makes a small difference to what learners learn, it must be noted that this research tends to deal with class sizes that are much lower than in many South African schools. The large size of South African classes is particularly worrying at the primary level where individualised attention to learners is important. According to TIMSS data, one in seven Grade 5 learners is in a class with 50 or more learners.

Indirect change factors

Other elements in the diagram that are described below may not impact as directly on the classroom as the elements referred to above, but they remain vital change factors.

South Africa's conditions of service for educators are determined nationally. These policies play a large role in influencing who chooses to take up teaching as a profession and whether the best teachers remain in the public system. It is important to develop clear and logical career pathways for teachers, including opportunities for advancement with respect to pay, responsibilities and professional self-fulfilment. Much work is needed to improve existing career pathways, for instance through a better focus on the role of senior teaching positions such as those of schools-based 'heads of department', and a more transparent process of promotion into management posts. Budget constraints in recent years have underlined the importance of better costing methods and better cost projections to inform conditions of service and career pathway policies.

The system of teacher deployment includes the 'post provisioning' policy governing how enrolment numbers are used to generate each school's entitlement to publicly paid educator posts, and a complex system of redeployment which moves 'excess' teachers with fewer years of experience first, giving these teachers some say as to where they move, and schools some say as to who they appoint as a new teacher. The system works better in some provinces than in others. A crucial element of any deployment system should be incentives to teach in disadvantaged schools. While policy for such incentives exists, it is not widely implemented and is due for review.

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) describes what should be taught in each subject and grade, and to some extent, how. It moreover explains how teachers and schools should assess learners. There are aspects of the CAPS which need to be expanded, including a critical need to provide Foundation Phase teachers with better guidance and materials to help them teach reading. Improving the availability of good assessment tools for teachers is a critical area. Schools need better formative assessment (assessment *for* learning) in schools throughout the school year, in addition to the summative assessments *of* learning that often occur twice a year.

Learners who speak one of the nine indigenous African languages at home generally experience a dual disadvantage: not only do they usually begin learning in an unfamiliar language in Grade 4, usually English, they also tend to come from more socio-economically disadvantaged households. To facilitate a better transition in the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT), more support will be needed to improve the teaching of English as a First Additional Language (FAL) in the Foundation Phase, but perhaps even more importantly, more support will be needed to improve the teaching of Home Language Literacy in the Foundation Phase

because it is a child's home language skills that are used to learn a second language. Furthermore, the DBE will investigate ways to ensure that the home language resources of children are drawn upon to a greater extent in Grade 4 and beyond. This is aimed at allowing language to be a positive resource to help our children learn rather than viewed as a barrier to learning.

Principals, supported by their School Management Team (SMT), need to play a stronger instructional leadership role as agents of change in the schooling system. Managers need to pay more attention to how teachers teach, and how academic improvement over time for the school as a whole is monitored, keeping in mind that the national improvement in learning outcomes envisaged by the NDP is the sum of improvements brought about in each of several thousand schools across the country.

While schools are accountable to districts and the provincial authorities, there is a need for a holistic school accountability framework to bring together the various strands and identify critical gaps to effect educational improvement. Existing school accountability elements include the annual school improvement plan, school annual report, the increasing use of the SA-SAMS and the Whole School Evaluation (WSE) programme run in certain provinces.

The DBE is introducing a Grade 9 General Education Certificate (GEC), as proposed by a Ministerial Task Team in 2014. The primary purpose of the GEC would be to facilitate subject choices beyond Grade 9 and articulation between schools and TVET colleges, as a low stakes feature of the school accountability system.

Strengthening the accountability of the approximately 14 800 public primary schools with no grade above Grade 7, and their principals, remains a key challenge. The NDP noted the need for 'reliable measures' of primary school performance. A 2017 agreement with teacher unions focuses on establishing the Systemic Evaluation programme, which would include the testing of samples of Grades 3, 6 and 9 learners every year. This would permit highly accurate monitoring of whether learning outcomes were improving at provincial and national levels. In fact, this sample-based testing is likely to produce more accurate system-level trends than a testing system covering every school. There would still be a need to monitor the levels of performance and trends of all primary schools with reasonable accuracy.

Depending on the definition of poverty used, between a quarter and half of South Africa's learners come from poor households. Poverty involves many factors impacting negatively on learning, including an inability to pay for transport to school or a school uniform, weak capacity of parents or caregivers to provide educational support and a variety of social problems in the home. Policies dealing with nutrition, scholar transport, safety in schools and the identification of especially vulnerable children, among others, contribute to the social protection offered by the schooling system to mitigate the effects of poverty.

Districts play a critical role in managing support to schools and teachers and the accountability of schools. Their support functions span many of the boxes in the diagram, including professional teacher development, teacher deployment, LTSMs and school governing bodies. As emphasised in the NDP, the accountability between districts and schools is *mutual.* Schools are accountable to districts for effective use of the available resources, and districts are accountable to schools for providing quality support services.

A national strategy to bring about quality basic education is needed, as articulated in the NDP and the DBE's Action Plan. The national strategy must be a living one, characterised by a lively and constructive policy discourse, informed by reliable information produced by government and non-government players. All this could profoundly influence the mood in the sector and trust between stakeholders, which inevitably impact on what happens in schools and classrooms. The key element which the DBE will prioritise is the new Systemic Evaluation programme expected to become fully operational in 2020. This programme focuses not just on learning outcomes, but also on the multitude of contextual factors. Importantly, the programme will enable South Africa to report against the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicators dealing with the attainment of proficiency levels among children.

9.1.4 The Demographic and Spending Trends

A large increase in Grade 1 enrolments, particularly in 2011, followed by a large Grade 2 increase in 2012, and so on up the grades, were reflections of serious and unexpected demographic shifts. It is now clear that the number of births per year rose to a new level during the 2003 to 2005 period. The reasons for this are not fully understood, but the evidence suggests easier access to antiretroviral treatment was the principal cause. Whatever the cause, the schooling system had to deal with an unexpectedly large inflow of children. For instance, Grades 1 to 3 enrolments increased by 12% between 2010 and 2017, while Grades 4 to 7 enrolments increased by 10% between 2013 and 2017. In addition to these, large enrolment increases were seen in Grades 10 to 12, not as a result of the rise in births, but due to lower dropout rates from the upper secondary level.

9.1.5 Inclusivity

The NDP envisages an education system that will build an "inclusive society, providing equal opportunities and helping all South Africans to realise their full potential, in particular those previously disadvantaged by apartheid policies, namely black people, women and people with disabilities" (NDP, p. 296). The DBE aligns itself with the social justice principles of access, redress, equity, efficiency, quality and inclusivity. Our policy obligations include the establishment of effective management, policy, planning and monitoring capacity to guide and support the development of an inclusive education and training system. This includes ensuring that learning difficulties are not only perceived as residing within a learner, but also within various aspects of the system. Table 4 shows that progress has been made with regards to ensuring inclusivity in the basic education system. Learning losses due to COVID-19 threaten the improving picture of equity in the schooling system.

Table 4: Access to Education for Learners with Disabilities

Growth Area	2002	2018
Number of special schools	295	501 (447 Public, 54 Independent)
Learner enrolment in special schools	64 000	93 699
Number of full-service schools	30	848
Number of learners with disabilities in public ordinary schools	77 000	121 461
Number of children with severe to profound intellectual disability supported in special care centres	Implementation started in 2018	6 654

Source: EMIS data for 2019.

9.1.6 Early Childhood Development

With the President's recent pronouncements about the migration of more ECD services to the DBE, this sub-sector became a top priority for the next five years. It is important to note that expanded access to ECD opportunities has been an area of redress where much was achieved in the last two decades. Schools-based Grade R attendance increased from 13% to 72% of the age five cohort between 1999 and 2017. Table 5 and 6 below also indicate substantial improvements in attendance of ECD facilities for 3 to 4-year-olds and 5 to 6-year-olds since 2009. However, more work clearly needs to be done in certain provinces, especially KwaZulu-Natal and Northern Cape, to improve access to ECD opportunities among 3 to 4-year-olds. The loss of household income and jobs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, could reduce the numbers of learners participating in ECD. This is a risk that has to be mitigated against.

Table 5: Percentage of 3 to 4-year-olds attending ECD Facilities by Province, 2009–2018

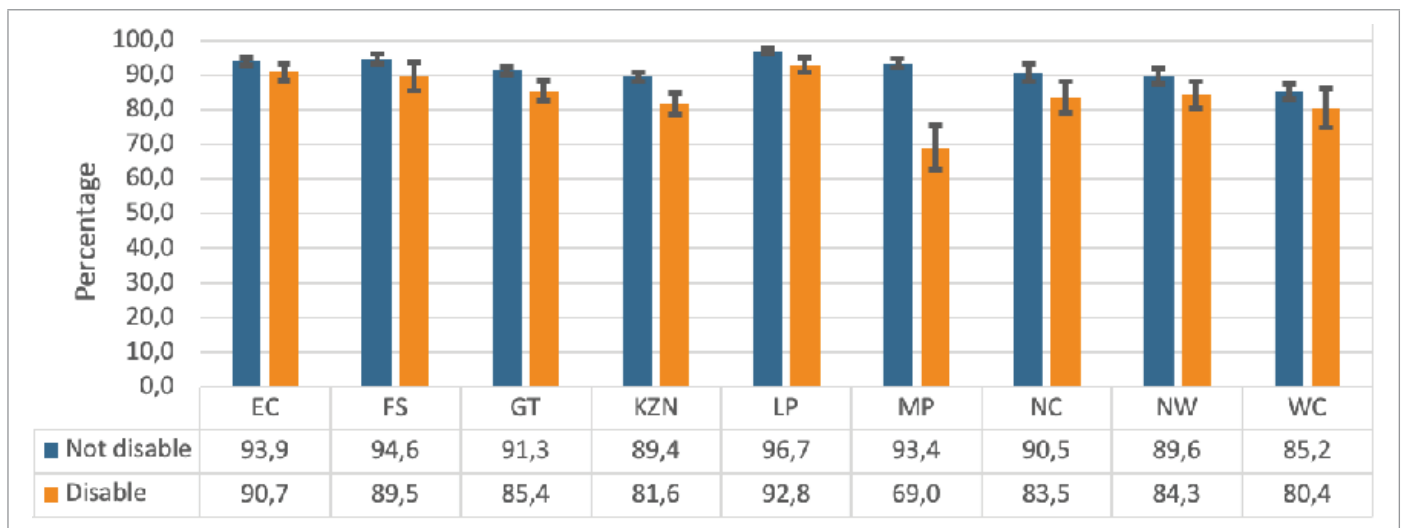| Province	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
WC	44.1	54.8	53.7	59.1	62.5	61.9	61.7	54.6	61.4	68.4
EC	56.7	57.0	59.3	63.1	62.1	66.0	58.5	56.9	63.0	64.3
NW	38.8	37.3	42.1	46.2	53.8	60.4	51.4	62.4	53.8	58.5
FS	62.8	53.7	66.1	71.5	82.8	80.0	76.8	67.8	78.4	73.1
KZN	39.9	42.0	39.6	41.5	54.4	58.3	51.8	49.2	46.7	45.1
NC	39.1	46.6	49.1	55.8	56.1	55.3	59.6	55.6	58.5	54.0
GP	66.6	66.4	67.2	73.3	79.7	83.2	80.0	76.8	76.3	76.1
MPU	46.7	50.1	54.0	51.0	56.7	53.5	54.6	61.4	58.5	62.9
LP	54.4	56.4	65.1	65.0	68.3	68.9	69.7	68.0	70.4	71.6
Total	**50.9**	**53.4**	**55.8**	**58.9**	**64.7**	**66.6**	**63.3**	**61.0**	**62.4**	**63.7**

Sources: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey (GHS), DBE own calculation.

Table 6: Percentage of 5 to 6-year-olds attending Educational Institutions by Province, 2009–2018

Province	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
EC	89.6	94.7	93.9	94.9	95.2	95.3	94.0	95.8	96.1	93.1
FS	90.6	86.8	88.7	92.0	91.2	93.7	92.2	94.1	95.9	98.2
GT	87.6	91.5	90.0	90.5	90.2	91.9	94.6	93.1	94.5	92.1
KZN	81.9	89.1	87.3	86.4	88.9	92.0	89.5	88.8	89.5	89.2
LP	95.5	97.6	96.7	96.2	97.6	95.9	97.1	97.0	98.6	97.7
MP	88.7	82.9	90.9	91.5	87.9	92.7	92.5	94.3	91.8	90.2
NC	80.9	87.9	86.9	81.2	91.0	88.5	85.8	89.4	90.0	87.6
NW	77.0	83.5	90.4	93.0	90.2	86.4	91.3	92.7	86.8	91.1
WC	87.0	81.3	83.9	83.6	83.9	81.8	85.7	90.9	83.9	85.2
National	**86.8**	**89.6**	**90.1**	**90.3**	**90.6**	**91.5**	**92.1**	**92.9**	**92.4**	**91.6**

Figure 2 below indicates that, in most provinces, educational attendance among 5 to 6-year-olds is not lagging too much for children with a disability, although more work needs to be done in Mpumalanga.

Figure 2: Percentage of 5 to 6-year-olds with Disabilities and Those without Disabilities Attending Educational Institutions by Province, 2014–2018

	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NC	NW	WC
Not disable	93,9	94,6	91,3	89,4	96,7	93,4	90,5	89,6	85,2
Disable	90,7	89,5	85,4	81,6	92,8	69,0	83,5	84,3	80,4

Sources: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey (GHS), DBE own calculations.

Note: Data for 2014 to 2018 was pooled together to overcome small sample challenges.

There have been concerns about the quality of both Grade R and pre-schooling. An evaluation of schools-based Grade R as it existed in the 2005 to 2011 period has been commissioned by Government and published. This evaluation revealed a low impact of Grade R in Quintile 1–3 schools. The quality of school-based Grade R is likely to have improved in subsequent years following the introduction of national workbooks and other materials in this Grade, but the variable quality of Grade R remains a crucial equity concern going forward.

9.1.7   Foundation Phase

Participation in Foundation Phase schooling has now become nearly universal in South Africa. About 99% of children 7 to 13 years old attend school, according to 2018 GHS data. Primary school completion rates are now estimated be about 95%, as Table 7 below shows. These achievements can be attributed to a number of pro-poor schooling policies and programmes, such as no-fee schooling and the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP). Since 2010, the percentage of learners benefiting from the NSNP has increased from around 70% in 2010 to around 82% in 2018. The highest proportions of learners benefiting from the NSNP are found in those provinces that are regarded as mostly rural and where the need is the greatest.

Table 7: Percentage of 16 to 18-year-olds who have completed Grade 7 and above by Population Group, 2009–2018

Population Group	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
African/Black	89.7	91.0	92.0	92.4	93.7	94.0	94.0	93.6	94.7	94.5
Coloured	94.9	97.2	95.6	97.4	95.4	94.6	95.2	94.5	95.2	95.5
Indian/Asian	99.2	97.8	98.1	100.0	96.5	97.8	96.1	98.3	100.0	100.0
White	98.2	98.2	97.0	98.9	99.2	99.8	98.7	100.0	100.0	98.9
Total	90.9	92.2	92.8	93.4	94.2	94.4	94.4	94.1	95.2	94.9

Sources: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey (GHS), DBE own calculations.

The focus in the Foundation Phase is now shifting to issues of learning quality. In particular, it is being recognised that foundational learning in literacy and numeracy is lacking in many schools, and is essential for later learning. The PIRLS of 2016 and the TIMSS of 2015 provided internationally respected measures of learning trends over time and these studies indicated that large proportions of South African children reach Grade 4 without having learned to read for meaning and Grade 5 without achieving basic numeracy proficiency. These outcomes at Grade 4 and 5 are a reflection of the quality challenges that persist in the Foundation Phase.

Evidence has been mounting globally of the importance of reading acquisition of children in the initial grades, and which interventions best improve the situation. Ground-breaking research in South Africa – the EGRS research project – was undertaken in recent years by the DBE, working with partner organisations, to produce South Africa-specific knowledge about early grade reading. The study confirmed that better reading skills among learners could be achieved through better materials (specifically lesson plans and graded reading materials in the African languages) and teacher training on how to implement the curriculum. Importantly, the EGRS tested various in-service teacher training methods and concluded that certain approaches involving some individualised coaching were preferable, yet not prohibitively costly. Details on the EGRS are available in a series of published reports. Initiatives to scale up the implementation of what was found to work through the EGRS are being incorporated into a newly developed sector reading plan.

A combination of rising learner enrolments and above-inflation wage increases in recent years has put the basic education sector under tremendous financial pressure. One effect of this has been to worsen learner-educator ratios, which led to larger class sizes. Figure 3 shows how learner-educator ratios have increased in recent years, especially in primary schools.

A related matter is that grade repetition rates remain high, even in the Foundation Phase. In Grade 1 around 15% of learners are repeating, while the figure is around 10% for Grades 2 and 3. This contributes significantly to higher class sizes. Several South African education experts have argued that making learners repeat in the Foundation Phase does more harm than good. It has been suggested that experiences in countries such as Brazil, which have recently opted for automatic grade promotion at the primary level, should be examined.

Figure 3: Learner-Educator (LE) Ratios, 2003 to 2017
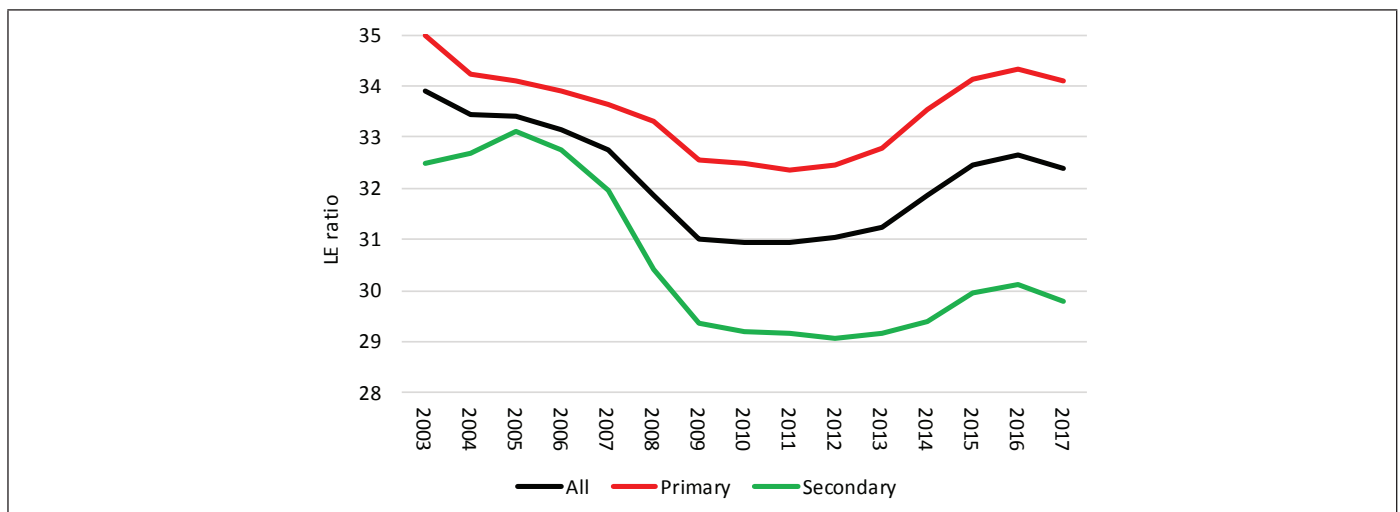
Source: Snap Survey microdata.

Note: Only public ordinary schools are considered. 'Primary' is any school with learners in the range of Grades 1 to 7. 'Secondary' is any school with learners in the range of Grades 8 to 12. There is a small overlap between the two categories, where schools have both primary and secondary learners. For the numerator of each school, only Grades 1 to 12 learners were counted. For the denominator, all educators, whether public employees or employees of the School Governing Body, were counted. Grade R practitioners were not counted. Mean LE ratios across schools were calculated using total enrolment as a weight in order to avoid biases produced by small schools. A method was used which compared two adjacent years at a time, using only schools present in both years, with the highest and lowest 5% of LE ratios excluded. This was necessary, given some anomalies with the educator values in the Snap Survey.

9.1.8 Intermediate and Senior Phases

Projected learning losses due to COVID-19:

School closures and learning losses: The actual learning losses suffered by children due to disruptions such as school closures can be considered to be higher than those attributed to the number of days schools are closed. For these projections, we have used inflated the values by 25%. Thus 40 days of school closures would result in the loss of 50 days' worth of learning, in line with the evidence from developing and developed countries. What is not clear in the data is whether learning losses seen immediately after learners return to school, worsen, stay the same, or shrink, over time. Two South African pandemic-induced scenarios are worth noting, one where learning losses remain unchanged for the rest of each learner's schooling, another where there is a catching up to the pre-pandemic trajectory after three years. Without catching up, the skills of Grade 12 graduates would be lower than in the no-pandemic scenario for a decade up to 2031. In contrast, the catching up scenario takes the quality of graduates back to the no-pandemic trend in 2023.

Participation in the Intermediate and Senior Phases of schooling has increased in recent years and this has served to reduce historical inequalities. Table 8 shows that Grade 9 completion rates have continued to increase since 2009 with a narrowing of the gaps between population groups.

Table 8: Percentage of 19 to 21-year-olds who have completed Grade 9 and above by Population Group, 2009–2018

Population Group	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
African	81.5	84.3	83.5	84.7	84.7	85.3	86.0	87.8	89.0	89.8
Coloured	86.4	84.7	86.7	84.6	82.1	82.5	83.3	87.9	87.7	89.0
Indian	98.2	97.8	93.5	94.4	93.4	99.5	100.0	100.0	100.0	96.2
White	99.6	99.9	96.1	97.5	95.7	98.2	96.2	96.9	98.6	96.7
Total	**83.4**	**85.7**	**84.8**	**85.8**	**85.4**	**86.2**	**86.7**	**88.6**	**89.6**	**90.2**

Sources: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey (GHS), DBE own calculations.

As was mentioned when discussing the Foundation Phase, the heart of development in the schooling sector must obviously be what learners learn, the learning outcomes. This is made clear in the NDP and the Sustainable Development Goals. It is of great significance for South Africa's development that learning outcomes, although still too low, have been improving according to several reliable standardised testing programmes.

Figure 4 below outlines past achievements and the targets Government envisages for the future, in terms of the TIMSS **Mathematics tests**. When the Department set ambitious TIMSS targets in its first sector plan, the *Action Plan to 2014*, there was little certainty that they could be reached. It was thus good news when the 2011 and 2015 TIMSS results revealed significant improvements, comparable to that of the fastest improving countries in the world (for instance, Brazil's PISA[6] improvements between 2000 and 2012). This put South Africa on track to achieve its long-range TIMSS targets. By 2015, South Africa was almost on par with Botswana. If these improvement trends continue, South Africa is set to reach a level of performance in Grade 8 seen in Thailand in 2015 by around 2022 and would surpass Malaysia's 2015 Grade 8 level by 2030.

Figure 4: Past and Envisaged Educational Quality Trend for South Africa
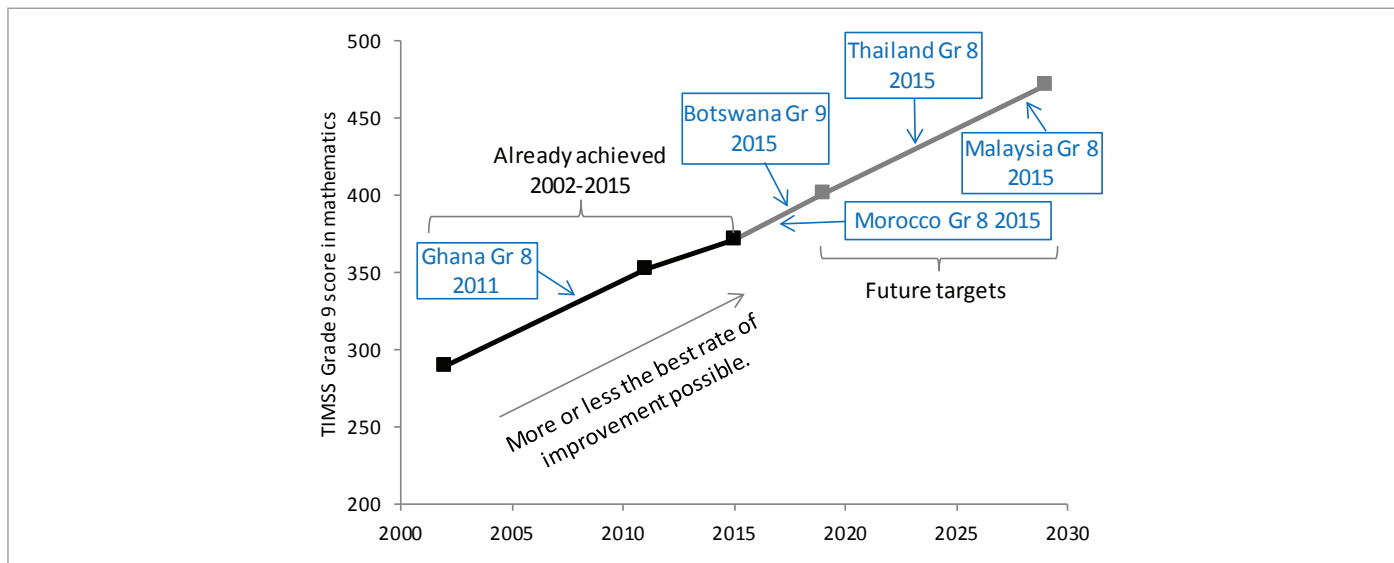
Sources: Points indicated in the graph, South African and other, are from official TIMSS reports, with one exception, namely the 2002 Grade 9 figure for South Africa, which is from Reddy et al (2012).

Note: All the South Africa points refer to Grade 9. The 2002 Grade 8 average was 264, 21 points below the Grade 9 average for the same year, but this Grade 8 figure is not reflected in the graph. The 2019 target of 401 is from MTSF targets published online in 2016. The 2029 target of 472 is from Action Plan to 2019.

TIMSS Science results reveal similar patterns to the TIMSS Mathematics test. The analysis for the landmark 2017 "Report of the High Level Panel on the Assessment of Key Legislation and the Acceleration of Fundamental change"confirmed that South Africa's TIMSS trends are based on a comparable sample of learners and that the improvements were strongest among the most disadvantaged learners, meaning that schooling had contributed to reducing social inequalities. Importantly, it is these improvements in the grades below Grade 12 which account for upward trends in the Grade 12 indicators. SEACMEQ and PIRLS results at the primary level are somewhat more difficult to interpret than the TIMSS results, in part due to statistical adjustment issues, yet both point to improvements of a magnitude comparable to those seen in the TIMSS.

Although it is impossible to attribute these improvements in any scientific way to specific interventions and social trends, new policies and successes in implementing these policies, provide an indication of five likely drivers of change in the sector: (1) increasing access to Grade R and pre-school below Grade R; (2) the CAPS tools designed to facilitate the implementation of the curriculum in the classroom; (3) better access of learners to high-quality books, such as the national workbooks; (4) more focused assessment practices; and (5) improved subject knowledge among newly graduated teachers. While further improvements in learning outcomes are of course not guaranteed, sustained dedication to the activities described below and outlined in sector plans and the NDP would improve the chances of sustained improvement.

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6   Programme for International Student Assessment.

Improvement factor 1: Increased access to Grade R and pre-school below Grade R.

This has already been discussed in the section on ECD above.

Improvement factor 2: CAPS tools designed to facilitate the implementation of the curriculum in the classroom

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) was a set of guides introduced into the schooling system between 2012 and 2014 and intended to clarify exactly what had to be taught in the various subjects and grades. The CAPS provided certainty, whereas the previous curriculum documents introduced in 2002 were arguably too vague and difficult to interpret. In 2017, the DPME released an evaluation of the implementation of CAPS which reported that the great majority of the users of the guides found them superior to preceding guides. An earlier 2014 evaluation by Umalusi had arrived at similar conclusions. Both reports lend support to the probability that teachers' access to better curriculum documentation accompanied by training was a likely factor behind the improvements in learning outcomes described above.

Improvement factor 3: Better access among learners to high-quality books, such as the national workbooks

Any notion that textbooks are unimportant, not uncommonly held fifteen years ago, has been abandoned. Not only is the CAPS very clear about the importance of textbooks, but teachers reporting that they use a textbook as their main classroom resource for teaching Mathematics have increased from a worryingly low 30% in 2002 to 70% in 2011, according to the TIMSS[7]. In the SEACMEQ, the percentage of Grade 6 learners saying they had access to a Mathematics textbook increased from around 36% in 2007 to around 66% in 2013. The General Household Survey (GHS) of Stats SA, points towards a consistent decline in the percentage of learners who lack books, from 20% in 2002 to 4% in 2017. The GHS has included additional questions on access to books in schools since 2013, with responses indicating that access to national workbooks improved from around 83% of Grades 1 to 9 learners in 2013 to 96% in 2017, with similar trends across grades.

This was achieved by prioritising budgets for LTSMs, including the so-called school allocation. The government has focused strongly on lowering book prices, in particular where books are bought in bulk. South Africa's successes in achieving particularly low unit costs for workbooks without compromising on quality has been acknowledged by UNESCO. Moreover, national and provincial systems for delivering materials to schools have been strengthened.

Despite these improvements, access to books still falls short of the ideal of 100% for all learners. In Grades 10 to 12, the percentage of learners accessing textbooks in all their subjects remained at around 78% between 2013 and 2017, according to the GHS. According to the 2017 School Monitoring Survey, a survey aimed specifically at monitoring progress against indicators put forward in *Action Plan to 2019*, 83% of Grade 9 learners and around 84% of Grade 12 learners had access to a Mathematics textbook.

Improvement factor 4: More focused assessment practices

Assessment as a tool for improving teaching and learning has evolved over the last ten years and important lessons have been learned which will help to shape the way forward. The CAPS distinguishes between informal and formal assessment activities, with the latter category comprising assessment tasks, tests and examinations. The CAPS also provides considerable guidance on how teachers should conduct assessments, guidance which was reinforced through an intensive process of CAPS training in the years 2011 to 2014. The curriculum guides introduced in 2002 that preceding the CAPS had provided far less guidance on assessments.

Systemic assessments are assessments without any direct implications for individual learners, for instance with regard to grade promotion, but which help managers and planners understand the relative academic performance of schools, districts, provinces or the country as a whole. In 2015, South Africa ended its participation in the international Annual National Assessments (ANA) covering Grades 1 to 6 and Grade 9. This was due to disagreements among stakeholders and particularly between the government and teacher unions, about the purpose of the ANA. During the four years in which ANA was implemented, it played a major role in bringing to the fore the quality of learning and teaching in the national debates and at a local level. School principals, parents and district officials were able to compare the quality of learning across schools, in particular the primary schools, in ways which had not been possible previously. Following an intensive evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of ANA, stakeholders reached consensus on the specific problems in the design of ANA that should be avoided in future. The newly designed National Assessment Programme which is to be implemented in 2020, will provide an important opportunity to again use assessments to stimulate a focus on learning throughout the school system.

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7   From analysis of the TIMSS microdata. Unfortunately, the TIMSS 2015 data does not allow for this statistic to be calculated.
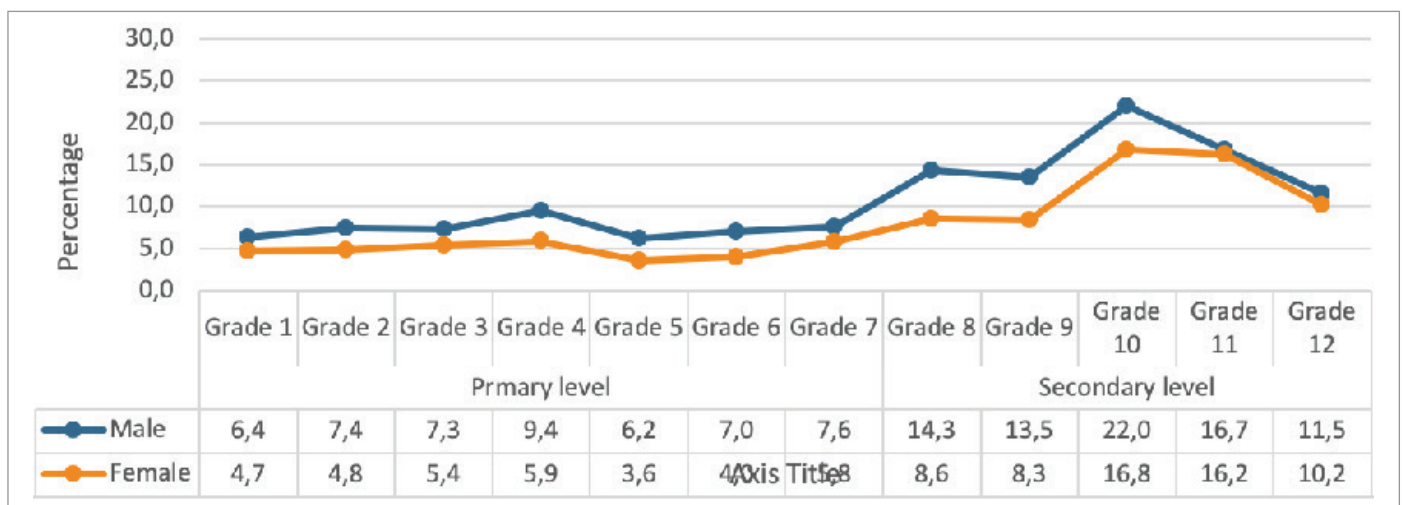
Improvement factor 5: Improved subject knowledge among newly graduated teachers

Despite some concerns around the quality and relevance of Initial Teacher Education at universities, there are indications that younger teachers are being better equipped to teach than older peers who received their initial training in the previous system. Specifically, the results from Mathematics and language tests written by teachers as part of the SEACMEQ in 2007 and 2013 showed that younger teachers displayed a considerably higher level of subject knowledge than older teachers. In policy terms, this pattern suggests that moving all teacher education from colleges to universities in the late 1990s was an effective change.

9.1.9   Grade Repetition

Grade repetition remains an efficiency challenge in the system and this is especially so for boys. The General Household Surveys indicate higher levels of grade repetition by boys at all grades, except Grades 11 and 12. This is probably both a reflection of and a contributing factor towards the overall underperformance of males relative to females in South African education.

Figure 5: Percentage of Repeaters by Grade and Gender, 2018

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
			Prmary level							Secondary level		
Male	6,4	7,4	7,3	9,4	6,2	7,0	7,6	14,3	13,5	22,0	16,7	11,5
Female	4,7	4,8	5,4	5,9	3,6	4,0	5,8	8,6	8,3	16,8	16,2	10,2

Sources: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey (GHS), DBE own calculations.

The DBE has begun consultations with stakeholders around the possible introduction of a Grade 9 General Education Certificate (GEC), as proposed by a Ministerial Task Team in 2014. Its primary purpose would be to facilitate subject choices beyond Grade 9 and articulation between schools and TVET colleges. However, should the GEC be introduced, information generated by the new national examinations should feature within the school accountability system. This would be of particular relevance for the approximately 2 300 public schools, mainly in the Eastern Cape, whose highest grade is currently Grade 9[8].

9.1.10   National Senior Certificate (Further Education and Training Band)

The highly publicised National Senior Certificate (NSC) pass rate – meaning the number of NSCs obtained divided by the number of learners who wrote the examination – is but one of many indicators tracking trends at this level. The DBE's sector plans aim to have all youths obtain the NSC or an equivalent qualification, either from a school or a TVET institution. Plans also emphasise the attainment of an NSC allowing for Bachelor-level studies at a university and obtaining a mark of at least 50% in Mathematics and Physical Science.[9] In the case of Mathematics, this 50% threshold is the lowest threshold applied for entry into mathematically-oriented university programmes such as accounting and economics.

Trends in the attainment of the National Senior Certificate and Bachelor-level passes are illustrated in Figure 6 below. It is noteworthy that most learners who obtain the NSC, but not a Bachelor-level pass, achieve the lower Diploma-level pass. For the class of 2018, this permitted an additional 140 000 learners to study for a diploma at a university. Both indicators have displayed a generally upward trend for the last twenty or so years. The increase in Bachelor-level passes, at 4.3% a year, has been the strongest. Youths qualifying for entry into a Bachelor's programme at a university increased from around 100 000 in 1994 to around 160 000 more recently.[10]

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8   Areas in the Eastern Cape where these schools are common also have separate schools catering only for Grades 10 to 12.
9   Prior to 2008, a Bachelor-level pass was referred to as a Matriculation Exemption.
10   These figures are from the public examination system and exclude the approximately 10 000 Bachelor-level passes emerging from the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) system annually.

Figure 6: NSC and Bachelor-Level Increases since 1994
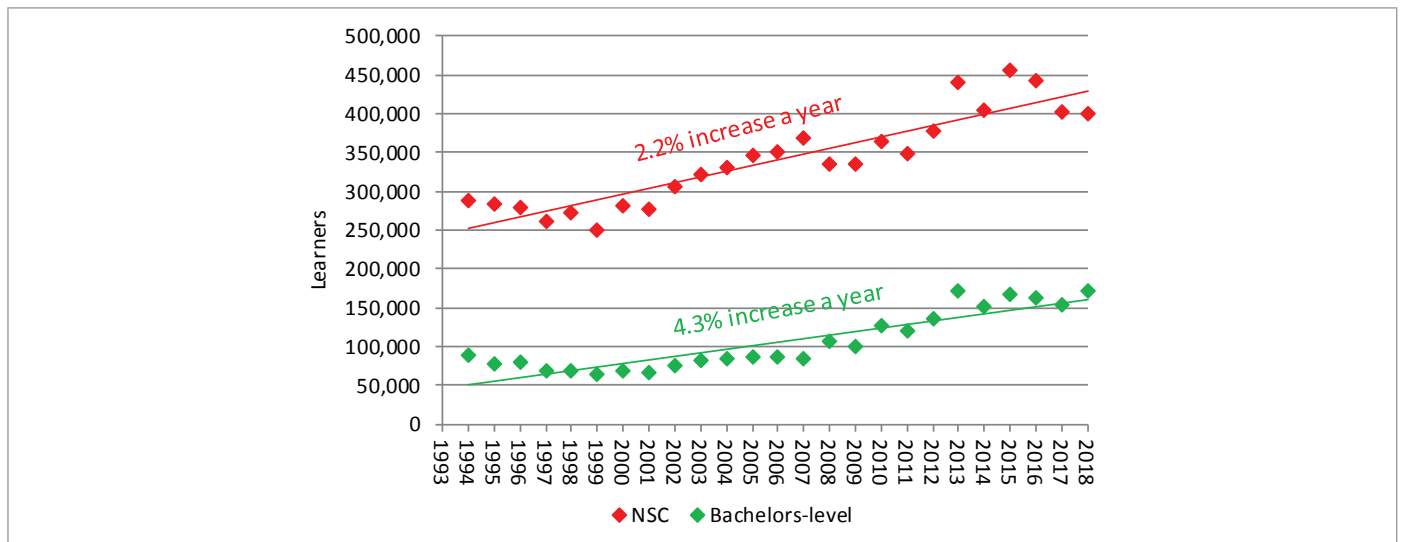
Note: These values reflect only the results of full-time candidates, excluding the effect of supplementary examinations and any examinations taken by Multiple Examination Opportunity (MEO) candidates in the following year.

Stats SA data collected from households confirm the rise in the number of youths obtaining the NSC. As shown in Figure 7 below, the percentage of youths successfully completing Grade 12 has increased from around 45% in 2005 to close to 55% in 2017. The peaks of the various curves in the graph point to the fact that many youths obtained their NSC rather late. For instance, in 2017 the peak at age 24 illustrates that below this age, many youths had still not obtained the NSC. This not only reflects that opportunities were created to allow youths to achieve the NSC beyond their first attempt, but also points to a challenge to have more youths successfully complete their secondary schooling at a younger age.

Figure 7: Grade 12 Attainment Among Youths according to Household Data
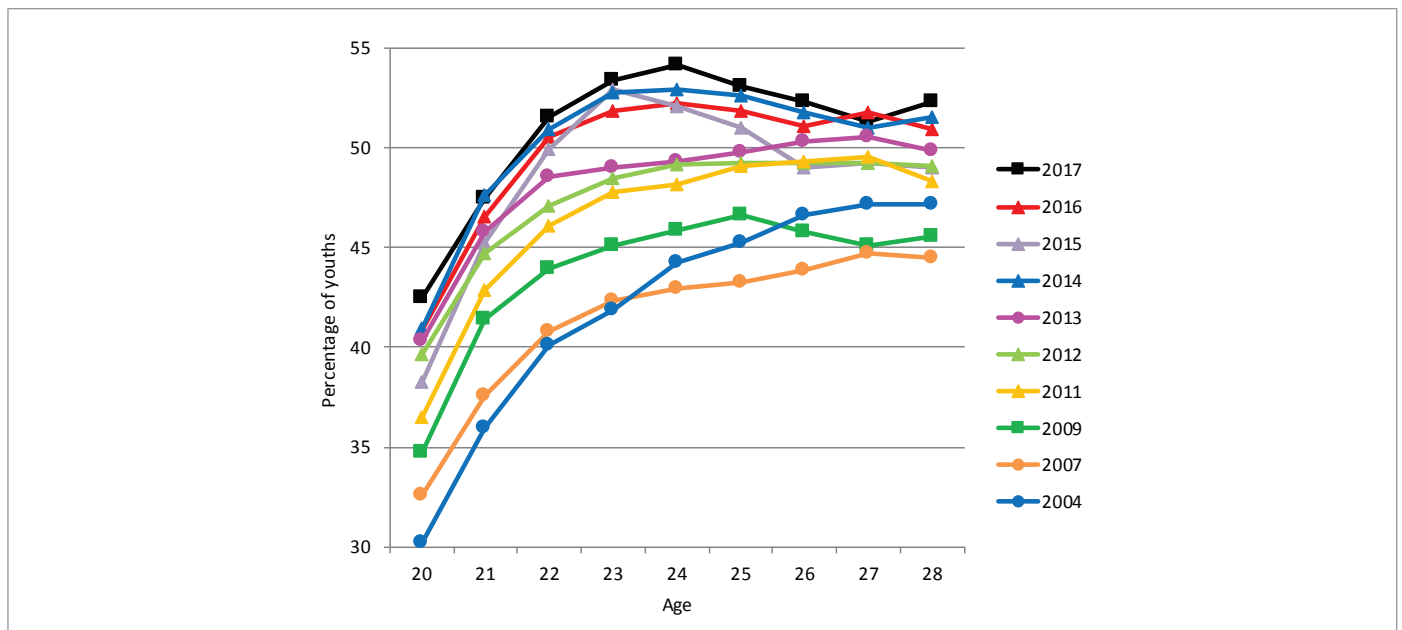
Source: Stats SA's General Household Surveys.

The government's targets envisage 270 000 Bachelor-level NSC passes per year by 2019, with the number rising to 435 000 by 2030. The NDP set a target of 425 000 university graduates produced annually by 2030. While the 4.3% annual increase in the number of Bachelor-level NSCs takes the country closer to these targets, roughly double that increase is needed between 2019 and 2030 if the 2030 targets are to be reached.

9.1.11   e-Education

The use of modern Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the delivery of schooling – e-Education – is an important area of innovation to be focused on in the next five years. A 2018 study facilitated by the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT), which brought together the insights of several foreign and local experts and around 1 200 district and school personnel, led to seven 'high priority' recommendations:

1. Enhance the links across education goals, **metrics** and data down to the school level, and tailor them to the provincial context.
2. Create mechanisms for accountability for **data accuracy**.
3. Accelerate the rollout of Operation Phakisa of **ICT infrastructure** and improve **data affordability**.
4. Create dedicated roles with strong **specialist ICT and data analysis capabilities**.
5. Define and implement a **public-private collaboration** framework.
6. Build a robust ICT landscape of data systems and **EdTech tools**.
7. Define data and system interoperability **standards**.

The study found that growth in the use by schools of SA-SAMS and better organised provincial and national warehousing of SA-SAMS data have had tangible benefits in the forms of less duplication in the submission of data and the introduction of online tools through which schools and districts can visualise important statistics. Crucially, the study found that managers, for instance in districts, are becoming increasingly aware of how data can contribute towards better planning and management. Progress was achieved largely through modalities of development involving public-private partnerships. The Data-Driven Districts (DDD) initiative, involving the education departments, the Dell Foundation and other stakeholders, has provided valuable lessons not just on how to harness technology, but also on how partners can work together to advance e-Education.

But the study also found that South Africa lacked a sufficiently clear and widely understood e-Education strategy.[11] Quality assurance of data was still not what it should be, meaning certain statistics, such as those on learner attendance and assessment results, were too often unreliable and difficult to interpret. Above all, new approaches and technologies were not being fully utilised to monitor and understand learning outcomes.

9.1.12   EdTech

With regard to EdTech, or the use in the classroom of technology for learning, the above study did not cover important innovations by the DBE to produce more dynamic and digital learning materials. Building on the successes of the national workbooks and Siyavula textbooks developed within the *Action Plan to 2019*, the DBE worked with partners such as the Sasol Inzalo Foundation to produce a greater variety of materials that could be freely copied and distributed. Many of the national workbooks have been converted to interactive digital materials and are being piloted. While interactive materials make it easier for different learners to proceed at different paces, assess themselves and repeat certain tasks in line with their learning needs, migration to such materials requires careful planning and testing to ensure that materials work as they should and that teachers are properly trained in their use. Much of the innovation currently occurring involves the production of non-copyrighted materials, which lowers costs and could greatly facilitate the move towards e-Education.

There has been slow progress in the availability of computers in schools. The 2015 TIMSS data confirms that around half of Grade 5 and Grade 9 learners can access computers or tablets in school. This puts South Africa roughly on par with other middle-income countries at the primary level, but well below the average for these countries at the lower secondary level. Moreover, improvements between the 2011 and 2015 waves of the TIMSS were strong in most developing countries but negligible in South Africa.

The 2017 School Monitoring Survey roughly concurs with the TIMSS data. In public schools, 64% of Grade 12 learners are in schools that have computer laboratories. This figure obscures the fact that distribution remains skewed in favour of the historically and economically advantaged, being 93% for Quintile 5 and 40% for Quintile 1. Inter-provincial differences are also large; for instance, 91% in the Free State (a particularly successful province in this regard) against 25% in Limpopo.

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11   The NECT is drafting a new strategy, which was made available for wider consultation during 2019.

The percentage of Grade 12 learners who take one of the two computer subjects, Computer Applications Technology and Information Technology, has remained around 6% for many years – 20% in Quintile 5 against 2% in Quintile 1. While there are now many technology and curriculum options to follow beyond the traditional computer subjects and the traditional computer lab, the importance of these formats for bringing technology innovation into historically disadvantaged schools should not be underestimated. They offer proven routes to skills in areas such as computer programming and can serve as a first step towards technology innovation for schools that have experienced very little of it. Moreover, there are clearly 'low-hanging fruits' in the form of historically disadvantaged secondary schools which have a computer laboratory, but which do not formally offer any computer subject – around a third of Quintile 1 to 3 secondary schools fall into this category. The intervention required here is mostly support to existing teachers so that they can offer these subjects, or the appointment of suitably qualified teachers.

Figure 8 illustrates statistics emerging from the School Monitoring Survey on computer labs for both the secondary and primary levels.

Figure 8: Access to Computer Labs in Schools, 2017
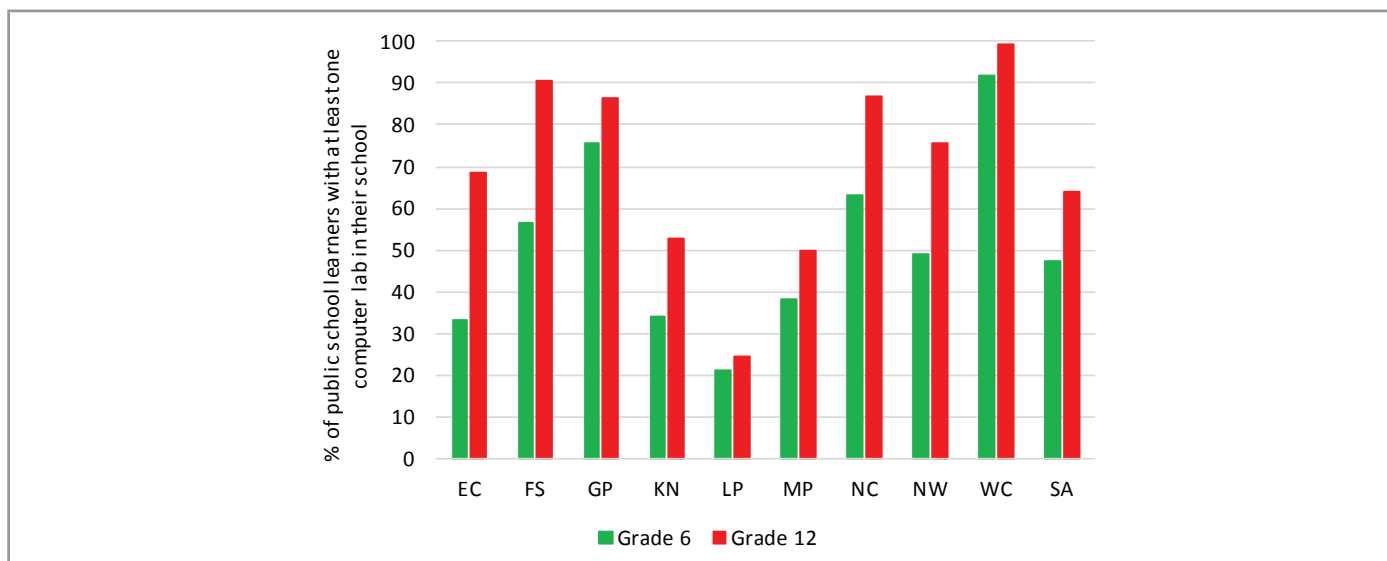
Source: Analysis of School Monitoring Survey microdata.

There has been a great improvement in the percentage of the population in the country as a whole accessing the internet. In 2007, internet access was slightly below the middle-income country average at 8%, while in 2017, access was at 56% and slightly exceeded the global average[12]. Yet, progress with regard to internet access in schools has been slow. According to the School Monitoring Survey, in 2017, access by secondary school principals, teachers and learners to the internet was 68%, 59% and 21% respectively. These figures are clearly lower than they should be for e-Education to become a reality across all schools. The NDP states that "the most crucial enabler of ICT [in schools] is high-speed broadband". While quality schooling without the internet is possible, not having access to this important resource means learners are less prepared for the world of work and post-school studies.

9.2 Situational Analysis: Internal Environment Analysis

9.2.1   Structure of the DBE

The Department is structured into five programmes to ensure that it achieves its strategic mandates. The programmes are 'Curriculum Policy, Support and Monitoring'; 'Teachers, Education Human Resources and Institutional Development'; 'Planning, Information and Assessments', 'Social Mobilisation and Support Services' and 'Programme 1, Administration and the Office of the Director-General'.

Despite severe budget cuts over the MTEF period, the DBE has filled key critical posts to ensure service delivery. The Department has a staff establishment of 710. In line with the objectives for the Employment Equity Plan of the Department, the Department has 15 interns and five learners, a total of 20 youths on internship and learnership.

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12   The World Development Indicators dataset of the World Bank (accessed May 2019) shows the middle-income country averages being 9% and 45% for the two years. In the case of the indicator on fixed broadband subscriptions, South Africa performed well below the middle-income average in all recent years.

Table 9: DBE Programmes

PROGRAMME 1	Administration
PROGRAMME 2	Curriculum Policy, Support and Monitoring
PROGRAMME 3	Teachers, Education Human Resources and Institutional Development
PROGRAMME 4	Planning, Information and Assessments
PROGRAMME 5	Educational Enrichment Services

The Department has reconfigured itself to ensure there is alignment between the organisational structure and programmes

The Department ensures that there is alignment between its broad strategic objectives and human resource planning within the DBE, such that:

- Sufficient posts and human resources are available at all times for the Department to achieve its strategic and operational objectives;
- Personnel are employed at the correct salary levels;
- Employment equity targets are met;
- Active steps are taken to ensure that suitable persons are recruited and retained as far as possible, and that personnel with talent are identified and nurtured within the Department;
- The required funding for human resources is made available within the Medium Term Expenditure Framework;
- A system of performance management ensures optimal utilisation of human resources for effective service delivery, training, development and recognition of achievements;
- Human resources and financial planning are integrated; and
- Human resource planning and management are integral parts of the responsibility of all managers.

The DBE is a member of the Government Information Technology Officers Council (GITOC). This engagement model enables the DBE to contribute towards ICT standards, policies, frameworks and procedures, allowing the DBE to align itself with all ICT governmental initiatives. The DBE has strengthened its business relationship with the State Information Technology Agency (SITA) which allows the DBE to conclude Service Level Agreements with SITA focused on technical support to the Department that assists it to deliver its services and mandate.

9.2.2   BBBEE Status

The Department appointed a service provider to conduct the BBBEE compliance assessment for the 2017/18 financial year. The appointed service provider was liquidated and could not complete the process of the assessment. Therefore, the results of the 2017/18 financial year could not be included in the 2018/19 annual report. Another service provider was appointed to do the BBBEE compliance assessment for the 2018/19 financial year. The results of the assessment will be published in the 2019/20 annual report.

Table 10: Status of the Institution regarding Women, Youth And People with Disabilities

Women	59.8% of the total staff
Youth	26.7% of the total staff
People with disabilities	1.2% of the total staff

9.2.3   SWOT Analysis

As a national department that is mandated to lead the sector in terms of capacity for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, the DBE has to have the internal resources, skills and mechanisms to ensure that its leadership results in quality basic education outcomes. The following presents an overview of the current capacity of the Department, reflected against the organisational strengths, weaknesses and challenges which were identified in the 2015/16–2019/20 Strategic Plan.

Strengths

The Department has well developed systems and administrative data on its operations in terms of finances, human resources, examinations and textbooks. Consistent leadership has also ensured stability in the portfolio. The DBE benefits from political and administrative leadership with extensive experience at all levels in the issues of curriculum, teacher development and assessment.

Even after three cycles of curriculum reform, stability prevails in the system and attention is turning to the vexing issue of how to coordinate efforts within the sector to improve learning outcomes. The maturity of the organisation means that it is now interrogating the depth and extent of monitoring, which is evolving from mere inspection visits to more in-depth examinations of school-level success indicators, information and strategies for improving instruction. School-level monitoring reflects more on learning and teaching than on asset management and visible compliance with education law and policy. The role of the national department has evolved from actively monitoring schools to determining the parameters for monitoring, although there are still issues related to aligning the logistics and interventions associated with these visits between school, district, province and national levels.

Labour peace has characterised recent years. Efforts to improve consultation, dialogue and public narratives include the establishment of various visible partnerships with United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF), the NECT, National Reading Coalition and other such structures, to bring together public, private and civil society interests in education development. Interdepartmental collaborations have been particularly useful, including the partnership with the Department of Health on learner well-being, and the Department of Social Development on ECD and provision of support to vulnerable learners.

The education sector has a well-established institutional framework, including schools, and concurrent arrangements determining the responsibilities for service delivery and oversight according to the NEPA. Innovations in provinces are highlighted in these interprovincial and intergovernmental interactions, facilitated by the shift to a focus on learning. The Action Plan developed by the DBE requires an integrated approach to education provisioning, which has been seen in the realignment and re-examination of several departmental structures. The use of data, information and analyses to inform policy making has, in recent years, grown through the work of the Department. The Department has developed several progress reports drawn from administrative, special purpose surveys, and rigorous evaluations of the implementation and the performance of key programmes including programmes on teacher bursaries, nutrition and how to improve and support early grade reading and provision at the classroom level.

Communication with the public has improved with the development of a comprehensive communication profile, with a solid social media presence and interactions intended to communicate policy positions and progress, based on the research and analytical reports produced by the planning, monitoring and research functions in the Department.

Weaknesses

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of more coherent data systems in education. It has also highlighted the administrative processes and protocols that are needed to respond flexibly to teaching and learning disruptions. In addition, the accountability within the schooling system needs to be strengthened in order to ensure learning improves within the context of COVID-19.

Organisations need sufficient time and opportunity to reflect on the attention needed in the systems, resources, capacity and skills and knowledge to effect change. The interventions in weak provincial administrative systems have meant that capacity in the national department has been stretched, especially in the support functions. The skills and capacity of the personnel filling the positions should be aligned to the organisational mandate which is determined by the NEPA. The monitoring and evaluation functions in all programmes require strengthening as does operational planning to meet output, process and outcome expectations in the Department and in the sector.

The limited use of evidence and substantive information to design comprehensive programmes means that programme design, delivery and outcomes are sometimes not optimal and the spirit of public service delivery is lacking. To remedy this, the Department will need to engage in a series of introspective reflections on cultures and values in the organisation, in relation to inclusion, diversity, gender sensitivity and creating an effective working environment.

While recognising the need for consequence management, the role of managers as leaders in guiding the organisation is highlighted in the Department's work in practice and engagement with the needs of the public and organisational mandates. Root cause analysis of organisational problems will be conducted to improve organisational functioning. Better engagement by managers on departmental mandates will assist in communication and processing to create the context for skills, knowledge and people development.

Opportunities

The strong institutional framework of the sector allows the potential impact on education outcomes to be further leveraged through the migration and transfer of the function for Early Childhood Development from the Department of Social Development. This migration provides an opportunity to contribute even more to the education, skills and social mobility of South Africa's people, after the introduction of a publicly funded Reception year by the DBE. The ECD migration is not just an administrative phenomenon, involving health, education, social, civil society and municipal players and providers. It presents an opportunity to develop institutional configurations for seamless service delivery that caters to the health, education and social development needs of young children at all stages of development.

Provincial developments show that the schooling system has matured and PEDs have begun to examine their learning outcomes in relation to the quality of support and development of instructional practices throughout schooling and especially in the early grades. This extensive examination aims to identify challenges to improving and achieving curriculum, assessment and teacher development practices and outcomes in schools.

Threats

COVID-19 global education shocks have the potential to destabilise the schooling system. The good work that has been done in terms of curriculum stability and progressive learning improvements shown in 3 international assessments are under threat. In addition, hunger and household poverty could deepen as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The system experiences internal pressures including weak instruction, weak learning and weak school functionality. Unequal capacity, endowment and outcomes at the provincial level result in imbalanced development and reduced capability to withstand shocks, including the recent slowdown in economic growth and budget cuts.

The pressures of poverty, inequality and unemployment have led to more focus on the post-school opportunities that follow basic education. Post-schooling sector funding has already started crowding out government budgets with the promise of fee-free tertiary education persisting in the public discourse.

Capacity, resources and systems need to be more effectively mobilised to support the actions that will improve and support instruction in our schools, districts and departments. Oversight needs to be focused on ensuring that these supportive actions work in practice, not just in theory. Lack of institutional capacity to develop systems for administration in the public sector threatens future and present delivery, and a compliance culture that uses information for reporting on short-term performance instead of long-term development outcomes threatens the capacity of the state.

Part C: Measuring Our Performance

10. Institutional Performance Information

10.1 Measuring the Impact

Table 11: Impact Statement

Impact statement	Provide quality basic education for all, and lead the establishment and development of a South African schooling system for the 21st century.

10.2 Measuring Outcomes

Table 12: Outcomes Measured by Indicators, Baseline and Targets

Outcome	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Five-Year Target
1. Maintain and develop the system of policies, including the curriculum and assessment, governing the basic education sector to advance a quality and inclusive, safe and healthy basic education system	1.1 Improve the proportion of 6-year-olds (Grade R) enrolled in educational institutions by 2024	96% respectively (2017)	99%
	1.2 Improve the proportion of 5-year-olds (Grade RR) enrolled in educational institutions by 2024	88% (2017)	Enrolment rates of 5 and 6-year-olds at 95% by 2024
	1.3 Improve the proportion of Grade R learners that are school ready by 2024	New: System for monitoring quality will be implemented to determine the baseline by 2022	15% increase of the baseline that will be established in 2022
	1.4 Increase the number of youths obtaining Bachelor-level passes in the NSC by 2024	Bachelor-level passes in NSC: 172 043 (33.6%) in 2018	Bachelor-level passes: 190 000 by 2024
	1.5 Increase the number of youths obtaining 60% and above in Mathematics by 2024	Youths passing Mathematics at 60% and above: 28 151 (12%) in 2018	Youths passing Mathematics at 60% and above: 35 000
	1.6 Increase the number of youths obtaining 60% and above in Physical Science by 2024	Youths passing Physical Science at 60% and above: 30 368 (17.6%) in 2018	Youths passing Physical Science at 60% and above: 35 000

Outcome	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Five-Year Target
2. Maintain and develop information and other systems which enable transformation and an efficient and accountable sector	2.1 Improve learning outcomes in Grade 6 in critical subjects reflected through the new Systemic Evaluation by 2024	New	Grade 6 performance in the new Systemic Evaluation: Mathematics Literacy (targets to be determined after first assessment)
	2.2 Improve learning outcomes in Grade 9 in critical subjects reflected through the new Systemic Evaluation by 2024	New	Grade 9 performance in the new Systemic Evaluation: Mathematics (targets to be determined after first assessment)
	2.3 Improve learning outcomes in Grade 6 Mathematics according to the international SEACMEQ by 2020	Average score for Grade 6 in the SEACMEQ: Mathematics: 552 (2013)	Average score for Grade 6 in the SEACMEQ: Mathematics 600
	2.4 Improve learning outcomes in Grade 6 Reading according to the international SEACMEQ by 2020	Average score for Grade 6 in the SEACMEQ: Literacy: 538 (2013)	Average score for Grade 6 in the SEACMEQ: Literacy 600 by 2020.
	2.5 Improve learning outcomes in Grade 9 in Mathematics in the TIMSS programmes by 2023	Grade 9 performance in the TIMSS: Mathematics: 372 (2015)	Average score for Grade 9 in the TIMSS: Mathematics 420 by 2023
	2.6 Improve learning outcomes in Grade 9 Science in the TIMSS programmes by 2023	Grade 9 performance in the TIMSS: Science: 358 (2015)	Average score for Grade 9 in the TIMSS: Science 420 by 2023
3. Maintain and develop knowledge, monitoring and research functions to advance more evidence-driven planning, instruction and delivery	3.1 Improve the proportion of Grade 3 learners reaching the required competency levels in reading and numeracy skills as assessed through the new Systemic Evaluation by 2024	New	Grade 3 performance in the new Systemic Evaluation: Reading (targets to be determined after first assessment)
	3.2 Increase the average score obtained by Grade 4 learners in the PIRLS by 2021	320 average score in the PIRLS (2016)	355 average score in the PIRLS by 2021
	3.3 Increase the average score obtained by Grade 5 learners in the TIMSS by 2023	376 average score in the TIMSS (2015)	426 average score in the TIMSS by 2023
4. Advance the development of innovative and high-quality educational materials	4.1 Increase the percentage of schools with access to functional internet connectivity for teaching and learning connected through different options, working with the Department of Telecommunications and Postal Services (DTPS)	64% of schools have some connectivity (POA Q4: 2018/19)	90% to be connected for teaching and learning (DTPS and private sector)
	4.2 Improve the availability of quality early reading materials for teaching Home Language Literacy in indigenous languages	New	100% of Grade 3 learners who learn through indigenous languages have graded reading books
5. Conduct strategic interventions to assist and develop provincial education systems	5.1 Increase the number of mediation sessions conducted to ensure accurate interpretation of assessment data	New	7 by 2024/25
6. Communicate information to, and partner with, relevant stakeholders in better ways	6.1 Increase the number of District Director forums held	3 per year	12 by 2024/25

10.3 Explanation of Planned Performance over the Five-Year Planning Period

During the next five years, the DBE will work on implementing the priorities which are linked to the NDP, MTSF 2020–2024 and 2019 SoNA to improve on learning outcomes. In discharging its monitoring and oversight responsibilities, the Department is guided by the National Education Policy Act of 1996 (NEPA). The Department will execute its responsibilities of monitoring the sector as a whole through policy and systems development, as expressed in the NEPA.

However, the nature of monitoring will have to change from face to face monitoring to digital mediated monitoring. As a result of COVID-19 pandemic, the approach taken in annual plans and strategic plans is to shift the timelines for expected performance out, to cater for delays, postponements and the lockdown during the pandemic. The sector outcomes however remain the same - providing basic education to all. It is anticipated that performance against the MTSF and the targets will have to be shifted outwards to accommodate the COVID-19 pandemic. When clarity returns to the budgeting process in future years, this approach will be re-examined

The standards of education provision, delivery and performance throughout the Republic will be monitored and evaluated by the Department annually or at other specified intervals, with the object of assessing progress in complying with the provisions of the Constitution and with national education policy. The Department will undertake the monitoring and evaluation contemplated through the analysis of data gathered by means of education management information systems. The Department will fulfil its responsibilities with a view to enhancing professional capacities in monitoring and evaluation throughout the national education system.

Drawing from the NDP, SoNA, MTSF and the Sector Plan, the Department identified its strategic planning focus areas, namely Early Childhood Development (ECD); Infrastructure /Sanitation Appropriate for Education (SAFE); Reading; Skills and competencies for a changing world; School Safety; and Assessment and Accountability.

Linked to the strategic focus areas, the impact the Department wants to make in the schooling system was defined as: *Provide quality basic education for all, and lead the establishment and development of a South African schooling system for the 21st century.*

The NDP sees better outcomes at the Grade 12 level, driven by improvements in lower grades, as crucial for national development. It is envisaged that by 2030, 80% to 90% of youths should complete twelve years of education, either in a school or a college. In terms of achieving these goals the NDP envisages that one important change would be better public services to cater for the physical, emotional and cognitive development of children before they reach Grade 1. The NDP also highlights that all children should start their learning and development at Early Childhood Development centres. This is of special relevance, given the NDP's goal of shifting key ECD responsibilities from the social development sector to the basic education sector. The basic education sector plan outlines both the need to expand participation in ECD (Goal 11), but also its quality and relevance. The MTSF also emphasises the need for improved school readiness of children. The DBE's response to the ECD and Bachelor passes commitments is through the "Improved system of policies, including the curriculum and assessment, governing the basic education sector to advance a quality and inclusive, safe and healthy basic education".

The NDP targets about 80% schools and learners achieving 50% and above in literacy, Mathematics and Science in Grades 3 and 6 and is supported by Goals 1, 2, 3 and 7 of the sector plan and MTSF Outcome 3. As a way of responding to this commitment, the Department has an outcome on "Efficient and accountable sector through development of information and other systems".

In response to the NDP's call for South Africa to improve its position in international education rankings on the SEACMEQ and TIMMS, DBE outcome focuses on "Advance evidence driven planning, instruction and delivery through developing knowledge, monitoring and research functions". This outcome also links to Goals 1,2,3,7 and 19 of the sector plan and Outcome 2 of the MTSF. Conduct strategic interventions to strengthen Provincial education systems has been identified by the Department to respond to Goal 21 of the sector plan, to SoNA in terms of assessment and accountability to the NDP call "Education institutions must have the capacity to implement policy and, where capacity is lacking, immediate measures need to be taken to address it."

The NDP also stresses promoting constructive partnerships. The Department has committed to achieving this through "Improved communication and partnership with relevant stakeholders". This is also expressed in the sector plan Goal 22 (Improve parent and community participation in the governance of schools, partly by improving access to important information via the e-Education strategy).

The table below graphically maps the points of response between the DBE's expected outcomes, goals and actions (the Sector Plan) and the requirements and intents for the basic education sector expressed by the NDP, MTSF, CEM and SoNA.

Table 13: Alignment of Priorities

DBE Outcome Statement	Link to NDP	MTSF Outcome Statement (Outcome indicators)	Action Plan Goals	SONA/ Ministerial priorities	CEM Priorities
1. Maintain and develop the system of policies, including the curriculum and assessment, governing the basic education sector to advance a quality and inclusive, safe and healthy basic education system.	**Early Childhood Development:** Universal access to two years of ECD.	**Outcome 1: Improved school readiness of children** Proportion of 6-year-olds (Grade R) enrolled in educational institutions by 2024. Proportion of 5-year-olds (Grade RR) enrolled in educational institutions by 2024. Proportion of Grade R learners that are school ready by 2024.	**Goal 11:** Improve the access of children to quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) below Grade 1.	ECD Migration	Early Childhood Development
	Increase the number of students eligible to study Maths and Science at university to 450 000 by 2030 (Bachelor passes).	**Outcome 4: Youths leaving the schooling system more prepared to contribute to prosperous and equitable South Africa.** The number of youths obtaining Bachelor-level passes in the NSC by 2024. The number of youths obtaining 60% and above in Mathematics and Physical Science by 2024.	**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 13:** Improve the access of the youth to Further Education and Training (FET) beyond Grade 9.	Implementation of curriculum focusing on skills for a changing world. Collaborating with DHET to equip teachers with skills and knowledge to teach literacy and numeracy, especially around teacher training and development.	Skills and competencies for a changing world.
		Outcome 5: School physical infrastructure and environment that inspires learners to learn and teachers to teach Increase the number of schools that reach minimum physical infrastructure norms and standards. Schools with access to functional internet connectivity for teaching and learning, connected through different options working with the DCDT.	**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.	Infrastructure-Sanitation.	Infrastructure/ Sanitation appropriate for education.

DBE Outcome Statement	Link to NDP	MTSF Outcome Statement (Outcome indicators)	Action Plan Goals	SONA/ Ministerial priorities	CEM Priorities
2. Maintain and develop information and other systems that enable transformation and an efficient and accountable sector.	About 80% of schools and learners achieve 50% and above in literacy, Mathematics and Science in Grades 3, 6 and 9.	**Outcome 3: Youths better prepared for further studies and the world of work beyond Grade 9** Learning outcomes in Grades 6 and 9 in critical subjects reflected through the new Systemic Evaluation by 2024. Learning outcomes in Grade 6 Maths and reading according to the international SEACMEQ by 2020. Learning outcomes in Grade 9 in Maths and Science in TIMSS programmes by 2023. Average score for Grade 4 in the 2021 PIRLS assessment for Reading. Average score obtained by Grade 5 learners in TIMSS by 2023 for Maths. TIMSS score 420 for Grade 9 Mathematics and Science	**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 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 9 learners in Mathematics. **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.	Implementation of standardised assessments.	Assessments and accountability.

DBE Outcome Statement	Link to NDP	MTSF Outcome Statement (Outcome indicators)	Action Plan Goals	SONA/ Ministerial priorities	CEM Priorities
3. Maintain and develop knowledge, and monitoring and research functions to advance more evidence-driven planning, instruction and delivery.	About 80% of every cohort of learners successfully completes the full 12 years of schooling. **SA improves its position in international education rankings.** SEACMEQ 600 score by 2023. TIMMS score 420 by 2023.	**Outcome 2: 10-year-old learners enrolled in publicly funded schools read for meaning** Proportion of Grade 3 learners reaching the required competency levels in reading and numeracy skills as assessed through the new Systemic Evaluation by 2024.	**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 7**: Improve the average performance of Grade 6 learners in languages. **Goal 19**: Ensure that every learner has access to the minimum set of textbooks and workbooks required according to national policy.	Early Grade Reading Improving the foundational skills of numeracy and literacy, especially reading for meaning.	Reading
4. Advance the development of innovative and high quality educational materials.	"...learning materials are readily available..."	**Outcome 5: Schools with access to functional internet connectivity for teaching and learning, connected through different options working with the DCDT** Schools with access to functional internet connectivity for teaching and learning, connected through different options working with the DCDT. **Outcome 2: Youths better prepared for further studies and the world of work beyond Grade 9** Invest in the development of reading material in indigenous languages for academic purposes, including workbooks (Intervention).	**Goal 20**: Increase access among learners to a wide range of media, including computers, which enrich their education. **Goal 19**: Ensure that every learner has access to the minimum set of textbooks and workbooks required according to national policy.	Eliminating the digital divide by ensuring that within six years, all schools and education offices have access to the internet and free data. Provision of digitised material for learning on a tablet device, focusing on the most disadvantaged schools which are in the poorest communities, including multi-grade, multi-phase, farm and rural schools.	Skills and competencies for a changing world.

DBE Outcome Statement	Link to NDP	MTSF Outcome Statement (Outcome indicators)	Action Plan Goals	SONA/ Ministerial priorities	CEM Priorities
5. Conduct strategic interventions to assist and develop provincial education systems.	"Education institutions must have the capacity to implement policy and, where capacity is lacking, immediate measures need to be taken to address it." "Districts should provide targeted support to improve practices within schools."	None	**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 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 27**: Improve the frequency and quality of the monitoring and support services provided to schools by district offices, partly through better use of e-Education.	Increasing the safety net through pro-poor policies.	
6. Communicate information to, and partner with, relevant stakeholders in better ways.	"By 2030, the schooling system is characterised by learners and teachers who are highly motivated; principals are effective managers who provide administrative and curriculum leadership; parents are involved in the schools their children attend; schools are accountable to parents."	None	**Goal 22**: Improve parent and community participation in the governance of schools, partly by improving access to important information via the e-Education strategy. **Goal 25**: Use schools as vehicles for promoting access to a range of public services among learners in areas such as health, poverty alleviation, psychosocial support, sport and culture.	Strengthen partnerships with all stakeholders. Teach and promote social cohesion, health and school safety.	School safety

11. Key Risks

The following factors have been identified by the Department as key strategic risks that may impact on the achievement of outcomes.

Table 14: Key Risks and Risk Mitigation

Outcome	Key Risk	Risk Mitigation
1. Maintain and develop the system of policies, including the curriculum and assessment, governing the basic education sector to advance a quality and inclusive, safe and healthy basic education system.	• The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the education system will be lasting but cannot necessarily be quantified at this point • Insufficient budget to implement required mandate (unfunded mandate or inadequately funded mandate) • Lack of timeous review of curriculum policy and assessment • Inability to timeously deliver infrastructure for schools • Lack of adequate organisational structure • Inadequate capacity to deliver on mandates. • Inability to attract and retain suitable skills	• Effective planning, management, catch-up of infrastructure and other programmes to support effective learning and teaching in the context of COVID-19 • Develop a programme for monitoring the implementation of Education White Paper 6 to strengthen the system as a whole. • Conduct consultations to regulate and institutionalise curriculum review • Monitor curriculum implementation and use findings to inform curriculum review. • Sourcing of funds for all unfunded mandates through partnerships etc. • Streamline the coordination of programmes to ensure effective use of HRM. • Request additional staff • Streamline the coordination of programmes to ensure effective use of HRM. • Request HRM to conduct skills audit and train personnel. • Ensure effective succession planning to mitigate the impact of loss of key personnel.
2. Maintain and develop information and other systems which enable transformation and an efficient and accountable sector	• Ineffective centralised data management • Validity of information	• Invest in an Information Management System • Collaboration with EMIS on data requirements and collection. • Capacitate personnel on data management and analysis.
3. Maintain and develop knowledge, monitoring and research functions to advance more evidence-driven planning, instruction and delivery.	• Lack of coordinated research process within the sector. • Inadequate teacher development intervention • Inadequate knowledge management	• Motivate for coordinated research processes to serve the sector. • Leverage on the monitoring and evaluation components of the conditional grants through to improve evidence based programme planning and implementation as well as decision making within the sector. • Utilisation of existing curriculum research and collaborate with scholars from different institutions of higher learning. • Succession plans to mitigate the impact of the loss of key personnel • The business process for the filling of posts to be reviewed
4. Advance the development of innovative and high-quality educational materials.	• Inability to convert existing learning and teaching material (LTSM) into interactive and accessible LTSM to all learners.	Sourcing funding from sponsors and private partners.
5. Conduct strategic interventions to assist and develop provincial education systems.	• Norms and standards for provincial monitoring	• Development of norms and standards for provincial monitoring and support. • Joint monitoring visits by National officials,
6. Communicate information to, and partner with relevant stakeholders in better ways.	• Compromised and unavailable Information Technology network • Misinterpretation by media	• Secure data centre for business applications implemented • Arrange Media briefings to provide clarity on issues raised

12. Public Entities

Table 15: Public Entities within the Oversight of the DBE

Name of Public Entity	Mandate	Outcomes	Current Annual Budget (R thousand)
South African Council for Educators	Registration, promotion and professional development of educators, as well as setting, maintaining and protecting the ethical and professional standards of educators.	• Enhances the status of teaching. • Professionalises educators through registering educators appropriately, managing professional development and promoting a code of ethics for all educators. • Professionalises teaching. • Administers and promotes the professional teacher development system.	**13 000**
Umalusi	Develop and maintain a framework of qualifications for General and Further Education and Training: NQF Levels 1–4; and for the attendant quality assurance and certification of such qualifications.	• Promotes quality and internationally comparative standards in FET. • Maintains and improves educational standards through development and evaluation of qualifications and curriculum; quality assurance of assessment, and provision of education, training and assessment. • Continually develops in-depth knowledge and expertise in mandated areas through rigorous research. • Issues appropriate and credible certificates of learner achievement in terms of specific qualifications and subjects on the FET Framework of Qualifications. • Provides reliable and credible leadership and guidance in standard setting and quality assurance.	**139 172**

Part D: Technical Indicator Descriptions (TIDs)

Indicator Title	1.1 Improve the proportion of 6-year-olds (Grade R) enrolled in educational institutions by 2024.
Definition	This measures the percentage of all children aged 6 at the time of the survey who are attending any kind of educational institution (not only Grade R).
Source of Data	General Household Survey, Stats SA.
Method of Calculation/ Assessment	Number of 6-year-olds attending an educational institution divided by the total number of 6-year-olds in the population.
Assumptions	The sample of children in the General Household Survey is representative of the total population of children in South Africa; Reported attendance by the survey respondent can be regarded as a satisfactory, though imperfect, representation of reality.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for Girls: 99%. Target for Youth: N/A. Target for People with Disabilities: 97%.
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	In our annual GHS Report on education, we report by province.
Reporting Cycle	Annually.
Desired Performance	99% of 6-year-olds (Grade R) enrolled in educational institutions by 2024.
Indicator Responsibility	Branch C: Curriculum Policy, Support and Monitoring

Indicator Title	1.2 Improve the proportion of 5-year-olds (Grade RR) enrolled in educational institutions by 2024.
Definition	This measures the percentage of all children aged 5 at the time of the survey who are attending any kind of educational institution (not only Grade R).
Source of Data	General Household Survey, Stats SA.
Method of Calculation/ Assessment	Number of 5-year-olds attending an educational institution divided by the total number of 5-year-olds in the population.
Assumptions	The sample of children in the General Household Survey is representative of the total population of children in South Africa. Reported attendance by the survey respondent can be regarded as a satisfactory, though imperfect, representation of reality.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for Girls: 95%. Target for Youth: N/A. Target for People with Disabilities: 90%.
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	In our annual GHS Report on education, we report by province.
Reporting Cycle	Annually.
Desired Performance	95% of 5-year-olds (Grade RR) enrolled in educational institutions by 2024.
Indicator Responsibility	Branch C: Curriculum Policy, Support and Monitoring

Indicator Title	1.3 Improve the proportion of Grade R learners that are school ready by 2024.
Definition	Percentage of learners having acquired adequate learning foundations to be likely to cope well in Grade 1.
Source of Data	Early Learning National Assessment (ELNA).
Method of Calculation/ Assessment	Number of learners above a defined threshold divided by total number of learners taking the assessment in a nationally representative sample of Grade 1 learners.
Assumptions	The assessment done at the start of Grade 1 will be a fair reflection of the state of school readiness achieved by the end of Grade R.
	Benchmarks for school readiness according to the ELNA will be developed during 2020.
	Literacy and numeracy skills are valid and adequate proxies for school readiness.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for Girls: TBD after first data collection.
	Target for Youth: N/A.
	Target for People with Disabilities: To Be Determined (TBD) after first data collection.
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	Results will be disaggregated by school poverty quintile, noting that Quintile 1 and 2 schools are mainly in rural areas.
Reporting Cycle	Every three years when the ELNA is administered.
Desired Performance	A certain percentage of learners achieving above a school readiness benchmark to be decided based on baseline data collection.
Indicator Responsibility	Branch C: Curriculum Policy, Support and Monitoring

Indicator Title	1.4 Increase the number of youths obtaining Bachelor-level passes in the NSC by 2024.
Definition	Number of learners who achieved Bachelor-level passes in the National Senior Certificate (NSC).
Source of Data	National Senior Certificate Database.
Method of Calculation/ Assessment	Count the number of youths obtaining Bachelor-level passes in the NSC.
Assumptions	Data from officially published NSC reports in January will be used, even though some additional Bachelor-level passes will be obtained through the supplementary examinations.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for Females: N/A.
	Target for Youth: N/A.
	Target for People with Disabilities: N/A.
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	Results will be disaggregated by school poverty quintile, noting that Quintile 1 and 2 schools are mainly in rural areas.
Reporting Cycle	Annually.
Desired Performance	190 000 Bachelor-level passes
Indicator Responsibility	Branch C: Curriculum Policy, Support and Monitoring

Indicator Title	1.5 Increase the number of youths obtaining 60% and above in Mathematics by 2024.
Definition	Number of Mathematics candidates who achieved 60% or more in the National Senior Certificate (NSC).
Source of Data	National Senior Certificate Database.
Method of Calculation/ Assessment	Count the number of youths obtaining 60% and above in Mathematics.
Assumptions	Data from officially published NSC reports in January will be used, even though some additional Bachelor and Diploma-level passes will be obtained through the supplementary examinations.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for Females: N/A. Target for Youth: N/A. Target for People with Disabilities: N/A.
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	Results will be disaggregated by school poverty quintile, noting that Quintile 1 and 2 schools are mainly in rural areas.
Reporting Cycle	Annually.
Desired Performance	35 000 youths obtaining 60% or above in Mathematics.
Indicator Responsibility	Branch D: Delivery and Support

Indicator Title	1.6 Increase the number of youths obtaining 60% and above in Physical Science by 2024.
Definition	Number of Physical Science candidates who achieved 60% or more in the National Senior Certificate (NSC).
Source of Data	National Senior Certificate Database.
Method of Calculation/ Assessment	Count the number of youths obtaining 60% and above in Physical Science.
Assumptions	Data from officially published NSC reports in January will be used, even though some additional Bachelor and Diploma-level passes will be obtained through the supplementary examinations.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for Females: N/A. Target for Youth: N/A. Target for People with Disabilities: N/A.
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	Results will be disaggregated by school poverty quintile, noting that Quintile 1 and 2 schools are mainly in rural areas.
Reporting Cycle	Annually.
Desired Performance	35 000 youths obtaining 60% or above in Physical Science.
Indicator Responsibility	Branch D: Delivery and Support

Indicator Title	2.1 Improve learning outcomes in Grade 6 in critical subjects reflected through the new Systemic Evaluation by 2024.
Definition	Critical subjects refer to Mathematics and languages.
Source of Data	DBE Systemic Evaluation data.
Method of Calculation/ Assessment	The number of children scoring at or above a critical benchmark level of achievement divided by the total number of children writing the assessment (applying sampling weights to ensure national representivity).
Assumptions	The baseline data collection will be used to inform the definition of a critical benchmark level of satisfactory performance, after which targets will be set relative to the initial percentage of children scoring above this benchmark. The sample of schools selected for the Systemic Evaluation will be nationally representative.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for Males: TBD. Target for Females: TBD. Target for People with Disabilities: TBD.
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	Results will be disaggregated by school poverty quintile, noting that Quintile 1 and 2 schools are mainly in rural areas.
Reporting Cycle	Reporting will happen whenever the Systemic Evaluation is undertaken.
Desired Performance	Grade 6 performance in the new Systemic Evaluation: Mathematics - Literacy: (targets to be determined after the first assessment).
Indicator Responsibility	Branch C: Curriculum Policy, Support and Monitoring

Indicator Title	2.2 Improve learning outcomes in Grade 9 in critical subjects reflected through the new Systemic Evaluation by 2024.
Definition	Critical subjects refer to Mathematics and languages.
Source of Data	DBE Systemic Evaluation data.
Method of Calculation/ Assessment	The number of children scoring at or above a critical benchmark level of achievement divided by the total number of children writing the assessment (applying sampling weights to ensure national representivity).
Assumptions	The baseline data collection will be used to inform the definition of a critical benchmark level of satisfactory performance, after which targets will be set relative to the initial percentage of children scoring above this benchmark. The sample of schools selected for the Systemic Evaluation will be nationally representative.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for Males: TBD. Target for Females: TBD. Target for People with Disabilities: TBD.
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	Results will be disaggregated by school poverty quintile, noting that Quintile 1 and 2 schools are mainly in rural areas.
Reporting Cycle	Reporting will happen whenever the Systemic Evaluation is undertaken.
Desired Performance	Grade 9 performance in the new Systemic Evaluation: Mathematics - Literacy: (targets to be determined after the first assessment).
Indicator Responsibility	Branch C: Curriculum Policy, Support and Monitoring

Indicator Title	**2.3 Improve learning outcomes in Grade 6 Mathematics according to the international SEACMEQ by 2020.**
Definition	The Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SEACMEQ) conducts assessments of Grade 6 Mathematics and reading in nationally representative samples across a number of Southern and East African countries every seven years.
Source of Data	SEACMEQ dataset as provided by SEACMEQ.
Method of Calculation/ Assessment	The average score of all learners is calculated by the SEACMEQ based on a nationally representative sample by adding all sampled children's scores (weighting them in accordance with sampling weights) and dividing by the total number of children.
Assumptions	The administration of the SEACMEQ and the calculation of scores using Item Response Theory will be scientifically undertaken by the SEACMEQ office.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for Girls: 600. Target for Boys: 600. Target for Youth: N/A. Target for People with Disabilities: N/A (this disaggregation is not available in the SEACMEQ).
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	Results will be presented by the province.
Reporting Cycle	Every seven years once SEACMEQ results are released. The next survey is planned for 2020 – based on previous experiences, the SEACMEQ should release results in 2022.
Desired Performance	Average score for Grade 6 in the 2020 SEACMEQ assessment for Mathematics: 600.
Indicator Responsibility	Branch C: Curriculum Policy, Support and Monitoring

Indicator Title	**2.4 Improve learning outcomes in Grade 6 Reading according to the international SEACMEQ by 2020.**
Definition	The Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SEACMEQ) conducts assessments of Grade 6 Mathematics and reading in nationally representative samples across a number of Southern and East African countries every seven years.
Source of Data	SEACMEQ dataset as provided by the SEACMEQ.
Method of Calculation/ Assessment	The average score of all learners is calculated by the SEACMEQ based on a nationally representative sample by adding all sampled children's scores (weighting them in accordance with sampling weights) and dividing by the total number of children.
Assumptions	The administration of the SEACMEQ and the calculation of scores using Item Response Theory will be scientifically undertaken by the SEACMEQ office.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for Girls: 600. Target for Boys: 600. Target for Youth: N/A. Target for People with Disabilities: N/A (this disaggregation is not available in the SEACMEQ).
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	Results will be presented by the province.
Reporting Cycle	Every seven years once the SEACMEQ results are released. The next survey is planned for 2020 – based on previous experiences, the SEACMEQ should release results in 2022.
Desired Performance	Average score for Grade 6 in the 2020 SEACMEQ assessment for Reading: 600.
Indicator Responsibility	Branch C: Curriculum Policy, Support and Monitoring

Indicator Title	**2.5 Improve learning outcomes in Grade 9 in Mathematics in TIMSS programmes by 2023.**
Definition	The TIMSS conducts assessments of Grade 8/9 Mathematics and Science in nationally representative samples in countries all over the world.
Source of Data	The TIMSS dataset as provided by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA).
Method of Calculation/ Assessment	The average score of all learners is calculated by the IEA based on a nationally representative sample by adding all sampled children's scores (weighting them in accordance with sampling weights) and dividing by the total number of children.
Assumptions	The administration of the TIMSS and the calculation of scores using Item Response Theory will be scientifically undertaken by the IEA.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for Girls: 420. Target for Boys: 420. Target for Youth: N/A. Target for People with Disabilities: N/A (this disaggregation is not available in the TIMSS).
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	Results will be presented by the province.
Reporting Cycle	Every four years once the TIMSS results are released. The 2019 results are due to be released at the end of 2020. The next survey is planned for 2023 and will probably be released at the end of 2024.
Desired Performance	Average score for Grade 9 in the 2023 TIMSS assessment for Mathematics: 420.
Indicator Responsibility	Branch C: Curriculum Policy, Support and Monitoring

Indicator Title	**2.6 Improve learning outcomes in Grade 9 Science in the TIMSS programmes by 2023.**
Definition	The TIMSS conducts assessments of Grade 8/9 Mathematics and Science in nationally representative samples in countries all over the world.
Source of Data	The TIMSS dataset as provided by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA).
Method of Calculation/ Assessment	The average score of all learners is calculated by the IEA based on a nationally representative sample by adding all sampled children's scores (weighting them in accordance with sampling weights) and dividing by the total number of children.
Assumptions	The administration of the TIMSS and the calculation of scores using Item Response Theory will be scientifically undertaken by the IEA.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for Girls: 420. Target for Boys: 420. Target for Youth: N/A. Target for People with Disabilities: N/A (this disaggregation is not available in the TIMSS).
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	Results will be presented by the province.
Reporting Cycle	Every four years once the TIMSS results are released. The 2019 results are due to be released at the end of 2020. The next survey is planned for 2023 and will probably be released at the end of 2024.
Desired Performance	Average score for Grade 9 in the 2023 TIMSS assessment for Science: 420.
Indicator Responsibility	Branch C: Curriculum Policy, Support and Monitoring

Indicator Title	**3.1 Improve the proportion of Grade 3 learners reaching the required competency levels in reading and numeracy skills as assessed through the new Systemic Evaluation by 2024.**
Definition	The baseline data collection will be used to inform the definition of a "required competency level" of satisfactory performance, after which targets will be set relative to the initial percentage of children scoring above this benchmark.
Source of Data	DBE Systemic Evaluation data.
Method of Calculation/ Assessment	The number of children scoring at or above a critical benchmark level of achievement divided by the total number of children writing the assessment (applying sampling weights to ensure national representivity).
Assumptions	The sample of schools selected for the Systemic Evaluation will be nationally representative.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for Males: TBD. Target for Females: TBD. Target for People with Disabilities: TBD.
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	Results will be disaggregated by school poverty quintile, noting that Quintile 1 and 2 schools are mainly in rural areas.
Reporting Cycle	Reporting will happen whenever the Systemic Evaluation is undertaken.
Desired Performance	Grade 3 performance in the new Systemic Evaluation in numeracy and literacy (targets to be determined after the first assessment).
Indicator Responsibility	Branch C: Curriculum Policy, Support and Monitoring

Indicator Title	**3.2 Increase the average score obtained by Grade 4 learners in the PIRLS by 2021.**
Definition	The PIRLS conducts assessments of Grade 4 reading in nationally representative samples in countries all over the world.
Source of Data	The PIRLS dataset as provided by the IEA.
Method of Calculation/ Assessment	The average score of all learners is calculated by the IEA based on a nationally representative sample by adding all sampled children's scores (weighting them in accordance with sampling weights) and dividing by the total number of children.
Assumptions	The administration of PIRLS and the calculation of scores using Item Response Theory will be scientifically undertaken by the IEA.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for Girls: 355. Target for Boys: 355. Target for Youth: N/A. Target for People with Disabilities: N/A (this disaggregation is not available in the TIMSS).
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	Results will be presented by the province.
Reporting Cycle	The PIRLS results are released every four or five years. The next survey is planned for 2021 and will probably be released at the end of 2022.
Desired Performance	Average score for Grade 4 in the 2021 PIRLS assessment for Reading: 355
Indicator Responsibility	Branch C: Curriculum Policy, Support and Monitoring

Indicator Title	**3.3 Increase the average score obtained by Grade 5 learners in TIMSS by 2023.**
Definition	The TIMSS conducts assessments of Grade 4/5 Mathematics and Science in nationally representative samples in countries all over the world.
Source of Data	TIMSS dataset as provided by the IEA.
Method of Calculation/ Assessment	The average score of all learners is calculated by the IEA based on a nationally representative sample by adding all sampled children's scores (weighting them in accordance with sampling weights) and dividing by the total number of children.
Assumptions	The administration of the TIMSS and the calculation of scores using Item Response Theory will be scientifically undertaken by the IEA.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for Girls: 426. Target for Boys: 426. Target for Youth: N/A. Target for People with Disabilities: N/A (this disaggregation is not available in the TIMSS).
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	Results will be presented by the province.
Reporting Cycle	Every four years once TIMSS results are released. The 2019 results are due to be released at the end of 2020.
Desired Performance	Average score for Grade 5 in the 2023 TIMSS assessment for Maths: 426
Indicator Responsibility	Branch C: Curriculum Policy, Support and Monitoring

Indicator Title	**4.1 Increase the percentage of schools with access to functional internet connectivity for teaching and learning, connected through different options working with the Department of Telecommunications and Postal Services (DTPS) .**
Definition	Connectivity, including broadband, refers to telecommunication in which a wide band of frequencies is available to transmit information. In the context of internet access, broadband refers to any high-speed internet access that is always on and faster than traditional dial-up access. This can be achieved through fixed cable and Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) internet services or through fixed wireless broadband services, such as mobile wireless broadband, where a mobile card is purchased for a modem or laptop and users connect to the internet through cellphone towers.
Source of Data	School Monitoring Survey.
Method of Calculation/ Assessment	Numerator: total number of public schools in SMS sample that have access to functional internet connectivity for teaching and learning; Denominator: total number of public schools; Multiply by 100.
Assumptions	Increased connectivity enhances access to teaching content and learning resources.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for Women: N/A. Target for Youth: N/A. Target for People with Disabilities: N/A.
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	Results will be disaggregated by school poverty quintile, noting that Quintile 1 and 2 schools are mainly in rural areas.
Reporting Cycle	Whenever the School Monitoring Survey is conducted.
Desired Performance	All schools are to have access to information via the internet to enrich the teaching and learning experience.
Indicator Responsibility	Branch D: Delivery and Support

Indicator Title	**4.2 Improve the availability of quality early reading materials for teaching Home Language Literacy in indigenous languages.**
Definition	A package of quality reading materials for the Foundation Phase will be defined, consisting of Lesson Plans, Reading Books and Big Books, to support the teaching of Home Language Literacy.
Source of Data	School Monitoring Survey.
Method of Calculation/ Assessment	The number of Grade 3 learners in schools with access to a defined package of quality early reading materials divided by the total number of learners in Grade 3.
Assumptions	The materials identified in the package will be of sufficient quality.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for Women: N/A. Target for Youth: N/A. Target for People with Disabilities: N/A.
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	Results will be disaggregated by school poverty quintile, noting that Quintile 1 and 2 schools are mainly in rural areas.
Reporting Cycle	Whenever the School Monitoring Survey is conducted.
Desired Performance	Improved quality of early reading materials for Grade 3 learners.
Indicator Responsibility	Branch D: Delivery and Support

Indicator Title	**5.1 Increase the number of mediation sessions conducted to ensure accurate interpretation of assessment data.**
Definition	Assessment data refers to the systemic assessments conducted by the Department in the form of standardised national assessments focusing on the General Education and Training (GET) band. These include the ELNA, the PIRLS, the TIMSS, the SEACMEQ and the TALIS.
Source of Data	Systemic Assessments.
Method of Calculation/ Assessment	The average score of all learners is calculated based on a nationally representative sample by adding all sampled children's scores and dividing by the number of children that participated.
Means of Verification	National Research Coordinators prepare datasets and submit them to international agencies for verification.
Assumptions	Critical stakeholders in the sectors do not have sufficient knowledge to interpret data.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for Youth: N/A. Target for Women: N/A. Target for People with Disabilities: N/A.
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	Reflect on contribution to spatial transformation priorities: N/A. Reflect on the spatial impact area: N/A.
Reporting Cycle	Annually.
Desired performance	7 by 2024/25
Indicator Responsibility	Branch C: Curriculum Policy, Support and Monitoring

Indicator Title	**6.1 Increase the number of District Director forums held.**
Definition	The indicator measures the number of contact sessions/ meetings the Minister holds with District Directors. The purpose of the meetings is to strengthen communication in the sector and share best practices to improve service delivery and the achievement of learner outcomes.
Source of Data	Information is obtained through the forums.
Method of Calculation/ Assessment	Count the number of District Director forums held.
Means of Verification	Reports from the District Director forums. Attendance registers.
Assumptions	Minister's availability guaranteed for at least three meetings in an academic year.
Disaggregation of Beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for Youth: N/A. Target for Women: N/A. Target for People with Disabilities: N/A.
Spatial Transformation (where applicable)	Reflect on contribution to spatial transformation priorities: N/A. Reflect on the spatial impact area: N/A.
Reporting Cycle	Quarterly.
Desired Performance	12 by 2024/25
Indicator Responsibility	Branch D: Delivery and Support

Website:	Facebook:	Twitter:
www.education.gov.za	www.facebook.com/BasicEd	www.twitter.com/dbe_sa