

TWENTY YEARS OF EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION IN GAUTENG 1994 TO 2014

An Independent Review

Edited by Felix Maringe and Martin Prew



Commissioned by the
Gauteng Department of Education

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ABIS	Alliance of Black Independent Schools
ACE	Accelerated Christian Education
ACE	Advanced Certificate of Education
AD(H)D	Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder
AET	Adult Education and Training
AETASA	Adult Education and Training Association of South Africa
AFL	Assessment for Learning
AGM	annual general meeting
ALN	Adult Learning Network
AMS	Association of Muslim Schools
ANA	Annual National Assessment
ANNSSF	Amended National Norms and Standards for School Funding
APLLC	Accelerated Programme for Literacy, Language and Communication
APP	Annual Performance Plan
AROS	Akademie Reformatoriese Opleiding en Studies
ASCI	Association of Christian Schools International
ASECA	A Secondary Education Curriculum for Adults
AZAPO	Azanian People's Organisation
BMT	Broad Management Team
C2005	Curriculum 2005
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CASPA	Catholic Schools Proprietors Association
CATE	Council for Adult Education and Training
CCEAM	Commonwealth Council for Education Administration and Management
CCF	Colleges Collaboration Fund
CDE	Centre for Development and Enterprise
CEM	Council of Education Ministers
CEPD	Centre for Education Policy Development
CETC	Community Education and Training Centre

CHE	Council on Higher Education
CIE	Catholic Institute of Education
CITE	Centre for International Teacher Education
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
COLT	Culture of Learning and Teaching
CPD	continuing professional development
CPTD	Continuing Professional Teacher Development
CREATE	Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity
CST	Circuit Support Team
DAS	Developmental Appraisal System
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DBST	district-based support team
DEA	district enumerator area
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DMT	District Management Team
DOE	Department of Education
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
EAP	Employee Assistance Programme
EAZ	Education Action Zone
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECDI	Early Childhood Development Institute
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EFA	Education for All
EHW	employee health and wellness
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
EMASA	Education Management Association of South Africa
EMGD	Education, Management and Governance Development
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EMT	Executive Management Team
EPU	Education Policy Unit
ESF	Equitable Share Formula
ESSP	Education School Support Programme
ESSP	Extra School Support Programme
FBO	faith-based organisation
FDE	Further Diploma in Education
FET	Further Education and Training
FTE	full-time equivalent
FWSA	Federation of Waldorf Schools in Southern Africa
GCRA	Gauteng City Region Academy
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
GENFETQA	General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act

List of acronyms

GET	General Education and Training
GETC	Gauteng Education and Training Council
GETC	General Education and Training Certificate
GHRDS	Gauteng Human Resource Development Strategy
GICD	Gauteng Institute for Curriculum Development
GJLC	Gauteng Joint Liaison Committee
GNP	gross national product
GPG	Gauteng Provincial Government
GPLMS	Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy
GPLS	Gauteng Primary Literacy Strategy
GSSC	Gauteng Shared Service Centre
GYC	Gauteng Youth College
HOD	head of department
HRD	human resource development
HRM	human resource management
HRM&D	human resource management and development
HRPDA	Human Resource Planning and Development Agency
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IDSO	Institutional Development and Support Officer
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
IEB	Independent Examinations Board
ILP	Illustrative Learning Programme
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
ISASA	Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa
ISD	Independent Schools Directorate
ISER	Institute of Social and Economic Research
ISISF	Informal Settlement Independent School Forum
ISSF	Independent Schools Stakeholders Forum
JC	Junior Certificate
JLC	Joint Liaison Committee
KRG	Kha ri Gude Adult Literacy Campaign
LCD	Link Community Development
LO	learning outcome
LOLT	language of learning and teaching
LSEN	learners with special educational needs
LTR	learner-teacher ratio
LTSM	learning and teaching support materials
MGSLG	Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance
MIP	Massified Induction Programme
MST	Maths, Science and Technology Strategy
MTEF	Medium-term Expenditure Framework

MTL	management of teaching and learning
NAISA	National Alliance of Independent School Associations
NAPTOSA	National Professional Teachers' Association of South Africa
NASCA	National Senior Certificate for Adults
NASGB	National Association of School Governing Bodies
NBI	National Business Initiative
NCESS	National Committee on Education Support Services
NCSNET	National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training
NCTL	National College for Teaching and Leadership
NCV	National Certificate (Vocational)
NEET	not in employment, education or training
NEIMS	National Education Infrastructure Management System
NEPA	National Educational Policy Act
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NLTT	National Landscape Task Team
NNSSF	National Norms and Standards for School Funding
NPDE	National Professional Diploma in Education
NPFTED	National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
NSE	Norms and Standards for Educators
NSES	National School Effectiveness Study
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NSNP	National School Nutrition Programme
OBE	outcomes-based education
OFSTD	Office of Standards
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
OMIGSA	Old Mutual Investment Group South Africa
OSD	Occupational Specific Dispensation
PAEPL	provincial average estimated spend on a public school learner
PALC	Public Adult Learning Centre
PBO	public benefit organisation
PDA	professional development activity
PDE	Provincial Department of Education
PDP	Personal Development Plan
PGP	Personal Growth Plan
PIC	Public Investment Corporation
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PLC	professional learning community
PMDS	Performance Management and Development System

List of acronyms

PPN	Post Provisioning Norms
PPP	public–private partnership
PS	public service
PSA	Public Service Act
PSR	Public Service Regulations
QCTO	Quality Council for Trade and Occupations
QLTC	Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
RPL	recognition of prior learning
RTT	Resource Targeting Table
SABJE	South African Board of Jewish Education
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SACHED	South African Council for Higher Education
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SAELA	South African Education Law Association
SAMA	South African Montessori Association
SANLI	South African National Literacy Initiative
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SASA	South African Schools Act
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SGB	school governing body
SIAS	Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
SIP	Strategic Integrated Project
SLD	Specific Learning Disability
SMT	School Management Team
SMT	Science, Mathematics and Technology
SRN	Schools Register of Needs
SSIP	Senior Secondary Intervention Programme
TDS	Teacher Development Strategy
TED	Teacher Education and Development
TED	Transvaal Education Department
TIMSS	Third International Mathematics and Science Study
UDF	United Democratic Front
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
V-ANA	Verification Annual National Assessments
WSE	Whole School Evaluation

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FOREWORD

The day of 27 April 2014 marked a historical moment in our country as it was the day on which all South Africans – irrespective of race, colour, sex, language, age, religion, geographical location, and political or other opinion – celebrated 20 years of democracy in our country. As part of taking stock, the Gauteng Department of Education commissioned an independent review to provide an overall assessment of the performance of the GDE over the past two decades. As a result, 16 chapters were produced, each of which reflects achievements, challenges and possible solutions for consideration going forward. Some of the high-level achievements confirmed by the independent review cover an overview of provincial performance in standardised assessments.

The independent review has established that in the Grade 12 school-leaving exams, Gauteng performs well in comparison with the other provinces – not only in the simple matric pass rate, but especially when taking into account progression and retention. When comparing the true matric pass rate of any one particular cohort, Gauteng has the highest conversion ratio – that is, the ability to convert Grade 2 enrolments into Grade 12 passes 10 years later. This is perhaps the best indication of the quality of education in a province. Furthermore, Gauteng’s superior performance is not simply a single-year peculiarity, but a stable trend extending back at least to 2004. Given that these conversion ratios could well be used as a measure of efficiency, it can be said that of the nine provinces, Gauteng has the most efficient education system.

During the period under review, Gauteng achieved almost universal access for appropriately aged children to schools and the overall quality of teaching has undoubtedly improved as indicated by the province’s matric results: the province achieved a pass rate of 83.9% in 2012 and 87% in 2013. Many of the measures introduced by the GDE over the past decade, with a focus on improving the quality of education offered in the classroom, have clearly had an impact. It was also revealed that in the 20-year period under review, the GDE managed successfully to create a single, unified education system from four fragmented education systems.

Despite the ‘good story’ exposed through the review, there are also areas of concern or unfinished agendas that have been identified as priorities for the coming five years. As part of its intervention, the department has developed a new Five-year Strategic Framework, which includes ten pillars. In this strategy, the department intends to promote

social cohesion and skills development, and to leverage ICT to modernise classrooms to accelerate delivery of quality teaching and learning.

Through this review, I hope that a foundation has been laid and that the book produced will benefit not only the department as part of institutional memory but our scientific community as a whole in advancing knowledge. In many ways, the GDE, as a game-changer, has led the way in providing lessons for other provinces and beyond to emulate. On behalf of thousands of employees of Gauteng Department of Education, I would like to invite our partners to join us and provide the necessary support in the new journey that we are undertaking in the coming five years. Finally, looking at the history over the last 20 years, I need to compliment my predecessors, particularly the first MEC, Mary Metcalfe, for laying a good foundation during the first term of democracy in South Africa. I must also add my gratitude to former MECs Ignatius Jacobs, Angie Motshekga and Barbara Creecy for stabilising the education system and steering the ship further in the right direction during difficult times.

Panyaza Lesufi

Member of the Executive Council: Education

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Martin Prew and Felix Maringe

The book

This book aims to record the successes of the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) over the past 20 years and also to report and analyse its failures and challenges. It is designed to provide the GDE, at both policy and implementation levels, with analysis of, and pointers for, how challenges could be tackled and perhaps solved in the future. Furthermore, the book sheds light for the general reader onto aspects of how a provincial department operates and why – and with which consequences – certain decisions have been made in education over the past 20 turbulent years, both nationally and provincially.

The book contains 15 chapters or – to be more accurate – essays, which cover many aspects of the mandate, resourcing and implementation processes of the department. Each essay is written by one or more specialists in the subject area. While most of the authors are based at the University of the Witwatersrand, specific writers were identified from outside the university to write particular chapters.

Twenty Years of Education Transformation in Gauteng 1994 to 2014: An Independent Review was internally peer-reviewed in a two-stage process. The first review process was undertaken by the editors. The revised versions of the chapters were then internally reviewed by respective specialists at the Gauteng Department of Education necessitating further revisions which were completed before final acceptance by the editors and by the publisher.

The contents of the chapters have been edited for access and readability but represent the views and analysis of their authors. There has been no attempt to fit these chapters into a particular ideological or educational paradigm. Inevitably, among the authors differing views are held, even over something as basic as how successful the GDE has been in fulfilling its educational mandate over the past 20 years. This, we believe, is as it should be, and hopefully makes the overall book more stimulating and authentic.

The province¹

As an introduction to this book, this section reviews the size and shape of the education system in Gauteng.

The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) was created in the aftermath of the democratic elections of 1994 when the country was divided into nine provinces. As education is a Section 4 function, responsibility for education lies both at national and provincial level. The national department, as defined in the legislation, has the responsibility of setting national legislation and norms and standards and of making sure that these are implemented at provincial level. It also has the overall responsibility for the performance of the education system. The provincial department owns the public schools under its jurisdiction. It sets policies for them and subsidises institutions within the province, within national legislation, and employs the educators who staff the public schools and the various district and provincial offices. It also has the responsibility of monitoring and supporting its institutions and staff.

On its creation in the aftermath of the 1994 elections, the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) had the responsibility of servicing the education requirements of the province, which was producing some 70% of the national wealth. By 2011, Gauteng was also the most populous province in the country with a population of 12.3 million, meaning that about a quarter of the national population was crowded into the smallest province. This means that whatever the GDE does in education has both a local and national impact.

The Gauteng population is the best educated in the country, with 52% of the population having reached Grade 12 – at least 10 percentage points above any other province – while all of Gauteng’s 15 education districts record literacy rates of over 85%, with some being well over 90%. The average household income is also much higher than in other provinces, being R156 000 in 2011, which was three times that of the neighbouring Limpopo Province. As would be expected, Gauteng – along with Western Cape – has a higher percentage of its population having access to running water and electricity than other provinces. However, the wealth is far from being distributed equally geographically. Even in adjacent areas there are huge variations in wealth and access to resources, as can be seen when moving two kilometres from Alexandra Township to Sandton.

In 1996, Gauteng contained under a fifth of the national population and had 1.3 million learners in education institutions. By 2013, there were 2.1 million learners in the province. This is related to increased concentration of the population in the province with the relative decline of mining and farming in other provinces, as well as migration of learners into the province, particularly from Limpopo and Eastern Cape provinces where the education systems are struggling and performance is much lower. The result is

¹ The data for this section has been drawn from a number of unpublished provincial and national education department reports, as well as published EMIS data and 2011 census data reports and data from the CREATE Project.

that 4% of learners each year in Gauteng schools are new to the province. This puts huge pressure on education planners as it is hard to predict this flow of learners year on year.

Perhaps even more impressive has been the growth in budget allocated to education in the province, which grew from R4.5 billion in 1995 to R29.2 billion in the 2013/2014 year. This means that the allocation per learner soared from R3 378 to R12 418. This is well above the rate of inflation, which represents real increases in funding. For learners in public schools this meant that while in 1995 an average of R2 898 was being spent on each learner, by 2013 this was R11 304. However, in the same period there was no explosion in school building. Only 242 new public and special schools were built in this period, averaging just over 12 schools a year. Increasing the number of learners by some 750 000 but only building a few hundred schools obviously means that the existing schools enrol more learners than they did 20 years ago. As a result, while the national average is 475 learners per school, in Gauteng it is 790; Gauteng schools have an average of 28 educators per school, while the national average is 16.3. This makes sense in a province in which the population is mainly concentrated in cities and large townships. However, while the number of learners has risen by over 60%, the number of state-employed educators has risen by only just over 20%. The gap has been filled by larger classes, and also by the burgeoning employment of privately employed educators, with 5 950 privately employed educators (in independent institutions and employed by state schools' governing bodies) in Gauteng schools. However, these educators are not equally spread across all types of schools.

Gauteng, like South Africa generally, entered the election in 1994 with a highly differentiated system based on race. So, while the past 20 years has been about growth in the provincial system, it has also been about creating greater equity and redress, such that all learners in the province have similar schooling experiences irrespective of who their parents are and where they were born. While the GDE is a long way from achieving this, important strides have been made in the state schools to cater for all learners in a relatively equal way. To drive pro-poor funding of schools, a national quintile system was introduced, driven by the National Norms and Standards for School Funding. According to these norms and standards, as amended in 2007, all schools in the country are allocated a quintile status based on a range of community and school capacity indicators. The poorest 20% of schools, which are mainly rural and farm schools, are allocated quintile 1 status and get the highest per capita grants. The next poorest 20% of schools nationally are allocated quintile 2 status and get slightly lower per capita grants – and so on until quintile 5, which contains most of the ex-Model C schools that used to cater for the white community and remain better resourced with generally wealthier parents. Quintile 5 schools get the lowest per capita income.

At the same time as the quintile ranking was made a nationally set system, quintile 1 schools were also declared 'no fee schools'. No-fee status has been extended to quintile 2 and 3 schools progressively at national level. This means that the state provides cost-of-learning subsidies to these schools so that they do not need (and, in fact, are not

allowed) to charge school fees. Gauteng pays the full subsidy to these schools, which in 2013 was R1 010 for quintile 1 schools. However, Gauteng has extended the same level of subsidy to all quintile 2 and 3 schools, presumably on the assumption that the quintile allocation system is somewhat blunt, so the communities that all of these schools serve are not fundamentally different from each other, and that the schools have traditionally not performed very differently from each other.

Further, Gauteng has allowed quintile 4 and 5 schools voluntarily to become no-fee schools if they feel that they could benefit by a secured income instead of having to collect fees from reluctant parents. This goes beyond national policy, as the GDE often does. The result is that although only 50% of Gauteng learners are in quintile 1–3 schools, 62% of the learners in the province are, in fact, now in no-fee schools.

The wide range in the distribution of wealth in the province is starkly illustrated by the fact that only 7% of Johannesburg Central learners are in quintile 1 and 2 schools while 50 kilometres away, in Gauteng North, 69% of learners attend such schools. This is also the only district in the province with less than 90% of its schools having access to running water, electricity, sewage disposal and flushing toilets. The fact that all the other districts have over 90% of such services and that in some districts all schools have these facilities indicates how far Gauteng has come in meeting the basic needs of schools.

Alongside this pro-poor allocation of funding, the system increased access to the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP). There is no doubt that these measures have improved the school experience for many poor learners. Moreover, the way in which the GDE has interpreted and extended the pro-poor provisions has assisted in reducing the artificial differentiation between levels of poverty, to a large extent allowing most Gauteng learners to experience schooling in a similar way, and making the schooling experience considerably better than it was 20 years ago. However, the GDE acknowledges that the education experience that a learner gets in a former white school – which is in quintile 5 and charges fees of over R20 000 per year – is very different from the learning experience of a learner in a no-fee school in a township or rural area. Closing that experiential gap without driving the remaining middle-class learners out of the public system remains one of the greatest challenges facing the GDE.

While South Africa's education system in 1994 was typified by unequal provision based on race, with schools catering for white learners being very different in appearance and resources from those catering for the majority black population, most learners in school were in the state system. Only 5% of Gauteng's learners in 1994 were in independent schools. Many of these schools, such as Sacred Heart College, catered consciously for learners who wanted to be schooled in a multiracial environment, as apartheid crumbled in the 1980s. The middle class at this time, which was predominantly white, found that state schools adequately met their educational requirements, with well-qualified teachers and relatively small classes. At the same time, the apartheid state authorities encouraged such a belief as the schooling system was one of the main routes through which children

were inducted into the rationale for the segregated and differentiated state provision of services, life choices and chances based on race.

However, since 1994 this has changed and there has been a substantial flight of middle-class children out of the state system. In 1995, there were very few non-subsidised independent schools. Now, such schools cater for over 10% of Gauteng's learners, with 230 000 learners attending these schools in 2013. This indicates a largely middle-class reaction to the perceived and real problems that transformation has brought to schools in Gauteng. While racial integration of schools and larger classes persuaded many white parents to seek alternative education forms, many other parents from all race groups have been persuaded to do the same, as the press is littered with stories of incompetent and abusive teachers and a national belief that public school teachers would prefer to strike than teach. Such stories are reflective of the difficult journey that educators have had to walk over the past 20 years. They have been faced with a barrage of changes – having had four different curricula, each one requiring different paperwork and assessment norms – while dealing with what are perceived as unruly and ill-disciplined children with little sanction available since the banning of corporal punishment in 1996 and minimal parental support.

The reality of the legacy of apartheid is that many of the province's teachers, who were inappropriately trained as teachers, struggle to master the content of their subject as well as to manage classes, maintain discipline and teach. In the same period, though, on average, the conditions of service for teachers have improved in the province. While their salaries cost the state R3.6 billion in 1996, by 2013 this had soared to R22 billion as a result of recruitment of more teachers, substantial pay increases, the creation of pay parity between teachers with the same qualifications and upgrading teacher qualifications to a minimum level.

A recent report found that South African teachers' salaries and conditions were comparable with, or better than, those of other middle-income countries such as Malaysia. Employees' pay took up 81% of the provincial education budget in 1996, which increased to 86% in 1999, but has declined to 75%. This means that there is a substantial and increasing budget available for investment in school improvement. In fact, in the same period, the capital budget available has risen from a mere R200 million annually to R1.9 billion in 2013/14.

During the period under review, Gauteng achieved almost universal access for appropriately aged children to schools, including the recent addition of Grade R (Reception) classes in most primary schools. At the same time, the overall quality of teaching has undoubtedly improved, as indicated by the province's matric results, which achieved a pass rate of 86.9% in 2013. Many of the measures introduced by the GDE over the past decade, with a focus on improving the quality of education offered in the classroom, have clearly had an impact.

Nic Spaull's chapter indicates that if matric is calculated both on exam results and the retention of the Grade 2 cohort from 11 years earlier, then Gauteng has consistently been

the highest-performing province in the country. The translation of a higher percentage of learners who did Grade 2 in 2002 into numbers who sat for matric in 2012 in Gauteng also indicates that the Gauteng education system is among the most efficient in the country.

Over 60% of learners complete the schooling cycle without repeating a year or dropping out. An education system in which few learners drop out or repeat and which has a high pass rate in exit exams is more efficient than one in which many learners drop out or repeat, which uses teacher time and energy and eats up resources.

In another indicator of system efficiency, when comparing the number of learner years it takes to produce a matric pass (this measures repetition, dropout and matric failure), Gauteng comes out as the most efficient provincial education system in South Africa, with an average across its districts of 29.4 years of learner effort per matric pass. In five of its districts (a third of its total districts), it takes fewer than 27 years, placing these districts among the top 10 most efficient districts in the country. By this measure, the most efficient district in South Africa is Tshwane South, where it takes 23 learner years of effort per learner pass. However, in a perfectly efficient system it would take 12 years of effort, so there is still a long way to go.

Equally important is that the GDE, driven by a belief that all children have the basic human right to equal access to quality education, has deliberately set out to narrow the gap between the performance of learners from poorer backgrounds who generally attend quintile 1–3 schools, which do not charge fees, and learners from wealthier backgrounds who attend quintile 4 and 5 schools. While there is still a gap in performance between quintile 1–4 schools and quintile 5 schools, which collectively have a matric pass rate of over 90%, the gap has closed considerably: very few quintile 1–3 schools in the province now score below 60%, and 21 quintile 1 secondary schools achieved a pass rate of over 80% in 2012, while a decade ago many were achieving below 50%, with some below 20%.

In fact, in 2012 Gauteng only had four secondary schools scoring a pass rate of below 40% in matric, compared to 50 in 2009. By 2013, this had been reduced to just two schools.

Perhaps as significant is that over 80% of learners who pass matric in the province achieve grades that allow them to proceed to higher education. It is this relative success that is the magnet attracting poorer learners from other provinces. Attending a peri-urban school in Gauteng is often a much more enriching experience than attending any school in some other provinces.

There is still work to be done, though, as the GDE moves to ever greater efficiency while ensuring that learners, irrespective of their backgrounds, have an equal chance of success in the education system. The province still experiences a situation in which learners are being ‘warehoused’ in Grade 10 and, to a lesser extent, in Grade 9 and Grade 7. This implies that schools are deciding who is able to pass matric and holding back the learners whom educators believe are unlikely to pass. Pedagogically this can be defended with the argument that if a learner is not ready for matric, it would be wrong to push that

learner through to Grade 12 like a lamb to the slaughter. However, there is suspicion that much of this warehousing is a school-level response to political pressure to maximise the school's matric pass rate, which is publicly available in league tables. The result in human terms is worrying. There is clear evidence, which is reflected in official GDE documents, that this practice is 'culling' learners – in other words, with almost 50% of Grade 10 learners being overage, there is a strong likelihood that many will drop out if they are warehoused. There is a strong relationship between being overage and dropping out of school (Hunt 2008; Motala et al. 2007).

Also of concern is that while the matric pass rate has risen, the percentage of learners sitting for Mathematics and Physical Science has declined rapidly in the province since the CAPS curriculum has come into effect over the past few years. Gauteng contained two of the 10 districts nationally that had the lowest percentage of learners sitting for Mathematics in matric, with under 30% of learners doing Mathematics in 2012. In 2013, one of these districts still had fewer than 30% sitting for Mathematics.

Further, no district in Gauteng had over half of its matriculants sitting for Mathematics in matric in 2012 or 2013. The result is that only 27.5% of Gauteng learners who sat for Matric in 2013 managed a pass in Mathematics and 22.8% in Physical Science. As these are the base subjects required for accessing most technical, professional and commercial degrees and jobs in most economic sectors such as mining, the medical profession, construction and financial services, this situation must be reversed.

It would be ironic if Gauteng's education system, which is increasingly seen as the most effective and best-performing nationally, could not provide the basic skills and qualifications required by its industries and services and limited the life chances of its learners, compared to Limpopo and Free State where a higher proportion of learners sitting for matric pass Physical Science.

Another area in which improvement is needed is in the selection and professional preparation of school managers. While progress has been made with the work of the GDE's Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance and the Sci-Bono Discovery Centre, as well as with provincial and district interventions, there are still serious gender imbalances seen in school management. While 75% of teachers in the province are female, 66% of school principals are male. So, the old adage that if you meet a man over the age of 40 in a primary school you can confidently address him as 'principal' still holds in many schools in Gauteng. Hopefully, the various upgrade programmes focused on female educators will impact on this imbalance over the next five years.

Finally, Gauteng also has a backlog of classrooms, with a shortage of 2 850 in 2012; this is an average of 190 per district. This is not high compared to other provinces, but is one of the main causes of large class sizes.

While public focus has mainly been on ordinary schools and the system that caters for the majority of learners, this book also looks at the parts of the GDE system that cater for learners who are too young to enrol in school; are undertaking post-school vocational

courses or upgrading their literacy skills; or are not catered for adequately in ordinary schools due to their mental or physical disabilities. These sectors – Early Childhood Education (ECE), Further Education and Training (FET), Adult Education and Training (AET) and Special Schools – have not generally benefited to the same extent as the public ordinary system over the past 20 years, and were particularly neglected in the first post-independence decade. The Further Education and Training sector in the province has been ‘rationalised’ from 33 institutions into eight multi-campus FET colleges. These colleges are increasingly catering for the education needs of the province’s 19–23-year-olds, with nearly 100 000 enrolled and a tenfold increase in funding allocations over the period. This indicates that the colleges are mainly catering for learners who completed matric or dropped out in Grades 10 and 11, rather than being used as a vocational alternative, by those in Grade 9, to the academic schooling system. This may change as FET colleges were recently moved out of the GDE’s jurisdiction into that of the national Department of Higher Education and Training.

Similar changes have occurred in the provision of AET, with the 214 public centres in 1999 being reduced to 47, and the main users (64%) increasingly being young adults repeating their matric. However, as the chapter on AET indicates, the national Kha-re-Gudi adult literacy programme has also increased enrolment and success in this sector of provision.

There has been a similar change in government’s attitude and focus in relation to provision of ECE places and facilities. Traditionally, this has been an arena left largely to private provision. However, as research indicated the importance of pre-school learning experience on later results, and as the education system struggled to find ways of improving South Africa’s performance in international comparability studies, the state’s attention has moved to building capacity in all primary schools to be able to cater for Grade R as an extra year of schooling before Grade 1, housed in schools but staffed by early childhood development (ECD)/ECE practitioners. The intention is that every learner, irrespective of his or her home background, should experience a year of high-quality ECE prior to entering Grade 1. As a result, learner enrolment in Grade R in the province has risen by 300% since 1995, with 120 000 children now enrolled in public Grade R classes.

The provision of education opportunities for learners with learning difficulties has also become a focus of increasing attention over the past decade. While national policy encapsulated in White Paper 6 is moving the country towards mainstreaming such learners – where possible – in ordinary, inclusive, full-service schools, the province has increased dedicated institutionalised provision, with 11 new special schools being built and a process of early identification of learners who would benefit by being in such schools. This responds to educator concerns that catering for learners with serious barriers to learning in large classes where many learners have moderate poverty-related barriers to learning is extremely difficult without extensive specialised training and means

that learners with serious barriers to learning are further marginalised. The province has increased spending on such learners almost tenfold over the past 20 years, with special schools getting a per capita grant well above that of mainstream schools and a higher Post Provisioning Norm for staff as well.

The structure of the book

The book is divided into four broad, progressively connected sections.

Section 1

This section presents the policy and planning framework that guides all implementation. It mainly addresses the ‘Why?’ questions.

The section contains a single chapter, written by the eminent team of Shireen Motala, Seán Morrow and Yusuf Sayed. It explores the policy environment that has developed in education and the GDE since 1994. This chapter is intended as the foundation for the other chapters in the book.

Section 2

The second section explores the implementation frameworks and systems developed by the GDE, including the curriculum, management and governance arrangements, the financial and employment systems and provision of professional development. It mainly answers the ‘How?’ questions.

This section, containing six essays, is intended, along with Section 1, to create the basis of a deep understanding of the GDE and its systems and processes. The first chapter, written by Professor Felix Maringe, explores the curriculum changes that have dominated the education landscape for the past two decades. The chapters that follow explore the financial and governance systems and the human resource and resourcing provisions and processes that the GDE has put in place, and the section ends with a review of the teacher education and development systems that have been established by the GDE and the local universities. These chapters are written by Raj Mestry, Zakhele Mbokazi, Gugu Nyanda and Francine de Clercq with Yael Shalem, all experts in their respective fields. They include many important insights and conclusions and flag important lessons and signposts for the future.

Section 3

The third section talks to the implementation processes and arenas. It focuses on the different elements in the system, such as ECE and AET provision, as well as dedicated GDE institutions for professional development and system improvement. This section mainly answers the ‘Who?’ and ‘What?’ questions.

The section contains six essays, which look at several institutional structures and their performance in Gauteng since 1994.

The first chapter looks at the two main existing institutions that drive teacher and education management in the province: the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGSLG) and the Sci-Bono Discovery Centre. Both have had their original mandate extended greatly since their inception, particularly to include all aspects of teacher development. The eminent international expert on school management, Tony Bush, discusses the implications of these changes on the two institutions.

In the next three chapters, Lorayne Excell, Elizabeth Walton and Edward French with Barbara Dale-Jones, specialists in their respective fields, explore the education provision for pre-school children, children with special needs and adults. This is generally acknowledged as the area in which the education system has struggled to make meaningful progress nationally, as in Gauteng. The issues that the chapters explore are those of marginalisation in the early years after 1994, limited funding, and high hopes supported by expansive policies that have not delivered to the extent that was hoped for.

All three chapters end on a somewhat more positive note with acknowledgement that progress is being made in each field in Gauteng, with the allocation of more funding and prioritisation. This is particularly the case with the drive to get all children into Grade R before they enter Grade 1.

In the next chapter, Anthony Gewer and Makano Morojele explore the situation in the FET sector. The chapter explains how this sector has been badly impacted by being split from education for a number of years while under the Ministry of Labour. It has recently been handed from the Department of Basic Education to Department of Higher Education and Training. All of these political changes – as well as high expectations of the sector’s absorptive capacity; low lecturer morale and skills base; and a radical transformation process involving consolidation of sites – have left the sector scarred and unable to fulfil its mandate effectively.

Finally, Jane Hofmeyr looks at the growth of the independent school sector since 1994 and the challenges it faces from an insider perspective.

Section 4

This final section looks at interventions to improve schools as well as measuring and assessing the performance of learners and institutions. It mainly answers the ‘With what effect?’ question.

This section contains the last two essays in the book. The first, which is written by Veerle Dieltiens and Brian Mandipaza, looks at the process of school improvement with a focus on particular school and district development projects undertaken over the past two decades. The second chapter, authored by Nic Spaull, examines the performance of the Gauteng education system based on exam and test results as well as international comparability studies, and comes to some interesting conclusions about the relative efficiency and performance of the system.

The chapters provide a picture of a provincial education system that has made considerable progress in two decades, bringing together multiple differentiated schooling and education systems and forging a unitary system while trying to achieve fairness and equity across income and race groups in the education experience that children receive, while at the same time stabilising the system and improving its quality of output. This has been achieved with much of the legislation and policy being developed beyond its control by various national departments.

Not surprisingly, given the complexity of this task, there have been changes of direction, failed interventions and experiments, and varied priorities over this period. In the process, almost all of the managers who pioneered the creation of the new department moved on years ago and a new cadre of leaders has taken up their posts as the GDE became a settled bureaucracy.

At the same time, there has been relative stability of staff in many schools. These teachers – not surprisingly – often feel powerless and suffer from innovation overload. This book captures some of the tension between mainly well-intentioned head- and district-office bureaucrats who are trying to make the education system work as best they can, and the practitioners working in schools who just want to be able to get on with their jobs with minimal disturbance.

The picture with which the reader is left is that of a system that has matured but still has a long way to go to be considered high performing against international indicators of school and education institutional performance.

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Policy and Planning

CHAPTER 2

GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: A POLICY REVIEW

Shireen Motala, Seán Morrow and Yusuf Sayed

Introduction

Formed by a complex and contested past, the South African polity has developed in ways that reflect its particular racially segregated and class-divided history. This has led to a semi-federal governmental structure with nine provinces, all nearly entirely dependent on finance from central government, and with considerably circumscribed powers to make policy.

Managing and delivering education is one of the main functions of provincial governments, for which large sums of money are channelled from the centre. This managerial role sits uneasily with policy-making, which is largely initiated by the national Department of Basic Education and, after 2009, Department of Higher Education and Training when the Department of Education (DOE) was divided into two new departments. It is with this provincial policy space that this chapter deals. The context is the significant province of Gauteng, the economic hub of the country.

In this chapter, we talk of ‘policy’ in its widest sense, and include not just formal legislation but also the debates, often heated, that may or may not lead to legislation but comprise an essential part of the policy process. We understand policy to be the ‘authoritative allocation of values’ (Prunty 1984: 42) and that this encompasses strategies to realise contested values.

Some 20 years after the inauguration of the new democratic political dispensation, it is a good time to take stock of progress. At the moment, when primary and lower secondary education (also known as basic education) is almost universally available

and accessed, the question of quality has come to dominate policy debates at national, provincial, district and school levels. Physical access to basic education is necessary but insufficient. Equitable access to quality education also implies meaningful learning and progression to secondary and higher levels. In 2000, at the World Education Forum in Dakar, the South African government committed itself to improving all aspects of education quality. The Forum noted that:

Quality is at the heart of education, and what takes place in classrooms and other learning environments is fundamentally important to the future well-being of children, young people and adults. A quality education is one that satisfies basic learning needs, and enriches the lives of learners and their overall experience of living. Evidence over the past decade has shown that efforts to expand enrolment must be accompanied by attempts to enhance educational quality if children are to be attracted to school, stay there and achieve meaningful learning outcomes (LOs). (World Education Forum 2000)

This policy review of the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) begins with a survey of legislation, and then looks at the policy context and the key priorities of each minister at national and provincial levels. It then examines selected examples of policy implementation and how Gauteng has fared in terms of key priorities, and offers some concluding comments.

Policy-making in the context of concurrent powers

Fundamental in any discussion of educational policies and policy-making in Gauteng, or in any of South Africa's provinces, is the relationship between provincial and national competencies. The concept of 'concurrent powers' implies equality between national and provincial policy-making processes, but this is not the case. Autonomous powers are not reserved for South Africa's provinces in the same way as they are in the states of the United States or provinces of Canada. It is notable that where national documents tend to refer to 'policy' and 'policy-making', roughly equivalent provincial documents tend to use terms such as 'strategy' and 'strategy implementation'.

This differentiation between making policy and implementing programmes precisely represents the power relations underlying the reality, if not the rhetoric, of concurrent powers. Taking legislation to be the distillation and culmination of policy discourse, we will follow this theme through a brief survey of the relevant national and provincial legislation and other related processes such as white papers.

The GDE derives its mandate from and recognises the authority of a number of legislative enactments. The ultimate touchstone, as it is for all government departments, is the Constitution, which declares that education should be available and accessible to all citizens. There is also a range of legislation that is not specifically educational but that nonetheless impinges on the activities of the Department. Examples are the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) of 1999, which guides the financial management of the Department, and the 1997 Batho Pele White Paper, which lays out the ways in which public servants are meant to operate in their interactions with the public and in their approach to service delivery.

There is no need to describe national educational legislation in detail. The key national acts are the National Educational Policy Act (NEPA) and the South African Schools Act (SASA) (both promulgated in 1996, both as amended), and a series of white papers and Acts dealing with early childhood education, further education and training, adult basic education and training, and so on. The key point in the present context is that Gauteng educational legislation follows, as it must, this national educational programme, relating national principles to specific provincial conditions.

Where there is a risk of provincial legislation falling out of line with national policy, provincial legislation must be amended accordingly. An interesting apparent exception occurred in the early days of the new democratic dispensation, in 1995, when the provincial legislature passed the Gauteng School Education Act. In this unique and probably unrepeatable conjuncture, the province was, in the educational sphere, ahead of the national department and its national legislative process. In many ways this act was a precursor of the national SASA and similar legislation passed by other provincial assemblies. However, subsequent amendments of this provincial Act – as of the 1998 Gauteng Education Policy Act, the other key provincial educational law – have been designed to bring them in line with national legislation. Provincial educational legislation to 2003, and its relationship to national legislation, can be traced in a number of consultancy reports produced for the GDE by the legal firm of Cheadle, Thompson and Haysom (2003a; 2003b; 2003c).

We make the point unambiguously: in policy terms, the GDE's room for manoeuvre has always been limited and, in fact, as will be indicated later, has shrunk over time. The fit between national and provincial educational policy and legislation is and must be close, and national takes precedence where there are contradictions between levels. The outline in successive GDE Annual Reports makes this quite clear. However, there is some room for autonomy in provincial education matters, if not to any great extent in fundamental legislation, then in allocation of priorities within an environment where national legislation is authoritative. Policy-making by the GDE operated, and still operates, in this relatively narrow autonomous space. What happened in this space is the subject of the rest of this chapter.

Policy review: An outline of policy to 2013

This review is structured around policies identified with particular national ministers and provincial Members of the Executive Committee (MECs) for education (see Sayed & Kanjee 2013 for a review of education policies since 1994). Into this web we will weave the story of policy and practice in GDE education.

The democratic government, which came into being in South Africa in 1994, showed its commitment to what later became known as Education for All (EFA), epitomised in the 2000 declaration of the UNESCO Dakar Conference, in part by producing numerous policy documents intended to ensure universal equitable access to meaningful learning opportunities. Between 1994 and 2013, there were seven white papers, three green papers, 26 bills (of which 17 were amending bills), 37 Acts and amendments to Acts, 11 regulations, 59 government notices, and 29 calls for comments encompassing basic to higher education (Sayed & Kanjee 2013). During this period, the Ministry of Education was governed by four different ministers.

Under the minister of education in the first democratically elected government – Sibusiso Bhengu (1994–1999) – policy focused on developing frameworks to address the historical inequalities of apartheid, at the same time creating a broad-based vision for a new South African education system, founded on the two keystone pieces of legislation – the NEPA and SASA. While aiming to improve access to education for all South Africans, paradoxically the government also permitted the ex-Model C (formerly white) schools to charge tuition fees, a decision described by many as the semi-privatisation of education (Ahmed & Sayed 2009). The justification, that such user fees would make it possible for these schools to maintain quality (and thereby, in theory, decrease chances of a feared white flight to private schools) and allow scarce state resources to be directed instead to enhance equity, was challenged by many on the grounds that user fees would, in fact, increase inter-school inequalities.

The policies of Mary Metcalfe, first Gauteng MEC (1994–1999) in the post-apartheid era, followed from national imperatives and were largely determined by national legislation, focusing on reconfiguration of the GDE into one department, on the equalisation and redistribution of resources, and on ensuring stability. The premise was that a focus on equalisation would put the province in a better position to address quality. Also, asserting a position at odds with that of the incoming national president and minister of health, the GDE allocated funds for HIV/Aids awareness in schools ‘to deal with the frightening situation that is facing us at present’ (GDE 1999). It was still a period of post-liberation optimism, and while acknowledging the enormous challenges that remained, the MEC felt able to say in 1998 that the GDE had developed a clear vision of education quality and is systematically laying the foundation for the realisation of the aspirations of ordinary people for access to a quality education within a framework of equity and democracy (GDE 1998).

However, performance in secondary schools' final examination – matriculation, or matric – and leaks of examination papers brought the province under scrutiny and invoked criticism. Also, as nationally, the implementation of voluntary severance packages saw skilled and experienced teachers leaving the system, with unfortunate results for stability and expertise at a time of considerable change.

The second period, overseen by Minister Kader Asmal (1999–2004), was epitomised by the Tirisano ('Working Together') campaign. In an important cross-current to presidential and health ministry policy, the HIV/Aids epidemic as it affected educators and learners was stressed, as were school effectiveness and educator professionalism, adult literacy, further and higher education and – significantly in the context of this chapter – the need for the national and provincial departments to work together effectively. The fifth Education White Paper targeted early childhood education and the sixth mooted the creation of an inclusive education and training system to serve learners with special needs. While this more expansive focus showed the desire to address the access and other educational needs of some of the most marginalised groups, progress towards meeting these objectives was very slow. Also, in this period – here, policy must be seen as extending to what is stressed in practice as much as what is expressed in programmatic documents – concern about improvement in matric results began its domination of the educational agenda. This focus on outcomes was welcome, in so far as it led to a focus on efficiency and performance, but limiting as it often tended towards an unbalanced concentration on this summative moment in young people's educational experience.

The focus of Gauteng MEC, Ignatius Jacobs (1999–2004), in line with national objectives, was to implement substantial redistribution through the equitable shares formula, the method devised to allocate funds in a systematic and transparent way from central government to the provinces. He also stressed access and inclusion, but increasingly prioritised gains in efficiency through focusing on performance. Special interventions included the Education Action Zones (EAZs), the Alex Renewal Programme, the Secondary School Intervention Programme (SSIP) and Whole School Evaluation (WSE). The GDE argued that it was in many ways ahead of the national Tirisano strategy, anticipating it with strategic interventions on the impact of HIV/Aids in schools, and on school safety, sports, arts, culture and values. Jacobs focused on balancing personnel and non-personnel expenditure, established the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) and focused on quality in the attempt to reduce the number of underperforming schools in townships (GDE 2000).

The third period, under Minister Naledi Pandor (2004–2008), was characterised by a distinct departure from previous policies that, to some extent necessarily, had emphasised educational access rather than quality. In response to widespread underperformance in basic literacy and numeracy at General Education and Training (GET) level, the Foundations for Learning Campaign (2008–2011) showed strong government commitment to a back-to-basics approach (DOE 2008). This initiative identified literacy

and numeracy learning targets for schools offering the Foundation Phase, and included prescriptive guidelines for the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills, with the aim of better equipping students for the later years of schooling and for potential post-school training and employment opportunities. The initiative was based on the understanding that schemes to improve matric results were unlikely to succeed without focusing on the whole system – especially the early years of schooling – in which the final school examination was embedded.

Gauteng MEC Angie Motshekga (2004–2009) followed suit, focusing on an evidence-based approach to the problems of underperforming schools. She also stressed infrastructure issues and targeted school interventions, performance trends and regional testing. The provincial response to concerns about the quality of schooling was typified by the Accelerated Programme for Literacy, Language and Communication (APLLC) (GDE 2007). In this respect, there is continuity with MEC Motshekga's subsequent concerns as national Minister of Basic Education. She also stressed an issue of increasing importance to Gauteng: the difficulty, from the perspective of education provision and quality, of keeping pace with migration to the province, with the accompanying strain on schools (GDE 2004; GDE 2006; see also Sayed & Motala 2012b).

Since 2009, a fourth phase has been underway, with new policies emerging and significant changes in how education is managed at national level. The National Department of Education was split in two, with schooling and early childhood development centres falling under the Department of Basic Education (DBE), headed by former Gauteng MEC for Education, Angie Motshekga. The other department, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), headed by Dr Blade Nzimande, oversees technical and vocational training, adult and tertiary education.

During this fourth phase, five main trends can be identified amidst the flurry of education policy documents.

1. The back-to-basics approach of the previous phase continues. Accompanying and reinforcing this approach is Action Plan 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025. Echoing Kader Asmal's earlier Tirisano campaign, Action Plan 2014 spearheads national strategic priorities and is the first long-term vision of education in recent years (DBE 2010). Of its 13 output goals, three focus on access; one deals with ensuring enrolment in schooling until age 15; two others target access to Early Childhood Education and Further Education and Training (FET). The remaining goals respond to poor ongoing learner performance in Grade 3 and Grade 6 national assessments and international comparative tests. There is also a strong focus, in Annual National Assessments (ANAs), on testing the quality of language and mathematics learning in all public and government-subsidised independent schools.
2. Outcomes-based education (OBE), which had been introduced incrementally since the late 1990s, came under critical scrutiny. In 2009, the outcomes-based

- Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) was itself revised after being reviewed by a Ministerial Committee, and a new curriculum document, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), came into effect in January 2011, signalling the end of a 14-year attempt to focus teaching and learning primarily on outcomes rather than, for example, on processes or inputs.
3. Policy has begun to give greater credence to the notion of teachers as agents of change. The National Teacher Development Summit in 2009 was an important catalyst, with the resulting Summit Declaration expressing commitment to the development of a coordinated national teacher development plan. On 5 April 2011, the two national departments of education jointly launched the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa, the main purpose of which is to improve and accelerate initial teacher education and continuing professional teacher development, with training for CAPS a priority (Sayed & Motala 2012).
 4. The separation of basic and higher education at the national departmental level has enabled a more intense policy focus on skills development. This was shown in the publication of the National Skills Development Strategy III 2011–2016 and the Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training. This more dedicated approach also saw the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) transferred from the Department of Labour to the Department of Higher Education, by way of Presidential Proclamation 56 of 2009 (*Government Gazette* 2009), a move intended to improve coherence across the university and college systems. It also saw legislation in 2012 to transfer FET colleges from provincial to national oversight, with the transfer taking effect in 2013.
 5. In the past few years, a number of amendments have been made to the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF). This has enabled some important developments. There has, firstly, been an expansion in the number of no-fee schools to assist the poorest families to afford schooling. The determination as to which schools are to achieve no-fee status is based on the quintile system, which is a division of schools into five categories defined by the economic status of the surrounding community (refer to Chapter 1 for more discussion on the quintile system). This was introduced in an attempt to target learners from the poorest families more effectively. This has been less successful than anticipated with, for instance, doubts about allocation of schools to quintiles and unforeseen inequities such as the disadvantaging of learners from impoverished families who attend schools in quintiles that are not classified as no-fee (Dieltiens & Motala 2012).
 6. The most recent NNSSF amendment came in 2011, allowing schools to apply to the head of department for compensation for fee exemptions each year, based on a formula determined by the Department of Basic Education. This is a clear pro-poor development, though even more substantial adjustments will be required if

current inequities are to be fully addressed. Another area of expansion has been the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), with the increased provision of school meals. This programme has been extended to secondary schools.

Yet, despite the range of education policy documents, plans, strategies and interventions produced, and the real progress that has been made, the third decade of democracy in South Africa has nearly arrived with clear evidence at national, regional and international level that the majority of South African learners are far from mastering the basic minimum competencies required by the curriculum. Among these learners it is the poorest and most marginalised who are especially impacted on and prejudiced by the poor quality of the education to which they currently have access.

In the national Department of Education's systemic evaluation of Grade 6 in 2005, learners obtained a national mean score of 38% in the language of learning and teaching, 27% in Mathematics and 41% in Natural Science (DOE 2005). Six years later, the results of the 2012 ANAs show some improvement in the Foundation Phase, but alarmingly poor results in the Intermediate and Senior Phases. Compared with learners internationally, including those in many other African countries, South Africans often score lowest (Strauss & Burger 2000; HSRC 2004). South Africa also has the highest levels of between-school performance inequalities in both Mathematics and reading, in comparison with regional counterparts like Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (Van der Berg 2011).

This is the national background against which Gauteng MEC Barbara Creecy (2009 to the time of writing) has worked in Gauteng. Under her leadership, the GDE has focused on districts as an important node of delivery and large-scale literacy and numeracy interventions. The most significant of these was the 2010 Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS). This is envisaged as an intervention enabling Gauteng schools to realise President Zuma's target of 60% of learners reaching the required proficiency levels in Language and Mathematics in Grades 3 and 6 by 2014. The strategy uses assessment information to guide improvement. Accompanying this was a continued stress on the improvement of educational quality. This included attempts to confront the under-qualification and incapacity of many teachers with, for example, a coaching programme to support Foundation Phase teachers, the first in the country, and intensified intervention into Grades 10–12 through the SSIP. Finally, Adult Basic Education and Training and Early Childhood Education received renewed emphasis in this period.

Gauteng was in tune with national educational policy, but was also, in some respects, in advance of much of the rest of the country, even moving ahead of national government in the speed and depth with which it applied reforms. Nonetheless, Gauteng faces challenges that reflect those at national level.

The GDE's policy and legislative development since 1994

The years after 1994 saw significant provincial legislation within the national policy framework, though with some important shifts of emphasis. The 1997 Gauteng Education Policy Act led to the formation of the Gauteng Education and Training Council, which affirmed the important role of stakeholders in education and training. Another initiative aiming to promote broad participation was the establishment of the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaigns (QLTCs) in 2009, which aimed to ensure that the voices of parents were heard.

In 2002/2003 the review of Gauteng legislation took place, and in the mid to late 2000s Gauteng actively led the way in terms of regulations and amendments to promote access and equity. Specific amendments were put in place to regulate admission to schools through improved planning and administration, as well as dedicated poverty alleviation programmes. An example is the scholar transport system for learners who walk more than five kilometres to school. Possibly the most important strategy, which anticipated national policy, was the introduction of the no-fee policy for quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools, the extension of this to quintile 4 and 5 schools that requested no-fee status, and the implementation of the exemption policy, in keeping with the 2010 Polokwane resolutions. Also significant were the regulations for school governing bodies (SGBs) that safeguarded the rights of parents, and for independent schools that aimed to guarantee the quality of these schools' education, to ensure that the subsidy is used only for educational purposes and that these schools meet minimum standards. Norms and standards for funding of Grade R were instituted. Other important regulations were introduced relating to norms and standards for school infrastructure and teacher performance.

Regarding quality, legislation and regulations focused on implementation of the learning and teaching support materials (LTSM) policy, the intervention strategy around coaches and mentors, the Education Action Zones (EAZ) strategies, training parents to support learning, and providing homework supervisors and additional resources at school level through Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs).

Provision of exemplar policies for schools shifted the emphasis from compliance to support in important areas such as governance, budgeting and leadership support. The Gauteng Education Laws Amendment Act of 2011 captured many of these provisions.

The main focus, therefore, was on implementing national policy, development of Gauteng-specific legislation, dealing with the complexity of concurrent powers and creating an enabling environment for delivering on the key goals of access, quality and equity.

Notwithstanding the significant changes of the past 20 years, coherence has been lacking in the province's approach to learner performance. The biggest challenge has been in the area of school change and quality, and while Whole School Evaluation (WSE), the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) and other strategies and policies are in place, alignment is lacking. This is partly an inheritance from the earlier

period, when there was an absence of sufficient planning capacity to establish a coherent strategy across the different policies and practices. What was needed was a cycle of school improvement and performance, and improved bureaucratic accountability. Important interventions were started and then faltered, because of funding and capacity constraints and because of insufficient planning to be sustainable. In addition, destabilising shifts in emphasis took place, depending on the orientation of the various MECs.

Policy tension has arisen between national and provincial levels, particularly in relation to concurrent powers and unfunded mandates such as the establishment of learner–educator ratios prescribed by the national department. The equitable shares formula – the mechanism for quantifying the sums disbursed from central government to the provinces, taking into account population, level of economic development and poverty and regional imbalances – is a significant redress–funding mechanism. It has, however, led to the indicative amounts allocated to education differing considerably from actual amounts received, with sectors such as health and welfare receiving increasing disbursements (Van der Berg 2011). SASA has been in existence for nearly 20 years, and as a senior GDE official noted, ‘it may be time to re-examine it, particularly in terms of SGBs and we need to move towards a single model of public schooling’ (Interview with Albert Chanee, 10 June 2013).

Holding schools accountable for learner performance continues to be a key challenge, in particular making them accountable for both processes and outcomes. There are difficulties, however. School governing bodies (SGBs) and school management teams (SMTs) have a quasi-managerial governance role, but social class separation has increased, with implications for governance. With the middle class tending to seep away from the public schooling system, SGBs often do not have the requisite skills. To reduce the burden on parents, SGBs should be reviewed and the administrative capacity that schools require should be reconsidered (Interview with Dan Lekgoate, 15 June 2013).

Teacher professionalism and accountability, content knowledge and competence continue to be major issues, as they are nationally. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) have led to some predictability in what is expected of and by teachers. Often the minimum is done, and this is within a framework in which there is minimal monitoring and evaluation. Too much prescription of and support in implementing the curriculum may reduce teacher innovation. There are, of course, objective difficulties: for example, multilingualism will continue to be an ongoing challenge because of the polyglot nature of urban settlement and therefore of school learners, continually reinforced by in-migration from all parts of the country and from elsewhere.

There has been a more aligned and structured approach to work across departments in the social sector. The governmental Cluster System is one indication of this.

Public–private partnerships could receive more attention: partnerships are too often seen as gestures of goodwill, rather than as substantively contributing to reduced costs. Interventions are not donor-funded, and corporate social investment tends to support poorer provinces, yet the GDE is leading the way in innovation and could use its expertise

to assist the provinces that are lagging to preclude these provinces from employing costly consultants. There are also policy tensions about the funding and regulation of the independent school sector, particular the low-cost sector. To what extent should the GDE continue to subsidise the low-fee independent school sector, and should it encourage this sector to grow?

The GDE has introduced an innovative model of school support. The District Office model currently being implemented focuses on multidisciplinary teams working in school clusters and circuits. This model informed the 2013 national policy for Education Districts (DBE 2013). Thus, as a senior GDE official noted, what is required is not more school visits but multidisciplinary teams with different approaches to outsourcing services, giving not only more appropriate service but also value for money.

From a provincial perspective, the GDE has led the way in certain respects. In the first five years of democracy, it produced legislation on FET and ABET, admissions policy, equalising class sizes, and putting more resources into poor schools (GDE 1998; 1999; 2005; 2012). It was ahead of other provinces in universalising schooling access and getting children off the streets and into schools. In the initial years of democracy, provinces had more autonomy in important areas such as the choice of textbooks, prescribing feeder areas and establishing teacher reviews. These policies were in the context of the concurrent powers of the time where the balance was somewhat more in favour of the provinces than, as it subsequently became, of central government. In terms of equity gains, Gauteng was the first province to transfer the full subsidy to schools, which contributed to the equalisation of choices for all learners and led to the no-fee policy.

Translating policy intentions: Equitable access and quality in Gauteng?

National as well as Gauteng provincial policy has been driven by the twin imperatives of equitable access and quality. Each policy in the range of policies considered in the section above has at its core the vision of education expressed in the Freedom Charter, with ‘the doors of learning and culture’ open to all; in addition, quality should be evident and the poor and marginalised should benefit. In this section, we consider the extent to which equitable access and quality have been achieved.

Divided access to well-resourced schooling

Unlike in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, daily school attendance in South Africa is high, repetition rates are relatively low and dropping out is rare, at least during primary schooling (Meny-Gibert & Russell 2012). However, while Grade R access has improved, only 42% of the age cohort is served. Nonetheless, at least 2% of all children nationally

still never attend school; these are the most marginalised, often suffering from disabilities, deep poverty and lack of access to social grants.

While attendance is not necessarily a major problem, the learning environment remains problematic. This is not surprising given the scale of need identified by the School Register of Needs in 1996. Much of the policy effort since 1994 has thus been directed, under the rubric of redress as a constitutional commitment, to correcting hastily created systems and structural inequities in schooling environments. In general, poorer schools – unlike their ex-Model C counterparts – suffer, *inter alia*, from shortage of classrooms and a lack of fencing, sanitation and playgrounds. This detracts from a healthy and positive learning environment. Schools physically mirror the poverty of their surroundings and the communities in which they are located, often being as under-resourced and dilapidated as their poverty-stricken environs (or as richly endowed and well maintained as their wealthy neighbourhoods) (Dieltiens et al. 2012). While a better physical environment does not guarantee better performance, it is important in its own right. Learners should be able to attend schools where toilets are clean and windows intact, and where they have chairs. In Gauteng, reprioritisation in the 2011/2012 infrastructure programme is trying to make a tangible impact on backlogs in rehabilitation and preservation, but problems persist and it is acknowledged that ‘severe maintenance problems exist’ (GDE 2009). The promulgation of national and provincial minimum norms for schools is an important, though not fully achieved, policy step in realising the redress imperatives of the post-1995 education policy environment.

While education has been desegregated, the simple reality is that 20 years on, schooling remains bifurcated. Students from the middle classes (mainly white, and the emerging black elite) remain concentrated in historically white institutions while those from the working class and rural poor are concentrated at historically black institutions. The opening up of public schools has not fundamentally altered the historical and geographical patterns of advantage and disadvantage, with high-quality education still retaining a strong association across every measure with historically advantaged institutions. Thus, a ‘two-nation’ educational structure exists, reflected in a two-tier system of education. This results in a poorly resourced educational sector serving the poor and mainly black population, while the wealthy have access to private and semi-private public schools that serve mainly whites and the new black elite (Badat & Sayed 2014).

Inequitable progression

While gender parity has been largely achieved and apparently maintained in the GDE, as measured by enrolments and attendance, this masks substantial gender bias in the schooling system. More boys than girls are retained beyond basic education into FET, and sexual harassment and the absence of safe spaces, especially for girl learners, are problematic (Dieltiens & Ngwenya 2010; Motala & Dieltiens 2008). Boys tend to move

through the system at a slower pace than girls, and are more likely to repeat, so more girls than boys proceed to matric. Nevertheless, on average, girls do not excel academically as much as boys. This pattern is especially clear in Gauteng.

Gender inequities in progression are accompanied by inequitable progression across school types. It is evident that learners from schools in quintile 5 (and independent schools) continue to be disproportionately represented in higher education and arguably in positions of high-paid employment and in leadership roles in industry and commerce.

Quality and learning remain a problem for the poor

Understandably, much policy attention has been paid to ensuring equitable access. It is only in recent policy that quality has received prominence.

Severe unevenness in education quality is evident in many ways. Research (Motala et al. 2012) shows that while repetition and dropping out are generally low in South Africa, it is highest for the poorest and the most marginalised. Case study research in the Ekurhuleni South district of Gauteng found that repetition was highest in Grade 1 and then declined, increasing again at secondary school level, with a significant increase at senior secondary school level. Patently, this is a direct result of official policy whereby one repetition is allowed per phase, creating dropout pinch points at the start or end of phase cycles (Motala et al. 2009; Shindler 2012). This unintended effect of policy resulted in only 46% of learners who started Grade 1 in 1997 making it through to Grade 12 by 2009 nationally. This impacts mostly on the poor (DBE 2010).

Perhaps the most important marker of inequity as noted above is that access beyond basic education (after Grade 9) remains limited for the poor. The Consortium for Research on Educational Access Transition and Equity (CREATE) found many dropouts who had completed Grade 9. The biggest dropout period in the South African schooling system is thus unequivocally from Grade 10 to Grade 12, where many schools hold learners back from Grade 12 for fear that they will fail to matriculate and thus damage the schools' pass rates. It appears that many then drop out of school before doing the examination (DOE 2008; Meny-Gibert & Russell 2012). Dropping out of post-basic education, in contrast, is low for learners from richer schools, explaining why a disproportionately high number of learners from such schools complete a full cycle of 12 years of schooling and go on to access tertiary education.

While progression and transitions are important markers of quality, it is learning in the classroom that has most impact on life opportunities. Research for CREATE showed that learners in Gauteng performed far below the levels expected of them in numeracy tests (Pereira & Du Toit 2012). The majority of learners were not at the level expected for their grade, and numeracy outcomes were poor. Very little actual teaching and learning took place: lessons often started late, much time was spent maintaining order, teachers did most of the talking, and learners were passive and contributed little (Dieltiens et al.

2012). Such proxy measures of quality once again tell the story of a divided schooling system 20 years after 1994.

There are many reasons explaining inequitable national and provincial learning attainment. CREATE findings confirm those of earlier research that many Foundation Phase teachers are unable to teach learners adequately how to read and write (HSRC 2005; Taylor et al. 2010). Poor-quality teacher knowledge is linked to teaching performance. Research found that use of workbooks in Gauteng varies widely between schools, with significant differences in coverage of learning outcomes (LOs). Findings suggest that more attention needs to be paid to investigating differences in opportunities to learn within and between schools and how these may play themselves out in terms of learners' performance (Venkat 2012).

In short, 20 years after the achievement of democracy, good-quality education remains elusive for the poor (Sayed & Kanjee 2013) and while Gauteng may be relatively better off than other provinces, the poor quality of learning in poorer schools remains worrying.

Real and meaningful choice for the middle class only

By all accounts, SASA was the most significant policy act post 1994 in education. It sought to balance strong parental involvement in school with efforts at redress (Sayed 2013). It provided choice for parents and guardians in that it allowed them to enrol their children in whichever school they choose (the so-called 'soft-zoning policy'). However, there are fewer secondary than primary schools in most areas, and the reality is that choice is restricted by competition for places at this level, as well as, in general, for places in schools formerly reserved for white learners. Moreover, it is evident that it is largely the middle class that has sufficient choice of schools, given the persistence of residential settlements that still largely reflect apartheid geography: the black middle class is moving rapidly into the wealthier, previously white suburbs, where many of the better-quality schools are located, but the poor remain trapped in distant and under-resourced areas with access, mostly, only to poorer-quality schools.

The soft zoning policy thus reproduces, rather than mitigates, the geography of what is still in effect segregated residential settlement. The majority of poor parents are not able to exercise choice in schooling, having to send their children to schools in close proximity to their places of residence. However, for those who can afford higher fees and/or higher costs of transport, proximity is likely to be far less a factor than it is for other parents, and schools' perceived quality a much greater factor (Luxomo & Motala 2012).

Schools' languages of learning and teaching also limit parents' choice of schools, particularly in Gauteng, forcing some learners in the earlier grades to travel long distances to schools that teach in their home language (Motala & Dieltiens 2008). The GDE's

Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS) attempts to confront these problems. Inadequate mastery of the language of learning and teaching is a major factor in the abysmally low levels of learner achievement; yet many parents prefer (with their children's concurrence) to have their children taught in English by teachers who are themselves second-language speakers (Alexander 2010; Lafon 2009; Motala & Dieltiens 2008). A Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD) report, commissioned by the GDE, on the implementation of the language policy in schools in Gauteng, found that about half of the Foundation Phase children in the province are being taught in a language that is not their mother tongue.

Home support for learning reflects the racially divided and class-stratified nature of South African society, with poorer parents lacking the time and cultural capital to support their children's education adequately, and middle-class parents more likely to encourage learning and to send their children to higher-performing schools. The voices of many parents and caregivers are not sufficiently heard at school level, whether they believe they 'own' or adopt a more detached view of the school their children attend. Nevertheless, for all parents, care, discipline and the quality of teaching are high on the list of educational priorities. Despite their general lack of participation in school affairs and their low levels of involvement in their children's learning, parents value school-going to the extent of making the best of what they have or keeping their child in a school they do not like but that is better than no school at all (Luxomo & Motala 2012; Motala & Deacon 2011).

The Gauteng Strategic Plan 2010 to 2014 found that many school governors do not perform their duties and responsibilities. Policies and procedures to govern the school's human, physical and financial resources often do not exist or are outdated. Despite the increased resourcing levels and investment in SGB and SMT development activities, it notes that 'we have failed to get the schools of poorer communities to work effectively' (GDE 2009: 22).

While policy changes to governance have been striking and – some might consider – far-reaching, the reality is that unequal distribution of wealth and capacity in society conditions the extent to which the poor can use these devolved powers to improve their children's schooling and uplift their communities. While the devolution of education control is a laudable policy intention, its implementation and efficacy in highly unequal societies remain challenges.

This section has provided four snapshots of the realities of education policy change in post-apartheid South Africa nationally and provincially. While there has been much progress and while race no longer features explicitly as a marker of differentiation, in many ways the challenge of providing high-quality education to the poorest communities remains. Equitable access and quality as part of a programmatic policy platform for redress falls short for those for whom it matters most. A more active and aggressive transformation strategy is called for in the coming years.

Poverty alleviation strategies

Gauteng has put in place important poverty alleviation policies that promote the goals of access, equity and quality. Some key examples are discussed below.

Access to school education has been enhanced by the exemption of poor learners from paying school fees and outlawing discrimination against and exclusion of learners who cannot afford them in fee-paying schools. The issue has been progressively eliminated in Gauteng's poorest schools, as they are declared no-fee schools and receive increasing per capita allocations year on year. In return for the per capita grant these schools are not allowed to charge school fees (GDE 2012). In addition, orphans have automatic access to all schools and do not have to pay fees. Many of these children have been orphaned because of the death of their parents from HIV/Aids, so this policy is in large part designed to assist young people affected by the epidemic.

However, the persistence of fee-charging schools alongside no-fee schools helps to sustain a class-differentiated education system. The recent extension of no-fee schooling to approximately 60% of schools has arguably reduced the five-quintile to a two-tier system. The no-fee schools policy may have had important positive effects in creating greater access by poorer learners to schools, but such improved access is not necessarily the same as access to better quality (Sayed & Motala 2012a; Sayed & Motala 2012c).

The National School Nutrition Programme operates within the framework of a conditional grant from the national Department of Basic Education. The main aim is to ensure that needy learners are fed daily at primary schools. In 2011/12, 1 004 458 learners – that is, all learners at no-fee schools – benefited from the Programme, a major increase from the 172 325 learners being fed in 2004. Extension of the scheme to learners to quintile 3 secondary schools in 2011 added 151 527 learners to the scheme.

School transport was provided in 2011/12 for 57 187 primary and secondary school learners who lived more than five kilometres from their school, thereby improving school attendance among a vulnerable group.

Improving education quality in South Africa: Strategies and plans

A number of strategies relating to education emerge from current thinking.

The first is government's reiteration of the 'back to basics' approach, also evident in Gauteng. Citing national, regional and international achievement data, proponents of this approach argue that the many post-apartheid innovations and changes have destabilised the education system by introducing interventions neither well suited to the poor nor within the current capacity and capability of teachers. In response, it can be said that

rather than such inherently biased and narrowly utilitarian approaches to education, what poor learners need are varied and challenging curricula and forms of pedagogy that suit their particular contexts and circumstances.

The second strategy argues that policy is not the problem, but the lack of effective monitoring and supervision of schools and teachers. Efforts to address this include instituting special measures in underperforming schools and signing performance contracts with senior education officials reflecting a ‘what gets measured, gets done’ approach. In October 2010, the Minister of Basic Education and members of the nine provincial Executive Councils signed a Basic Education Delivery Agreement committing themselves to improving the quality of teaching and learning; undertaking regular assessment to track progress; ensuring a credible, outcomes-focused planning and accountability system; and improving Early Childhood Education. The solutions proposed are management-centric, in the form of additional training of principals, varied new approaches to management and dedicated leadership institutes.

A third approach argues that resolution of educational problems in South Africa might instead be found in effecting changes in governance. The approach has persuasive policy appeal, as structural changes often give the appearance of movement, reform and innovation. However, the assumption that structural changes have a direct and constructive impact on what happens in the classroom is contestable; in reality, revitalised governance procedures may be necessary but may not be sufficient to address the situation.

Finally, education is, of course, embedded in South Africa’s social and political realities. Popular participation or non-participation, corruption, nepotism and the like are all relevant to education in Gauteng, and policy needs to take such realities into account. Such issues, however, go beyond the themes dealt with in this chapter.

Conclusion

In the past 20 years, the GDE has made significant progress in education and training, which is increasingly being aligned with skills required in the economic sectors. The strategic focus has been twofold: firstly on institutional factors dealing with learner and educator discipline, school safety, poor hygiene, cleanliness and infrastructure, and poverty and social deprivation; and secondly on learning-related problems that address curriculum management and inadequate coverage, the quality of teaching and classroom assessment, and the ineffectiveness of school-based systems for monitoring curriculum delivery (GDE 2009). The location and identification of tasks that the GDE needs to undertake in the future is clear and well informed, ensuring that learning and the context in which learning is taking place is addressed.

While there are no shortages of policy proposals to improve education quality, it is important to build on processes that already exist, even if in some cases they are weak in form or substance. Moreover, it is of great significance that, despite the generally poor

quality of education offered, school-going in South Africa remains highly valued, even among the poorest of the poor. Such practices and perceptions need to be used as points of intervention for ensuring meaningful learning, by revitalising them and making the policy agenda geared towards EFA more inclusive, feasible and achievable. For this to occur, continued and coordinated policy planning and effective implementation (and a narrowing of the gap between the two), concerted attention to the nature of teaching and learning in the classroom, and improved support for and development of teachers will remain necessary. Most fundamentally, a much more explicit, proactive and equity-driven approach is needed, one that prioritises the neediest and most marginalised and works towards contextually specific and indigenous understandings and approaches to education change and reform.

All this, we believe, is desirable. However, to return to the issue raised at the beginning of this chapter, it has to be remembered that there are severe limitations to the independence of provincial departments. Broad policy is set by national government, and while departments such as the GDE may operate more or less efficiently and effectively, and may develop innovative routes to a common goal, they are essentially implementing agencies, and must work within the ambit of policies set in Pretoria, not Johannesburg.

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Implementation Frameworks and Systems



CHAPTER 3

TWENTY YEARS OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN GAUTENG: SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

Felix Maringe

Introduction

The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) has been at the heart of the successes achieved and challenges faced in implementing the national school curricula in the province since 1994. Over the past few years Gauteng has been outperforming all other provinces in the country in terms of percentages of learners achieving matriculation success; entry to universities; number of distinctions in the critical subject areas of Science, Mathematics and Technology (SMT); and in the Annual National Assessment (ANA) tests (see, for example, DBE 2013). This is no small achievement.

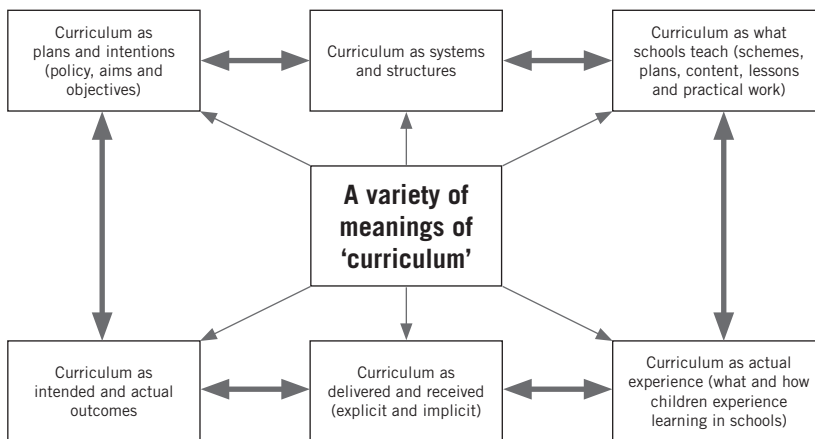
Three key strategies seem to be at the centre of this achievement, although this may have to be tempered by the fact that significant budgets have been invested in reforming and improving curriculum performance in the province. The first has been the department's ability to integrate its plans with those of the province and to seize opportunities in both the City of Johannesburg and the province more widely to drive improvement in education. The second is the readiness of the department to engage commerce and business to support educational development through the creation of key strategic organisations. The third has been an ability to invest money where it matters the most, i.e. in strategies and programmes known to have high impact in driving school

improvement. However, despite the significant achievements noted in the province in the past 20 years, there are challenges ahead, which are destined to shape the future of education in the province.

The curriculum

There is a mistaken but quite pervasive notion that curriculum only refers to the plans that educators and policy officials make for teaching and learning in schools. Curriculum is a much broader concept than this and encompasses a wide variety of activities, processes, inputs, outputs and outcomes that define and shape decisions about teaching and learning in schools, providing a framework for what is considered to be worthwhile knowledge on the basis of which teaching and learning decisions can be made. It is also a political tool for transforming society, often marking radical departures from, and continuities and discontinuities between, the past, current and envisaged future purposes. It is, however, an amorphous term, characterised by lack of consensus about its exact meaning. For purposes of this discussion, curriculum will be used in its broadest sense, encompassing the prescriptions that are set by the government for teaching and learning in schools; the experiences of those who work with it; the management of the educational experiences in schools; the inputs and outputs expected and achieved; and the impact of teaching and learning in schools. Figure 3.1 is the author's attempt to build a conceptual frame for understanding this nebulous idea.

Figure 3.1: Multiple meanings of 'curriculum'



Based on this broad perspective of the concept, the purposes of the curriculum and associated performance measures in Table 3.1 will be used as a basis for determining achievements and challenges in the province of Gauteng over the past 20 years.

Table 3.1: Purposes and benchmarks for the curriculum

Purposes and intentions of the curriculum	Selected performance measures/benchmarks
Ideological transformation	The extent of unification of the system, policy-level and epistemic unification
Equity and access	Improvements in educational participation for racial, gender and socio-economic groups and ameliorating deficit for disadvantaged groups
Transforming teaching and learning	Supporting educators to cope with the needs of the curriculum; adequate resources to support teaching and learning in schools
Equalising opportunities to learn	Support for learner needs across the continuum of performance; interrogating educator and learner absence
Enhancing quality of learner outcomes	Matric examination and ANA results improving
Motivating staff	Supporting staff experiencing stress; improving staff working conditions
Promoting indigenous knowledge and languages	A working language policy in schools

Some of the elements in Table 3.1 will be used as a framework for exploring curriculum developments both in terms of the achievements and challenges still being faced in the province since the dawn of democracy in 1994.

The policy and legislative context

Rafts of national policies and constitutional changes have been developed over the years, which aim to provide a legislative framework for the delivery of a new education based on the principles in Table 3.1. These include:

- The new Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA 1996a);
- The White paper on Education and Training (DOE 1995);
- The National Education and Policy Act (NEPA) (RSA 1996b);
- The South African Qualifications Act (SAQA) (RSA 1996c), which established the Education and Training Quality Assurance Bodies under the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA);
- The South African Schools Act (SASA) (DOE 1996), which created a single public school system based on principles of democracy and equity; and
- A raft of other policy frameworks promulgated in the years that followed, including the Higher Education Act (RSA 1997b), the Further Education and Training Act (DOE 1998), the Education Law Amendment Act (RSA 1997a) and the Employment of Educators Act (RSA 1998), among others. Between 1994 and 2013, there were no fewer than 25 official education policy pronouncements in South Africa. This demonstrates on the one hand the complexity of transformation associated with turning a once deeply divided society into the intended multiracial nation, and on the other hand the slippery nature of establishing a democratic society in which everyone has a stake.

South Africa's major curriculum thrusts

Since 1994, four major national curriculum reforms have been pronounced. The first sought to rid the school system of racially offensive curriculum materials inherited from the apartheid era, described by Jansen (1997) as the 'essential alterations' curriculum reform process. The second focused on the introduction of continuous, as opposed to the previous episodic or summative, assessment processes. It was felt that the summative assessment formation largely served to promote a rote-learning culture, which was seen as underpinning the apartheid teaching and learning culture promoted especially for the undervalued and under-resourced sectors serving the majority of black schools. However, the most ambitious curriculum reform was the introduction of outcomes-based education (OBE), which resulted in the introduction of the first post-apartheid curriculum, Curriculum 2005 (C2005), which was planned on an incremental model starting with implementation in Grade 1 of primary school and envisaged for full implementation across the school system by 2005.

A critique of the rationale for OBE

Outcomes were meant to displace the over-emphasis of content orientation from the inherited apartheid curriculum. This seemed to be in line with international trends at the time, which were calling for reform in education in light of the knowledge explosion discourses and the need to teach learners how to acquire knowledge rather than focusing on the acquisition of the knowledge itself. As Jansen (1997: 2) puts it, 'outcomes would signal what is worth learning in a content heavy curriculum'. However, the language of C2005 became overly complex, introducing a raft of new and difficult-to-understand vocabulary for a largely under-prepared educator force, compromising effective implementation in the process.

Outcomes-based learning was seen as better inclined towards the skills-oriented society that South Africa needed in order to prepare citizens for their roles as the economic drivers of the new economy and labour markets (Mahomed 2002; Mohamed 2003). This, however, was an overly ambitious – and possibly even unrealistic – expectation as schools are generally the last places to rely on for development of labour market skills (Psacharopoulos & Woodhall 1985).

In a more process-led learning environment, teachers had to be transformed from content-givers to facilitators of learning. This was largely translated by many educators to mean that they had to abandon the content of education and allow learners to discover for themselves. However, this tended to undermine the authority of educators while promoting an unsuccessful culture of learner-centred cooperative learning, which ignored the fundamental subject content knowledge.

It was assumed that C2005 would transform and create a more professional educator force. On the contrary, evidence on the ground suggests that the educator force at the time was very poorly trained and that due to ineffective preparation for the curriculum reform, educators were confused by the reform, which left them feeling incompetent (Brady 1996).

By their dependence on stated outcomes, C2005, along with OBE, could be criticised for violating democratic learning principles and for going against the philosophy of some teaching subject areas, such as the Physical and Biological Sciences and Mathematics, which seek to promote the discovery, rather than the simple verification, of knowledge through predetermined outcomes.

The belief that a process is more important than content, which has been at the heart of the new reforms, has been challenged over the years. Its negative impact has been clearly demonstrated in the poor standards associated with the South African school system as a whole. Constructivists, for example, recognise the importance of a process but situate content as the primary pillar of the educative process. The task of the educator is to determine the most efficient and effective processes to transact content learning (Shulman 1986; Cochran et al. 1993). Content is perhaps the most important lever for generating outcomes and has to be at the heart of any learning process.

Numerous challenges befell C2005 both nationally and in the Gauteng province, most of which were related to the issues raised in the critique of its assumptions as outlined above. If anything, the system continued to experience failure with close to 60% of learners at primary level failing to achieve the required levels of mathematics numeracy and literacy expected of them at the end of the respective cycles of education (Fleisch 2008). Furthermore, the country continued to do poorly in international educational performance measures. Much of this failure was attributed to the new curriculum, especially as it was seen as having removed educators from the heart of the instructional process, both advertently and inadvertently. Following the Chisholm report in 2000, which sought views from across a wide range of stakeholders, C2005 came under severe pressure for reform. Criticisms against it ranged from issues about its complexity to the failure by many educators to distinguish it from the OBE and, most importantly, its diluted focus on teaching reading and numeracy including the absence of specific instructional guidelines for educators. This led the country to rethink the nature of its curriculum. In recent years, South Africa has come up with a series of new curricula.

Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS)

Issues of lack of clarity about the content of learning at various levels and phases of the school system and curriculum overload were instrumental in the need to revise C2005. The RNCS articulated several dimensions, which hitherto had not been spelt out clearly. It clearly stated the nature of the learners it expected to produce. Learners were

expected to demonstrate the values of a democratic society; the sanctity of life; equality; human rights; and social justice. Values of independence, lifelong learning, respect for the environment, and critical and active citizenship were also highlighted as key indicators of the type of learners intended through this revised curriculum. The RNCS was also clear about the type of educators needed to drive this curriculum. They were expected to be qualified, competent, dedicated and caring in accordance with the requirements of the department's norms and standards for educators (DOE 2000). It provided a structure for eight learning areas including Languages, Mathematics, Natural Science, Social Science, Technology, Arts and Culture, Economic and Management Sciences and Life Orientation. In each of these areas, the values, skills and knowledge underpinning the content of the curriculum were clearly spelt out for all phases. It also identified a core of high-level knowledge and skills, which formed the basis of content for learners at higher levels of competency and as a way to create opportunities for extending learning from the baseline levels aimed at the entire cohort of learners. Unlike C2005, the RNCS clarified the distinction between outcomes and assessment standards, making the selection of teaching content and assessment criteria a lot easier for educators. The RNCS also allocated time for each learning area, phase and lesson. This enabled educators to grapple with the issue of variable access, equity and equality of opportunity in a more realistic way.

However, since the RNCS was not introduced as a new curriculum and was explicitly still an outcomes-based curriculum, space was opened up among educators and administrators to interpret it in a variety of ways. In addition, there are claims that the assessment support and guidance was inadequate, as was support for curriculum guidance and planning. Lastly, educator training in universities did not respond quickly enough to underpin the implementation of the revised curriculum. The home language policy for teaching at foundation levels has been implemented in various and contradictory ways, as it is open to parental determination.

In turn, the RNCS was subjected to a review commissioned by the Minister of Education. This was in part driven by South Africa's poor showing in the regional Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) tests. In this test, both the language and numeracy skills are below the regional median. The criticisms of the RNCS created space for the creation of yet another curriculum in South Africa.

The CAPS curriculum

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) (DBE 2011) have been designed as a comprehensive framework for teaching and learning from reception to year 12, replacing the RNCS's Subject and Learning Area Statements, Learning Programme Guidelines and Assessment Guidelines for all subjects. The CAPS represent a new national curriculum policy statement across all phases of learning in schools,

stipulating content to be taught; activities to support the learning of content; standards for assessment of knowledge, skills and values; and the amount of time for each learning area in the curriculum. Compared with C2005 and RNCS, the CAPS can be seen as a prescriptive curriculum with sufficient guidance to support the work of educators on a grade-by-grade and subject-by-subject basis.

However, it was not long before CAPS was also being subjected to critique. Some of the problems associated with the implementation of the CAPS curriculum include the following:

- The unequal times allocated to home and generic language teaching, creating less space for English language use and teaching in some schools (see, for example, CIE 2010);
- In some subject areas there is no assessment weighting stipulated, making it difficult for educators to judge the relative importance of the different elements of the syllabus. Mathematics has been singled out as content-dense in some grades, compromising the quality of teaching and the opportunity for learners to attain the expected competences;
- In Natural Sciences, suggested projects are seen as overly complex, disadvantaging learners in schools with limited resources; and
- No textbooks have been suggested for the human and social science curriculum areas, with CAPS opting rather for educators to use the Internet as a resource. This disadvantages learners in rural schools with limited or no Internet access. The issue of late delivery of textbooks has been raised in many provinces.

Factors contributing to curricular success in Gauteng

While there does not seem to be much hard evidence to make claims about success in the curriculum anywhere in South Africa, there are several distinguishing and unique features associated with Gauteng province about which we can hypothesise as contributing to the province's relative success over the past 20 years. The data used here was based on a focus group discussion held with three long-serving members of the department, which was corroborated with documentary evidence that underpinned some of the strategies.

The best indicator demonstrating curricular success in the province is its performance relative to other provinces in the matric examinations written in Grade 12. This may be a questionable indicator of curricular success given the arguments surrounding the use of summative testing as a valid indicator of school performance (Joubert 2012). However, it remains the most direct and reliable proxy for casting light on what is happening in schools.

Gauteng Province sits at the top of the provincial performance tables in terms of the quality of matric results. In 2012, 12 of the 15 districts in Gauteng produced a pass rate

in excess of 80%. None of the 23 districts in the Eastern Cape did, suggesting significant differences in provincial performance across the country. The national pass rate at Grade 12 is approximately 68%, while the Gauteng pass rate has been significantly higher at above 75% since 2009. In 2012, 43% of matriculants in Gauteng gained entrance to university compared to a national average of around 20%, implying that the province is increasingly becoming the biggest producer of talent for universities. This is an achievement and shows clearly the progress that the GDE has made relative to other provinces since 1994. Although the notion of dysfunctional schools is debatable, by whichever measure used Gauteng has the smallest percentage of schools that may be considered dysfunctional compared with other provinces.

Several factors, strategies and interventions are assumed to have contributed to Gauteng's pre-eminence in relation to other provinces.

Structural contextual factors

Gauteng is the smallest province in the country. This means that there are smaller distances to travel for provincial and district officials on school inspection duties. It also means that issues of materials and textbook delivery and educator and school networking are less complex than in other provinces. The province also has a relatively small number of rural schools. However, it has a high percentage of township schools which, according to Mbokazi (2013), presents a unique set of challenges exemplified by high incidences of drug and substance abuse and teenage pregnancy; high prevalence of gang cultures in schools; learner absenteeism from school; higher rates of educator absenteeism from work; and high incidences of learning disruption due to frequent theft of technological equipment and computers, among others.

Such challenges remain a formidable obstacle to school improvement in the majority of Gauteng's township schools. However, the recent strategy for bringing computers and Internet connectivity to schools across Gauteng also places schools in the province at significant technological advantage compared with schools in largely rural provinces such as Mpumalanga and Limpopo.

Strategic interventions

The GDE has what may be described as a proactive strategic culture that has served its curriculum reform well over the years. A few examples are briefly discussed below.

The Education Action Zones (EAZs)

In the early years of democracy, despite the structural changes that replaced the highly segregated school system in South Africa, school performance statistics continued to evidence the signs of a largely dysfunctional education sector. Policy-makers and academics felt that rather than seeking to reduce bureaucracy, the system of accountability in schools had to be strengthened (Fleisch 2006). Bureaucratic accountability was thus seen as a strategy for turning dysfunctional schools around. Within the original proposed 20 EAZs, the following strategies were put in place, most of which impacted on curriculum delivery (Jacobs 1999):

- A special tutoring programme for learners;
- Extra monitoring of educator progress on the official syllabi;
- Training for educators in high-risk subjects;
- Establishment of education–business and education–religious fraternity partnerships;
- Special security arrangements with the police services; and
- Added support for the governing bodies of targeted schools.

In the 70 schools that participated, matric results improved from an average pass rate of 15% to about 35% in the first year (Fleisch 2006). The strategy confirms the theory that pressure and directive have a place in securing much-needed change, especially in severely underperforming schools (Hargreaves 2003; Hopkins 1998; Slavin 1998). The improvement in learner outcomes measured in terms of matriculation pass rates in schools facing difficult circumstances placed under increased monitoring and supervision suggests that directed change has had some positive impact on curricular performance in the province.

The Science, Maths and Technology (SMT) strategy

Given the importance of Science, Maths and Technology (SMT) subjects in modern economies and that Gauteng is the economic hub of the country and the continent, and given, also, the fact that the results in these subjects have been consistently lower than in other subjects – and that in comparison with other nations, performance of South African learners in these subjects has been persistently poor – the GDE put into place a strategy for improving the teaching and learning in these subject areas during 2010–2014. The strategy was based on three key goals that relate strongly to curricular improvement:

1. To increase and enhance the human resource capacity to deliver quality SMT education to all learners;
2. To increase the participation and performance of learners in SMT in the General Education and Training (GET) and Further Education and Training (FET) bands, giving special attention to black and female learners, and learners with special education needs; and
3. To provide and encourage optimal use of appropriate resources to deliver quality SMT education to all learners.

The goals were supported by a wide range of strategies including in-service training for existing educators; supporting universities to intensify knowledge enhancement training; enhanced pedagogical approaches, including training in the use of ICT to deliver SMT curricular subjects; career guidance in SMT subjects; scholarship provision for students intending to study SMT subjects at universities; and resourcing and equipping school science laboratories with up-to-date teaching and learning equipment.

Although the outcomes have been described as modest in real terms since the start of the project, universities have reported increased applications in SMT subjects and overall pass rates in these subjects have been on the increase (GDE 2012).

The Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS)

Funded by the GDE, the Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS) was initiated by the Gauteng MEC for Education in 2010 (GDE 2012). It was designed to realise President Zuma's target of ensuring that 60% of learners reach appropriate proficiency levels in Language and Mathematics in Grades 3 and 6 by 2014. Fleisch (2007) noted that between 70% and 80% of South African children, overwhelmingly from disadvantaged schools, were completing their primary schooling without being able to read fluently in their schools' instructional language, while a similar majority were completing school with little or no capability in even the most basic mathematical operations of addition and subtraction (Fleisch 2008; Moloi & Strauss 2005).

The Strategy has four pillars, each of which has specific relevance to curricular improvement:

1. Using assessment information to guide improvement;
2. Providing educators with support through the provision of detailed daily lesson plans, high-quality learning materials, in-class coaching and just-in-time training;
3. Working with parents and the wider community; and
4. Training school management teams and district professionals.

Beginning in January 2011, with an initial focus on Foundation Phase literacy in 740 underperforming schools, by 2013 the Strategy had expanded to serve over 1 060 schools from Grades 1 to 7 in both Mathematics and Language (Home and First Additional Language). The Strategy works directly with 480 Language and Mathematics coaches, who work with 12 education NGOs serving over 12 000 educators and close to 900 000 learners. The Strategy has developed, field-tested and refined detailed CAPS-compliant daily lesson plans for all primary school grades in both Mathematics and Languages (Foundation Phase classes cater for a total of 10 languages in Gauteng). The GPLMS has developed a catch-up programme for Intermediate Phase language learners. As a result of the baseline study, the GPLMS commissioned and procured African-language Foundation Phase graded readers (Vula Bula books). Working with McKinsey & Company, it has developed a sophisticated approach to the ongoing training of Language and Mathematics coaches. The Strategy has gained considerable expertise in the selection of quality reading networks for Intermediate Phase second-language classrooms.

With the final evaluation for Phase 1 (2010–2014) due in October 2014, available interim results look promising.

Table 3.2: Achievement in Grade 3 Language for GPLMS and non-GPLMS schools for different test instruments (%)

	Systemic Evaluation 2008	ANA 2011	ANA 2012
GPLMS schools	27.3	37.0	51.9
Non-GPLMS schools	58.9	54.7	63.4
Difference (percentage points)	-31.6*	-17.7*	-11.5*

Notes: * indicates that differences in means are statistically significant at a 1% level of significance

Figure 3.2: Distribution of Grade 3 literacy scores in Systemic Evaluation 2008, ANA 2011 and ANA 2012 (GPLMS schools)

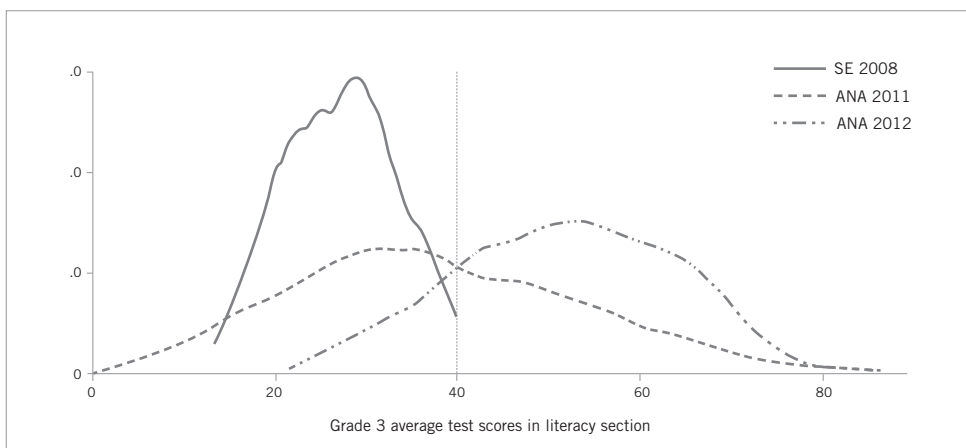
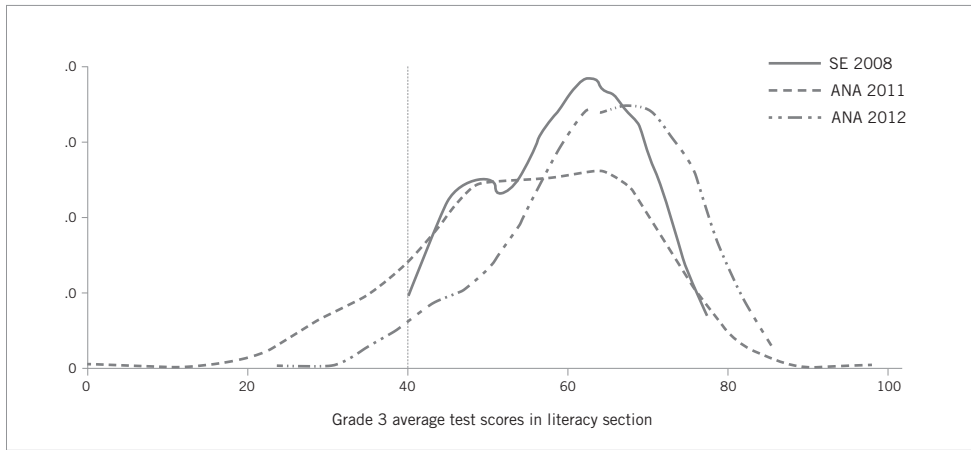


Figure 3.3: Distribution of Grade 3 literacy scores in Systemic Evaluation 2008, ANA 2011 and ANA 2012 (non-GPLMS schools)



GPLMS Phase II: 2014–2019

Phase II of the Strategy is planned with two components. The first, which has already begun, centres on mainstreaming the Strategy into the core business of the GDE. The second component focuses on deepening the instructional components of Mathematics and Language teaching in schools, building on and deepening the instructional innovations introduced in Phase I. In line with a growing body of research, the GDE will initiate a specialised course focusing on building the Mathematics content knowledge of educators, micro-targeting support and accountability, and developing new approaches for slower learners and multi-grade classrooms.

The Secondary School Improvement Programme (SSIP)

Improving schools and teaching in addition to learning opportunities contributes strongly to curricular performance. Following research commissioned by the GDE, aimed at finding ways to enhance the quality of performance at matriculation level in the province, the MEC at the time of writing (Barbara Creecy), after consultation with schools and parent bodies, announced an extended school programme of revision at about 100 centres across the province. Three subject areas were selected in which it was felt that the need for improvement was strongest. Revision classes were mounted, resourced and facilitated to take place on Saturdays over a designated period running up to the examinations in October 2010. The results of this intervention were remarkable. All of the 216 schools that participated in this programme had notable improvements in

their matric results. The number of distinctions in Mathematics, Mathematics Literacy, Physical Science, Accountancy and Life Sciences in these schools increased by between 8% and 18%.

It is important to note that much of the improvements related to these various intervention strategies can be directly linked to the huge financial investment in these strategies. The challenge going forwards will be that of sustained improvement with reduced direct financial investment.

Capacity-building programmes

Various capacity-building programmes have been undertaken in the province in the past 20 years. This is in recognition of the fact that staff members are the most important resource, especially in terms of their curriculum knowledge and their commitment. Programmes aimed at developing subject area experts through in-service knowledge-enrichment courses have been conducted in conjunction with local universities. Despite inevitable staff mobility, transfers, promotion and natural forms of wastage, the programme has been linked to some modest improvements in the learning outcomes of learners at both primary and secondary schools.

In 2011, MEC Barbara Creecy announced a R1-billion budget for improving teaching and management standards in schools. Through this initiative, almost 2 800 Grade R teachers were identified as needing upgrading in content and subject pedagogical knowledge, and about 3 000 educators in primary schools as needing further training to meet the needs of the new literacy and numeracy strategy. Above all, it was also indicated that more than 4 500 members of senior management teams in schools in challenging circumstances needed training and support in implementing school improvement plans. The GDE has also conducted competency assessments of 975 principals and deputy principals to identify areas of improvement for better management of curriculum delivery at school level. Six hundred and fifty principals and deputy principals have already been trained on educator performance management, strategic planning and financial management. It is anticipated that such enormous investment in the people will lead to notable improvements in school outcomes and, especially, in learner performance. Nevertheless, human resources improvement on its own without investment in material resources and strong supervision and monitoring of performance does not always translate to significant improvement, especially in the context of school-based improvement.

Strategic partnerships

Four key agencies in Gauteng have had a profound impact on the quality of education and on the general school improvement in the province. The work of these agencies

has been reported extensively elsewhere in this book. Therefore, only brief reference will be made to these in order to complete the picture about what makes Gauteng a relatively successful educational environment, particularly in relation to the delivery of the curriculum.

Sci-Bono Discovery Centre

Opened in 2004 in Johannesburg, the Sci-Bono concept is a unique Gauteng idea that brings private business and commerce into partnership with the education department to drive improvement in the teaching and learning of the SMT curriculum in the province. Working within the remit of the province's SMT strategy, the centre provides support to schools in challenging circumstances, both in terms of educator education and in creating access for learners to state-of-the-art science and technology equipment, discussion groups, debates and presentations on topical issues. Educator education initiatives tend to include knowledge-expansion sessions for designated periods with supported teacher replacement programmes, which have proved a very useful element of staff development models. The number of visitors to the centre, including school visits, has been increasing significantly over the years, a testimony to the centre's increasing influence. While there has been no formal evaluation conducted yet on the impact of Sci-Bono, the weight of anecdotal evidence suggests that the project is having a positive impact in schools (see www.sci-bono.co.za).

Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance

The Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGSLG) was opened in 2003 in response to the research that showed how important school leadership is to school improvement. It focuses on issues of school, district and provincial leadership and management training that are central to curriculum improvement in schools. Significant numbers of schools in the province now have principals and members of senior management teams, including school governing body members, who have undertaken training and staff development at the MGSLG. Although there is no strong evidence yet, such schools have tended to be linked with notable improvements in learner outcomes and the improvement of teaching and learning in particular (Bush & Glover 2009).

The Gauteng City Region Academy (GCRA)

Continuation and progression are important indicators of curricular success. The GCRA was developed to pursue the third strategic goal in the GDE strategy, enabling young

people to make the transition from school to further education and work that provides further training opportunities. Its activities relevant to this chapter are centred around the need to provide effective careers education in schools through counselling, support and the provision of information to facilitate decision-making and to support learner choice. The programme has embarked on the training of specialist careers guidance staff using laypeople who are doing an excellent job supporting learners in different schools in the province.

Through research, the programme has helped to identify key barriers at school and curriculum levels that militate against learner progression and transition to higher forms of learning. These include unhelpful subject combinations in schools, inadequate space in the curriculum to integrate career guidance properly and prevailing negative attitudes towards FET in schools. Despite these issues, the GCRA has had some impact in promoting careers education in Gauteng schools. However, despite the achievements, much still needs to be done in relation to the advice and guidance that learners get about subject choices and subject combinations in schools. Because of the pressure to produce high matriculation pass rates, some learners are shunted into courses that are considered less demanding, ensuring better matric results but providing less value in the competition for places in universities and in the workplace. A case in point is the issue of Mathematics Literacy (ML), which a significant number of Gauteng learners are advised by their schools to do in place of Mathematics.

Curricular challenges in Gauteng

Despite the progress that has obviously been made in the province, Gauteng faces some significant challenges going forwards. Emerging from the interviews conducted with GDE staff and from analysis of the aforementioned, the challenges fall into three broad groups.

Working with and for diversity

Gauteng hosts the most cosmopolitan city in South Africa and arguably on the African continent. As such, its population demographic has transformed, as it has progressively become host to multinational communities. The need to integrate diversity into the department's strategies for development has now become urgent. Schools need help with issues of implementing the language policy, especially in this highly linguistically diverse environment. More and more educators from outside the country are now teaching in Gauteng. The need for understanding the backgrounds, training, skills and experiences of these educators is critical and can only enhance the delivery of the curriculum and the learning experience in Gauteng schools. With increasing learner and educator diversity

comes the need to rethink classroom pedagogical practices with adequate sensitivity to the learning needs of learners from different parts of the world.

Closing the gaps in school achievement

Gauteng has made significant inroads in terms of improving the delivery of the curriculum and its learners. However, gaps in achievement continue to exist when measured in terms of race and socio-economic background, and whether the school is rural or urban (Fleisch 2008). For example, black children perform, consistently, the worst of all race groups in tests of reading and spelling at primary level. The issue may not be racial but largely poverty-related. In addition, schools that suffered historical disadvantage in the apartheid era continue to underperform in the system. For example, the majority of dysfunctional schools in South Africa are in the rural areas, former homelands and townships. Increasing bureaucratic accountability, strengthening support for educators, increasing learning materials for learners and protecting learning time are strategies with the greatest potential for yielding improvement in schools that perform poorly and in curriculum delivery (Hargreaves 1998; Marzano et al. 2005).

Prospective strategies for enhancing further curricular success in Gauteng

A number of strategies are suggested that could propel the province to further pre-eminence in terms of curricular success.

A baseline school improvement strategy

School improvement research and initiatives directly impact on curricular improvement. It is suggested that a province-wide strategy for school improvement based on research into factors known to contribute significantly to curricular performance and improvement be developed for the province. Seven variables have been distilled from research as creating the most secure foundation for school improvement that leads to curricular improvement. Improving schools all over the world share the following characteristics:

- They have a safe and orderly environment characterised by an absence of behavioural problems and the presence of self-respect, respect for educators and respect for the learning environment. The environment is free from physical harm and learners are purposeful and free from disruptive noise; educators are

businesslike in their approach, and relationships with learners and parents are open and friendly.

- They have a climate of high expectations for success characterised by awareness among learners, parents and staff of the skills, competences and habits that breed successful learning and a prevailing culture of high expectations among all stakeholders.
- They are led by strong instructional leaders who dedicate and focus the energy of the school towards instructional improvement, including the management of instructional programmes.
- They have a clear and focused mission that is regularly shared and communicated to all stakeholders and through which educators and learners dedicate their effort to improve the outcomes of the school and its performance.
- They create opportunities to learn for everyone and manage time on task strictly and persistently. Such schools have an inclusive learning policy where every learner is afforded a commensurate opportunity to learn and to be successful and where parents, educators, and learners guard jealously the importance of time on task as a fundamental principle for effective teaching and learning.
- They frequently assess learner progress and use principles of Assessment for Learning (AFL) to underpin learner development and progression. Such schools have effective assessment management systems.
- They have working home–school relations, where parents participate in school governance and help to monitor learner development, curricular choice and progression (Lezotte 2005; Marzano et al. 2005).

Gradual autonomy of key strategic partners

The GDE has continued to have considerable involvement in the leadership, management and governance of its flagship strategic partners, such as MGSLG and Sci-Bono. As these organisations mature, they need to be allowed space to become more independent. This frees the GDE to focus on issues of running schools while allowing the strategic partners to chart new directions and become more innovative.

Continued investment in programmes that yield significant improvement

Two programmes that are likely to create sustained improvement in curriculum delivery and learner success are the GPLMS and the additional tuition programmes. The financial investment related to these programmes may be significant, but the impact they have – in terms of raising numeracy and literacy levels in schools and providing more curriculum

time, which improves the quantity and quality of learning and performance outcomes – appears to provide good returns on investment.

Contextualising policy and school improvement

Blanket policy enactment does little to recognise local contextual factors in different parts of the province. Schools in rural, farming and township environments are lagging behind those in locations that are more privileged. Local development strategies coordinated in the first instance at district level, variable budgets and funding approaches may need to be considered in order to increase chances of a more contextualised school improvement process in the province.

Supporting training for rural experience

Training providers broadly base their standards on producing educators for urban learning environments at the expense of standards that take into account the skills needed to deliver the curriculum effectively in rural, farming and township environments. The GDE could provide grants and bursaries to trainees who opt to have their teaching experience in these environments, while also lending support to training providers who develop rural and township education educator training programmes.

Diversity training

Gauteng is becoming the province of educational choice for much of South Africa and the continent. Learner and staff demographics in schools are transforming and creating new challenges for curriculum delivery and learning in the schools. The current language policy that is based on official South African languages will gradually come under threat as more and more learners with foreign languages populate the schools. The GDE needs to plan for this.

An agenda for community and stakeholder engagement

As diversity increases in schools, the need for engaging local communities and stakeholders becomes ever greater. This should have two important effects. It should contribute to raising educational relevance through an increasingly contextually embedded educational development strategy. However, more importantly, it should bring communities even

closer to the challenges of schools, thus raising prospects for even more curriculum and school improvement.

Conclusion

The past 20 years have seen impressive improvement in education in the province of Gauteng. The province has taken its place at the top of the performance tables in the country. As always, it is easier to get to the top than it is to remain there. The strategies proposed in this chapter, together with those suggested elsewhere in this book, can be a basis for securing the province's eminence as the prime location for excellence in education in the coming 20 years. Key strategic interventions have been put in place in the province, many of which have produced, and continue to produce, much-needed improvement of the curriculum and its delivery both inside schools and through external interventions. What is needed is a culture of continuous improvement, aimed at fine-tuning what already seems to be working and eradicating sources of inefficiency that constrain the working of key strategic partners, for example. In the medium term, the GDE may need to continue investing in programmes such as the GPMLS but will, at the same time, need to examine alternative ways of funding programmes that have helped it to achieve the success that has been witnessed thus far.

The biggest challenge going forwards is to invest in programmes of curricular improvement that are based on evidence. Gorard and See (2013) have cautioned against investing in policies, strategies, interventions and practices that have little hope of success and that are not based on substantial supporting research evidence. It is strongly recommended that the province should invest more heavily in funding evaluation research, both as a strategy for strengthening its interventions and as a way to create data sets upon which further improvement can be built. Gathering better evidence should therefore become a priority area for the GDE and not just be left to researchers in universities and research institutes. There is evidence, for example, that the following are very strongly linked to curricular improvement in schools:

- Initiatives that promote attendance by learners;
- Initiatives that promote good behaviour and discipline in schools;
- Initiatives that strengthen subject content knowledge of educators;
- Initiatives that promote and encourage more parental involvement in the processes of the school;
- Initiatives that promote learners' emotional and social learning and civic participation;
- Initiatives that provide reliable and authentic guidance for subject and career choices in school; and

- Targeted literacy and numeracy programmes for specific groups (Gorard & See 2013).

How the province prioritises its responsibilities to schools and how research and evidence-driven it will be in terms of the support it offers schools will become the new drivers for maintaining and further enhancing the progress made in curriculum design and delivery over the past 20 years.

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CHAPTER 4

STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE OF SYSTEMS, STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT, ROLES AND POWERS

AD Padayachee, Anusha Naidu and Tom Waspe

Structure and governance of systems overview

The post-1994 process of state change in South Africa can be characterised as one of building a developmental state. This has entailed creating a public service that is developmental in nature. Accordingly, the state has had to empower itself to intervene strongly in society to overcome and transform the social structures and institutions and to address inequalities and poverty that were, and still are, a legacy of apartheid. At the same time, the government has to deliver goods and services that will uplift and empower the people and enable them to play an effective role in the economy. The construction of the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) as a public service developmental organisation has been a key component in ensuring that the development mandate of the state in the post-apartheid era is fulfilled in the province.

The broad mandate for public sector education administrations was contained in Education White Paper 1 published in 1994, which was to transform and provide education and ensure redress, equity, access and quality in the provisioning of a new non-racist, non-sexist and democratic education system serving all the people of South Africa.

Based on the CODESA agreements¹ and the democratic Constitution, the new system had to be reconstructed from the old systems. Provincial education systems were given provincial competences, but as part of a new, single, unified, national education system. The GDE inherited the following four education systems:

- The Department of Education and Training (DET), whose mandate in pre-1994 South Africa had been to provide education to black South Africans;
- The Transvaal Education Department (TED), whose target was white South Africans;
- The House of Delegates (HOD), whose target was Indian South Africans; and
- The House of Representatives (HOR), whose target was coloured South Africans.

None of the previous administrations that the Gauteng province inherited was provided intact. The GDE received only fragments and dismembered functions of the previous education systems. The quality and resource allocations in these previous administrations were extremely unequal and differentiated, and reflected the typical social and political inequalities of South Africa under apartheid. From this, the Gauteng province had to build a new provincial education system while continuing to provide goods and services and transforming and restructuring education according to the new developmental mandates. It was, as one analyst caricatured, like 'changing the wheel while the car was moving' (Schoole 2003).

Over the 20-year period under review, the GDE has gone through four iterations of organisational design, construction, restructuring and transformation to meet its national and provincial mandates. A public sector organisation such as education needs to consist of a set of functions, roles, processes and resources structured and organised into meaningful arrangements and entities to ensure effective delivery of goods and services in its prime domain, which is educational institutions like schools, colleges and other education centres (such as Early Childhood Education and Adult Education sites). At the same time, the GDE must ensure transformation, redress, access, equity and quality of education within and between institutions. Although there have been significant changes and developments in the organisation and governance of education in the Gauteng province over the 20-year period, this period has also seen definite continuity as well as uneven and patchy development and delivery of its core goods and services.

In order to provide goods and services to educational institutions, the provincial education departments have to perform key basic functions. The sites of the delivery of education to young people of the province are institutions such as schools. Educational provisioning essentially boils down to the delivery of the national curriculum by means of teaching and learning in classrooms and other associated spaces such as laboratories in

¹ The convening of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) in December 1991 brought together various political, civil, religious and community organisations to negotiate a new constitution for, and chart the future of, a new and democratic South Africa. 80

these institutions. The broad function of the department is to ensure that the institutions perform this role in a transformed and developmental manner.

Within the broad transformational and developmental mandates, strategies and policies of the post-1994 political dispensation, the core functions of a provincial education department in relation to educational institutions can be characterised as:

- The overall planning for, and management and coordination of, the entire provincial education system;
- Support for the delivery of the national curriculum in pedagogically appropriate ways – in other words, support for teaching and learning in the schools and institutions;
- Support for the management, governance and administration of the institutions;
- The interpretation, mediation and implementation of national education policy as well as provincial development and education policies and strategies in relation to the education institutions in its domain;
- The provision of resources like state-compensated personnel (institutional managers, teachers, administration and support staff), institutional infrastructure (school buildings, classrooms), teaching and learning support materials (textbooks, computers) and financial resources in the form of subsidies and payments;
- The control and monitoring of educational provisioning in and by the institutions; and
- Accounting and reporting on the provisioning, quality and performance of the various inputs, processes and outcomes of the provincial department as well as the institutions.

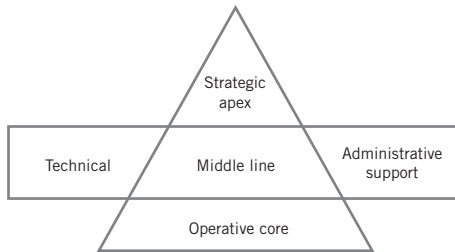
Although the content and internal functional structures of the organisation of the GDE have changed and varied over the 20-year period, the basic organisational design and construction has remained consistent over that period. The approach has been one of hierarchical command-and-control organisation based on horizontal functional divisions with associated sub-functions and sub-structures, such that one division or branch is differentiated from another (Minzberg 1979; Thompson 1967). This model is a reflection of the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) approach to the organisational design, functioning and structuring of state public administrations. A review of the organisational development of the GDE indicates that the design, development and construction of the GDE as a public sector education administration has taken into account the following organisational issues and imperatives: overall purpose; objectives and strategy; broad functions; processes (core business and organisational processes); departmentalisation (differentiation) according to grouped, broad functions; vertical and horizontal control, coordination and integration; job specialisation; chain of command, authority and functional responsibility; centralisation/decentralisation; line and staff authority; and span of control (Daft 2009; DPSA n.d.; Luneberg & Ornstein

2012; Minzberg 1979). Organisational arrangements were based on the distribution of roles, organisational policies, rules, codes of behaviour and performance criteria that were applied to the structure, functions and personnel of the organisation. Coupled with this organisational approach, the GDE has generally followed a participatory management and decision-making model as well as a formalised participatory arrangement for the involvement of civil society stakeholders in educational policy and accountability processes.

Minzberg’s organisational model

Luneberg & Ornstein (2012) and Daft (2009) adapted Minzberg’s organisational model and have identified the macro-components of large-scale organisations shown in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Organisational components



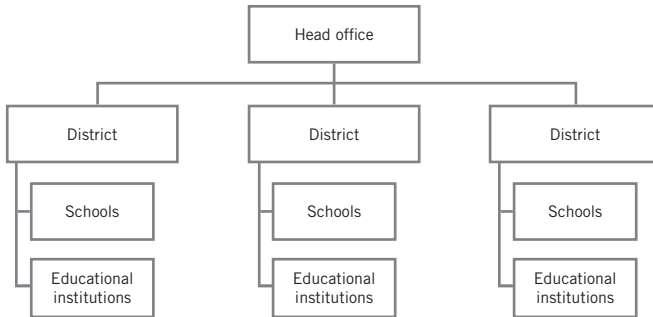
The strategic apex includes top management, which is responsible for the overall strategic direction and coordination of the department. The operative core involves the core functions of the department which, in the case of the GDE, is exemplified in the core functions listed earlier. Technical and administrative support functions ensure that the core functions get implemented effectively and efficiently.

The design and structuring of the GDE as an organisation has gone through a number of iterations in which functions have either been more centralised at head-office level or decentralised to district level. Where efficiency and non-repetitive imperatives have predominated, functions tended to be centralised at a head-office level. Where closeness to the primary domain of delivery, such as schools, has been a key imperative, the principle of subsidiarity has applied, hence functions have tended to be decentralised to the education-district level. The number of education institutions and their geographical spread was the basis for decentralisation of core functions to district offices, which are located as close to the institutions as possible. The organisational structure of the GDE over the review period has therefore tended to comprise of a centralised head office with a number of district offices² (see Figure 4.2). The core operations of the GDE, teaching

² For a brief period (1994–1999) the GDE had three regional offices located between the hierarchy of head office and the district offices.

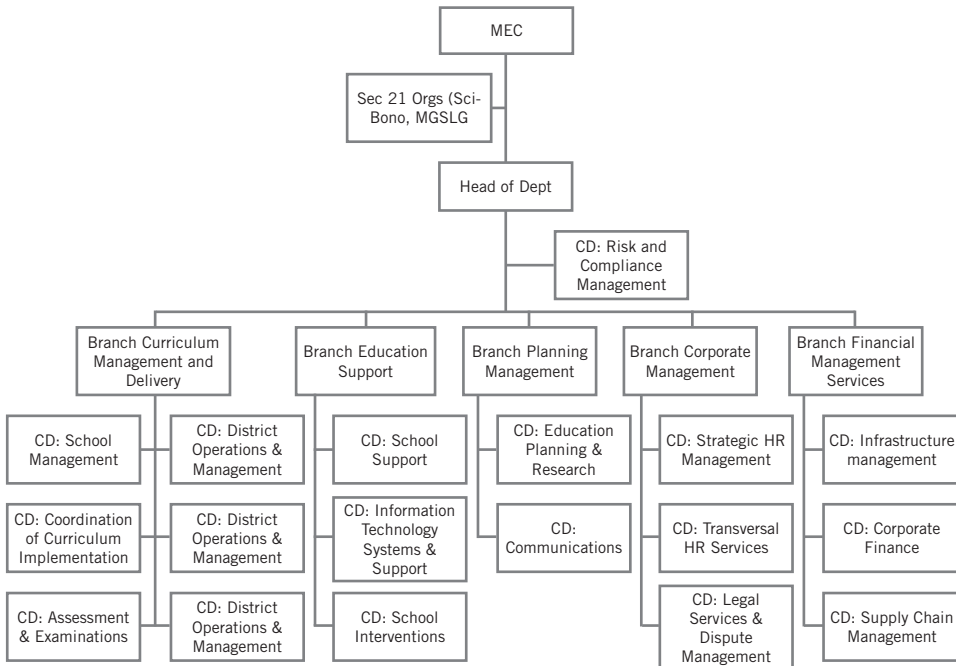
and learning, are carried out in the schools and educational institutions as reflected in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2: General macro structure of the GDE



Based on the organisational design principles of vertical and horizontal differentiation and control, functions and sub-functions were organised into divisions and units, and finally took the form, in 2012, of a complex matrix system as illustrated in Figure 4.3 (GDE 2012).

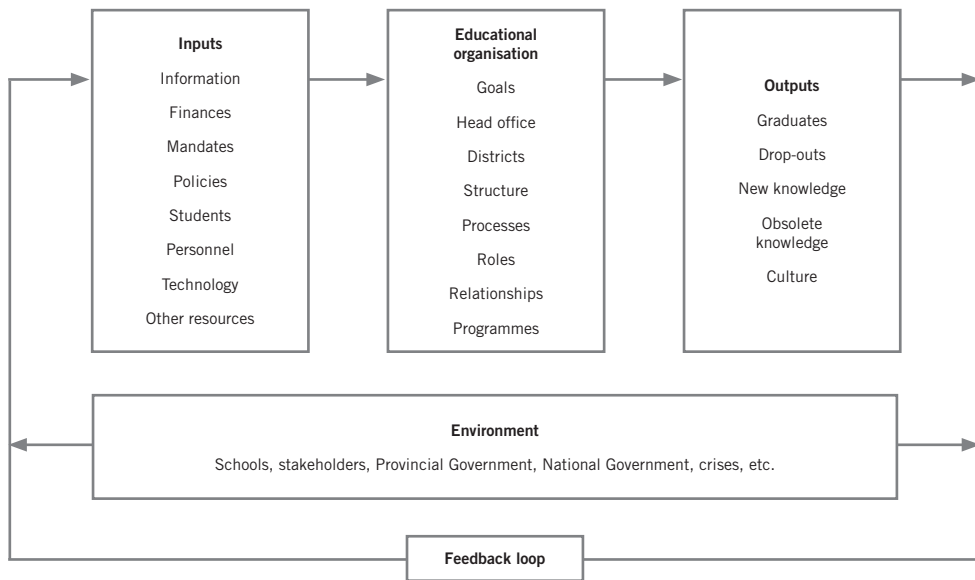
Figure 4.3: Detailed structure of the GDE³



³ This diagram only reflects the macro structure down to Chief Directorate level. Currently, there are a further 73 directorates incorporated under and into these Chief Directorates (GDE 2012). The superintendent general, deputy director generals, chief directors and directors make up the senior management of the public service.

Education departments are organisational components of open social systems that comprise of the environment (which includes schools, stakeholders, provincial and national structures, policies and regulations, ongoing events and crises), inputs (which include resources, school-going youth and personnel), the educational organisation (which has been described above) and outputs – and all of these aspects are fed into a feedback loop.

Figure 4.4: The organisation as part of the education system (from Ballantine & Hammack 2012)



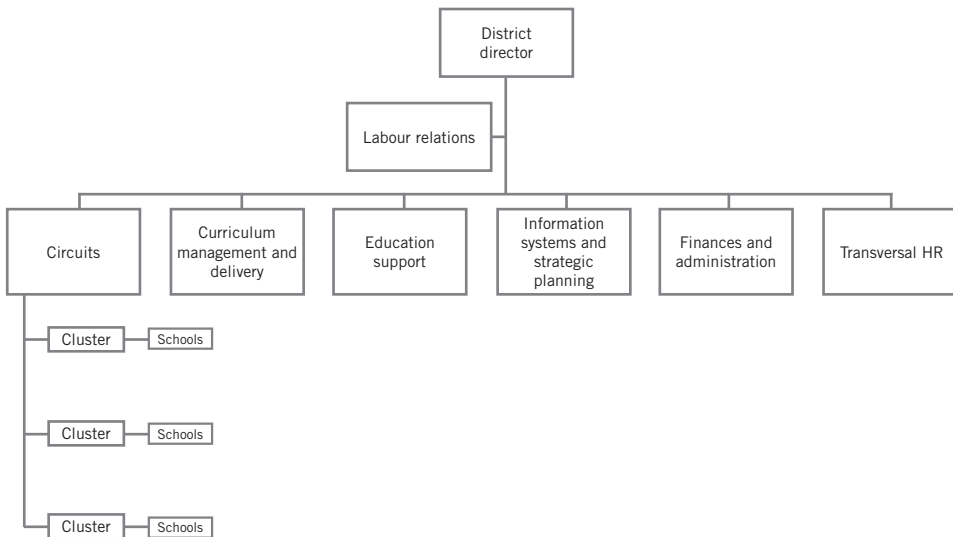
The environment and the ongoing feedback loops have a constant impact on the system and organisation, providing imperatives for interventions, changes and possible reorganisation and restructuring.

The development of education districts

A key feature of the organisational development process over the past 20 years has been the design, development and growth in education districts. This focus was a reflection of the ongoing centralisation/decentralisation dynamic that characterised the construction of the new South African state (GDE 2002). Based on experiences in the administration of education globally, from the outset the GDE opted for a model of a decentralised education administration, especially in the areas of school, teacher and learner support and development as it was considered to be the most appropriate model for transformation, equity, access, redress and quality in schooling. The development of districts at the

provincial level is now championed and propagated by the national Department of Basic Education (DBE 2011). Over the years, and with each iteration of the organisational design and restructuring, there has been a steady devolution and decentralisation of functions and processes into the education districts. However, at the same time, functions that the GDE believes require greater control and coordination have tended to become more centralised over the period. In Figure 4.5 we present the current organisational chart of the GDE’s educational districts with its associated functional arrangements. What is noteworthy in the contemporary period is the development of circuits and clusters that are functionally and geographically located as close as possible to the schools that they serve.

Figure 4.5: GDE education district structure



Management structures

Governance of a public sector organisation like the GDE ‘generally refers to the means for achieving direction, control, and coordination of wholly or partially autonomous individuals or organisations on behalf of interests to which they jointly contribute’ and involves ‘organisational structures, administrative processes, managerial judgment, systems of incentives and rules, administrative philosophies, or combinations of these elements’ (Lynn et al. 2000).

This section focuses on the governance of education through the GDE by concentrating on the roles and structures of the GDE as an organisation, management

decision-making structures and the role of its stakeholders. In the paragraphs that follow, we focus on management structures.

Since 1994, the GDE has established a number of management structures. Their adjustment and development often coincided with each iteration of the organisational structure. From the outset the GDE implemented a collaborative, collective, committee-based approach to participation in these structures by senior managers (directors, chief directors, deputy directors general and the superintendent general). The use of the word 'Team' in the names of these structures has exemplified this collaborative collective approach, for example Executive Management Team (EMT), Broad Management Team (BMT) and District Management Team (DMT). The functions of these teams are:

- Decision-making;
- Setting strategy and planning;
- Oversight, reporting and accountability of programmes, operations and mandated activities;
- Coordination of functions and divisions; and
- Problem-solving and crisis management.

The primary function was decision-making, which permeated all of the other functions and roles of the management structures. Not all departmental decisions were referred to these structures. Day-to-day operational or programmed decisions (decisions based on each unit's business function and purpose) were located either in the unit or the divisional line based on the delegation of responsibility and authority. The management structures mainly focused on non-programmed decisions. Non-programmed decisions are issues and problems that need to be addressed at an organisation-wide level. They are non-routine and there may not be a standard operational procedure for handling them (Luneberg & Ornstein 2012). The purposes of having collective management teams performing the functions listed above include: improving the rationality, accuracy and quality of decision-making; getting buy-in and ownership of the direction and functioning of the organisation by senior management; developing a common understanding and consensus among senior management; facilitating acceptance of and accountability for key decisions; and providing legitimacy for the functioning and direction of the organisation. However, the realisation of these management objectives was not without its difficulties.

Firstly, the management structures often did not use and follow sound decision-making and problem-solving procedures and methods, sometimes resulting in inappropriate and incorrect decisions being made that appear irrational in the face of the needs of the organisation. Secondly, all organisations function on the appropriate use and distribution of power and these management structures entail the wielding of power. However, as in most organisations, power coalesces around people, interests, functions and organisational 'turf'; very often these manifest as divergent interests that play themselves out within the powerful management structures, which could negatively affect the rationality and quality

of the decisions made and hence what ultimately gets implemented in the institutions. Thirdly, the desire for consensus can override effective problem analysis, evaluation and solution, which can also result in inadequate decisions being made. Coupled with this, the play of power – as well as the formation and action of management coalitions that operate as intense pressure groups within these formal decision-making structures – may mean a veneer of consensus is achieved, resulting in a lack of buy-in and implementation or, once again, inappropriate decisions being made. Finally, collective decision-making structures can create what is sometimes called a diffusion of responsibility away from individual managers. This means that individual managers can avoid taking responsibility for the decisions being made and hide behind the collective legitimacy of the management structure⁴.

These dysfunctionalities are not an automatic result of collective management structures but often occur. It is only by tracing the decisions and their resulting effectiveness over the review period that an evaluation of the impact of the management structures of the GDE can be made.

Transformation of structures and systems (1994–2014)

As already explained, the GDE faced the challenge of transforming education from four racially structured systems into a unified system. According to Fleisch (2002) the re-organisation of education was based on four objectives:

- Administrative restructuring;
- Equity and redress;
- Democratic governance; and
- Curriculum reform.

The 20-year evolution of the GDE has been a journey of addressing a legacy of years of apartheid, inequity and injustice. The first phase of democracy under the national minister, Professor Sibusiso Bengu (1994–1999), and the provincial MEC of Gauteng Education, Mary Metcalfe, was a period dominated by policy formulation and the creation of a single education department. This period began the process of setting up organisational systems and structures and engaging stakeholders to bring the diversity of the apartheid structures together into a single system. The legislature of this period addressed equity, equality and quality of education (Naidu 2012), while Mary Metcalfe responded to this mandate and set the trend for the GDE to take a vanguard role in education policy development, often in advance of even the national department.

⁴ Most of these dysfunctions of collective management structures are discussed in Luneberg and Ornstein (2012).

Once legislation was in place, the integration of the four departments – the DET, HOR, HOD and HOA – resulted in a unified education system consisting of three tiers, namely:

- Head office: Responsible for the overall allocation of resources, development of education programmes, legislation and the co-ordination of the provisioning for education and training services;
 - District offices: The GDE set up 18 education districts in a manner that would be responsive to the needs of schools and local communities. Functions managed by the district offices included:
 - Administration Unit: Responsible for administrative systems in the district;
 - Education and Training Unit: Responsible for the training of principals and educators facilitated by district education coordinators;
 - Auxiliary Unit: Responsible for training educators to work with learners who have special educational needs; and
 - Development Unit: Responsible for programmes aimed at groups that were previously disadvantaged and out of school youth.
- Regional offices: The three regional offices were designed to support resource allocations to schools.

Budget constraints and the need to downsize the public service sector resulted in a streamlined organisational structure, consisting of 33 senior management posts and a total number of 2 744 posts at head office, regional offices and district offices.

While the transition period was characterised by policy development, crisis management was evident. The District Management Team (DMT) played a vital role in contextualising the problems experienced by schools and developing unified ways of addressing them.

Key gains made during the first five years of democracy were the creation of a single education system supported by legislation, access of learners to all schools, developing a funding model to address the imbalances of the past and creating a process to establish an equitable distribution of educators across all schools in the province.

The second phase of democracy under national minister, Professor Kader Asmal (1999–2004), and the MEC of the Gauteng Education Department, Ignatius Jacobs, saw a consolidation of the first phase, while the imperative of this phase was the need to respond to the many problems facing schools and education, especially the great number of dysfunctional schools in the country. The minister responded to this need for improved quality with his ‘Call to Action’ speech and established priorities for the next five years under the slogan Tirisano (‘Working Together’).

Challenges experienced by the GDE centred around a lack of quick responses in addressing identified challenges at school level, facilitating teacher development and institutional support in implementing outcomes-based education (OBE), inadequate schools in areas that mostly required them as a result of the unprecedented and

unpredictable influx of learners from other provinces, and the lack of accountability by school principals to produce quality matric performance.

Further, a strained relationship existed between district offices and regional offices primarily as a result of the region's slow response to the provision of administrative support to schools. This effectively reduced the ability of districts to address identified school problems promptly.

In addressing these challenges, a key shift from policy formulation to appropriate intervention characterised the period. An extensive restructuring process resulted in the establishment of a new organisational structure. The structure consisted of a two-tier system, with head office responsible for operational policy and the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of school performance, and 12 district offices, including two mega-districts, responsible for all services to schools and educators (GDE 2001/2002). The regional offices were closed, with many of the functions being transferred to the districts. Districts thus became empowered to provide administrative support as well as professional and managerial support. However, in view of the establishment of the Gauteng Shared Service Centre (GSSC) in 2000/2001 to facilitate transversal functions across all provincial departments, further re-organisation was inevitable.

The decentralisation of functions to the districts created a power play between head office and district offices. The District Management Team (DMT), which created a forum for discussion of challenges that existed throughout the province, played a vital role in creating a uniform way of addressing these challenges. However, pockets of power became evident, which finally resulted in the demise of the DMT and the establishment of the Broad Management Team (BMT).

The BMT created a broader forum to enable greater interaction between directors and head office officials. While a closer relationship was created, it did not adequately address the challenges experienced by district offices. It soon became evident that the level of effectiveness in providing key services to schools differed considerably across districts. The uneven distribution of township schools, rural schools and urban schools added to the uneven effectiveness of services, as the structure was not customised to respond to the different needs of each district with its unique school profile.

Key changes to the structure and activities included:

- Creation of the Office of Standards (OFSTD): This unit was established in the chief executive office to monitor education standards across the province, including benchmarking of organisational performance and levels of learner achievement. In performing its functions, the unit identified appropriate intervention strategies to improve performance of schools;
- Establishment of Education Action Zones (EAZs): A significant departure from the first term, EAZs provided poorly performing schools with a dedicated team established under the Office of Standards to turn these schools around with quick

wins and long-term interventions. The intervention was intended to create a province-wide environment for effective learning and teaching;

- Introduction of the Senior Secondary Improvement Programme (SSIP): The strategy was driven by the curriculum unit to target matric learners at poorly performing schools. The system ensured the provision of learner support material for educators and learners;
- Transformation of the technical college sector: The department facilitated the process of winding up the teacher education college sector and proceeded with the transformation of the technical college sector into the Further Education and Training sector;
- Establishment of key Transformative Units: In order to continue to address inclusion, redress and equity challenges, several directorates were established. These include (GDE 2002/2003):
 - Separation of the FET and GET directorates and the creation of a Directorate for Inclusion with its own programmes;
 - The expansion of the institutional development and support division at head office by creating a dedicated directorate for the provisioning of education resources for the expansion of ECD and ABET; and
 - Establishing a new branch to facilitate Gauteng-on-Line (GoL) to schools and to ensure access to and maintenance of IT infrastructure for all officials in the department. GoL was established to provide quality and equitable education to all Gauteng learners. It was an attempt to use ICT to enhance learning and teaching and to produce individuals who think creatively, are technologically literate and demonstrate good communication and collaborative skills. The initial goal was to provide ICT infrastructure to 1 100 schools; it was later expanded to all of the province's schools.

The creation of the above resulted in the increase in the number of senior management posts to 39 and a significant increase in the number of posts at head office and district offices to 3 411.

Significant achievements accomplished during this period included the improvement in the quality of education as evidenced by the performance in the matric examinations, a decrease in the number of learners in school aged 20 years and above from 9.5% to 8.4%, a special focus on the girl learner and the provision of scholar transport to school for thousands of learners.

The third phase of democracy under the national minister, Naledi Pandor (2004–2009), and the MEC for Education in Gauteng, Angie Motshekga, was categorised by a need to address serious issues emerging from the implementation of the new curriculum. The MEC in Gauteng responded to the call for 'back to basics' by beginning to address serious gaps in teaching and learning.

Some of the key challenges in this period included achieving universal access for Grade R (reception year) learners; increasing access to learning areas such as Mathematics, Science and Technology; gearing FET colleges to respond to the needs of the citizens of Gauteng; and improving the resource levels of the most needy schools (GDE 2003/2004).

This period was characterised by a further realignment of GDE plans to achieve the aims of Tirisano by integrating them into the programmes and activities of the department. It called for significant social cohesion among parents, learners, educators and the private sector. This process led to the revision of the GDE's organisational structure to address policy changes in respect of public education. This included increasing the capacity to support poorly performing schools to improve both institutional and learner performance. Capacity was also created to support the implementation of e-education and inclusion policies. The GDE further aligned the function of institutional support and districts by locating both functions in the same branch. A dedicated directorate for ECD was created to address equal opportunities for pre-Grade R learners, which significantly increased the number of learners attending preschools.

During this period, several functions performed by head office and district offices – including procurement, personal administration and financial management – were transferred to the GSSC.

The restructuring process aimed at addressing several challenges, including ensuring universal access to ECD, ensuring that all children of school-going age are at school, addressing the shortage of classroom space and ensuring that all public schools become centres of quality learning. Further, it aimed to address key challenges that emerged during the rollout of GoL. These include:

- Connectivity and networking issues;
- Lack of skilled computer-literate educators managing ICTs;
- Lack of maintenance support;
- Sustaining functional laboratories and accurate reporting of usage; and
- Security and infrastructural shortcomings.

During the period 2004 to 2009 it became evident that the department had to align its district boundaries to accommodate cross-border municipality re-demarcation to improve service delivery. This resulted in splitting the two mega-districts into four smaller education districts and increasing the GDE's districts to 15, which were responsible for all services to learners, educators, schools and the local communities. A number of changes were effected to improve capacity and enhance delivery of existing services with particular emphasis on ABET, ECD and e-learning. During this period a concerted effort was made to rectify the challenges identified by the rollout and functionality of the GoL project. These included the appointment of an external service provider and the creation of a help desk to project-manage the rollout to all schools and to ensure quick response to the maintenance of GoL laboratories.

In addition, a provincial Human Resource Planning and Development Agency (HRPDA) was established to address specific challenges relating to the imperatives of promoting economic growth in the province and to ensure effective implementation of human resource development and the skills development strategies (GDE 2007/2008).

To alleviate the effects of poverty, redress imbalances of the past and ensure that children exercise their right to be educated, school fees were eliminated in the poorest of schools. While the quality of learning continued to be the single biggest challenge, strategies were put in place to address poor literacy and numeracy, allowing for the optimal utilisation of schools and the expansion of the education system to more learners than ever before while reducing dropout rates.

Further, the department established the Early Childhood Development Institute (ECDI) to realise the government's commitment to raising the quality of care that children receive in their early years (GDE 2008/2009). Its focus was to integrate and coordinate ECD projects to prevent duplication and fragmentation of services to children.

A further province-wide structure, the GCRA, was established to facilitate the integration of human resource development in the province to address socio-economic imperatives in line with national policies. This resulted in the integration of the HRPDA and the training and development unit at GSSC.

A significant number of directorates and posts were created in the GDE, resulting in further growth in the post establishment in order to manage the multiplicity of redress and quality functions being performed by the department. This resulted in the expansion of the number of senior management posts to 77, with a total post establishment of 5 969.

Key achievements in the period 1994–2009 were in effectively promoting equity and redress. These included increased access to primary and secondary education, reduction in infrastructural backlogs and reducing disparities across race and class.

While significant improvements were made in learner performance, the quality of education provision still remained a challenge, and programmes to realise quality basic education continued from the previous term of office into the next period.

The period 2009 to 2014, under the leadership of the national minister, Angie Motshekga, and the MEC for Education, Barbara Creecy, saw the continuation of reorganisation by expansion and intensification to address the quality of learning in literacy/language and numeracy/mathematics.

The thrust for the improvement of learning outcomes resulted in the adoption of the:

- Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS);
- Maths, Science and Technology Strategy (MST);
- Senior Secondary Intervention Programme (SSIP);
- ECD Strategy; and the
- School Safety Strategy (GDE 2011/2012).

In order to ensure that the department delivers on its key strategic goals and is aligned to its new strategic direction of education delivery in the province, a revised organisational structure was established.

The proposed realignment of the organisational structure focused on the implementation of a new service-delivery model. As district offices are key structures in education delivery, more emphasis had to be focused on effective service delivery from districts to support schools. The department was determined to redefine and transform districts as levers of change.

The new operating model introduces multifunctional development teams that serve as the GDE's critical interface with schools. Circuit Support Teams (CSTs) have been created to coordinate learning outcomes by focusing on what happens in the classroom. This represents a fundamental departure from previous organisational structures that aimed to decentralise all services to the district to support schools. The new model places emphasis on professional and managerial support by districts to schools. The model therefore centralises administrative support while decentralising professional and managerial support.

A new branch, Education Operations, was established to facilitate and coordinate administrative support to schools. Further, the functions associated with the rollout of GoL to all schools had migrated from education to the GSSC. This resulted in the development of a robust, functional ICT laboratory. Aging infrastructure and unused laboratories, however, continued to persist and further changes to the design and models began to emerge.

A significant development to address concerns about institutional functionality and the promotion of learning provided the opportunity for the MGSLG to develop managerial and governance skills in many schools in the province, and for Sci-Bono to increase direct intervention to thousands of learners, particularly in Mathematics and Science. While this appears to be a parallel delivery arm of the department, it provides a vital mechanism for addressing challenges in the schooling system in the short to medium term.

With this expansion in intervention programmes and other functions by 2014, the GDE had 100 senior management posts and a total post establishment in head office and districts of 6 758.

The key achievement during this period was the significant improvement in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) pass rate, with a closing of the gap between the performances of former Model C schools and improvement in the number of high-quality passes. In addition, the period saw the promotion of numeracy and literacy, the expansion of the SSIP to Grade 10 and 11 learners, increasing the number of schools benefiting from no-fee status and the introduction of the Extra School Support Programme (ESSP) by providing targeted schools with safety procedures, homework coordinators and sport coordinators.

Stakeholder involvement and governance: Towards collaboration in education

Democracy, especially in the South African context, is signified by participation and collaboration with all relevant stakeholders including communities at a local level. The decentralisation of education to provincial structures empowered provincial education structures to bring democratic processes ‘closer to the people’. Stakeholders in the education terrain include parents, learners, educator unions and other community structures involved in the welfare of children such as religious organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and political parties. These groups of people have a stake in both policy development and the education agenda.

One of the products of the participatory process of engaging and including all stakeholders was the 1994 Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which began as a process of engaging civil society in the governance process. Under the umbrella of the national RDP, the GDE initiated a ‘Culture of Learning Programme’ in the 1994–1999 period. This programme allocated development grants to disadvantaged schools with the idea that schools would lead their own development through local-level collaboration. Schools began to use their grants in various ways, mainly for infrastructure development purposes. The idea of involving stakeholders in the delivery of the priorities of the GDE grew and the MEC in 2001, Ignatius Jacobs, announced the establishment of a framework for ‘Constructive Partnerships’. This framework set the parameters for the GDE in collaborating with parents, community-based organisations, NGOs and the private sector to support the delivery of education in Gauteng.

The Gauteng province also took the lead in setting up a consultative forum in education. The Gauteng Education and Training Council (GETC) was launched on 28 February 1997 and its roles and functions were established through the Gauteng Education Policy Act (1998) in terms of national legislation. The GETC included representatives of civil society and it has acted as an advisory council to the MEC (Heckroodt 2002).

According to Section 10 of the Regulations (Gauteng Province 2001), the GETC included representatives of a number of interest groups such as parents, education and training development practitioners, the provincial Department of Education, heads of institutions, governing bodies of institutions, and NGOs whose core activities relate to education and training authorities. There was also provision for other interest groups to apply for representation.

While the GDE succeeded in setting up the GETC and allowing stakeholder participation, there were many challenges. Establishing agendas and reaching a common understanding across the sector was not always easy. The perception and knowledge of the various role players often differed, making attaining consensus difficult. Perceptions and knowledge of consultative processes by officials of the GDE was sometimes problematic. The consistency of attendance and active participation was a challenge. It was not always possible to take all matters to the GETC or to consider all opinions; however, it was a

forum that allowed the MEC to interact with all significant and relevant stakeholders (Heckroodt 2002).

The South African Schools Act (SASA) (1996) further embraced the notion of community involvement in schools through the establishment of democratically elected school governing bodies (SGBs), which are responsible for the governance of public schools. SGBs include parents, teachers, non-teaching staff and secondary school learners, with provision for co-opted community members. The principal of the school is also an *ex officio* member of the SGB. SGB elections are held every three years; it is the second largest election after the national elections. The significance of SGBs according to Naidu et al. (2008) can be deduced from the fact that one third of the SASA (22 sections of the Act) deals directly with SGBs, and the Employment of Educators Act (1998) also makes reference to the role of SGBs.

All SGB members are elected by their specific constituency: parents' representatives are elected by parents; educator representatives are elected by the educator staff and non-educators are also elected. The parent component must always add up to one more than the total of all the other members who have voting rights. The SGB may co-opt members without voting powers. Thus, all members of the SGB represent stakeholders and are accountable, and need to report, to their constituencies. Motala and Pampallis (2001) argue that the real danger of allocating considerable power to communities through legislation is that many schools may not have the capacity or expertise to exercise their powers. The other argument raised is whether conferring such powers on the SGB, especially the financial obligations, is a genuine attempt at collaboration and redress or devolves state responsibility for the provision of education to SGBs.

The powers allocated to SGBs include the following:

- Providing quality education for all learners;
- Developing and adopting a constitution for the school;
- Adopting a mission and vision for the school;
- Adopting a code of conduct for learners;
- Developing and adopting policies for the school, including admissions policy and language policy; and
- Making recommendations to the Provincial Head of Department on the appointment of educators following interviews.

In addition, Section 21 of the SASA allows for SGBs to apply for functions that may be allocated to them. These include:

- Maintaining and improving school property;
- Determining the extramural curriculum and choosing subject options in terms of the provincial curriculum;

- Purchasing textbooks and teaching and learning materials; and
- Paying for services to the school.

The above functions required skills and capacity. In early 1997 the national minister, Professor Bhengu, commissioned the development of training materials in collaboration with provincial department representatives. A School Governance Starter Pack entitled 'First Steps' (detailing the need for SGBs) and 'Understanding SASA' (describing the legislative principles and functions of SGBs) were developed to support the election and functions of SGBs.

In May 1997, the first SGB elections were held. This was a major milestone in the democratisation and transformation of education. SGBs were elected in public schools across the Gauteng province with 98.4% of public schools in Gauteng electing SGBs successfully. By the end of 1997, 95% of SGBs had selected chairpersons, secretaries and treasurers (Fleisch 2002).

Further SGB elections took place every three years. Each election has presented similar challenges. A Ministerial Review Committee (2003) presented some of the election challenges, with inclusivity and representation of all races and genders being most significant. A real concern was the low level of parental participation in elections in many schools. After the 1997 SGB elections, associations of SGBs began to emerge and the formation of a National Association of School Governing Bodies (NASGB) was supported by the National Department of Education (Karlsson et al. 2001).

There was an urgent need to provide training for the newly elected SGBs, especially in their new legislated mandates. The GDE established the Education, Management and Governance Development (EMGD) unit as part of the RDP unit, and then established similar district structures. The immediate task of this unit was to provide training and support for SGBs and school management structures, which it did with Canadian funding. An NGO was contracted to provide training for all SGBs. The provincial and district teams met regularly to coordinate and monitor all training activities. A 'cascade model' of training was used, with district officials being trained who would then train SGBs in clusters of schools.

The training of SGBs soon presented many challenges; the 'cascade model' of training proved to be problematic, with each level receiving a 'watered-down' version of the content. Parental attendance at training dwindled as parents faced competing priorities on weekends. Financial constraints such as transport costs to reach training venues impacted on attendance in poorer areas. Training of SGBs had to be undertaken after every election as new parents were elected, resulting in little consolidation of skills except where members were re-elected. Training was mainly outsourced to external providers of varied capacity or devolved through a cascade model. SGB training was inconsistent, with each service provider having a different approach and presenting different content. The diversity of the quality of training across the province exacerbated the problems of SGB capacity.

In 2001, the MEC for Education identified the need for a coordinated approach to the development of school management and governance in the Gauteng province. He commissioned the establishment of an institute for the development of leadership and governance in the province. This decision was informed by a task team commissioned by the National Department of Education to investigate a strategy for the development of education management in the country, which recommended the establishment of a national institute to coordinate the development of education management. The MEC took a bold decision and established the MGSLG.

The mandate of the newly established institution was to provide the GDE with a cutting-edge institute for the development of school management and governance for all schools in the province. SGB training became centralised and standardised across the province. A baseline evaluation highlighted the school governance needs in the province and the MGSLG developed a programme for the support and development of SGBs in Gauteng public schools. There was close collaboration with SGB associations in the province to increase stakeholder participation in the design and delivery of training programmes. This initiative by GDE was the first of its kind in the country; however, it was not without challenges. The MGSLG faced many obstacles as it struggled for support for its original mandate. The SGB training improved and the training became more consistent; however, due to funding constraints, training soon became irregular. In 2005, the CEPD was commissioned to evaluate the MGSLG governance training. The training was found to be relevant and at the correct pitch, although there were some issues with the inconsistent quality of facilitators.

The implementation of the functions of SGBs as legislated by the SASA and the impact of the authority and power devolved to SGBs has varied and has been plagued with challenges. Chaka (2005) argues that the implementation of the legislated functions of SGBs is difficult in areas of low literacy and high levels of poverty due to the lack of relevant skills, lack of resources and competing priorities. The lack of relevant skills often results in parent members of these SGBs being undermined by principals and educators. In contrast, SGBs in more affluent schools are more dominating and influential as the parent component is more skilled and has greater access to resources. Power relations within SGBs and between school management and SGBs dominate many schools. Mncube (2009) found that unequal power relations prevail in school governance and that lack of capacity and skills of parents contributes to the inequality. Bagarette (2011) researched the power relations in SGBs and found that successful partnerships between principals and SGBs were apparent in schools in which both parties acknowledged the separation of governance and management functions and responsibilities. However, the fine line between management and governance causes major tensions in many schools, especially when there are issues of a lack of trust between the parties and a lack of understanding of roles and functions. Van Wyk (2004) argues that the shift to decentralised school governance and management requires governors, principals and educators to develop a wide range of skills and capacity to deal with the complex issues in schools in the

context of South Africa. The great diversity and cosmopolitan nature of Gauteng schools increases the challenges of collaboration between stakeholders.

Conclusion

Over the 20-year period under review, the GDE has created a single, unified education system from four fragmented education systems. The quality of, and resource allocations in, these inherited systems were extremely unequal and undemocratic, and reflected the social and political inequalities of apartheid South Africa. In order to address transformation, the education system went through four major realignment and restructuring processes to meet pressing needs and policy directions, including administrative restructuring, equity and redress, democratic governance and curriculum reform. Challenges of providing quality education permeated each phase of restructuring. However, the achievements during this period were significant. They include the creation of a single education system supported by legislation, increased access of learners to basic education across all schools, developing an equitable funding model to address inequalities in the schooling system, the overall improvement of matric results, accelerated building of schools to address migration and shortage of classrooms, creating a focus on the girl learner, and the provisioning of scholar transport and nutrition for the needy.

However, challenges still remain. These include improving the overall quality of education to national and international standards and creating equality of standards across all schools in the province. At the organisational and administration levels, the development and growth of the GDE has been impacted by the environment and the domain that it serves. The schooling system is characterised by ongoing inequalities and crises. The organisation has not been able to stand outside of, and be immune from, these dynamics, which have consequently impacted the organisation as well.

Much of the growth in organisational functions has been in response to, and to deal with, these crises. However, over the years of organisational development and restructuring, the nature of the organisational development has been focused on the design of organisational charts with the functions, sub-functions and divisions being delineated followed by the movement and repositioning of these functions within the overall bureaucracy and hierarchy. Hierarchical and vertical lines of control and management have therefore been emphasised. There has not been an adequate focus on the development and building of organisational business processes. Most of the organisational charts (and their implementation) were not accompanied by concomitant organisational processes. The design and development of these processes was left mostly up to the middle and divisional managers, without much reference to how the processes needed to operate across divisions and units and between the head office, districts and schools. In many cases, these processes were run by verbal norms and standards. This has seriously impacted on smooth and effective service delivery to schools.

In future, the development of the organisation as it responds to the needs and challenges of its domain and environment should have a systematic and balanced approach to functional hierarchical assembly as well as horizontal and multidirectional processes and flows. Further, the department needs to ensure that the core functions of monitoring and providing effective support to educators are firmly located within departmental structures both in terms of capacity and skills to make a meaningful impact on curriculum delivery at school level, particularly in high-priority learning areas. This would entail that core functions – including governance as well as managerial, professional and curriculum support, which are presently provided by agencies created by the department – are migrated into the department. This would effectively reduce the number of parallel agencies providing core functions for the department and would empower the department to focus on its core mandate.

The emphasis on establishing accountability across the education system is gaining momentum. Addressing these tends to be more reactive than proactive. Effective real-time monitoring and evaluation systems would be critical in identifying key challenges and addressing them timeously to avoid them escalating into serious service delivery issues.

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CHAPTER 5

FINANCING EDUCATION IN GAUTENG: USING THE BUDGET TO IMPROVE OPPORTUNITIES

Raj Mestry

Introduction

The historical pattern of education financing has been characterised by severe racial and regional inequalities in South Africa. The unequal and separate funding of public education under the apartheid regime created huge disparities between white and black schools and this had serious implications for the provision of quality education, learner performance and educational outcomes in historically disadvantaged schools. In 1994, the new government inherited a system of unequal and unfair funding based on race and ethnicity, including:

- Disparate personnel distribution across former departments;
- Unequal school funding resulting in an average teacher-learner ratio of 1:18 in white schools, 1:24 in Indian schools, 1:27 in coloured schools and 1:39 in black schools;
- Uneven per capita grants from the state – white learners received the highest, while black African learners received the lowest. To illustrate this anomaly, in 1994 the state's annual per capita expenditure for learners from the most advantaged schools was R5 403, compared to R1 053 for learners from the most disadvantaged schools; and

- Poorly qualified teachers –96% of teachers in white schools had teaching diplomas, while only 15% of teachers in black schools were certified (Ndhlovu 2011).

In 1993/94, the allocated budget for education was R22 billion or 19% of total government spending. The disparities in per capita spending between black and white learners still persisted, with R1 spent on every black child for every R2,50 spent on a white child. Prior to this, white schools had per-learner expenditures 10 times greater than black schools (Crouch 2005).

To address this challenge, education financing policy had to be reviewed in light of the following Gauteng Provincial Education reforms:

- Restructuring the four inherited race-based education departments into one single department, shifting pro-rich and racial education funding to a system in which distributed resources were pro-poor and based on income rather than race;
- Preventing spontaneous privatisation and exodus of the increasingly non-racial middle class to private schools, making large-scale reforms in curriculum and teaching methods in order to remove apartheid content and ideology as well as to modernise pedagogy; and
- Working across all key subsectors to make them accessible to all, including those that were previously only for the privileged. These subsectors included Early Childhood Development (ECD), Further Education and Training (FET) (mostly technical colleges not requiring a secondary leaving certificate), Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) and schools for learners with special educational needs (LSEN).

After the democratic elections in 1994, the government faced enormous challenges in funding education. The education policies primarily aimed to redress the inherited race-based inequality and to build a new and unified national system based on equity. Education received a large share of the national budget and within the education budget increased spending was allocated to redress inequalities in primary and secondary school education. However, in the first ten years of democracy there was still significant conflict over resources and policies, and ensuing pressures and opportunities for growth of the budget (Chisholm et al. 2003).

The government faced serious budgetary constraints, and as Fleisch (2002) explains, the government's education expenditure took up to 24% of the country's total expenditure and over 7% of gross national product (GNP). Inequalities were apparent in differential spending that had an impact on access to, and the quantity and quality of, education on offer to black and white learners. Typical indicators that revealed the inequality were: literacy levels; school completion rates; teacher-learner ratios; number, quality and qualifications of teachers; and availability of different types of resources. On all indicators,

the worst off were African learners living in the former homelands, and on farms and in townships (Chisholm 2004).

Although since 1994 the funding and resource inequalities in the public education system have been reduced, significant inequalities still exist. While some schools are well resourced – having a full range of educational facilities, low teacher-to-learner ratios and highly qualified teachers – other schools are overcrowded, lack basic facilities and supplies, and have under-qualified teachers.

Since 1994, the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) has worked vigorously to improve funding and budgeting to redress the imbalances and to achieve quality education in Gauteng. In the past 20 years, it has achieved near universal access to education; reduced dropout rates across all grades in the secondary school phase; increased and sustained learner performance (especially at Grade 12 level); increased and equalised education spending; and made substantial progress in eliminating infrastructure backlogs. Strong and pragmatic leadership and prudent budgeting have contributed to the GDE becoming successful in administering and managing education in the province.

In this chapter, we analyse the progression of the GDE's management of financing education to ensure that they have effective schools and learning institutions providing quality education. The discussion focuses on:

- Financing of education – National Equity Share Formula;
- Financing education in the province;
- Financing school education; and
- Financing programmes and interventions in schools and districts.

Methodology

Primary and secondary sources were used to inform this chapter. Primary sources included such documents as the GDE Annual Reports 1997/98 to 2012/13, GDE Budget reports and relevant information posted on the GDE website. These were analysed for content and implications for the implementation of policy and regulations. Local literature and journal articles were utilised as secondary sources.

Three interviews were conducted with the key informant, Mr Albert Chanee, the deputy director general. A further interview was conducted with Mr Mohammad Sujee, Director, Education Planning and Information Management, to acquire insight into budgetary trends and the allocation of funds to various programmes.

Education financing policy development

Since democracy, the efforts of the state can best be organised into the following periods:

- The first five years of change can be characterised as stabilising education, policy formulation and increasing access.
- The second five years focused on getting resourcing right, compensating for the dire poverty in which the masses found themselves by ensuring adequate financing and focusing on school completion rates and Grade 12 performance.
- The third five years focused on consolidating the resourcing levels, implementation of new curriculum frameworks and beginning to intensify the quest for educational quality and learner performance.
- The fourth five years are characterised by intensive efforts to turn quality across all phases of education around through systemic and institutionalised change.

Underpinning the efforts of the state to reconstruct education, the following goals were set:

- Equity, because of the gross levels of inequality in education funding reflected in the visible disparities between former white and black schools;
- Efficiency, because of the high levels of wastage expressed in terms of high dropout and repetition rates;
- Quality, because of the documented poor quality of teaching and learning in schools;
- Effectiveness, because of poor educational performance in relation to the high levels of funding;
- Democracy, because of the legacy of authoritarian practices in education generally; and
- Lack of parental participation in school governance.

Equity and redress

The national government's educational reforms since 1994 have focused on access, equity, quality, efficiency and redress. Education policies such as the post-provisioning norms; rationalisation and redeployment of teachers and non-teaching staff; management of school fees; the functioning of governing bodies and the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (School Funding Norms); and other pragmatic interventions primarily aimed to redress the inheritance of race-based inequality and to build a new and unified national system based on equity (Mestry & Dzvimbo 2010). The government had to address issues relating to teacher rationalisation; equalising non-personnel spending in all schools; making provision for capital expenditure (Capex) and streamlining the different pre-1994 funding policies on subsidies and delegations to schools.

While the Constitution gives provincial governments the responsibility of providing education with substantial autonomy in administering and funding education, all

provincial decisions must be made within the context of educational policies as determined by the national government.

In order to effect equity and redress, necessary in a public education sector characterised by huge inequalities and disparities, careful consideration was given to education financing, provisioning and budgeting policy options. This mandate meant that provincial departments of education were required, among others, to reduce inequities in funding education; increase equality in teacher-learner ratios; and finance learning and teaching support materials (LTSM).

Following on international experience, the GDE pursued a mix of financing policy options. These options included strategies to distribute all personnel equally while reducing personnel costs in overall expenditure, a reprioritisation in the budget, the freeing of additional resources through efficiency gains, and the establishment of conditional grant funding through the national Department of Education to safeguard the application of national norms and key transformation initiatives such as curriculum implementation, district development and school management and quality assurance.

Financing of education from national sphere to provincial legislature

In 1994, the Council of Education Ministers (CEM) resolved that inequities in funding would be phased out over a five-year period. In 1995/96, the wealthier provinces' budgets were top-sliced by 15%, and in 1996/97 by 20%, in order to shift funding towards the lower-than-average-funded (poorer) provinces. From 1997/98 provincial education budgets were no longer allocated by the Minister of Education, but by the provincial governments themselves. As such, the Minister of Education no longer controls the equalisation process.

In 1997 and 1998, an Education Sectoral Medium Term Expenditure Framework Review Team, representing national and provincial finance and education departments, undertook significant analyses of provincial education spending patterns and policy priorities. Their report included an analysis of cost drivers, a computerised model of education spending and strong recommendations to curb enrolment bloating and to control personnel costs through improved management practices. There was a clear message that no qualitative improvement in education could be expected unless efficiency savings were made and directed to this end. The Review Team also recommended that the ratio of personnel to non-personnel expenditure be reduced to 80:20 in the long term.

During the period 1995–1997, the GDE experienced capacity problems in the management of resources and delivery of services. Given the very large budget and cash flows for which they were responsible – and the massive numbers of records and operations involved in handling personnel, learner and cost data – the level of professional and technical staff responsible for these vital systems was generally inadequate. The

exorbitant personnel expenditure dominated education expenditure and undermined the GDE's ability to provide minimally adequate resources to enable the provision of effective education.

While both the School Funding Norms for non-personnel expenditure and the post-provisioning model contain aspects of socio-economic targeting, actual spending for non-personnel expenditure constituted about 8–10% of school budgets. This meant that only a small portion of basic education allocation was targeted towards redress. Except for the 2% pro-poor weighting, the balance of state spending on schools, directed towards the payment of personnel, continues to favour historically advantaged schools that have better-qualified – and therefore more expensive – teachers.

The GDE thus had to balance inadequate funding with making inroads into the backlogs in school classrooms; the lack of basic water, sanitation and electricity reported in the National School Register of Needs; making good the lack of school libraries, laboratories, workshops, teaching aids and professional development for teachers; training school governing bodies; consolidating reforms in curriculum; and also extending essential services for adult education, childhood development and education for learners with special needs. There was a lack of coherence between the services to be delivered in accordance with national policy and the funding of these services.

Pro-poor funding

The introduction of the School Funding Norms saw the start of pro-poor funding of schools. This was based on the poverty profile of the community serviced by the school; schools were ranked and organised into quintiles. The poorest 40% benefited from 60% of non-personnel non-Capex funding in the form of subsidies. This was later supported by an exemptions policy that allowed poor learners in less poor schools to apply for exemptions from paying full fees. This policy was later adjusted with the introduction of minimum adequacy amounts per quintile. In 2007, we saw the introduction of no-fee schools and a decision was taken progressively to move the schools servicing the poorest 60% of learners nationally into a no-fee school status at the minimum adequacy amount for quintile 3.

In Gauteng, learner enrolment in no-fee and fee status schools changed dramatically, with 23% of the learners in no-fee schools in 2007 compared with 64% in 2013. Gauteng remains the only province to fund all no-fee schools at the same recommended adequacy amount of quintile 1 – the most preferential level – and all fee-paying schools at the quintile 4 level.

Other pro-poor interventions include access to by all learners in no-fee schools to a meal through the National School Nutrition Programme and access to scholar transport for learners in rural areas and informal settlements.

Financing education: The Equitable Share Formula (ESF)

The Equitable Share Formula (ESF), phased in from 1996, is used for allocating revenues from National Treasury to the provinces. Provincial governments are constitutionally entitled to an 'equitable share' of national revenue, based on a formula reflecting provincial variables such as the school-age population, public school enrolments, the distribution of capital needs, the size of the rural population and the target population for social security grants weighted by a poverty index. The ESF is of critical importance for the delivery of social services and calculations are currently based on a 41% share for education (OECD 2008).

The Equitable Share Formula reflects demographic and social criteria: 'The goal is to ensure that each province, regardless of its wealth, is able to spend an equitable amount on each learner' (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2008: 149). The formula used by the National Treasury still retains the 1997/98 structure. Each year, a percentage of the total Provincial Equitable Share is allocated to education based on primary and secondary school enrolments as a percentage of the population between the ages of five and 17 in the province. The Equitable Share reaches provincial governments in the form of an unconditional (block) grant. Because of the principle of cooperative governance, provinces are then entitled to make their own decisions about how to spread their equitable share across all provincial social services (education, health, welfare, housing and community development). However, in practice, provincial fiscal autonomy is restricted in a number of ways. First, public employees in South Africa – including teachers and other school personnel – belong to a single national civil service, and their salaries are set nationally. Personnel expenditure accounts for about 75% of provincial current expenditure on education (Gauteng Provincial Treasury 2013); thus their discretionary funds are limited.

About 15% of the national funding of the provinces is set aside in the form of conditional grants (for agriculture, culture, education, health, housing, transport, etc.). These are discussed later in this chapter. Conditional grants are the expression of national concerns for certain essential priorities for the whole country, such as school nutrition and tackling HIV and Aids.

Implementing the South African Schools Act and School: Funding norms in Gauteng

The South African Schools Act prescribes that all public schools are funded by the state. In terms of Section 12 (1), the member of the executive council (of the Provincial Legislature) must provide public schools for the education of learners out of funds appropriated for this purpose, and the state must fund public schools from public revenue

on an equitable basis in order to ensure the proper exercise of the rights of learners to education and the redress of past inequalities in education provision (Section 34).

The pro-poor funding policy is embedded in the School Funding Norms. These norms and standards provide a statutory basis for school funding in that schools are now classified into wealth quintiles and subsidised accordingly (that is, schools serving poorer communities must receive more funds than schools serving better-off communities). The principles governing the determination of the school poverty or quintile ranking include: the relative poverty of the community around the school, which in turn should depend on individual or household advantage/disadvantage with regard to income, wealth and/or level of education; data from the National Census conducted by StatsSA; or any equivalent data set/base that could be used as a source (Gauteng Department of Education [GDE], Circular 56 of 2006). Current policy determines that poor schools (quintile 1) receive seven times more than advantaged schools (quintile 5).

Although the School Funding Norms deal with non-personnel and non-capital expenditure, they also make reference to personnel norms as well as targeting procedures to be followed in allocating capital expenditures. In 2002, the School Funding Norms were amended to allow the distribution of personnel expenditure to be brought in line with the poverty weightings of the School Funding Norms. In terms of Section 88 of the School Funding Norms, the provincial education departments are required to maintain an 'accurate prioritized, annually updated database of school construction needs and undertake annually updated long term projections of new school construction targets and funding requirements, based on these norms' (South Africa, 1998: 13).

Impact of the Post Distribution Model for the allocation of teachers' posts to schools in Gauteng

The Post Distribution Model is based on the principle that available posts are distributed among schools proportionally to their numbers of weighted learners. As some learners and some learning areas require more favourable post allocations than others, each learner is given a certain weighting that reflects his or her relative need in respect of post provisioning. Other factors – such as the size of the school, the need to redistribute resources and the need to ensure equal access to the curriculum – may require that additional weighted learners be allocated to some schools.

It should be borne in mind that education provisioning is budget-driven. The number of teachers employed and distributed to schools is based on affordability within the budget allocation and is not driven by class sizes or teacher-learner ratios. However, class sizes and teacher-learner ratios are used as policy targets and this should be achieved progressively as funding increases.

Gauteng provincial policy targeting and resource allocation

The School Funding Norms set a macro policy target of an 85–15 split between personnel and non-personnel in the education allocation, excluding conditional grants. This was one of the recommendations of the work done in 1997 by the Education Sectoral Task Team. The GDE achieved the required 85–15 split in 2001/2 and has since been shifting back to a 90–10 split when excluding conditional grants.

Resource allocation strategies in Gauteng to meet the challenges

Post provisioning

From Table 5.3, we can see the progressive growth in teacher numbers over the 20-year period.

Currently the GDE has a post establishment of approximately 53 050 teachers, in both offices and institutions. This figure will be maintained over the next financial year. The projected learner–teacher ratio (systems ratio)¹ for 2007 is 31:1 as compared to 34:1 in 2006. This ratio is not as favourable as in some other provinces. The GDE has been in a position to maintain the 2006 ratio with the aim of stabilising the provincial teacher establishment but is not succeeding as a result of growth in learner enrolment. There is currently a need for 2 500 posts for schools to avoid unmanageable classroom ratios.² The revised post provisioning policy sets aside a maximum of 5% of all posts for redistribution to schools in disadvantaged communities for curriculum purposes based on the poverty index used by the department.

In terms of the public service (PS) staff during the apartheid era, there was an imbalance between white and black schools in the province. The GDE is responsible for restoring this imbalance. The GDE has a PS establishment of 17 761, of whom approximately 2 900 work in the districts and head office and 14 861 work in educational institutions. The GDE has currently made provision for a further 1 000 PS posts to be deployed in institutions. The GDE continues to implement an equitable personnel-provisioning model for PS staff in institutions.

1 The number of learners across the system (from all the sectors) divided by the total number of educators, including those in offices.

2 The number of learners divided by the number of class units. A class unit could mean any space that is utilised as a class for teaching and learning.

Capital expenditure (Capex)

In Gauteng, the provincial government allocates an annual budget for Capex and this amount is used for capital projects only. Capital projects include new works, renovations, refurbishments and minor repairs. Since 1996, the GDE has built sufficient classrooms to eliminate the historic backlog. However, due to increased learner migration and an annual growth of approximately 2%, there is an increase in demand for classrooms annually. Over 95% of the Capex budget is spent in disadvantaged communities.

The South African Schools Act and School Funding Norms: Poverty targeting

The GDE applies the School Funding Norms, and is therefore positively skewing the allocation of funds for recurrent expenditure towards schools in disadvantaged communities. This is being done through the extension of no-fee schools to all quintile 1–3 schools and those quintile 4 schools that opt to be included. Fee-paying schools are left with flexibility under the SASA and the School Funding Norms to determine their own needs and raise funds through school fees and fundraising.

District resourcing strategy

The GDE also allocates school and curriculum support budgets founded on a redress factor or index. This is based on the average distance from the district to schools and the number of schools per former department. This has been implemented to address the increased support and development that districts with a high concentration of remote and rural schools need to be providing in relation to other schools. This includes budgets for additional curriculum resources and library materials.

Learners with special educational needs (LSEN) redress

In the LSEN sector, the GDE has an equitable school funding system based on the needs of the sector. The GDE, however, has established a redress fund to address the needs of former Department of Education and Training schools that have a backlog in terms of education resources required to meet the needs of learners with special educational needs.

Provisioning additional learning and teaching support materials (LTSM)

Over the years, the GDE has provided additional LTSM in the grades that were implementing new national curricula. This has continued with provision of Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) LTSM to all schools where there is a shortage as a result of inadequate subsidies.

Independent schools

The GDE subsidises independent schools that qualify on a progressive basis. Independent schools serving the poorest communities receive a subsidy to the maximum of 60% of the per capita expenditure of public ordinary schools.

Cost Drivers

Population and learner growth

In 1994, the government promised access to, and equal opportunities (regardless of gender and race) for, efficient and quality education. This was based on the principles of transformation, redress and equity. Since 1994, many improvements have been noted, especially with regards to access, equity and redress – with serious implications for funding education in Gauteng.

In the first two decades of democracy, enrolment in the schooling sector grew significantly. Gauteng has seen an increase in the enrolment in public ordinary schools from 1.3 million in 1995 to 1.9 million in 2013 (see Table 5.1), in line with significant population growth as a result of urbanisation and migration into the province. The learner enrolment has been growing steadily at an average of 2% per annum resulting in overcrowding and the need for new schools and classrooms in some areas. This significant growth, along with movement of learners from one school to another, has led to overcrowding in some schools and forced the Department to deliver classrooms and schools in areas of need.

The number of learners by former department, learner enrolment by quintiles and learner enrolment in fee-paying and no-fee schools have an impact on the provincial Department of Education's budget.

The 2011 census data illustrated that Gauteng had a population of 12.3 million people, making Gauteng the most populous province, with an increase of almost 2.9 million people over the period 2001–2011. In 1996, Gauteng contributed 18.8% of the South African population; in 2011, it contributed 23.7%. While the population structure of Gauteng mirrors that of the nation in the sense of having a youthful population, there is

a distinctive feature showing a lower number for the 10–14 years age group. This reflects the high numbers of people migrating to Gauteng in their late teens and twenties.

In 2000, 75 965 learners entered the province, increasing to 90 967 in 2009 and 86 974 in 2013. This amounts to an average of 4% of the total enrolment in schools. Gauteng experienced movement of learners from all provinces as well as from other countries. The highest number of learners migrating into Gauteng was registered from Limpopo province (20 219) followed by Eastern Cape (14 708). The districts experiencing the highest average increase in learners over the years are Tshwane South, Johannesburg East, Ekurhuleni South and Ekurhuleni North.

Table 5.1: Number of learners

	1995	1999	2004	2009	2012	2013	Actual change
Public primary school	797 812	899 733	954 255	1 059 360	1 119 133	1 162 312	364 500
Public secondary school	513 473	553 404	606 635	660 883	739 612	737 230	223 757
Total ordinary	1 311 285	1 453 137	1 560 890	1 720 243	1 858 745	1 899 542	588 257
ABET	-	59 296	69 897	74 534	85 624	*	*
LSEN	25 515	28 036	33 111	34 334	38 144	40 462	14 947
FET colleges	-	40 789	44 702	100 509	97 953	*	*
Total Public	1 336 800	1 581 258	1 708 600	1 929 620	2 080 466	*	603 204
Independent non-subsidised primary school	674	852	11 268	24 888	30 312	37 214	36 540
Independent non-subsidised secondary school	4 536	8 224	41 129	69 812	89 562	111 501	106 965
Independent subsidised primary school	15 221	23 235	17 545	20 102	22 162	19 060	3 839
Independent subsidised secondary school	50 425	79 245	67 076	68 793	74 606	62 209	11 784
Independent non-subsidised LSEN	239	-	15	942	1 677	1 633	1 394
Independent subsidised LSEN	342	410	581	578	670	520	178
Independent non-subsidised ABET	-	-	-	-	3 053	*	*
Total Gauteng province	1 408 237	1 693 224	1 846 214	2 114 735	2 302 508	*	763 904

* Data not available for 2013 as yet.

Demand for school infrastructure: Increasing access to schooling

The number of schools across the different sectors has increased significantly since 1994 (see Table 5.2), while the consolidation of the FET colleges and ABET centres has seen numbers drop.

The GDE builds additional schools and classrooms and upgrades infrastructure in schools based on a needs analysis. Since 2002, substantial amounts of money have been

allocated for the building of new schools. In the period 2003–2005, all mud school structures and schools under trees were replaced with prefabricated classroom structures and all schools in the province obtained access to clean water and sanitation. In 2005, an in-depth analysis established that there was a need for 125 new secondary schools and 49 primary schools (GDE 2003/04; 2004/05). Since 2005, an average of 25 schools has been built each year. The GDE has also upgraded the infrastructure of many township and rural schools to ensure that all learners have access to education in a safe and conducive environment. The GDE, since 2004, has also set aside a substantial amount of money for the erection of fencing and for refurbishing schools. In addition to building schools, the GDE delivers mobile classrooms to alleviate classroom shortages. In 2010, 1 682 mobile classrooms were installed in several schools.

Table 5.2: Number of institutions

	1995	1999	2004	2009	2012	2013	Actual change
Public primary school	1 286	1 353	1 308	1 350	1 347	1 358	72
Public secondary school	539	548	554	620	698	698	159
Total ordinary	1 827	1 901	1 862	1 970	2 045	2 056	229
ABET	-	214	247	52	47	47	47
LSEN	98	98	103	103	109	109	11
FET colleges	-	33	9	8	8	8	0*
Total public	1 925	2 246	2 221	2 133	2 209	2 220	295
Independent non-subsidised primary school	4	34	52	88	116	137	133
Independent non-subsidised secondary school	14	96	116	148	250	299	285
Independent subsidised primary school	53	55	56	51	57	49	-4
Independent subsidised secondary school	159	155	159	133	143	108	-51
Independent non-subsidised LSEN	4	1	3	9	18	19	15
Independent subsidised LSEN	4	4	3	3	4	4	0
Independent non-subsidised ABET	-	-	-	-	10	10	10
Total Gauteng province	2 163	2 591	2 610	2 565	2 807	2 846	683

*33 technical colleges were merged to form 8 FET colleges with 33 campuses

The number of GDE schools grew by 11% in 1994–1999, 7% in 1999–2004 and 8% in 2004–2009, with a 10% growth in the current period. Public ordinary schools constitute the largest component of the sector, although this component has decreased from just over 95% in 1995 to 88% in 2013. The independent school sector, which has witnessed a significant increase, constituted over 2% in 1995 and 10% of the total enrolment in 2013. The LSEN sector increased to 2.9% in 2013 from about 2% in 1995.

Although this growth shows Gauteng’s commitment to ensuring that all have access to learning, it has a significant impact on the service delivery budget, which is facing financial constraints. As learner enrolment and numbers of institutions have

increased substantially, so the budget for education in Gauteng has increased from just over R4.5 billion to a significant high of R29.2 billion (an increase of over 500%). The education budget maintained its average share of about 40% of the total provincial budget from 1996 to 2013/14.

Increasing teacher employment to meet demand: Increasing access to teachers

The GDE increased the number of teachers by 22% from 1994 to 2013. This translates into 15 337 additional teachers employed in public ordinary schools, with 7 742 in primary schools and 7 595 in secondary schools. There are 15 744 teachers in independent schools; this sector showed an increase of 50% over this period.

Table 5.3: Number of teachers (including SGB and privately paid educators)

Level	1995	1999	2004	2009	2012	2013	Actual growth
Public primary school	24 522	25 450	26 635	30 787	32 169	32 264	7 742
Public secondary school	19 498	17 749	18 923	23 799	27 006	27 093	7 595
Total ordinary	44 020	43 199	45 558	54 586	59 175	59 357	15 337
ABET	–	2 313	3 246	2 186	2 397	*	*
LSEN	2 028	2 216	2 379	2 706	3 150	3 181	3 091
FET colleges	–	1 871	2 061	1 804	2 073	*	*
Total public	46 048	49 599	53 244	61 282	66 795	62 538	18 428
Independent non-subsidised primary school	30	48	778	1,793	2 183	2 465	2 435
Independent non-subsidised secondary school	338	482	2 965	5 881	7 720	9 054	8 716
IS – primary school	848	1 306	644	802	921	765	–83
IS – secondary school	3 513	4 889	3 569	3 289	3 961	3 182	–331
Independent non-subsidised LSEN	22	–	6	115	246	241	219
Independent subsidised LSEN	59	36	63	52	50	37	–22
Independent non-subsidised ABET	–	–	–	–	97	*	*
Total Gauteng province	50 858	56 360	61 269	73 214	81 973	78 282	29 362

* Data not available for 2013 as yet.

Budget trends and analysis

Budget and expenditure

Education financing

While the national budget grew from R31.4 billion in 1995/96 to over R232.5 billion in 2013/14, the education budget subsequently increased from R4.5 billion in the 1995/96

financial year to over R29.2 billion in the 2013/14 financial year. This is a 649% increase over 18 years. Education financing and resourcing policy was a critical lever for achieving a unified education system. In the period 1995–1997, the minister of education was responsible for provincial budgetary allocations. As a result of a strong national equity programme, inter-provincial inequity was reduced by almost 60% during this period.

In 1997/98, provincial governments were responsible for dividing their own budgets among their line function departments. During this transition period, there were many challenges that made effective expenditure management difficult. There was serious over-expenditure by some provincial education, health and social welfare departments. In education, there was a net increase in learner enrolment, especially in the junior primary phase. The national and provincial treasuries, and the departments of education, responded by assisting with the development of more credible budgets and enforcing tighter controls to bring actual expenditure in line with budgeted expenditure.

The GDE's revenue is sourced primarily from national and provincial government through the equitable share, provincial own revenue and conditional grants. Over 89% of the education budget is from the province and a further 11% of its budget is received from conditional grants. The conditional grants include the Infrastructure Grant, which is for funding construction and maintenance of physical infrastructure; the HIV/Aids grant, which promotes HIV/Aids and life skills education in primary and secondary schools; the National School Nutrition Programme, which improves the nutritional status of children and enhances their learning capacity; the Technical Secondary School Recapitalisation Grant, which improves conditions in technical schools; the FET Grant, which is still managed by the Department of Basic Education but will soon be transferred to the Department of Higher Education; and the Dinaledi Schools Grant, which aims to improve mathematics and physical science teaching.

The conditional grant allocation, excluding the FET Grant, has been 3% of the total budget since the 2006/07 financial year, but has subsequently increased to 3.9% for the 2012/13 Medium-term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) period. The total conditional grant is 8% when the FET Grant is included.

Small amounts of revenue are collected from administration of insurance deductions on behalf of companies and other sources. This revenue is not retained by the GDE and is ceded to the provincial revenue fund.

Budget trends: Personnel/non-personnel split

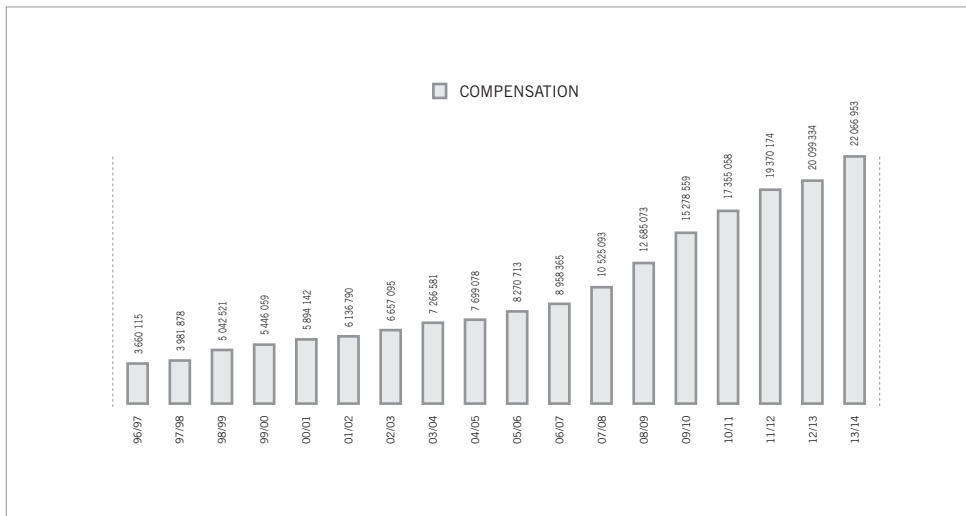
Personnel and non-personnel expenditure

The proportional expenditure, including conditional grants, on different budget items – in particular, the percentage of expenditure on personnel expenditure versus non-personnel expenditure – provides the extent to which the GDE funds educational services

and resources such as LTSM and other resources to schools. The ratio of personnel to non-personnel in 1999/2000 was 86:14; by 2013/14, it had dropped to 76:24, as more funds were made available to non-personnel items such as transfers to schools, nutrition, no-fee schools, infrastructure development and other core support items, ensuring that quality education is being delivered. However, this is primarily as a result of the funds for the conditional grants. With the removal of the conditional grants, the ratio of personnel to non-personnel is 80:20 in 2013/14.

Figure 5.1 shows that the compensation for employees has increased from R3.6 billion to R22 billion, an increase of 503% from 1996/97. This is as a result of an increase in benefits, and the sharp increase in 2009 is the result of the implementation of the Occupational Specific Dispensation (OSD). Although there was a significant increase in the personnel budget from 2009 to 2011, the funding for non-personnel expenditure did not regress, but increased as well. In 1996/97, compensation for employees constituted 81% of the total education budget and in 2013/14 it constituted 75% of the total education budget (including conditional grants).

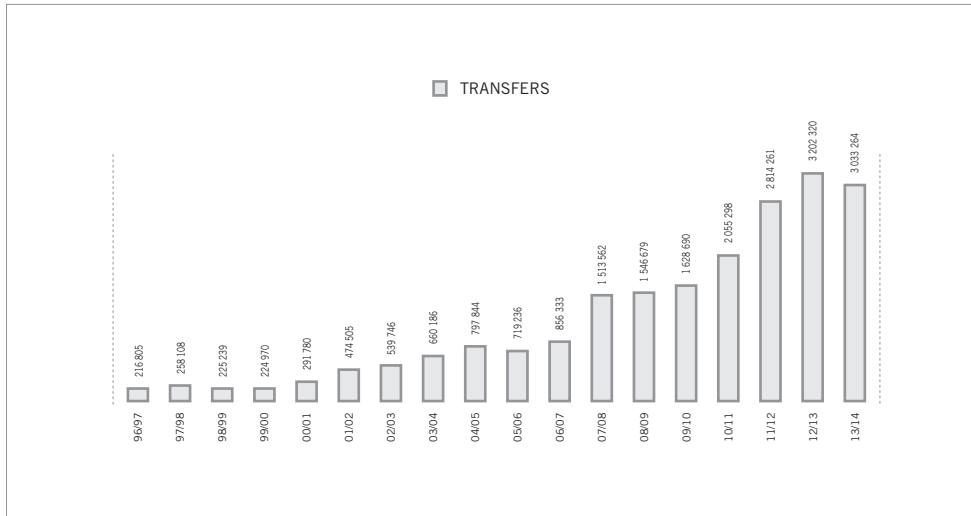
Figure 5.1: Budget of compensation for employees



Budget transfers and capital expenditure

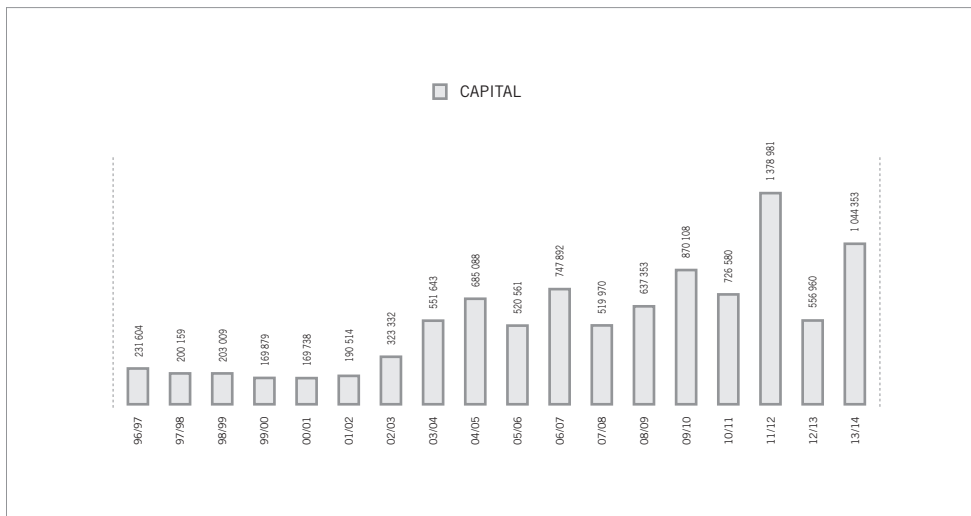
The budget for transfers (Figure 5.2) increased from R216 million in the 1996/97 financial year to over R2.8 billion in 2013/14, which constitutes an increase of 1 300%. This is the direct result of the implementation of the School Funding Norms and the no-fee school policy. The transfers are made to public ordinary schools and to the Matthew Goniwe School for Leadership and Governance (MGSLG) as part of training programmes of the GDE.

Figure 5.2: Budget transfers



In Figure 5.3, capital expenditure also experienced an increase from R200 million in the 1996/97 financial year to R1.9 billion in the 2011/12 financial year. It then decreased to R500 million in 2012/13.

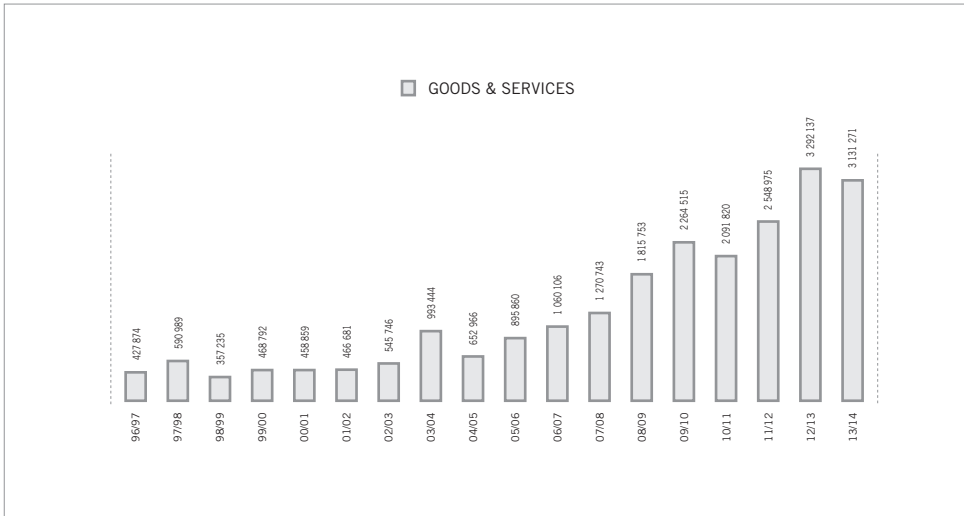
Figure 5.3: Budget of capital expenditure



Non-personnel/non-Capex expenditure

Goods and services expenditure shows a significant increase over the past decade. For example, there was an increase from R1.1 billion in the 2006/07 financial year to R3.1 billion in 2013/14, reflecting an increase of R2 billion over the 2013/14 MTEF period.

Figure 5.4: Budget of goods and services



Changes in per capita learner expenditure

The GDE’s expenditure per learner based on the GDE’s total expenditure and total enrolment (from all sectors) has increased from R3 278 per learner in 1996/97 to R12 418 in 2013/14.

The expenditure per LSEN learner experienced an increase of R10 030 in 1999/2000 to R39 841 in 2013/14, while expenditure per learner in public ordinary schools rose from R2 898 in 1996/97 to R11 304 in 2013/14. The GDE also resourced public schools through the School Funding Norms. In 2000, the per-learner allocation for quintiles 1 to 5 were R326, R227, R182, R136 and R46 respectively, increasing to R1 010 for all quintile 1 to 3 schools (including those no-fee schools in quintiles 4 and 5) and R505 for fee-paying quintile 4 and 5 schools in 2013. The average per-learner expenditure increased from R184 in 2000 to R808 in 2013, amounting to an increase of 339%.

Budget balance across programmes

The percentage distribution of budgets to educational programmes over the periods 2008/09 to 2012/13 remained stable. On average, public ordinary school education remained the largest of the eight budget programmes managed by the GDE, receiving an average of 77.7% of the total allocated sector budget. The second-largest service delivery programme, public special school education, received an average allocation of 5.4%,

while FET received an average allocation of 3.6%. ABET and ECD both received below 2% of the allocation. Table 5.4 indicates the budget allocated to each programme for the past 10 years.

Table 5.4: Percentage expenditure on budget programmes

Provincial education sector	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13
Administration	1.98	2.5	10.00	7.51	7.8	8.1	8.1	6.8	7.0
Public ordinary schools	84.00	82.87	74.82	79.88	79.7	78.1	77.7	76.7	76.4
Independent school subsidies	1.65	1.72	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.7
Public special school education	4.46	4.7	5.68	4.69	5.3	5.5	5.8	5.3	5.4
Further Education and Training	3.56	3.62	3.80	3.40	3.5	3.0	3.5	3.9	4.1
Adult Basic Education	1.51	1.92	1.37	0.98	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.2
Early Childhood Development	–	–	–	0.07	0.6	1.2	0.7	2.3	1.9
Auxiliary and Associated Services	0.90	0.70	1.53	1.64	0.5	1.5	1.4	2.1	2.2

Between the 2008/09 and 2012/13 financial years, expenditure per programme has grown consistently, benefiting all the service delivery programmes. Expenditure on ECD grew quickly from a zero base due to the GDE’s commitment to universalisation of Grade R by 2014, while increased expenditure on special school education shows inclusive education becoming a priority, with the aim of establishing 45 full-service schools by 2014. Allocations for public ordinary schools continue to account for the largest portion of the overall budget.

Programme budgets

Budgets for public ordinary schools

The largest amount of the GDE’s budget is allocated to this programme. The recurrent expenditure is committed to employee compensation, transfers and subsidies to schools and other educational institutions, and payments of capital assets. For example, in the 2012/13 financial year, a large portion of the recurrent expenditure committed to employee compensation amounted to R20 billion; transfers and subsidies to schools and other educational institutions amounted to R3.2 billion and payments of capital assets to R556 million. The increase in transfers is mainly due to the increased subsidies to implement the Department’s no-fee school policy and expansion of Grade R sites. The increase of 36.3% for the 2012/13 financial year is also largely due to the increase in the learner per capita adequacy amount and compensation for fee exemptions in quintile 4 and 5 schools. Transfers have also increased as the result of the focus in the 2012/13 financial year on expanding the Grade R programme to achieve the departmental aim of universalisation by 2014. Transfers to section 21 and non-section 21 primary and secondary schools, and the quality outreach programmes, are also given due consideration.

The increase in budgets over the 20-year period is the result of meeting the ever-increasing learner population over the past 20 years and normalising the teacher-learner ratio policy requirements of 1:40 and 1:35 for public primary and secondary schools respectively. GDE delivers education services to 2 611 institutions with over 2 million learners. At the same time as the sharp increase in enrolment, the budget has grown to try to provide the necessary resources and capacity to overcome the imbalances created by apartheid and to ensure that the principles of redress and equity are achieved. The budget for public ordinary schools (Figure 5.5) has grown from R3.7 billion in the 1996/97 financial year to R22.2 billion in 2014/15, indicating an increase of R18 billion – an increase of just under 500% over the 20-year period. This recorded an average annual increase of 10% in the 20-year period.

To address the backlog of classrooms and refurbishment and maintenance of schools, expenditure on goods and services remains the second-largest classification. The increase in transfers to schools is mainly the result of increased subsidies to implement the Department's no-fee school policy and the expansion in the Grade R sector. The GDE has achieved near universal access to primary education. At secondary school level, Gauteng has reached a Gross Enrolment Ratio hovering at 90%. This excludes learners in FET colleges and ABET centres. The average learner-teacher ratios (LTR) in 1995 were 30:1 for public ordinary schools, compared to 35:1 in 2013. The average low teacher-learner ratios in the early 1990s are due to the favourable position of historically advantaged schools. The primary LTR was 33:1 in 1995, compared to 35:1 in 2013. The secondary LTR was 26:1 in 1995, with 27:1 in 2013.

The increase in budget is also attributed to cost of living increases and the recruitment of additional teachers and support staff. The GDE has equalised and improved on the recruitment and distribution of teachers. In 1995, there were 44 020 teachers across the public school system, compared to 53 407 in 2013. This represents a 21% increase.

As the Department's main focus is on improving the quality of education in the province, a significant portion of the budget is focused on intervention programmes such as the Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS), the Intersen Strategy and the SSIP Strategy at an average cost of R85 million per year. In 2007, the Dinaledi Schools Project was established nationally to promote Mathematics and Physical Sciences in order to increase the number of learners pursuing careers in science and mathematics to address scarce skills in South Africa – at an average cost of R20 million for each financial year.

Budgets for independent schools

The budget to subsidise independent schools grew from R128.5 million in 1996/97 to R490 million (Figure 5.6) in the 2013/14 financial year, which reflects a total percentage increase of 281% in the 20-year series. The increase in this sector is attributed to the

Figure 5.5: Budget allocation for public ordinary schools

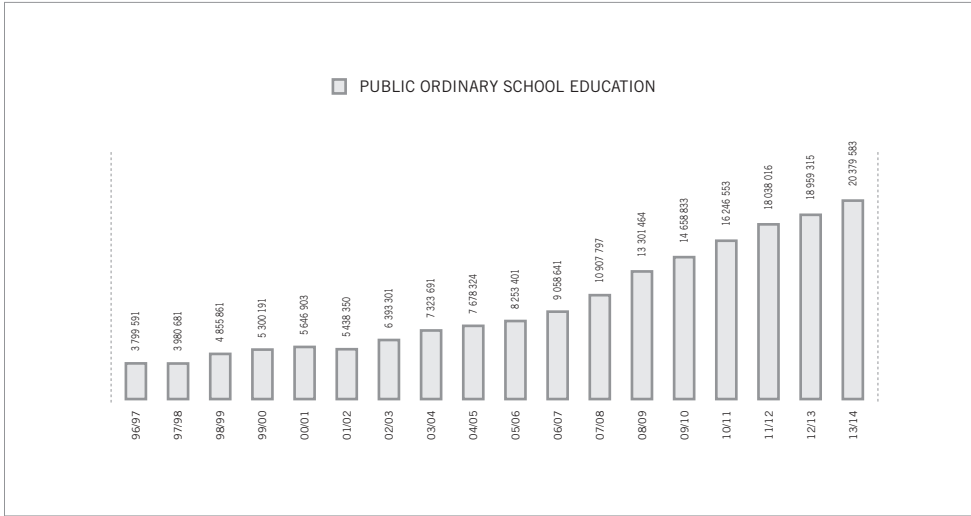
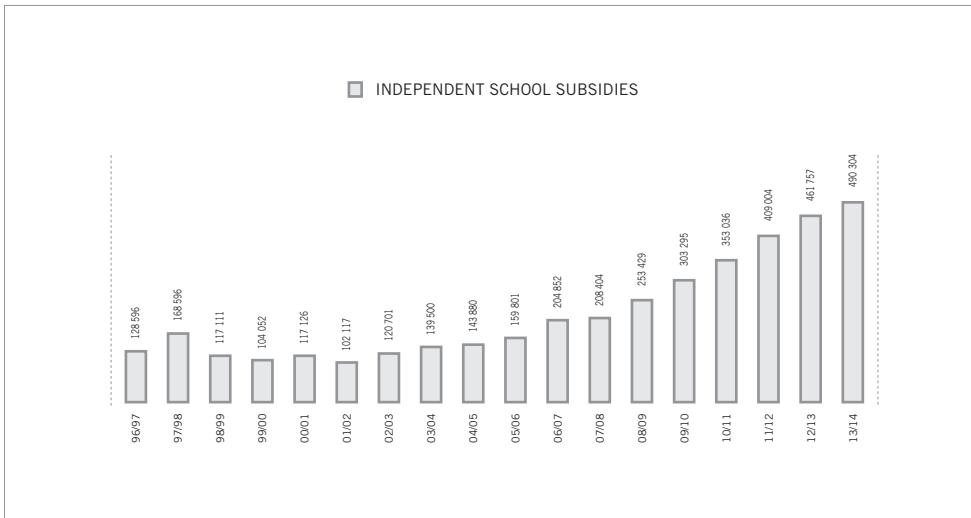


Figure 5.6: Budget allocation for independent schools

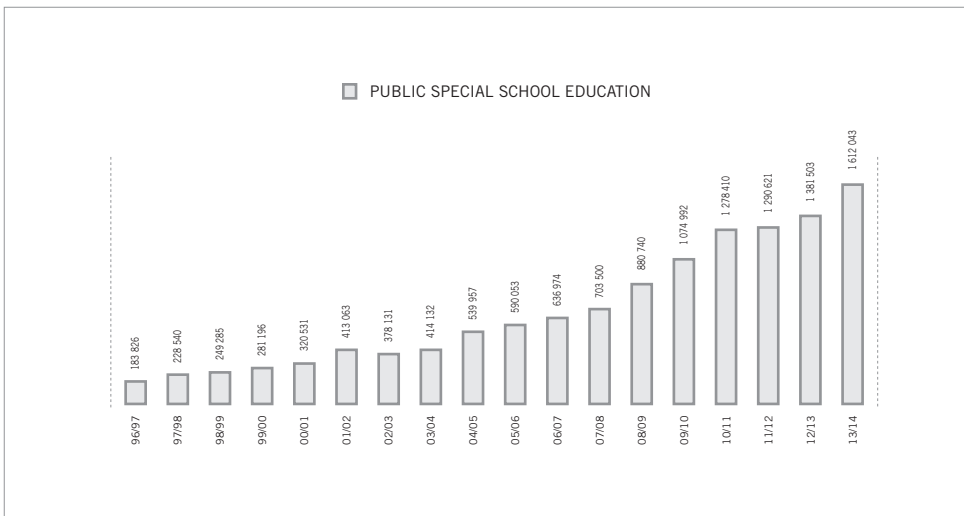


promulgation of the South African Schools Act of 1996, which gave guidelines for the transfer of subsidies to independent schools based on the School Funding Norms for independent schools as well as the increase in the number of learners and the registration of more independent schools.

Budgets for special schools

Public special schools had a budget of R183.8 million in 1996/97, which increased to R1.6 billion (refer to Figure 5.7) in 2013/14 – constituting a total percentage increase of 777%. The average percentage increase for the past 20 years was 12%. The substantial increases are as a result of the implementation of White Paper 6, which sought to promote inclusive education; increased access to special needs education; increased school subsidies; more resources and assistive devices; and – most significantly – the implementation of OSD that led to the sharp increase after 2009. The GDE also supported the establishment of *Schools of Industry*, which were included in 30 special education needs schools.

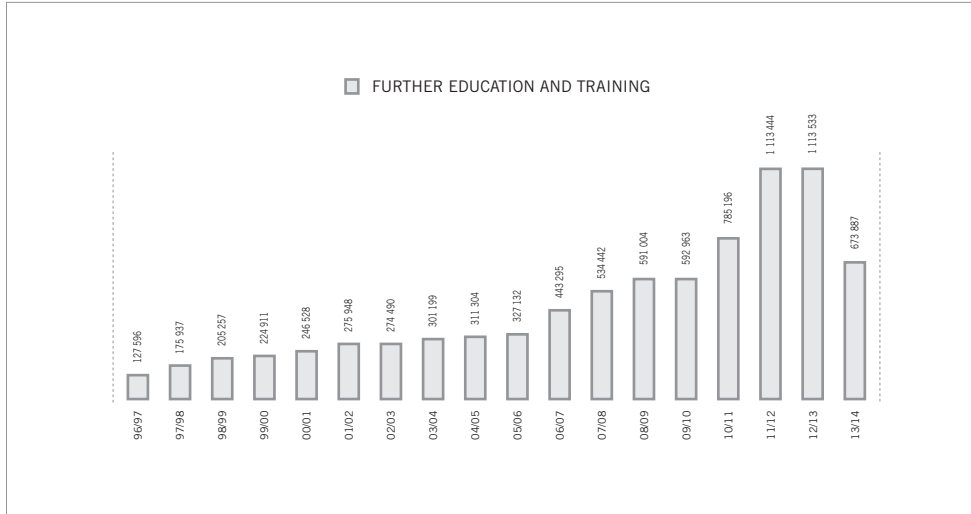
Figure 5.7: Budget allocation for public special education schools



Budget for Further Education and Training (FET)

FET received an allocation of R127 million in 1996/97 and R1.1 billion in 2012/13, showing an increase of 495%. The budget was growing at an average percentage rate of 13%. A decrease is evident in the budget as R759.6 million in the 2013/14 MTEF was absorbed by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). In the years 2010–2013, the budget for FET included the personnel component that amounted to well in excess of R11.1 billion. This sector is in the process of being absorbed and migrated to the DHET.

Figure 5.8: Budget allocation for FET



Budget for Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET)

ABET had an allocated budget of R35 million in 1996/97, which increased to R388 million by 2013/14 (Figure 5.9). The sector experienced an increase of 303%, resulting in an average growth rate of 8.2%. Increases in the programme are attributed to the implementation of the ABET Act and the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act (GENFETQA), which stipulated that ABET examinations should be written and monitored. Improvements in the curriculum and procurement of ABET LTSM, monitoring and evaluation of centres, introduction of technical and entrepreneurial courses as well as improvements in the conditions of service of teachers have all contributed to the increase of the budget.

Budget for Early Childhood Development (ECD)

The budget for ECD grew from R88 million in 2003/04 to R635 million in 2013/14 (Figure 5.10). Budget increases are attributed to the implementation of White Paper 5, which stipulates that an ECD institute be established and community sites be formalised to increase learner enrolment numbers in Grade R.

Figure 5.9: Budget allocation for ABET

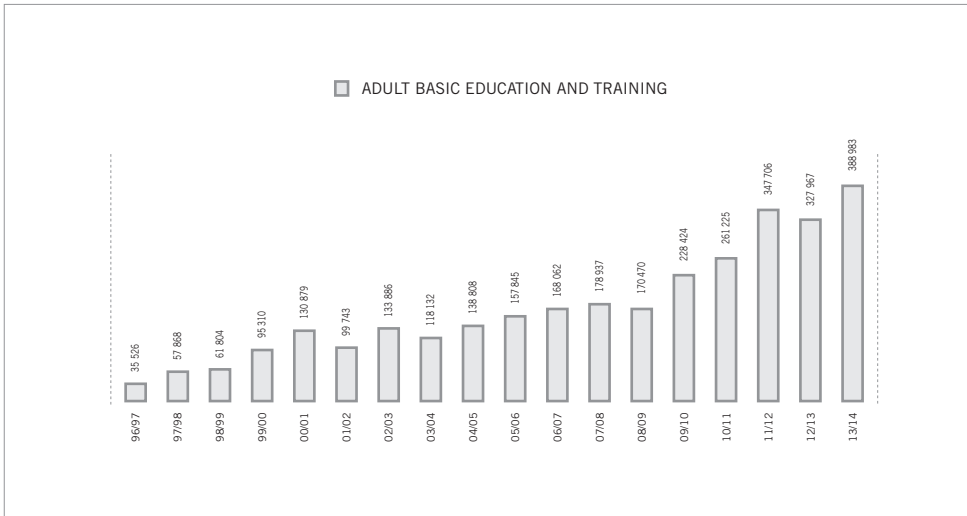
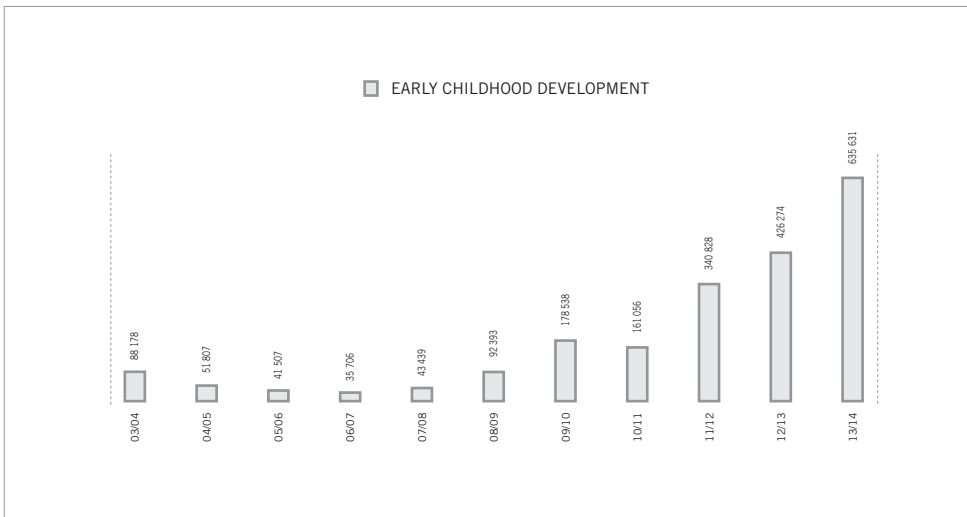


Figure 5.10: Budget allocation for ECD



Key challenges

In moving forwards, the following key recommendations must be considered:

- Financing of education: The current model used to fund education in provinces should be reviewed to consider both the enrolment of learners as well as quality improvements in the delivery of education. The key challenge that provincial

departments of education experience is the distribution of the national equitable share, which is based on historical enrolment figures. A provincial department of education only receives revenue for current enrolment two years later. The equitable share therefore does not make allowance for the projection of growth in enrolment, so the amount received may not be sufficient to meet the demand;

- Review of the adequacy amount allocated to no-fee schools as it is lagging behind inflation;
- Review of education legislation. In light of the introduction of no-fee schools and the increasing demand for a national free education system, a review of the South African Schools Act and related education legislation is required.

Conclusion

The period covered by this review has seen an uncertain start made by new structures in national and provincial government in education. At national level, the focus has been on, among others, rationalisation, integration of administrative structures and the future of white schools. At provincial level, there was a dire need for the redistribution of resources and the elimination of inequalities in provision, especially in historically disadvantaged schools.

Since 1994, the GDE – despite the challenge of limited financial resources – has been committed to providing quality education in the province. The department has worked forcefully to improve the conditions for quality education in Gauteng. In the past 20 years, it has achieved near universal access to education, reduced dropout rates across all grades in the secondary school phase, increased and sustained learner performance (especially at Grade 12 level) and increased and equalised education spending, and has made substantial progress in eliminating infrastructure backlogs.

Over the past two decades, the GDE has further intensified the accountability of carrying out its fiduciary duties and the prudent manner in which the financial resources voted to them have been effectively and efficiently managed, culminating in unqualified audit opinions for the past few years. It no longer receives comments from the auditors on wasteful expenditure or payroll inaccuracies, nor non-compliance on submissions to Treasury and the auditor general. These are indicators that the department is achieving the efficiencies set out in 1994. These efficiencies can be seen in both the budget balance to achieve quality education and the administration and accounting of the funds received.

The GDE is committed to achieving the desired quality education for all by accelerating service delivery and enhancing the conditions in institutions in the province.

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CHAPTER 6

RESOURCING PUBLIC ORDINARY SCHOOLS

Gugu Nyanda

Introduction

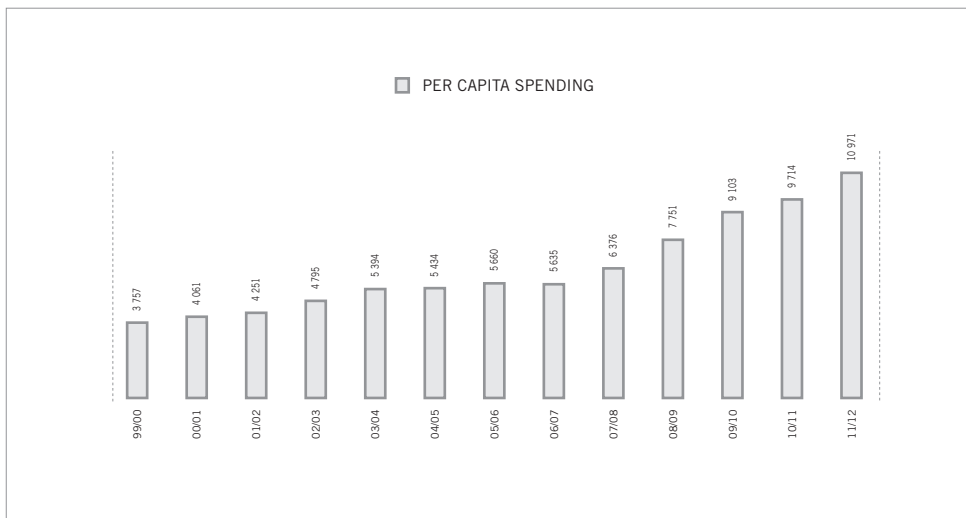
This chapter focuses on resourcing of public schools, and it reviews the key policy reforms and programmes that have been introduced in the education sector in pursuit of the imperatives of improving access, equity and redress. The chapter specifically addresses the following critical areas through which the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) provides for schools:

1. Overall allocation to public ordinary schools through the Resource Targeting Table, which includes direct cash transfers to schools and an allocation for learning and teaching support materials (LTSM);
2. The Post Provisioning Norms (PPN) through which educator posts are distributed to schools;
3. Infrastructure provisioning; and
4. Other resourcing mechanisms that mitigate the adverse effect of poverty on teaching and learning.

One of the key features of the apartheid system was the unequal access to education and training that permeated all levels of the system (ANC 1994a). There were major disparities in the provision of resources for schools, with the apartheid government spending R5 403 per white child; R4 607 per Indian child; R3 691 per coloured child; and R1 715 per black African child (DOE, as cited in Veriava 2005: 2). Apart from dismantling the apartheid structures, the provision of resources to schools was arguably the most important lever through which equal access could be achieved. As a result,

the major focus of the democratic government during the first five years of democracy (1995 to 1999) was to pursue the national imperatives of universal access to education, equitable distribution of resources and pursuing redress to correct the injustices of the past. The allocation of resources would subsequently form an important nexus around which social and economic reforms would be achieved, including education reforms. By 1999/2000, the GDE was spending R3 757 per learner in public ordinary schools (Budget Vote Speech 2002: 2) on average, increasing to R5 434 in 2004/05 and reaching R10 971 by 2011/12 (GDE 2011/12).

Figure 6.1: Per capita spending in public ordinary schools (personnel and non-personnel)¹



Resource targeting

The National Norms and Standards for School Funding (generally referred to as Norms and Standards) is arguably the single most significant reform instrument for the public schooling sector in South Africa, and has effected equity and redress through direct transfers to schools for non-personnel costs. Although the Norms and Standards distribute a relatively small proportion of state inputs to public ordinary schools compared with personnel costs, the policy instrument remains a critical component of instituting social justice for two reasons. First, it provides cash transfers to schools, enabling the community served by the school to have a voice in the utilisation of resources through the school

¹ The data for this graph was obtained from the Annual Reports of the GDE. In instances where figures were inconsistent, a later publication would be used as a source on the assumption that the data would have been corrected in later reports. The figures are nominal, and have not been adjusted for inflation.

governing body (SGB). Second, it has an inherent transparent mechanism for allocating resources in favour of the poor.

Released in 1998, the Norms and Standards were developed in terms of Section 35 of the South African Schools Act (SASA), which provided for the Minister of Education to ‘determine norms and minimum standards for the funding of public schools’.² The principal goal of the SASA was to provide for a ‘uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools’.

In Section 34, the SASA requires the state to fund public schools ‘on an equitable basis’ and to redress the education–provisioning inequalities of the past. The policy intention of this provision was to ensure that learners were able to exercise their right to basic education as stipulated by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The Act went a step further than is the norm of legislative frameworks, by stipulating an administrative imperative that the state must inform schools, on an annual basis, of their funding allocation within such time frames as to enable schools to prepare their budgets for the following year. This provision entrenched the role and place of SGBs in budgeting and in determining how school funds would be used.

Initially, the Norms and Standards provided for two critical areas with regard to public ordinary schools.³ The first was the funding of public schools in terms of Section 35 of the Act, for non–personnel costs and specifically for expenditure at school level, and the second was the exemption of parents from paying school fees on a progressive scale based on how their income compared to school fees.

With regard to the funding of public schools, the Norms and Standards provided for individual school allocations to be determined on the basis of their ranking within a province and their ‘relative poverty’ in a provincial Resource Targeting Table, or the extent to which the school compares with others on the basis of two factors:

1. The physical condition of the school (availability of facilities, physical infrastructures, crowdedness); and
2. The level of poverty of the community within which the school is located, computed into an index of poverty that took into account a number of proxy indicators for poverty (such as the percentage of households with access to electricity, and the level of education among adults in the population).

The two factors were weighted equally to create a poverty index. Each Provincial Department of Education (PDE) had to create a Resource Targeting Table (RTT), which ranked schools on the basis of their poverty index and grouped them into five groups known as quintiles. School allocations would then be determined on a progressive scale that allocated each rand as indicated in Table 6.1.

2 Government Gazette No. 1867 of 1996

3 Government Gazette No. 2362 of 1998

Learners in quintile 1 would be from the poorest 20% of the schools, while learners in quintile 5 would be from the least poor 20%. If a learner in a school that fell into quintile 3 was allocated R1, it meant that a learner in quintile 5 would receive R1.75 and a learner in the least poor schools would receive 25 cents.

Table 6.1: Resource Targeting Table scale

Quintile	Poverty ranking	Allocation	Per learner allocation (scale)
1	Poorest 20%	35% of resources	1.75
2	20%	25%	1.25
3	20%	20%	1.00
4	20%	15%	0.75
5	Least poor 20%	5%	0.25

The progressive scale for allocating resources ensured that the poorest would be allocated 35% of the resources, while the least poor would be allocated 5% of the resources, on a scale of 1:7. This was a key policy requirement with which PDEs were urged to comply. While it was understood that provincial priorities eventually dictated the final per capita that would be allocated to learners through the Norms and Standards, the progressivity of the curve between the poorest learner and the least poor was supposed to be maintained. Gauteng adhered to this principle from the first year of implementation.

By 2000, the per learner allocations for quintiles 1 to 5 were established (Table 6.2). Schools would receive an allocation per learner that was based on their quintile ranking, which would be multiplied by the number of learners in the school to arrive at the total allocation transferred to schools. The funding mechanism ensured that schools that received the largest allocation were schools that were poorest and had the largest number of learners in the annual headcount.

Table 6.2: Per learner allocation in 2000

Quintile	Per learner allocation	Scale of progressivity
1	R326.00	1.791
2	R227.00	1.247
3	R182.00	1.000
4	R136.00	0.747
5	R46.00	0.253

In addition, the Norms and Standards also allocated resources for purchasing learning and teaching support materials (LTSM), and provided for schools to pay for items such as utility bills as well as minor emergency repairs to school infrastructure. This aspect is discussed in further detail in Section 5 of this chapter.

The mechanisms of getting the money to schools were determined on the basis of Section 21 of the SASA, which provides for the SGB to apply to the head of department to be allocated certain functions that are otherwise the responsibility of the head of department. Three of these functions that relate to the utilisation of the resources

allocated to schools provide for the SGB to be allocated the function of: maintaining and improving the school's property, and the buildings and grounds occupied by the school; purchasing textbooks, educational materials or equipment for the school; and paying for services to the school. The function can be allocated in part or in full. Where a school has been allocated these functions in full, a PDE transfers to the school's bank account its full RTT allocation. However, in instances where a school has not been allocated the functions, the Department would procure and pay these expenses on behalf of the school. In Gauteng, the GDE has allocated almost 90% of its schools Section 21 (1) (c) status, which means these schools can procure LTSM using their own procurement systems.

While this differentiation of schools is often seen as a mere administrative arrangement, it could present challenges in two key areas:

1. The procurement and delivery of LTSM, the costs of schools individually purchasing materials and the extent to which the GDE can monitor the availability of LTSM available to learners during the course of the school year; and
2. The monitoring of the extent to which Section 21 schools spend money on maintaining and improving the school's property. There are instances in which minor issues of maintenance are neglected until they become serious infrastructure problems that are eventually fixed at great cost from a central GDE fund.

The implementation of the Norms and Standards was not without hiccups. The policy was implemented as a system-wide reform strategy, as opposed to policy reforms that are introduced incrementally through controlled experiments. Limitations of the Norms and Standards emerged between 2000 and 2003, and would later lead to the amendment of both the SASA and the Norms and Standards. These limitations will be discussed in Section 4.2.

With respect to exemptions, the Norms and Standards provided for exemption of parents who were unable to pay school fees. The intention was to ensure that no learners were denied the right to basic education because of their inability to pay school fees. The *Exemption of Parents from the Payment of School Fees Regulations* published in 1998 provided for total, partial or conditional exemption based on the circumstances of a parent in terms of income.

From a policy perspective, the logic appeared to be simple enough. Parents participated in the determination of school fees through the annual general meetings (AGMs) convened by the SGB as provided for in the SASA. This meant that school fees would not be so high as to become unaffordable. In instances in which a parent could not afford to pay school fees, the Regulations provided a framework for parents to be granted fee exemptions. Meanwhile, in 2006, all children of school-going age who were in the care of caregivers, foster homes or youth care centres, or in places of safety, child-headed households and/or were grant recipients, got an automatic right to full fee exemption.

However, the fee exemptions provisions were not as effective as policy-makers had envisaged. A Household Survey of 2004 showed a dismal picture in terms of awareness and uptake of fee exemptions, especially among the poorest households that needed fee exemptions the most (see Table 6.3).

Table 6.3: Fee exemption awareness

Survey question	Household income			All
	Low	Medium	High	
Aware that one can apply for fee exemption if one can't afford fees?	17%	32%	61%	32%
Applied for fees exemption this school year?	1%	4%	8%	3%

Source: DOE (2004)

This is despite the Department of Education's envisaged uptake of exemptions that would see as many as 25% of learners in quintile 5 obtaining full fee exemption (DOE 2003b: 19). It has been argued that the poor uptake of fee exemptions could be partly a result of schools' reluctance to grant exemptions since there was no form of compensation that schools would receive from the state to make up for the shortfall. However, the state would have found itself in a precarious position if it had compensated relatively well-off schools for granting fee exemptions when it had no say in the determination of school fees, and schools were effectively setting user fees with no cap set. Any form of compensation by the state would have created a perverse incentive for school fees to keep going up. The new dispensation of no-fee schools presents a framework within which relatively well-off schools would not be worse off by enrolling learners from relatively poor households by providing space for no-fee learners to be funded as such, even though these schools are fee-charging schools. The no-fee schools mechanism is discussed later.

Amendments were made to the Norms and Standards to improve the extent to which they (a) distributed resources equitably; and (b) removed hidden costs to education, thereby improving access for the poorest learners.

Two critical policy shifts were made by the national department in 2005 that introduced a significant change in the resourcing of schools.

The first major shift was related to the ranking of schools in the RTT. The 1998 Norms and Standards provided for ranking of schools to be conducted within a province, which led to learners who were equally poor getting different allocations simply because they were based in different provinces with varied levels of income and poverty. Provincial budgetary allocations work in a way that education Budget Votes are determined within a province, rather than at national level: within the Provincial Education Budget Vote, the allocation available for schools through the RTT depended on a number of factors, including provincial prioritisation and the proportion of the vote that is consumed by personnel costs. As a result, learners in quintile 1 in one province

would get a different allocation to learners in the same quintile in another province, despite their circumstances being similar. The direct transfers to schools, allocated on the basis of the RTT, had significant inter-provincial inequalities. Gauteng spent significantly more than other provinces per learner in quintile 1, even though the poorest learners in Gauteng were not any poorer than learners in, for example, the Eastern Cape. The DOE (2003a) has estimated that differences in per capita allocation as a result of provincial budgeting priorities could be as much as 20%.

The 1998 Norms and Standards also provided for the utilisation of the conditions at the schools (including the condition of the school building and availability of facilities such as lights and water, and even photocopiers), which carried the same weight as the poverty of the community surrounding the schools. This provision was seen to penalise numerous schools that were built after 1994 in poor communities but had access to basic services, and schools that had raised funds for school equipment and services.

While the DOE could not change the budgeting processes, it could adjust the Norms and Standards to minimise the impact of the differences in provincial priorities and eliminate the problem of penalising schools for occupying new or improved structures. The Education Laws Amendment Act of 2005 introduced a national ranking of schools, which would ensure that learners in relatively poor schools would receive the same allocation regardless of the province in which they were located. The amendment was geared primarily towards addressing provincial inequalities, while also improving targeting by using socio-economic profiles of smaller localities instead of ward profiles to improve precision in the poverty index assigned to a school.

Table 6.4: National quintile

	1 (poorest)	2	3	4	5 (least poor)	Total
Eastern Cape	35%	22%	21%	12%	11%	100%
Free State	31%	15%	20%	19%	15%	100%
Gauteng	11%	11%	27%	27%	24%	100%
KwaZulu-Natal	24%	19%	26%	17%	14%	100%
Limpopo	34%	22%	25%	12%	7%	100%
Mpumalanga	17%	20%	30%	20%	14%	100%
Northern Cape	26%	18%	22%	15%	20%	100%
North West	23%	15%	31%	21%	11%	100%
Western Cape	7%	8%	23%	28%	35%	100%
South Africa	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	100%

In addition, the amendment introduced benchmarks or ‘costed norms’ that were deemed adequate for the per learner allocation within each quintile. These benchmarked amounts in Table 6.5 came to be known as the ‘adequacy’ amount.

Table 6.5: Adequacy amounts

	Slope of progressivity	2006	2007	2008
		Amount	Amount	Amount
Q1	1.33	R703	R738	R775
Q2	1.22	R625	R677	R711
Q3	1.00	R527	R554	R581
Q4	0.67	R352	R369	R388
Q5	0.22	R117	R123	R129
Q5:Q1 ratio		1:6	1:6	1:6
Adequacy benchmark (minimum)		R527	R554	R581

The second major shift was the amendment of Section 39 of the SASA, which provided for the determination of school fees by resolution of a parents’ meeting. The amendment provided a mechanism through which the minister could determine a ‘no-fee threshold’, defined in the Act as the:

1. level of funding per learner contemplated in the norms and standards for school funding applicable to a public school which enables the Minister to declare a school a no fee school in terms of the Act. (Government Gazette No. 28426)
2. The procedure for the determination of no-fee schools would primarily remain the same, except that the poverty ranking would be based on the national ranking. During the first year of implementation of the no-fee schools policy in 2007, the national no-fee threshold was R554, which was deemed to be the minimum ‘adequacy’ amount. The threshold is adjusted for inflation annually, becoming R581 in 2008 and R605 in 2009 (GDE 2006b). As highlighted above, the new national ranking meant that 21.9% of learners in the province were located in quintiles 1 and 2, while the previous ranking method placed 40% of learners in the two quintiles. This relates to Gauteng’s relative wealth as compared to other provinces.

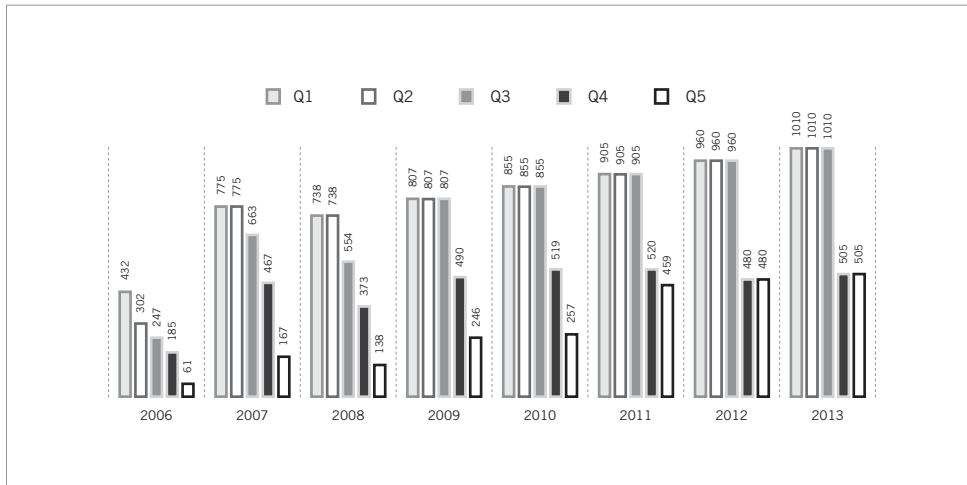
Table 6.6: Illustration of impact of change in ranking on per learner allocation

Quintile	2006			2007			2008		
	Number of learners per provincial quintile	As % of total	Adequacy allocation	Number of learners per national quintile	As % of total	Adequacy allocation	Number of learners per national quintile	As % of total	Adequacy allocation
Q1	320 380	20%	R432	177 328	11%	R738	190 127	11%	R775
Q2	326 528	20%	R302	199 946	12%	R738	189 186	11%	R775
Q3	318 192	20%	R247	443 979	27%	R554	472 230	28%	R633
Q4	320 915	20%	R185	450 595	27%	R373	461 803	28%	R467
Q5	321 503	20%	R61	393 481	24%	R138	353 154	21%	R167
Total	1 607 518			1 665 329			1 666 500		

Source: GDE (2008/9)

As indicated in Table 6.6, the GDE was already allocating a per learner amount of R554 to quintile 3 by 2007, and the Department has been able to maintain per learner allocations that are above the national average because it does not ‘top-slice’ the RTT allocation as some provinces do. Figure 6.2 shows the per learner allocation starting from the last year of implementing the ‘Old Norms’ to 2013. The GDE declared schools in quintile 1 and 2 in 2007 no-fee schools, and extended the number to include schools in quintile 3 in 2008. The province allocated the maximum adequacy rather than the minimum so that schools would not feel the loss of additional income that they were able to generate by collecting school fees and raising funds, which were both disallowed for no-fee schools. Therefore, in 2008, all 435 no-fee schools in quintiles 1 to 3, enrolling 49% of the learners in public ordinary schools in the province, received a per capita allocation of R775 and offered free education.

Figure 6.2: Per learner allocation in public ordinary schools since 2006



However, the new allocations made by the GDE have also compromised the extent to which the allocations are pro-poor. As highlighted above, the Norms and Standards aimed to have a 1:7 ratio of quintile 5 to quintile 1 learners per allocation. In 2006, the GDE maintained the 1:7 slope of progressivity, but it reduced to 1:2 by 2013.

Table 6.7: Extent of progressivity of allocation (Q5:Q1 ratio)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Q5:Q1 ratio	1:7.1	1:4.6	1:5.3	1:3.3	1:3.3	1:2	1:2	1:2

Note: The 2012, 2013 figures are based only on the allocation towards fee-paying quintile 5 learners

The amendments have retained the progressivity of the allocations between quintiles 1 and 5, and eliminated the progressivity between quintiles 1, 2 and 3 by 2013.

The Department extended the reach of no-fee schools to 147 schools in quintile 4 and 17 schools in quintile 5 in 2012. These are schools that voluntarily opted to apply to the GDE to become no-fee schools, despite the fact that they are prohibited from raising funds in any form from parents if they are awarded no-fee status. A 2011 study on the impact of the no-fee schools policy conducted by the Wits Education Policy Unit (EPU) shed light on the reasons behind schools voluntarily forgoing their fee-collection practice and opting for no-fee school status. The study found that some no-fee secondary schools had reported a slight increase in enrolment since they were previously seen as more expensive than primary schools. However, the study also pointed to the dangers of a perception where poor parents opted to send their children to fee-charging schools in the belief that they were paying for education of better quality. These perceptions need to be monitored as they can threaten the broad-based coverage and support that the South African public education system still commands.

By 2013, the province had declared 1 256 public ordinary schools no-fee schools. The total enrolment in these schools was 1 147 537 out of 1 802 838 learners in public ordinary schools. This means 64% of learners in Gauteng are receiving free education.

Achievements of the past 20 years

Despite Gauteng's task of providing for a rapidly increasing public school sector, there are significant achievements that need to be highlighted.

Equity and redress

From the perspective of state inputs towards education, the past 20 years have seen major strides being taken to provide for public ordinary schools in an equitable manner. The 1996 Norms and Standards, including all amendments that were introduced between 2005 and 2007 to improve targeting, have been effective in their progressive allocation of resources in favour of the poor. However, it should be borne in mind that the Norms and Standards represent a relatively small proportion of all government inputs. However, the Department should continuously monitor the slope of progressivity of the resources allocated to quintile 5 schools in relation to those allocated to quintile 1. The extent to which the state has achieved equity and redress can mainly be attributed to the progressivity of the Norms and Standards. Reducing the slope from 1:7 to 1:2 compromises this.

Mitigating the impact of poverty

The consolidation of state resources allocated to mitigate the impact of poverty among the poorest learners under the banner of ‘Single Window Package’ has assisted in resolving the thorny problem of social grants being used by the poorest families to access education provided by the state. Since the 2004/05 financial year, the GDE has steadily removed both the direct and hidden costs of education for the poorest. The school fee exemptions were the first attempt to ensure that learners living in households that survived on social grants did not have to pay school fees. By 2007, following the Education Laws Amendment Act, the GDE had abolished school fees for the poorest 372 558 learners (21.9% of the total number of learners) in 415 schools that fell within quintiles 1 and 2 (Budget Vote Speech 2007: 17).

The relief from paying school fees was implemented to align with access to the school nutrition programme, which was taken over by the GDE from the Department of Health in 2005. By 2006/07, over 378 903 learners were benefiting from the programme and R100 million was budgeted for the programme. In 2010, the GDE had extended coverage of the feeding scheme to a total of 795 785 learners, of whom 553 644 (69.6%) were in primary schools in quintiles 1 to 3 and 176 836 (22%) were in secondary schools in quintiles 1 and 2. The remainder were selected learners in primary schools in quintiles 4 and 5. Resourcing of the school nutrition programme increased to R548 million in 2012, to reach slightly more than 1 million learners in all schools that were declared no-fee schools in quintiles 1 to 3. The school nutrition programme is seen as a mechanism for alleviating immediate hunger and improving attendance and punctuality at schools, as well as its sustained benefits of improving children’s active learning capacity which, in turn, improves learner achievement (Budget Vote Speech, 2006: 14).

In addition, learners who had to travel distances of more than five kilometres to get to school were provided with transport. These learners are predominantly residents of informal settlements. In the late 1990s, the GDE was providing transport to children from farms and rural areas, with an expenditure of R6 million in 1998 for transport subsidies. By 2005, the GDE was providing transport to 66 000 learners per day. By rationalising routes and increasing the number of new schools, some efficiency gains were achieved so that by 2012, the number of learners using scholar transport had reduced to 56 793 learners from 360 schools across the province at a cost of R165.3 million (Budget Vote Speech 2012: 5). The implementation of the ‘Single Window Package’ that included providing poor learners who walk long distances to school with transport, the provision of nutritious meals for learners in primary and secondary schools and the provision of free education has eliminated much of the direct and ‘hidden’ costs of education for poorest, which is a major achievement for the GDE.

Limitations of resource targeting

Ranking techniques

The determination of the total allocation to a school hinges heavily on its position in the Resource Targeting Table ranking, so much so that schools are given an opportunity to contest their ranking – but not the per learner allocation – before the ranking is finalised. In the 1998 Norms and Standards, schools were ranked on conditions at the school and poverty levels of the community. The limitations regarding the first factor were addressed earlier in this chapter.

Most challenges that emerged relate to schools being allocated a poverty index that they deemed wrong. Socio-economic profile data that was used was at ward level or at the level of the district enumerator areas (DEAs). However, the DEAs were too large to differentiate between adjacent communities, so a school serving a small informal settlement next to a wealthy suburb could be allocated quintile 4 or 5, as would the school serving the wealthy suburb. In revising the rankings for the 2006 Amended National Norms and Standards for School Funding (ANSSSF), the GDE commissioned the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) to develop a better profiling method that would define communities on even smaller geographic sizes than a ward using small area estimation techniques, which are more precise in determining poverty indices.

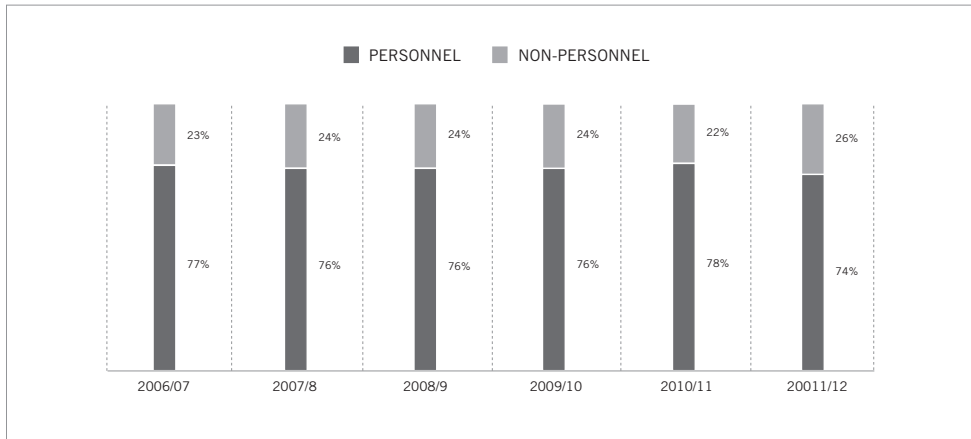
Post provisioning

The 1998 PPN model was concerned with devising a defensible mechanism for distributing teaching and school management posts to schools in an equitable and just manner, while ensuring that the posts were affordable to the state. While the bulk of financial resources for non-personnel costs were largely regulated through national policy, the allocation of teaching posts was allocated using the PPN model. The PPN is responsible for allocating a significant proportion of resources, as indicated in Figure 6.3, which stood at 74% by 2011/12 (GDE 2011/12: 52).

The 1998 PPN model was implemented in 2002. It is premised on two key principles (DOE 2002):

- Available posts should be ‘distributed among schools, proportionally to their number of weighted learners’; and
- The PPN would be based on the notion of ‘weighted’ learner numbers rather than the actual numbers, to compensate for the subjects and/or grades that require greater concessions than others, as well as the size of the school in terms of learner numbers.

Figure 6.3: Personnel costs since 2006



The notion of weighted learners was aimed at making a distinction between learners in terms of their requirements for a teaching post. The policy, therefore, made a distinction between learners in primary-school grades (Grades 1 to 9), and learners in secondary-school grades (Grades 10 to 12), as well as those in small schools so that these are not penalised for their size. In addition, the policy gives schools that teach in more than one language of instruction and special schools additional weighting (DOE 1998b).

The determination of the basket of posts to be allocated to each school would vary from year to year, and required the head of department to communicate the final basket of posts to schools by the end of September annually, based on the data collected through the 10th School Day Head Count Survey.

Achievements of the past 20 years

Fairness in distribution of posts

Despite its limitations, the PPN model resulted in an equal distribution of educators in all public ordinary schools regardless of race, colour or creed. The model also removed the secrecy that shrouded the methods of allocating teaching posts that was used by the apartheid government and resulted in highly uneven teacher-learner ratios.

Teacher-learner ratios

Unequal class sizes was one of the biggest challenges inherited by the democratic government in 1994. The average teacher-learner ratios in privileged schools for white

learners were reported to be 1:19, while the less privileged schools for black learners had a ratio of 1:41. An *average* of 1:41 indicates that there were many schools that had a much higher number than the average, with classes of over 70 learners being common.

In the past 20 years, the GDE has maintained a fairly stable learner-teacher ratio in public ordinary schools that is well within the norm of 40:1 in primary schools and 35:1 in secondary schools (DBE 2009) and compares favourably with national averages, as shown in Table 6.8.

Table 6.8: Learner-teacher ratios

Year	GDE ratio*	National average#
1999	36:1	34:1
2004	38:1	35:1
2009	32:1	33:1
2012	35:1	32:1
Average	35:1	34:1

Source: *GDE (2013); # DBE (2009; 2012)

(Note: The ratios are for state-paid educators only)

Of significance is that the learner-teacher ratios are distributed evenly and there are no schools that are overcrowded purely on the basis of the state’s unjust distribution of resources.

Notwithstanding the gains in curbing overcrowding, Bot (2011) reports that Gauteng still had 174 schools in which learner-teacher ratios were above the national norm of 40 in 2010. Of these schools, 75% were in the range of 41–45 learners per educator, 16% were in the range of 46–50 learners per educator and the remaining 9% had over 50 learners per educator. It appears that the phenomenon of overcrowding is increasing at a faster rate than the rate at which resources can be provided, primarily as a result of the rapid increase in the province’s population.

According to StatsSA (2011), the population in Gauteng grew by 31% between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses, while the total increase in the country was 16%. The province also gained a sizeable number of learners, schools and educators after the incorporation of some schools from North West and Mpumalanga into Gauteng as a result of the re-demarcation of provincial boundaries. These are realities with which the GDE is continuously dealing in the quest for retaining class sizes within national norms.

Number of teaching posts

The total number of posts allocated to Gauteng, and paid for by the state, increased from 44 020 in 1995 to 53 407 in 2013, an increase of 21%. However, the rate of increase in the number of learners has outstripped the rate of increase in the number of educator posts available. Between 1995 and 2013, the number of learners in the province increased

by 44.8%. The net effect is that the GDE created a post for every 62 new learners between 1995 and 2013. SGBs have employed a total of 5 950 new educators during the same period, bringing the total number of educators in public ordinary schools in Gauteng to 59 357 in 2013. This has assisted in curbing large class sizes.

Limitations of the PPN model

The PPN was designed as a costing model through which posts would be distributed to schools using a formula and within the parameters of available resources. As a result, there were no explicit policy intentions that articulated how the state intended to use the post basket to pursue the goals of equity, access and redress, unlike the Norms and Standards for School Funding. Instead, the PPN threatened to entrench the position of schools that were advantaged during apartheid. This is because the PPN allocates teaching posts to schools rather than rand-value funding, which eventually favours schools that have highly qualified teachers and which, by extension, are former white schools. Secondly, the PPN assigned more weight in areas that perpetuated inequalities such as dual-medium schools and learners taking subjects such as music and drama, conditions that predominate in former white schools.

The implementation of the PPN revealed a few limitations, leading to the Department of Education revising the model in 2002. The limitations were as follows.

Redistribution factor

The sheer size of the state resources consumed by personnel costs in the education sector makes the PPN one of the most critical policy instruments through which the broad goals of access, equity and redress can be pursued. The 1998 PPNs did not provide for progressive distribution of the education budget.

Given that the biggest cost drivers in employee compensation are qualifications and experience, the state was spending less per capita on learners in black schools than those in former white schools. The 2002 revised PPN model introduced a redress factor by allowing provinces to set the use 5% of available posts for poverty redress. In theory, this provision could result in poorer schools getting more posts, but it had minimal impact on learner-teacher ratios. It is important that the allocation of educators assumes a more progressive gradient, similar to the Norms and Standards for School Funding. There are two main arguments in support of the progressive allocation:

- The educational disadvantage that poor learners experience due to deficiencies in the home can partly be compensated for through smaller class sizes; and

- Schools serving poorer learners cannot raise the school fees needed to employ additional teachers (a common practice in schools serving wealthier communities).

Curriculum redress

Perhaps the biggest disappointment of the PPN was its inability to effect curriculum redress in a meaningful way. The PPN's limitation in this regard is partly related to the PPN being a *model* of distributing posts rather than government *policy* for allocating teaching resources. A PPN policy would have articulated government policy on curriculum redress, including its aims, objectives and parameters. 'Curriculum redress' is a deliberate attempt by the government to eliminate privilege in terms of access to subject choices and resources that improve teaching and learning, including qualified subject teachers. The PPN's limitations in effecting curriculum redress were a result of two provisions in the model.

The first was the additional weighting assigned to learners in schools that had more than one language of learning and teaching (LOLT). The model allowed for adjustments of an additional weighting of 0.150 per learner for learners who were taught mainly in a minority LOLT (GDE 2006a), while learners in single-medium schools would have no additional weighting. This provision further entrenched the privilege of former white schools, which are more often dual-medium schools.

The second was the favourable weighting assigned to learners taking specialised subjects such as music and art. These subjects are rarely offered in black schools and in wealthier schools are generally offered in small classes. The DOE (2002: 3) estimates that the 1998 PPN created, on average, 4% more posts in privileged schools than would otherwise have been the case had the schools not offered the specialised subjects. While the net result of the posts obtained by privileged schools as a result of this provision may have been limited, the inequalities in curriculum choices were perpetuated.

Resource constraints

The 1998 model determined educator requirements for schools on the basis of available resources rather than requirements for effective teaching and learning. This was, in part, a result of the fundamental economic principle of scarcity, and of resources always being limited relative to need. But it was also because of the state making commitments that it could not fund.

The Department of Education (DOE 2007) acknowledged that the 1998 PPN focused mainly on the *relative* needs for educator posts, and that the revised norms should reflect *absolute* needs as a planning goal for effective curriculum delivery. In other words, the Norms should not only provide the allocated post basket on the basis of what the

state could afford, but should articulate the post basket that is required by the school to offer meaningful teaching and learning. The gap between the two can be quantified, so the education sector can negotiate for more resources.

Resource constraints have also resulted in instances where the post provisioning allocation was higher than the number of classrooms available. The revised norms attempted to correct this mismatch.

Administrative burden

Another criticism levelled against the PPN is the administrative burden placed upon PDEs from one year to the next. The fluctuation of learner numbers results in annual changes having to be implemented in the actual baskets of posts allocated to schools. If learner numbers decrease, the PPN reduces the number of posts allocated to that school, which means that educators occupying those posts are declared 'in excess' and are moved to schools that have gained additional learners. At national policy level, this exercise is deemed a mere planning issue. At provincial and district level, moving posts and educators around is a highly complex process. Annual needs for posts have to be determined long before the end of one year, for allocation of posts in the following year. The number of 'excess' staff is determined on the basis of the 10th School Day Head Count Survey data of the current year, and the Annual Survey data of the previous year. This process is complex partly because of the labour relations implications, and partly because of the use of 'old' data to determine future allocation.

The GDE has managed this by only reallocating posts in cases where learner numbers have reduced in full multiples of 50 in public ordinary schools. It is only when learner numbers decrease by more than 50 learners that posts are deactivated and declared in excess and districts reallocate posts and educators from one school to another. At school and district level, this movement of educator posts every year destabilises curriculum delivery and remains a management challenge.

Learning and teaching support materials (LTSM)

The provision of LTSM to schools is one of the key means through which the government provides resources directly to schools. In the same way that the apartheid government operated a four-tier funding system for education, former DET schools were severely under-resourced when it came to LTSM. The policy targets, although not stated explicitly in any piece of legislation or policy documents of the 1994 to 1999 era, were determined from the ANC's *Policy Framework for Education and Training*. The ANC's vision in relation to LTSM is stated in two sections. First, the vision was to ensure that 'all learners will have access to the necessary texts to facilitate high quality and effective

teaching and learning' (ANC 1994a: 53). Second, the *Policy Framework for Education and Training* further sets the principle that:

Maximum availability of textbooks to learners must be ensured. Delivery mechanisms must effect this, together with mechanisms to ensure that learners and educators have full access to materials delivered. (ANC 1994a: 54)

Despite the ANC's vision, there was no firm government policy target for the provision of LTSM. Policy intentions have been stated through Budget Votes tabled in parliament and the provincial legislature. The Education MEC pronounced a target of one textbook per learning area per learner in her Budget Vote speech in 2008. It was only in 2012 that the GDE finalised a provincial Learning and Teaching Support Material Policy. The policy sets the following objectives for the GDE:

- Ensuring that LTSM are available for each learner at a ratio of 1:1;
- Ensuring that LTSM are delivered to schools timeously;
- Ensuring that the material is reviewed to determine its impact on learning; and
- Ensuring that the material is procured for schools through the applicable funding mechanism that GDE makes available.

The allocation for LTSM has increased significantly over the years, as shown in Table 6.9.

Table 6.9: LTSM budget in selected years

Financial year	LTSM allocation (R'000)
1995/6	R82 000
1996/97	R105 000
1997/8	R75 000
1998/9	R58 000
1999/2000	R106 000
2000/1	R157 000
2001/2	R172 000
2006/07	R527 000

Source: Budget Vote speeches and Annual Reports

Annually, the GDE issues guidelines to schools on how to split their RTT allocation. Over the past few years, the guide has maintained a fairly steady trend – 55% of the RTT allocated to LTSM; 12% to emergency repairs of infrastructure; and 33% for utility bills and other minor purchases. Within the 55% allocated to LTSM, the Department encourages schools to allocate as follows:

- 40% for textbooks;
- 35% for school stationery;
- 10% for office stationery; and
- 15% for library resources

The policy established structures for monitoring the LTSM procurement value chain, from the requisitioning and placement of orders to the delivery of materials. The policy is supported by a Procurement Handbook that provides guidelines in relation to roles and responsibilities of the LTSM coordinators in executing the procurement process. As a result of the foundations laid by the GDE, Gauteng is one of the best-performing provinces in relation to the timely delivery of LTSM.

Table 6.10: LTSM delivery by first school day

Academic year	Gauteng Department of Education
2004	78%
2005	87%
2006	91%
2007	98%
2008	97%
2009	96%
2010	99%
2011	99%
2012	99%

Source: GDE

Deviations from the trend become necessary when there are changes in the curriculum and new stock is required. In 2013, for example, the allocation of the RTT to schools spent on LTSM was 50%. In 2011, when the national Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) started being implemented, the GDE allowed schools to use 100% of their allocation to purchase LTSM. However, this had the potential to exert undue strain on school resources because other costs could not be put on hold as a result of the implementation of CAPS. Utility bills still had to be paid and emergency repairs still had to be done.

An alternative approach would have ensured that during the years in which major curriculum changes were introduced, PDEs would receive an additional grant allocation for purchasing materials for the new curriculum, as occurred in 2008/9 when the Department of Basic Education made available an additional R23.6 million for LTSM (GDE 2008/9: 138), to support the roll-out of the National Curriculum Statements for remaining grades.

The GDE stresses that schools are given ‘indicative’ figures as a guide: schools can request permission from the Department to deviate from the split, based on their requirements in a given year. This flexibility is important because of (a) the imperative to allow SGBs the

space to determine the manner in which schools' funds are used as provided by the SASA; and (b) the instances in which schools have enough stock of materials from previous years and therefore need to redirect the funds to other pressing needs. However, the flexibility could also have unintended consequences, including the following:

- Accounting mechanisms for expenditure by Section 21 (1) (c) schools are not as precise as mechanisms of accounting by the GDE for the 207 non-Section 21 (1) (c) schools. The central procurement of LTSM has enabled the GDE to report on the state of delivery of LTSM with verifiable data. Schools are also more likely to prioritise other expenditure items above LTSM if they do their own procurement, and less likely if the Department has immediate access to the data that reveals the requisitioning patterns of a school.
- Monitoring of expenditure against budget through audited financial statements becomes an elaborate task if all expenditure targets are a 'guide' rather than a ring-fenced amount. It would be difficult to hold schools to account for deviations from a guideline.

Another significant resourcing mechanism that provided resources in a targeted approach was the Gauteng Primary Literacy Strategy (GPLS), which has changed to Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS). The GDE targets primary schools that need additional assistance to improve literacy levels. The strategy was prompted by poor levels of learner performance in the National Systemic Evaluation assessments conducted in 2007 and the assessment results of a Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) study conducted in 2006 (Schollar 2012: 1).

In 2010, a total of R155 million was allocated to primary schools to strengthen literacy teaching and improve learner support in Grades R to 7. The strategy relied on an analysis of the challenges facing under-achieving schools, and sought to distribute high-quality readers to 792 schools in order to improve the teaching of reading and writing (Budget Vote Speech 2010: 6). An evaluation of the GPLMS in 2011 concluded that Literacy Resource Packs were delivered to the correct teachers in all primary schools (Schollar 2012), but the study raised concerns about the quality of the resource packs. According to Schollar (2012: 16), almost 25% of the packs had 'inadequacies so severe' that they were likely to have adverse effects on learning, particularly those specifically for black children in relatively poorer schools. From a resourcing perspective, state spending on poor-quality material negates the effort that is being made to redress the imbalances of the past by allocating additional resources to poorer learners.

Targeted resourcing to improve learner performance in Science, Mathematics and Technology (SMT) is another mechanism used by the GDE to provide additional LTSM to poorer schools. In 2010, the GDE spent an additional R3 397 000 supplying Technology kits to 792 underperforming schools and a further R3 779 360 in Maths and Numeracy kits for schools in quintiles 1 to 4 (Budget Vote Speech 2010: 7).

Limitations of LTSM resourcing

Adequacy

One of the key policy issues in relation to the allocation for LTSM is the *adequacy* of the allocation in ensuring that the target of *one learner, one textbook* is achieved while schools are also able to purchase library stock, apparatus for science laboratories and other materials they need. Policy should also address the adequacy of the allocation for LTSM, and distinguish between the allocation provided for LTSM during a regular year and the allocation provided for years during which there are curriculum changes that require a completely new set of materials.

Monitoring the LTSM policy target

Monitoring textbook availability in the hands of learners has emerged in the recent past as a major challenge for the state. There is a pressing need for a systematic approach to ensure that the information provided by schools – whether having Section 21 status or not – about learner access to textbooks is reliable. The information should allow the GDE to verify the status of delivery in preparation for a new school year, and whether the *one learner, one textbook* target is reached.

Physical infrastructure

The state of school infrastructure in 1994 reflected the inequalities that characterised all forms of public resources in South Africa. While white learners enjoyed state-of-the-art school infrastructure, the majority of learners were housed in facilities that had been damaged by violence or were affected by years of neglect by the state. Communities in rural areas and Bantustans were expected to fund school buildings through the apartheid government's rand-for-rand infrastructure funding mechanism. Many schools in previously disadvantaged areas lacked the basic infrastructure necessary for a school to function.

The policy frameworks between 1994 and 1996 sought to address these inequalities and provided broad principles upon which school infrastructure delivery programmes would be founded. These included:

- An urgent need for a national audit of school infrastructure, providing information on the state and condition of school infrastructure for accurate planning and to quantify backlogs (ANC 1994a: 11);

- the need to extend access and expand capacity by increasing the number of schools and classrooms so that there would be sufficient learning places for all children, while closing schools that were underutilised; and
- an extensive building programme progressively to meet the backlog of provision.

According to the SASA, the provincial MEC for Education must ensure that there are 'enough school places so that every child who lives in his or her province can attend school'. This responsibility is qualified in the 1998 Norms and Standards for School Funding by committing to the elimination of physical infrastructure backlogs by 2008 and the provision for a targeted approach in the construction of new schools or additional classrooms.

The Norms also place an imperative on the Department to maintain a prioritised and accurate database of school infrastructure needs (DOE 1998b: 26).

This section of the chapter outlines the achievements of the GDE since 1994 in dealing with issues of school infrastructure within the context of the broad principles set out in the different policy frameworks.

It is important to reflect on the unique position that Gauteng is in, as described in the introduction to this book, with its concentration of population and high growth rate.

Achievements since 1994

Infrastructure delivery

The democratic government launched the first national audit of school infrastructure in 1996 in the Schools Register of Needs (SRN) Survey. The survey painted a grim picture of the state of school infrastructure around the country. In Gauteng, the survey revealed that 17.4% of public schools did not have power; 9.25% did not have access to water; and 8.75% did not have toilets. Further, only about half of the schools in the province were in buildings whose condition could be classified as 'good'. The rest of the schools were in buildings that needed repairs or were not suitable for a school.

Despite the state's best efforts, crowding was becoming evident in Gauteng schools as inward migration increased. The 1996 SRN concluded that 7.4% of Gauteng's classrooms were prefabricated to deal with overcrowding. By 2000, this figure had climbed to 8.5% of classrooms.

Wilderman (2002: 12) estimated that a total of 2 963 classrooms were required in Gauteng in 2000, which translated into 5.2 additional classrooms per school or the equivalent of 197 new schools. The Department should be commended for having built more than 2 860 classrooms since 1996. However, at an approximate annual growth rate of 1–2% in learner numbers (GDE 2012: 21), the target of adequate classrooms remains elusive.

Lessons learnt in terms of school infrastructure delivery include:

- The need to set realistic targets. The Norms and Standards for School Funding assumed that infrastructural backlogs could be eliminated within a 10-year period, which was clearly unrealisable; and
- The need for involving planning experts when forecasting demand for learning spaces.

Facilities at school

The Department has recorded major achievements in improving facilities at schools, as shown in Table 6.11. The prevalence of schools that do not have basic services has been practically eliminated, except where temporary structures are erected to deal with emergency overcrowding.

Table 6.11: Provision of basic services and facilities

Facility	SRN 1996	SRN 2000	NEIMS 2007	NEIMS 2009	NEIMS 2011
No power	13%	7%	2.2%	0.6%	0.6%
No water on site	5%	2%	1.6%	0.0%	0.1%
No toilets on site	13%	1.1%	2.1%	0.2%	0.3%
No library	-	-	42.0%	41.1%	41.4%
No computer centre	-	-	33.5%	24.3%	24.7%
No sports facility	37%	35%	15.0%	14.5%	14.6%

Source: 1996 and 2000 SRN data obtained from GDE reports; 2007, 2009 and 2011 data obtained from NEIMS Reports.

The 2007 National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS) survey also found that 91% of Gauteng schools were either in excellent or good condition, which was a significant improvement from 1996. Still, 9% of schools were in either poor or very poor condition.

Class size

Class size is a key indicator of the extent of adequacy of provision of school infrastructure, and measures the number of learners in relation to the number of instruction rooms in a school. Gauteng inherited very large class sizes in 1994. Since 1999, the reduction in class size has been on a steady trend, albeit at a slower than ideal pace mainly because of the increasing demand for learning spaces as the population increases.

Table 6.12: Average class size

Year	Primary schools	Secondary schools	Provincial average
1999	40	43	41
2001	39	43	40
2003	38	39	39
2004	39	41	40
2005	29	41	40
2006	39	41	40
2007	38	39	39
2008	38	39	39
2009	39	39	39
2010	38	38	38

The average class size reveals a different picture if analysed on the basis of quintiles, which serves as a proxy for privilege. Schools that are in quintile 5 have smaller class sizes, partly because they occupy public facilities that had significantly more instruction rooms than their less-privileged counterparts, and partly because parental contributions pay for additional educator posts. This disparity is shown in Table 6.13. On average, schools in quintile 5 have 10 fewer learners per class than schools in quintile 1 or 2. The GDE intends to eradicate this gap using state funding.

Table 6.13: Average class size per quintile

Year	Quintile				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
1999	46	45	44	39	35
2000	45	46	43	40	35
2001	44	44	43	39	33
2002	43	42	41	38	32
2003	44	42	40	38	33
2004	44	44	42	38	33
2005	43	44	43	35	34
2006	44	43	32	37	32
2007	41	41	41	40	32
2008	42	45	41	41	32
2009	42	42	41	40	33
2010	42	43	41	38	33

The GDE acknowledges that in 2012 there were at least 321 primary schools and 340 secondary schools with class sizes above the norm of 1:35 and 1:40 respectively in Gauteng (GDE 2012). These shortages exist even as the GDE constructs new schools at a pace that is faster than the norm in the rest of the country. Between 1994 and 2013, the GDE built 263 new schools, 54% of which were primary schools and 46% of which were secondary schools. This constitutes an additional 6 643 classrooms. Expenditure on capital projects has grown from R521 million in 2002/03 to R1.26 billion in 2013/14. The province has also successfully implemented a few projects through public-private

partnerships (PPPs). Six schools have been built since 1994 using the PPP model, including the internationally acclaimed Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls.

Summary of achievements

To summarise the GDE's achievements during the 20 years of democracy, we can say the following:

Equity in provision of inputs

The pro-poor funding approach of the Norms and Standards has led to significant strides being made in achieving equity from the perspective of state inputs. Per capita allocation across all schools rose from R3 757 in 1999/2000 to R10 971 in 2011/12. Through the Amended Norms and Standards, the GDE transferred R1 010 per learner for the poorest learners and R550 per learner for the least poor learners in 2013.

Access to basic education

The removal of barriers of access to education for poorer children is a key achievement. Both the provision of scholar transport and the National School Nutrition Programme have ensured that the 'hidden' costs of education do not prevent access to schooling. By 2013, the GDE was spending R585 million on school nutrition, ensuring full coverage in all no-fee schools, and R273 million on scholar transport. Almost two thirds of learners in Gauteng public ordinary schools received free education in 2013, drawing the province closer to achieving universal free education as envisaged in the Freedom Charter.

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CHAPTER 7

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Zakhele Mbokazi

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review human resource management and development strategies by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). The chapter looks at the key human resource functions and provides an analysis and account of progress made over the past 20 years in the area of human resource management and development (HRM&D) in the province.

The role of the GDE in respect of HRM&D is particularly important as the custodian of the provincial initiatives in HRM&D in the province that generates the lion's share of the national income. This thrusts considerable responsibility onto the GDE, as success or failure of the provincial HRM&D strategy will have both provincial and national implications.

Purpose and structure of the chapter

This review seeks to highlight key challenges and achievements of the GDE by focusing on identified HRM areas. The chapter provides some indicators for various key performance areas in HRM&D, and explores whether these were achieved or remain a challenge for the GDE. In many respects, the review in this chapter concerns itself with the broader context of human resource development, management and systems, and its impact on service delivery, rather than with the detail of programmatic interventions. In this regard, the review is the result of detailed analysis of reports, relevant documents and interviews with key players within the GDE.

The chapter starts by presenting the national context of HRM&D in South Africa. It then looks at the provincial context, presenting the achievements and challenges that the GDE has faced over the past 20 years. The chapter also reviews relevant literature on HRM&D. Further, the issue of HRM&D has a cross-cutting effect; therefore, it features across multiple chapters in this book. There are obvious interrelationships between different levels of the education system. Consequently, the HRM&D review will touch on issues such as teacher development.

National context of HRM&D

The first comprehensive countrywide human resource development strategy was launched in 2001. The declared mission of that first strategy, called the *Human Resources Development South Africa (HRDSA) Draft strategy for discussion, 2010–2030: A nation at work for a better life*, was:

To maximise the potential of the people of South Africa, through the acquisition of knowledge and skills, to work productively and competitively in order to achieve a rising quality of life for all, and to set in place an operational plan, together with the necessary institutional arrangements, to achieve this. (Human Resource Development Draft Strategy for discussion, South Africa, 2010–2030: 13)

The *Report on Assessment of the State of Human Resource Management in the Public Service (2010: 3)* acknowledges that '[i]ssues of limited or lack of service delivery can be traced back to the lack of capacity or requisite skills within the departments responsible for service delivery'.

These reports clearly outline the state of HRM&D in South Africa. The *Report on Assessment of the State of Human Resource Management in the Public Service (2010)* further states that Human Resource Development in South Africa is based explicitly on relevant current and emerging education and training-related strategic frameworks, some of which informed documentary analysis in this chapter. In this regard, the following strategic frameworks were considered for the review:

- The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) 2005–2010 (including the Scarce Skills List 2007);
- The Basic Education Strategic Plans (ECD, schooling, ABET);
- The Further Education and Training (FET) Strategic Framework;
- The Higher Education (HE) Strategic Framework; and
- The HRD Strategy for the Public Sector.

Human resource development in the GDE

GDE reports show that the Gauteng Human Resource Development Strategy (GHRDS) was launched on 26 September 2006 and it was aimed at ensuring the effective implementation of human resource capacity and skills development strategies within the province. For the purpose of driving the implementation of the strategy for the province, the Gauteng Human Resource Planning and Development Agency was established within the GDE. In this regard, the GDE was affirmed ‘forerunner in managing an integrated Human Resource Development (HRD) Strategy for the Gauteng Province’ (GDE 2007b: 26). This is consistent with national trends, where the national Department of Education is seen as crucial to the delivery of the HRD vision for South Africa (DOE 2004).

Further, it would appear that the GDE has been able to forge critical relationships with other departments and other sectors of the education system, at national and provincial level. A GDE senior official mentioned that ‘when it comes to our strategic frameworks, even the national department takes the lead from us’ (Interview, 7 July 2013). There is also plenty of evidence that GDE continues to deepen relationships with other provincial departments in relation to HRD.

Achievements and challenges

One of the achievements of the GDE, as captured in various reports, was successfully to lead the process of formulating the provincial Human Resources Strategy that was designed to respond to the needs of the labour market in Gauteng. This was an important achievement and it had a significant and positive impact on the Department’s planning. The ultimate goal was that learners leaving the system could be absorbed into the provincial economy, as promoted by the Gauteng Growth and Development Strategy. It appears that over the past 20 years, the GDE has been able to make significant progress in transforming the provincial education system. In this regard, important strides were made in ensuring that the citizens of Gauteng have access to schools and learning institutions, developing the basis of a human resource and employment pipeline.

In its Annual Performance Plan (2007/8 to 2009/10), the GDE showed that education delivery was being continuously reviewed and that it constantly positions itself and its strategies ‘to improve the quality of education through improved service delivery characterised by service excellence’ (GDE 2007a: 2).

While the achievements are evident in many GDE documents and other reports, the challenges seem implied in the strategic thrusts and pillars in strategic documents. Within the period of review (2010–2015), for instance, four strategic thrusts were formulated by GDE:

- Enabling faster economic growth and job creation;
- Fighting poverty;
- Building safe, secure and sustainable communities; and
- Developing healthy, skilled and productive people.

Embedded in these strategic thrusts are challenges of skills development, poverty, healthy workers and building an effective system of service delivery in the GDE and, more broadly, in Gauteng. At the same time, the GDE has also made great strides in affirming the rights and status of girl learners and women in education. This is evident in a number of girl-child projects, which have been developed to increase access to and performance of girl learners in areas where they have been historically marginalised. In addition, reports show that the GDE also runs a project for women (the Bofenyi Project) to promote leadership and empower women to assume roles in education from which they have been previously excluded, including school management.

A framework for human resource management and development

The literature related to human resources management systems provides a framework for understanding HRM&D. For the purposes of this review, we use Ulrich's (1997) typological model on human resources (HR) practices. Issues around HR are complex and Alagaraja (2012) points out that there is disagreement about the definition and role of HR in organisations and about how to study that role. Another bone of contention is the distinction between human resource development (HRD) and human resource management (HRM). Alagaraja maintains that while scholars view these as competing perspectives, the increasing complexities in organisational contexts underline the need for drawing on the contributions of both fields. As Ruona and Gibson (2004) argue, the distinction between the human resource development (HRD) and human resource management (HRM) fields seems to be blurring. In line with this thinking, this chapter treats them as complementary and, in doing so, hopes to provide an enriched understanding of human resources in the practices of HRM&D within the GDE.

Another area of consideration in the discussions of HRM&D is the role of the HR department. Hailey et al. (2005: 49) argue that in HR discourses, 'the activities of the HR department are a critical aspect of HRM policy enactment and organizational performance'. In this regard, it was necessary to explore how HR policies are enacted by the HR department within the GDE.

One of the key HRM&D focus areas is that of HR practices, which warrants a consideration of which HR practices are implemented in the GDE. Becker and Huselid (2009) found that several HR practices, such as training, job design, compensation and incentives, directly affected organisational performance through measures such

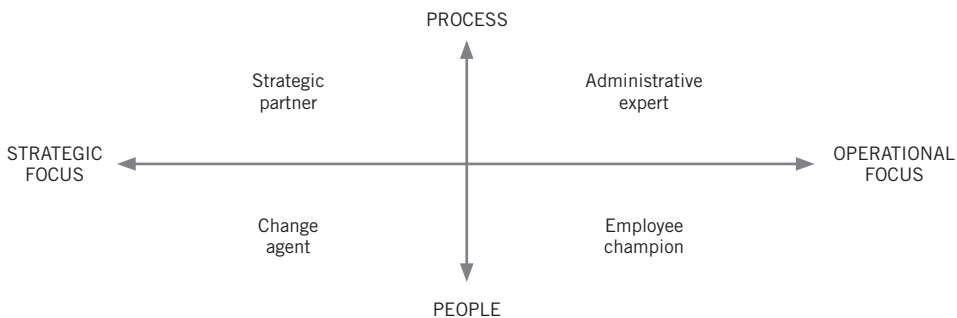
as employee retention, employee productivity and speed of delivery. These issues are important for this review as Aligaraja (2010: 22) pointed out that ‘as a formal system, HRM provides an important foundational support for training and performance’. Earlier, Becker and Huselid (1998) had argued that HRM, as a system, is an important component that can help an organisation to become more effective.

The theoretical perspective

To help understand the GDE’s HR management systems, Ulrich’s (1997) typological model is used. Ulrich’s typology defines people and process aspects of HR roles, and operational and strategic activities. In Ulrich’s view, the largest part of the organisation’s HR department role is that of the ‘administrative expert’, which is process-orientated with a day-to-day operational focus, based on the management of the organisational infrastructure. Given that the GDE is responsible for the management of more than 60 000 school-based educators, as well as thousands of office-based educators, it is important to understand the extent to which day-to-day operations are managed in schools.

In Ulrich’s model, the administrative role contrasts with the other process-orientated role, which he describes as ‘strategic partner’ and which is future-focused, based on the strategic management of people and aligning HRM&D strategy with the organisation’s strategy. The operationally focused, people-orientated role of ‘employee champion’, in which HR is responsible for listening and responding to employees, contrasts with the people-orientated strategic role of ‘change agent’, which focuses on managing organisational transformation and change. One of the key HRM&D focus areas is that of employee health and wellness. Ulrich’s ‘employee champion’ provides a lens for understanding how the GDE deals with issues of employee health and wellness. Linking HR roles with organisational performance, Ulrich’s (1997) model suggests that all four roles should be carried out simultaneously to improve performance in an organisation.

Figure 7.1: Ulrich’s HR model



Source: Ulrich (1997)

Five key HRM focus areas

Drawing from the literature, the following five key HRM focus areas were considered for the review:

1. Human Resources Organisational Strategy and Planning;
2. Human Resources Practices;
3. Human Resource Utilisation and Development;
4. Performance Management; and
5. Employee Health and Wellness.

These five key HRM focus areas were adopted from the report *Assessment of the State of Human Resource Management in the Public Service (2010)*. These areas provide a broad framework consistent with the key GDE human resource functions in which the review focuses. An assessment of ten years of education and training in South Africa (DOE 2004: 2) states that ‘all programme choices, interventions and developments are being governed by national transformation processes that sought efficiency and effectiveness’. In this regard, it is assumed that all GDE programme activities are directed towards building capacity for efficient and effective service delivery. This review seeks to establish the level of achievement in the implementation of such programme activities at various levels of GDE education service delivery at head office and the district offices.

Analysis of the five key HRM focus areas

Based on the five key HRM&D focus areas, research questions were developed and used as a basis for assessing and determining the extent to which HRM&D policy implementation has been achieved by the GDE and for identifying challenges that are still being experienced. The research questions were used to:

- Establish whether performance in various areas of HRM&D is stagnating or progressing;
- Assess and track implementation of HRM&D processes;
- Determine whether the HR components are strategically positioned to assist the GDE to achieve its service delivery goals; and
- Plan appropriate interventions to improve the strategic capability of the HRM&D components.

Human resource organisational strategy and planning

Human resource organisational strategy and planning helps to ensure that proper organisational structures, together with human resource requirements, are in place and are aligned to national and GDE strategic plans.

One key performance area under human resource organisational strategy and planning is organisational development. An important indicator for this key performance area is to ensure that the organisational structure of the GDE is aligned with the strategic objectives of the national strategic framework and that the roles and responsibilities of all concerned are clearly defined. The review sought evidence for whether the GDE has ensured proper organisational structures and whether these organisational structures are aligned to national priorities.

Reports accessed point to the key thrust of the GDE being to improve the quality of learning in direct response to the provincial human resources development strategy, aimed at focusing on strategies that will improve the quality of general education in the province. In terms of organisational structure, the GDE has realigned itself to government priorities and stakeholders' requirements to achieve organisational success. It appears that this realignment was essential for more practical and focused responses to present needs, as well as to future needs. The first GDE realignment took the form of restructuring in 2000, with the objective of ensuring that the GDE was positioned to deliver quality public education. This was also to promote socio-economic growth and development in Gauteng. The restructuring saw the reduction of the number of district offices from 18 to 12 and the removal of responsibilities from the regional offices, which were to be performed at the newly structured districts. Subsequently, the regions ceased to exist. The second restructuring within GDE, which was being implemented at the time of writing, is a direct response to the national directive on organisational restructuring.

Organisational capacity

A study by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) on the assessment of HRD in the public service in South Africa (2010) found that the way in which public service departments did their planning had too much of an administrative bias, focusing, to a large extent, on compliance rather than on strategic issues (Public Service Commission 2010). The report highlighted two key principles that should drive HR planning in the future, namely that:

- HR planning should provide a frequently updated framework of information for decision-making;
- HR planning has a fundamental role to play in the attainment of objectives through the effective utilisation of human resources.

There is evidence that the GDE is proactively looking at improving its service delivery and continuously working towards efficiency and effectiveness. The GDE states in its Annual Performance Plan (APP) (2012–2013) that realignment of the GDE structure, at district and school level, has a primary focus on improving service delivery and supporting educators and learners in GDE schools. The APP further states that the realignment will result in a new district office model that functions in school clusters and circuits. It also states that transversal teams consisting of curriculum, human resource and financial specialists will be established to support and monitor schools to improve the quality of education. These changes are indicative of the GDE's intent to improve capacity and enhance service delivery in terms of Education Support Services. For example, a remarkable area of change in the GDE is in the 80:20 principle, the objective of which is to strengthen school support. Unlike in the past, when school interventions were about compliance, the 80:20 principle has shifted support-compliance discourses to 80% support and 20% compliance. While there is, at present, visibility of this principle in only a few district offices, this is a major shift and it has to be acknowledged as an important milestone in the role of the state in support for schools.

Human resources practices

The ability of any organisation to deliver on its mandate effectively depends, to a large extent, on its ability to attract and select individuals of the desired quality and to retain them. Central to staff retention is effective career management and development. This function includes the management of recruitment and selection, the management of compensation and conditions of service.

The Public Service Commission (PSC 2010: 15) maintains that:

the recruitment and selection norms and standards applicable to the Public Service are determined by the Minister for Public Service and Administration through the Public Service Act (PSA), the Public Service Regulations (PSR) and other directives that are issued from time to time.

In addition, the Public Service Commission states that departmental policies on recruitment and selection can supplement the PSA and PSR respectively (PSC 2010). One key performance area under human resource practices is recruitment, selection and employee life cycle. Important indicators for this key performance area are to ensure that:

- A recruitment policy complying with good practice standards and spelling out detailed procedures is in place;
- Fair and objective recruitment and selection processes are utilised as required by law;
- Qualifications of all employees are verified prior to appointment;

- All vacant posts are advertised and filled within the prescribed time frame of three months; and
- The Department complies with all the provisions of the Skills Development Act.

This review found that the GDE has been proactive in developing policies and procedures to drive HRD in the province. While the study (Public Service Commission 2010) shows inconsistencies regarding recruitment and selection of personnel in other departments, both at national and provincial level, this review did not find these inconsistencies in the GDE. Documentary evidence suggests that advertisements for posts were all approved by senior management prior to their publication. It appears that there were clear job descriptions for all posts advertised and that there were well-documented shortlisting criteria. While there is evidence of clearly stated criteria that need to be applied, there is a public perception that recruitment and selection processes are open to abuse, and that there is 'union influence and interference' in the selection processes, especially at district and school level. It has to be said that limited evidence was found of this in the overall analysis of documents, but there is sufficient anecdotal evidence to fuel suspicion and reinforce perceptions of procedures that are flouted. It is suggested that if the various objectives of promoting socio-economic growth and providing quality education are to be achieved within the GDE, much better monitoring frameworks and systems are required to deal with either real or perceived notions of inconsistencies in recruitment and selection of personnel.

Human resource utilisation and development

Any high-performing organisation must utilise and develop its human resources optimally. This involves proper deployment of employees as well as developing them through training, bursaries and mentorships. This also includes the implementation of the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) and the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS).

An identified key performance area under human resource utilisation and development is human resource development. An important indicator for this key performance area is to ensure that an HRD strategy is developed, implemented and monitored on an annual basis. Another key performance area is that of the implementation of the PMDS. An indicator for the PMDS as a key performance area is that a formal performance management and development system that is in line with the priorities, objectives, indicators and targets contained in the GDE Strategic Plan is applied to, and implemented for, all levels of staff.

This review found that the GDE has a well-developed human resource development plan. This suggests high compliance with the national requirement for accelerated service delivery within the HRD Strategic Framework. This also indicates that the GDE is well

poised to deliver on its HRD mandates. However, there is also evidence to suggest that Personal Development Plans (PDPs) for office-based personnel and Personal Growth Plans (PGPs) for school-based educators were often completed for the sake of ensuring compliance instead of for genuinely identifying training needs.

The GDE also managed to provide support to the youth facing socio-economic challenges. This is evident in the financial assistance that was introduced, which was a result of attempting to address the most commonly reported reason for non-attendance of school: that of finances. Financial problems account for more than a third of youths aged 15 to 24 not studying. Placement programmes have been introduced to prepare particularly the youth and women for employment. These programmes provide work experience and link participants with work opportunities. However, there are many FET learners who are not able to do the placement part of their courses as planned. While there are challenges experienced by youth in finding employment, especially in entry-level jobs, there is evidence that the GDE is committed to dealing with this problem. This is seen in the promotion of internships in government and in the private sector.

Capacity building

A report on the Skills Development Plan 2010–2015 shows that the Gauteng Provincial Government (GPG), through the Gauteng City Region Academy (GCRA), commissioned a study to identify scarce and critical skills in the province to inform the Gauteng Master Skills Plan for 2010 to 2015 and beyond. In the same report (Skills Development Plan, 2010–2015), it is recorded that a total of 12 492 GPG employees received generic training, with a total of 759 provincial government employees having been through the Massified Induction Programme (MIP). However, what is not clear in the report is the number of employees trained specifically in the GDE. Also stated in the report is that a total of 219 executive and senior managers and school managers benefited from the Executive Coaching Programme, and that 724 supervisors – junior as well as middle management – were trained in various executive leadership programmes. However, again, it is unclear how many of the managers trained were GDE employees.

It appears that extensive measures have been taken by the GDE to build capacity in HRD units. This was aimed at strengthening the capacity for management and leadership development, including the development and coordination of systems for, and support to, departments. This was achieved through:

- The development of a planning framework for management and leadership development; multiple work sessions on, for example, the use of competence assessment in development; the use of executive coaching in development; and induction and work sessions about planning for management and leadership development;

- The development of competency frameworks for middle and junior middle managers, together with assessment batteries; and
- The development of integrated learning frameworks for management and leadership development across multiple levels of management, including the supervisory level (GDE 2009).

Institutions

The GDE Annual Report (2010/11) stated that the GDE provides education services to 2 628 institutions. Further, stated in the GDE's Annual Report (2010/11) is that the largest area of the GDE is the ordinary school sector that consists of 2 452 schools. The GDE's Annual Performance Plan (2010/11) reports that during the first decade after 1994, the GDE was effective in promoting equity, access and redress. Some key achievements are noted in GDE reports. These include increased access to primary and secondary education, and reduction in disparities across race and class in a large number of areas of education provision. The GDE considers quality education a national and provincial priority, and has set itself goals to realise the outcome of quality education. These goals include ensuring that Gauteng has effective schools and learning institutions, and that the GDE head office and districts provide relevant, coordinated and effective support.

Learners

The GDE reports, in its Annual Performance Plan (2010/11), that it services a total of 1 977 557 learners, of which 1 781 126 learners are in public ordinary schools, 196 431 are in independent schools, 37 715 are in special schools, 67 634 are in Further Education and Training colleges, 74 534 learners attend Adult Basic Education and Training Centres and 76 460 learners are in Grade R.

Educators

There are currently 64 307 educators in the ordinary school sector, 2 861 rendering services at special schools, 1 896 at the technical Further Education and Training colleges and 3 284 at Adult Basic Education Centres.

It appears that the GDE is sufficiently resourced and has the required facilities and technology with respect to skills and resources. A skills development plan has been developed and adopted in line with the province's HRD Strategic Framework. The Annual Performance Plan (2010/11) suggests that the GCRA is addressing the specific challenges

relating to the imperative of shared economic growth in the province and ensuring the effective implementation of a nationally driven human resource development strategy.

The GDE has a Development and Skills Development Strategy in place. This is reflected in the Circular 61/2006, which was introduced to fast-track the process of implementing the PMDS. Also stated in the Annual Performance Plan (2010/11) is that the GDE is the front-runner in managing an integrated HRD strategy for the Gauteng province. The purpose of the strategy is to assist the province strategically to prioritise its focus and interventions in a human resource supply, demand and development environment. Further stated in the Annual Performance Plan (2010/11) is that the strategy is underpinned by the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy and the envisaged Social Development and Sustainable Development Strategies. Regarding resourcing, the GDE has a detailed strategy and policy in place for the allocation of resources based on poverty and need.

Learnerships, internships and youth training programmes

The GDE has reached a number of milestones in addressing the issue of gender, youth and disability. The GDE reports that in 2011, a total of 4 808 learners were enrolled in formal learnership programmes and 3 178 graduates and learners were placed in internships. More specifically, in 2011 the GDE reported that it provided employment opportunities to 4 500 youth and community members through the scholar patrol programme.

In meeting the goals of the Human Resource Development Strategy, in 2012 and 2013 the GDE employed a further 11 675 community members and unemployed youth as patrollers in schools. In addition, 18 326 unemployed youth, who had completed matric, were provided with employment opportunities to assist learners with homework and sports, arts and culture after-school activities as part of the Education School Support Programme (ESSP). It is further reported that training was provided between 2011 and 2013 to 9 743 unemployed youth in order to equip them with skills that would assist them to access employment opportunities in the future, should these become available. In addition, the GDE, through the GCRA, is managing a youth unemployment database that is facilitating the placement of unemployed youth in jobs.

Another area worth noting as a significant achievement for the GDE is captured in the Gauteng Master Skills Plan. This plan was developed to provide integrated human resource and skills development in the province.

It is also suggested in various GDE reports that since the adoption of the Gauteng Master Skills Plan, the GDE has succeeded in creating an environment of opportunities for the young citizens of Gauteng. At the time of writing, the key priorities for the GDE in the area of skills development were to integrate and strengthen the implementation of the Master Skills Plan with a particular focus on skills development programmes for the

youth and the unemployed. It is also reported that targeted interventions, which are part of enabling the province's economic growth, were being developed and implemented.

Gender and disability

The intentions of the GDE to address issues of gender and disability are evident in the institutionalisation of these issues through the organisational structure. For instance, it is reported that the Gender Focal Point has been established and has successfully trained disability and gender committee members from head office and all district offices in key areas such as sign language, creating an enabling environment, employment equity and monitoring and evaluation.

An interesting point to be noted is that the GDE has been successful in working towards gender equity. Reports show that the overall gender split of learners in schools indicates that a slightly higher percentage of girls accesses both primary and secondary schools than boys. In addition, girls tend to repeat less frequently, so by Grade 12, 67% of female and 56% of male learners in public schools were 18 years and younger (which is age-appropriate). However, an area of concern is that GDE reports reveal that there are more male principals in the public ordinary schooling system than female principals, although the sector has a female to male ratio of 71:29 for all state-paid educators. The attempts by the GDE to fast-track competent female teachers into school management positions through targeted programmes has borne some fruit, but faces challenges at school level where the appointment procedures often prejudice female candidates.

Employee wellness

Another area of achievement by the GDE is in respect of employee health and wellness (EHW), which involves the development and implementation of effective programmes aimed at enhancing the quality of employees' working lives. These include initiatives to manage HIV/Aids and occupational health and safety programmes. In view of the vulnerability of the public service to the HIV/Aids pandemic, the *Assessment of the State of Human Resource Management in the Public Service (2010)* report states that research was undertaken in 2006 regarding the extent to which the policy framework for managing HIV/Aids and the requirement for associated employee assistance programmes had been implemented.

Employee wellness has received a great deal of attention in the GDE. A review of the performance management and remuneration policies clearly signals the wide-ranging approach that the GDE seeks to use in leading the way to a responsible, professional and efficient administration working effectively in support of its employees. The GDE Annual Report 2006/07 reports that in 2007, a total of 119 EHW cases were dealt

with internally. They included cases of divorce, depression, debt, relationships, HIV/Aids, alcohol abuse and managerial problems. A total of 61 of these cases were formally referred for comprehensive counselling sessions. At the same time, another 2 578 cases were informally referred for counselling sessions.

Details of health promotion and HIV/Aids programmes are captured in various GDE reports. For example, the GDE Annual Report 2007/8 shows that there is a dedicated Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). While recent reports do not point to the appointment of more practitioners to the Employee Assistance Programme, the GDE is advised to consider whether one practitioner is adequate for the entire province. An important aspect of this programme is that employees are encouraged to utilise services offered by the Department of Health.

The GDE Annual Report 2011/12 further shows that an online health and wellness programme (E-Care) was launched on 26 January 2007. It appears that this service is well utilised. It is also reported in the GDE Annual Report (GDE 2012: 25) that ‘a total of 50% of staff at Head Office and District Offices have used this service since its inception’. Employees are assisted with personal financial matters as ‘[f]inancial health sessions are held at Head Office, focusing on consumer education’. Further, one respondent during an interview mentioned that the ‘GDE has provided care and support programmes related to HIV/Aids which are accessible to all GDE employees’. Interview data further shows that the GDE continues to be a partner in the 16 Days of Activism awareness campaign by providing officials with information about abuse and their legal rights and by distributing tokens and postcards symbolising Human Rights Day.

A toll-free Employee Wellness Programme 24-hour support line, accessible to employees and their immediate family members, has also been established to provide assistance with matters such as on-site trauma debriefings, counselling services, trauma incidents, life management, managerial consultancy, supervisory training and psychotherapy interventions to address the contributing factors resulting in alcohol abuse. In this regard, the GDE has a more structured and multi-pronged approach than most other provinces.

Conclusions and recommendations

As the GDE reviews 20 years of education service delivery, it is important that there is recognition of the significant achievements that it has made in the area of HRM&D. These gains have been made in the pursuit of social and economic development for the people of Gauteng, and have frequently been made in spite of huge capacity and resourcing constraints. The challenge for the GDE going forwards is to consolidate its achievements; identify and deal with HRM&D challenges that persist within the organisation; and evaluate the development path that it should take to achieve the goals of both the national and provincial HRD strategy.

There is evidence that the provincial HRD strategy and the five key HRM focus areas are being proactively and diligently implemented through the GDE. There are suggestions that a priority skills programme may be implemented to develop commitment by public servants to strengthening accountability mechanisms. Various reports show that there is particular focus on developing management and leadership competencies to ensure skilled public servants who are committed to the public good and who prioritise national development. However, engagement with the bureaucracy and schools in the province indicates that while excellent policies, strategies and processes may have been formulated and put in place, they are still not fully impacting on public service members' behaviour and values as intended. This must be an area of concern as the GDE plays a leading role provincially in HRM&D going forwards, particularly as its success or failure will have a significant impact on the rest of the country and the overall economic performance of South Africa.

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CHAPTER 8

TEACHER KNOWLEDGE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Francine de Clercq and Yael Shalem

Introduction

There is a growing consensus in international and local literature that, to be effective, professional development activities (PDAs) should be focused on ways of teaching that improve learners' learning. As Welch (2012: 2) puts it, 'if professional development is not centred on the link between educator skill and knowledge and student learning, it cannot be said to be working'. This claim sounds simple and obvious, but what it means varies greatly between programmes. PDAs differ in the *form* in which teacher learning is organised – duration and pacing of teacher learning, the types of resource material and artefacts selected to engage teachers in the learning process, the site of learning and participant selection criteria. PDAs also have different *teaching foci*, which refer to the content of the programme.

The literature on teacher development has not reached a clear consensus on the form and teaching focus of PDAs (Cohen & Ball 1999; Elmore 2002). There are many reasons for this. One set of reasons derives from different claims about what appear to be the most important sources of weakness in teachers' practice, how teachers learn best and what is more important and pragmatically possible for teachers to know in the time allocated. A second set of equally important reasons is what specifically makes a difference to learners' learning according to the state of research. A recent review of classroom-based research (Hoadley 2012) shows clearly that research cannot yet establish what forms of teaching and learning have most impact on learner achievements. Notwithstanding this assertion, this excellent review suggests that a few factors – on the basis of their

consistent appearance across the reviewed studies – seem associated with learning gains: a focus on reading and writing text, teacher proficiency in the language of instruction, greater curriculum coverage, greater content exposure by cognitive demand, flexible pacing appropriate to learner ability, appropriate assessment and feedback to learners, all of which assume that sufficient teacher knowledge exists.

This chapter is a review and preliminary analysis of what the *Report of the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education* (DOE 2005) classifies as ‘employer-driven’ PDAs. It focuses on PDAs provided or funded by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) on a significant scale.¹ There are other, smaller, PDAs that are delivered in partnership with individual experts, but these do not form part of this review.

Our review identifies 2009 as a turning point in the GDE’s provision of PDAs. Until then, most PDAs were targeted, in some way or another, at the improvement of a few discrete aspects of teacher practice, in a context of redress but also of an under-specified curriculum framework. In about 2009, the GDE turned towards standardised lesson plans, with scripted teaching practices and assessment tasks, as the main tool of teacher support. This shift in the provision of more explicit opportunities to learn is first found in the Department of Education’s Foundation for Learning Campaign, then in the more specified curriculum (with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement or CAPS) and, in the case of the GDE, in detailed guidance to help teachers transmit the curriculum.

Our claim is that the GDE made the shift to lesson plans a principled one, which became the backbone of a new type of PDA with different teaching foci and forms. This was an interesting, even if controversial, way of proceeding, with notable advantages but also some limitations.

This chapter focuses on the PDAs provided by the GDE in these two periods of provision and examines their teaching foci and organisational forms, the reasons behind the shift in 2009 as well as the lessons derived from each period.

The first period: Up to 2009

Contextual conditions

After 1994, the DOE focused on policy and structural changes in the teacher education system (unification, governance and qualification structure) to redress past imbalances and improve the system’s cost effectiveness. The greatest challenges were at the in-service level because of the wide inequities inherited from the past but also because of the need to support practising teachers with the implementation of demanding new curricula.²

The DOE targeted the backlogs in knowledge resources of poorly qualified or underqualified teachers with short courses and longer, more formalised academic and

¹ Some of these PDAs have been completed or terminated, while others were ongoing at the time of writing.

² See chapters by Motala and Maringe for more on post-1994 policies and curriculum changes respectively.

professional programmes. The National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) was introduced for teachers with a two-year teaching certificate and the Further Diploma in Education (FDE) for teachers with a three-year teaching diploma. With the introduction of the 2000 Norms and Standards for Educators (NSE) and its specifications of new roles for teachers, the FDEs were replaced by the Advanced Certificates of Education (ACEs). The provincial departments of education (PDEs) were responsible for the planning, design and delivery of these programmes given their diagnosed needs and budgetary constraints.

Another challenge for the DOE was to address the fragmented and uncoordinated Teacher Education and Development (TED) system with its poor quality opportunities. A Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education was set up to research the concerns and the way forwards; its 2005 report suggested the development of a national framework that would provide coherence, direction and focus to a new teacher education system (DOE 2005: 2). Subsequently, the 2007 National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (NPFTEd) Act made the DOE responsible for teacher education planning, funding and monitoring and for partnering with universities, NGOs, unions and other approved providers. It formalised the concept of lifelong professional development with the Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) system, which expected teachers to take ownership of their own development by continuously updating and strengthening their professional knowledge (DOE 2007).

The new curriculum and its outcomes-based education (OBE) approach represented a major break from the norms of teaching for which teachers were trained. Curriculum 2005 (C2005), with its under-specified subject matter knowledge and complex concepts of integration of knowledge across the curriculum; discovery learning; school and everyday knowledge; and lessons to fit prescribed learning outcomes confused most teachers. The NSE and C2005 made high demands on teachers' knowledge and work, ironically at a time when small-scale classroom-based research was consistently finding serious knowledge gaps in many teachers, in particular from poor schools. These teachers were said to lack mastery of the language of instruction, how and what to teach, and how to cover and pace the curriculum with appropriate cognitive demand on their learners (Taylor & Vinjevold 1999; Schollar 2001).

The challenges faced by the provincial departments were enormous. To offer effective in-service professional development provisions, targeted at many different and important teacher needs, they had, *inter alia*, to improve their strategic capacity and human and material resources.

We identified three main GDE-driven PDAs in this period: curriculum workshops; district-based ad hoc training courses and cluster workshops; and more formalised programmes.

Curriculum-driven PDAs

The training of district officials and teachers about the mandated curriculum (and its three versions – C2005, the RNCS and the NCS) dominated provincial PDAs from 1998 onwards. The focus was on transmitting the philosophy, values and assumptions of the new curricula as well as their rationale. The training consisted of broad orientation workshops to inform teachers about the meaning of the curriculum framework and its new terms and directives, followed by subject-specific workshops for more clarification of a particular learning area and phase. Because of the under-specified nature of the curricula, the meaning of integration of school and everyday knowledge, group work, integrated and applied competence, and experiential knowledge were covered in an abstract, generic manner. Teacher subject matter knowledge, preferred ways of teaching and curriculum sequencing and pacing were totally backgrounded, according to teachers.

The organisational form of this training was as weak as its teaching focus. The cascade model was used by the DOE and the GDE, starting with a team of core trainers who were to take what they had learnt down to the various levels of the system until most teachers were reached. Trained teachers were then expected to train colleagues in case the latter did not attend district training. The training was compulsory and yet inadequate for several reasons: the discourse was based on a weak structure (information dissemination); it adopted a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach with poor generic learning material (a few handouts); the duration was limited to two days per workshop; the teaching methodology was top-down; and most trainers seemed poorly knowledgeable about the meaning of the OBE-type curriculum and how to translate learning outcomes into a lesson plan. Appropriate textbooks and learning materials were few, and follow-up district work was ineffectual as it was more about monitoring teachers for compliance than about supporting them.

The C2005 Review Report (DOE 2000) noted the inadequate planning of curriculum training. Beyond its long-term recommendation for the training to be part of an integrated teacher development strategy, it identified three issues to address in the short term:

- Learning outcomes and deepening content knowledge in the different learning areas;
- Sharpening understanding and use of assessment;
- Using textbooks and designing supplementary learning material (DOE 2000: 100).

Nevertheless, tight timelines, budgetary constraints and a training cadre with poor professional knowledge made it difficult for the GDE to improve significantly on its curriculum training. The introduction of RNCS and NCS continued with a similar

weak model. Aware of the thin training material supplied with C2005, more elaborate – but still general – GDE documentation was produced for the RNCS. This did not stop many teachers and principals from complaining that the material was laborious to read, too generic and therefore not helpful. Many teachers came out feeling unsupported, overburdened with paperwork, frustrated by the ‘one-size-fits-all’ generic approach to curriculum training and the little emphasis on subject matter knowledge, lesson planning and quality assessment – as recommended by the C2005 Review Report.

District-based PDAs

Districts, as other sites of PDA provisioning, offered two different types of professional development often linked to the teaching of the curriculum. The first type consisted of formal courses that focused on topic-specific knowledge (topics relating to new learning areas such as Economic and Management Science, Social Sciences, Maths and Natural Sciences); learners’ barriers; and ‘softer’ skills such as classroom management, discipline and computer literacy.

These voluntary courses targeted teachers of different knowledge and competence and were of short duration (one to six sessions), held outside school hours at district venues. Courses were facilitated by district officials or outside professionals of uneven expertise and with handouts of different quality, according to a teacher-centre-based interviewee. These courses were not conceptualised as part of a continuum of learning with follow-up or more advanced courses. Quality assurance was limited to teachers filling in short evaluation forms at the end of the course. The take-up by teachers and the alignment between the courses’ aims, design and delivery were not monitored.

The second type of district-based PDAs involved less formal cluster meetings that were context-based, classroom-situated, improvement-oriented and teacher-owned. District officials, teacher leaders or outside professionals facilitated reflections on selected problems of practice. Initially, districts were encouraged by the GDE head office to use the cluster system to train teachers on the common tasks for assessment. Soon, they became platforms for teachers to share best practice and/or problems with a view to generating concrete ideas for improvement.

Researchers compare cluster meetings to communities of practice which, they argue, have the potential to deepen aspects of teacher knowledge and practices, if certain pre-conditions exist. Conducive factors include a structured focus, reasonable duration, leadership and professional quality of facilitators, learning material quality as well as teachers’ commitment (Brodie 2013). The assumption here is that, by reflecting together, with professional facilitation, teachers can learn from context-specific problems, learners’ errors, and about topic-specific teaching strategies. There is a debate, though, about whether school-focused learning can make a substantial difference in teachers’ knowledge and, if so, at which depth and breadth.

These workshops were organised by district advisors and gathered teachers from neighbouring schools to a nearby venue. A few organisational weaknesses can be noted. Because cluster meetings did not benefit from financial resources to attract quality facilitators and assist teachers with travelling expenses, they were not easy to sustain over a long period. There was also the absence of a reliable mechanism to identify teachers' priority needs. District officials struggled to prioritise the knowledge areas with which teachers needed support. Their school work was about monitoring policy compliance and not so much about what teachers needed to engage more fully with the curriculum. The other source of identification of teachers' needs was the teachers themselves, which generated its own challenges. As the 1998 Developmental Appraisal System (DAS) – and later the 2003 Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) – stipulated, teachers had to develop their personal growth plans with their priority development needs. But the evaluative tool focused on aspects of teacher practices and not on the knowledge needed to perform these practices. Teachers were also reluctant to reveal their weaknesses because of fear, according to senior educators, that a genuine appraisal of their needs would be used judgementally against them. All this explains why districts rarely gathered meaningful data to plan a systematic provision of their PDAs.

There were a few exceptions to this trend. For example, one district teacher development centre developed a solid management information system and became proactive in diagnosing teachers' basic needs and organising corresponding quality PDAs. Phonics was diagnosed as a major prerequisite for the implementation of the new curriculum and this course became one of the most popular courses (De Clercq 2010).

Qualification-driven PDAs

As mentioned above, longer formalised upgrading qualification programmes offered by tertiary institutions consisted of more systematic teaching targeted at poorly qualified secondary school teachers. The PDEs negotiated the content coverage and scope of learning with each of their contracted tertiary institutions. As the Council on Higher Education (CHE) report (CHE 2010) argues, the teaching focus of FDEs, and later ACEs, was not clear. To start with, great differences in knowledge and competence existed among the various teachers who enrolled for these programmes, which had been given three different purposes by the NSE: reskilling teachers and changing their teaching specialisation; upgrading teachers' existing content knowledge and competence; and obtaining an academic qualification to pursue further research study.

Thus, tertiary institutions faced conflicting considerations in deciding on the content level and scope of the programmes. They were accountable for providing deep disciplinary focus (or subject matter knowledge) in line with the academic demands of an NQF Level 6 qualification programme. In the growing climate of curriculum compliance and the backlogs in proper curriculum training, most teachers were interested in support to

acquire the practical competence of teaching the NCS curriculum, a much narrower expectation (CHE 2010). In addition, no needs analysis research existed to inform the institutions about where to start or what to include in the programme (Adler 2005).

Such tensions created a difficult balancing act for tertiary institutions. In Gauteng, the objectives of FDEs were set ambitiously to broaden and deepen teachers' subject knowledge, the subject knowledge for teaching and the extension of teachers' reflective abilities (Adler & Reed 2002).

In 2003, the Quantum Project Phase 1 examined the kind of mathematical and teaching knowledge foregrounded in the formal assessment tasks of eleven mathematics ACEs, offered to secondary school teachers in five provinces. The analysis concluded that subject mathematics knowledge, or what it calls 'compressed' mathematics, was privileged at the expense of the teaching of mathematical problem-solving. Adler (2005) argues that subject knowledge for teaching was most needed to unpack the subject matter for learners, as most of them had serious content knowledge backlogs. A later review of fifteen mathematics ACEs was conducted by the CHE (CHE 2010). On the basis of an examination of the curriculum content, learning material, assessment, and staff and students' views, the CHE made slightly different criticisms. Many ACEs were not in line with the DOE's stated purpose for the qualification. Their ambitious learning objectives were not carried out in the rollout and implementation phase. The quality of their design, module content, assessment and delivery varied widely and often suffered from poor internal alignment. The CHE's main argument was that most ACEs became *de facto* 'locked into the school curriculum', they privileged the practical competence of teaching the curriculum and did not attain NQF Level 6 learning outcomes (CHE 2010; NEEDU 2013). It appeared that often, subject matter knowledge and subject knowledge for teaching were underemphasised.

Organisationally, ACE programmes that were offered in Gauteng by six universities differed widely. Under-qualified teachers were incentivised to upgrade their qualifications with state bursaries and a once-off monetary bonus. The mixed mode of delivery of the programmes varied, with some offering distance learning and others having classes during school holidays or every week. The balance and quality of contact sessions versus learner support also differed widely. Class sizes varied from 50 to 100 and facilitators were permanent teacher educators or contractual staff. There were activities and individual assignments of different quality, although all were school-focused and made teachers reflect on their classroom issues (Steinberg & Slonimsky 2004).

The impact of such upgrading programmes on teacher learning is difficult to establish. Only a few impact studies have been conducted on the FDEs/ACEs in Gauteng. Apart from an impact evaluation study of five ACEs in Educational Leadership,³ a three-year research project was undertaken on the impact of the FDE programmes in English, Maths and Science on teacher learning (Adler & Reed 2002). This research points to the

³ See Chapter 9 for more about this.

methodological complications of assessing teachers' take-up. Because teachers have so many diverse and unexpected ways of engaging with the course and using it to enhance their practice, it is difficult to identify exactly the aspects of the course content that are used and re-contextualised in their teaching. The take-up in the FDEs was said to be greater among teachers with a better knowledge base, as Adler (2012: 5) mentions:

Our analysis pointed to unintentional deepening of inequality. The 'new' curriculum texts selected by teachers from their coursework and re-contextualised in their classroom practice, appeared most problematic when teachers' professional knowledge base was weak, and typically, this occurred in the poorest schools.

Evaluations of other formal upgrading courses often note that the least-qualified teachers do not always complete the course or do not benefit as much as other more qualified teachers who appear more committed.⁴ However, in this period, many teachers – especially those from under-resourced and poorly performing schools – continued to complain of being unsupported, under pressure to comply with an under-specified curriculum and, above all, with little access to meaningful opportunities to learn (Shalem 2003).

Lessons learnt

It appears as if there were small pockets of quality in the GDE-driven PDAs of this period but there was also great fragmentation, lack of coordination and weak conceptualisation. PDAs were often driven by the immediate needs of teaching the curriculum, were not linked specifically to priority development needs and lacked internal coherence. Three main lessons can thus be derived.

Firstly, PDAs conducted as a discrete set of activities, self-teaching on the job, short courses and ad hoc once-off workshops do not work. Professional development needs to stay focused on a limited number of objectives *for improved teaching practice* over a long period (Elmore & Burney 1999; Cohen & Ball 1999). This means that PDAs need a strong teaching focus and should build in some support and monitoring measures to ensure that teachers use some of what they learn to improve their practices.

Secondly, employer-driven PDAs are structured by a fundamental tension between the employers' interest to implement the mandated curricula and the specific priority knowledge needs of teachers. It is clear that many teachers – especially those from poor areas – need support to counter their knowledge resource gaps to cope with sophisticated curricular demands. Yet, the emphasis in most PDAs of this period was on broad general curriculum knowledge and practical competence, which might have served

4 A JET-commissioned evaluation of the four-week in-service teacher training courses in English and maths, provided in 2010 by the Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute, found that teachers from relatively better performing schools benefited most from the courses. Sci-Bono and the MGSLG mentioned a similar point with the teacher workshops of the Teacher Development Strategy of SSIP (see later in this chapter).

the curriculum policy's immediate interests but not the subject matter knowledge and subject knowledge for teaching that teachers need to deliver effectively the curriculum of their phase. It did not expand the theory or improve the practice significantly.

Thirdly, if PDAs are conceptualised more rigorously, they will produce better internal alignment between the problems they deem important to address, the way in which their content design and delivery counters these problems and how the expected outcomes are likely to be secured. A reliable needs analysis based on a sound management information system will help to identify priority needs. A conceptually tighter content design will assist to understand what is appropriate and the delivery that avoids a 'one-size-fits-all' approach will be more suitable for teachers with different knowledge needs. Lastly, evaluation for improvement of outcomes has to become a permanent feature or practice.

The second period: After 2009

Our questions in reviewing this second period of GDE-driven PDAs are simple: what exactly changed, what remained the same and why?

Contextual conditions

After the 2009 elections, the work of national and provincial education priorities became increasingly dominated by the 'equity' mandate. Clear evidence was available by then from various systemic evaluation results that the performance of learners from poor schools pulled down average provincial and district-aggregated learner performance. This prompted the DOE and PDEs to develop various policy instruments and programmes 'to get learning right' and deliver quality education to all. Given the concern that formal upgrading courses had not been cost-effective at impacting on learner achievement, the idea of scripted material for teachers to follow when they teach became a prominent feature of most PDAs of this period.

The year before the 2009 election, the DOE instituted the Foundation for Learning Campaign, a four-year national programme to improve the teaching and learning of primary literacy and numeracy and to increase the average learner performance to more than 50%. It provided schools (especially underperforming primary schools) with more explicit guidance, with daily lesson plans, textbooks and materials to improve teaching and assessment practices. A similar reasoning is found in the 2009 *Report of the Task Team for the Review of the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement* (DBE 2009). The report recommended greater specifications in the curriculum content, sequence and pacing. Similar points were then emphasised in the President's 2010 State of the Nation address:

Our education targets are simple but critical. We will assist teachers by providing detailed daily lesson plans. To students, we will provide easy-to-use workbooks in all 11 languages.

The aim of the CAPS documents, published in 2010, was to streamline the NCS requirements and provide more explicit teacher support with an outline of topics to be covered each week for each grade and suggestions about teaching concepts and content, pedagogic activities and assessment tasks to cover. In its Action Plan to 2014, the now-renamed Department of Basic Education (DBE) specified increased percentage targets for Grades 3, 6, 9 and 12 learners in language and numeracy competencies.

At the level of teacher education, under pressure to develop a concrete development plan at the 2009 Teacher Development Summit, the DBE and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) produced an Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (2011–2025), aimed at improving the professionalism, teaching skills, subject knowledge and computer literacy of teachers throughout their entire careers (DBE and DHET 2011). This was the first integrated strategic plan to guide, more systematically, provincial PDAs on how to address teacher development needs on a continuum of learning and in articulation with other professional development interventions. Funds were to be allocated for specific outputs and activities such as provincial teacher development institutes, district teacher development centres and professional learning communities (PLCs) (DBE and DHET 2011). Unions were also to receive funds for their own institutes.

These national interventions and targets informed the GDE Five-Year Strategic Plan (2009–2014) and its interventions in early childhood education, maths, science, technology and primary languages. The GDE improvement plans were now premised on aligning the whole education system to support the improvement of learner performance. To that effect, the GDE developed a 2011 predictability framework for curriculum support and accountability. For the first time, GDE-driven PDAs were designed to improve average learner performance. The new MEC for Education in Gauteng, Barbara Creecy, noted the weak performance of primary schools: ‘learners in Grades 3 and 6 are functioning at least 2–3 grades below their expected levels in education’ and ‘can technically only answer 28% of the questions expected in the National Curriculum’ (GDE 2009/10 and 2013/14: 21–23).

Although many factors contributed to this low performance, Creecy emphasised poor teaching quality and the fact that teachers, particularly in the poorest parts of the province, struggled to cover the content of the curriculum and translate it into a work plan and coherent lesson plans with appropriate cognitive demand from learners. This was a warning that future PDAs had to change and that teachers needed more explicit guidance in their site of practice.

The following sections examine how the main GDE-driven PDAs tightened their organisation and teaching foci in the post-2009 period. We examine the CAPS training and then two main improvement strategies, specific to the GDE, that targeted teachers

from under-resourced and under-performing schools: the Teacher Development Strategy of the Secondary School Intervention Project (SSIP) for secondary schools and the Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS) for primary schools.

CAPS orientation training: General curriculum knowledge

To improve on its CAPS orientation training, the DBE developed more elaborate training materials. The idea was that all national and provincial training would use a thick file⁵ in their respective sites to ensure greater consistency and minimise distortions or misinterpretations down the implementation line.

The GDE orientation training covered broadly the content of the thick file through two workshops, as with the previous curricular orientation. The first was a general orientation workshop in which teachers were introduced broadly to general curriculum knowledge such as the new terms, topics, subject time allocation and their rationale. The second was a subject-specific training workshop, where teachers were provided with an opportunity to understand CAPS in the context of their subject area and phase. The thick file (CAPS documents were available online) included subject- and phase-specific schemes of work with examples of topics to cover each term. It also contained a sample of lesson plans with teaching and learners' activities, assessment and homework to be covered in those lessons and the specific order to be followed.

Since CAPS was phased in over three years, the mandatory training started in 2011 for teachers of the grades targeted for the first implementation in 2012. Organisationally, the same cascade model was used, but assisted this time by the thick file. The DBE trained a few facilitators from the GDE and its districts. The Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGSLG) was given the responsibility of CAPS training coordination and management. It organised Train-the-Trainer workshops for district subject advisors and 1 400 lead teachers who, in turn, provided CAPS orientation to teachers of specific subjects and grades over a two- or three-day workshop. The MGSLG reports indicate good teacher attendance, but no evaluation was done on the quality of facilitators and material or the way in which teachers received it. District subject advisors were expected to reinforce these orientation workshops with their own training of small groups of teachers doing the exercise activities suggested in the thick file.

The novel decision was to supplement the general training with the provisioning of detailed lesson plans for each subject and grade to guide more explicitly teachers' teaching and assessment practices. The MGSLG was responsible for these standardised lesson plans, which it outsourced to various professional service providers and experts. A quality assurance process was followed before finalising lesson plans that were not compulsory

5 This term was used in interviews by different GDE officials and school personnel.

but were to assist districts to monitor the curriculum coverage and pacing by teachers. At the time of writing, lesson plans were about to be supplied on CDs to all schools.

The Teacher Development Strategy (TDS): Learning to teach better with lesson plans

The SSIP intervention was introduced in 2010 for the Further Education and Training (FET) phase of underperforming secondary schools that achieved a pass rate of less than 80% in the National Senior Certificate examination. In 2011, it was transformed into a multi-pronged integrated programme targeted at FET teachers of 390 underperforming secondary schools. There were two main components to this PDA: the provision of lesson plans with standardised common tests and pace-setters, and the Teacher Development Strategy. The aim was to make teachers deliver the curriculum more effectively by providing them with year plans, work schedules and daily lesson plans as guides to ‘work in a structured, organised and professional manner’ so that ‘learners receive a quality classroom experience and achieve improved results’ (MGSLG website). The scripted lesson plans for each day of each term specified the topics, objectives and learning and teaching resources needed, and were designed around tightly timed teaching and learner activities, assessment and exercises. Hard copies were provided to underperforming schools while a CD resource pack made the lesson plans available to all schools. As with CAPS, these lesson plans were not accompanied by aligned textbooks and other learning and teaching resources. Since lesson plans were not compulsory, there was no intention to monitor their actual use in the classroom, according to the delivery agencies. These lesson plans were partially supported by workshops for teachers of the selected schools on a few specific curriculum topics of their subject areas. Topics had been identified by district subject advisors and from an analysis of FET exam moderators’ reports and Annual National Assessment (ANA) test results.

Organisationally, the GDE delegated the coordination, design, delivery and management of this teaching programme to two Section 21 companies. The MGSLG was responsible for the gateway subjects of Accounting, Geography, History, Business Studies, Economics and Languages, and Sci-Bono was in charge of the Maths and Science subject areas. The programme, which consisted of a one-day contact training session per term for each FET subject, was facilitated mainly by teacher leaders who were hired by, and accountable to, the MGSLG and Sci-Bono. The trainers were given short training in what they had to cover before the planned contact session. District subject advisors monitored the training and noted the uneven quality of trainers, some of whom had to be replaced.

Old problems in the design and delivery of the programme resurfaced. Interviews suggest that providers struggled to establish the exact level of competencies and needs of the teachers targeted to attend the programme. The lack of a viable information

management system on what teachers need illustrates the difficulty of finding quality teacher leaders, and the complex logistics in coordinating training sessions all contributed to the uneven quality and appropriateness of the training.

According to Sci-Bono, better teacher attendance was associated with dedicated involvement of district subject advisors with strong authority over teachers. The South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) complained that these training sessions abused the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC)-stipulated maximum 80 hours of PD and gradually teacher attendance declined, with only the more committed teachers completing the programme. The poor teacher attendance combined with the high delivery costs led the GDE to discontinue this programme in mid-2012.

Increasingly, the GDE was learning that formal teacher programmes or courses were not the most cost-effective manner to reach and support teachers, especially those with poor knowledge. There are now plans for more innovative courses based on technology, audio podcasts and interactive video lessons, according to Sci-Bono, the MGSLG and the GDE.

The GPLMS: Learning to teach with compulsory lesson plans, coach support and monitoring

Arguably the most innovative and longest PDA in this period was the Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS), a four-year literacy and numeracy strategy targeted at primary schools that scored below the provincial and national averages in assessments. The aim was to increase the Grade 3 and 6 pass rate from below 40% to at least 60% by 2014 (GDE 2010) by improving the teaching of languages and Mathematics in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases and reducing the gap between the intended and enacted curriculum. The focus was clear: standardised daily lesson plans based on a systematic approach to teaching with highly specified teaching steps were developed for teachers to follow to ensure appropriate curriculum delivery, pacing and coverage. The lesson plans were the key teaching resource that specified each lesson's topic, concepts and content around tightly timed teaching steps and activities as well as learners' exercises and assessment. As with CAPS and the TDS, the GPLMS lesson plans were based on a new approach to teacher learning. By following standardised lesson plans, designed by professional experts, it was assumed that teachers would adopt a new repertoire of teaching and assessment practices and learn more appropriate teaching routines in line with the curriculum demands.

The major novelty of the GPLMS was a stronger alignment between its design and its organisational arrangements, which were meant to reinforce one another. The lesson plans were compulsory and supportive and monitoring measures, in the form of high-quality materials and on-site coaches, were put in place to ensure that the content

and teaching routines specified in the lessons were followed by teachers. The learning outcomes were to be monitored through the Grade 3 and 6 ANA results.

Schools were provided with high-quality learning and teaching resource packs, textbooks, sets of graded readers, learning material and learner workbooks, which were supposed to be aligned to the systematic planned approach to teaching embodied in the lesson plans. The work of all the GPLMS parties also revolved around the lesson plans. Various subject-matter experts were asked to produce lesson plans and mutually supportive resource material. Coaches were appointed to provide training as well as ongoing support and monitoring to ensure that teachers delivered, and improved on, these lesson plans. The GPLMS management, in charge of the production of lesson plans and the additional resource material, was committed to a yearly iterative revision process of lesson plans, on the basis of feedback from teachers, coaches and quality assurers, to improve their quality and appropriateness for these context-specific schools, something absent from the other two PDAs based on lesson plans.

This conceptual alignment and integration of the different components around lesson plans facilitated the GPLMS roll-out and implementation. Started gradually with Foundation Phase languages and extended later to the Intermediate Phase and to Mathematics in both phases, it was a labour-intensive and expensive intervention with its personnel and non-personnel expenditures amounting to more than R300 million per year.

Beyond provisioning the resource packs, the GPLMS relied on 470 coaches hired by contracted NGOs to work in more than 800 underperforming primary schools (or 65% of the GDE primary schools). Each coach worked in six or more schools and was responsible for 35 to 45 teachers (depending on phase specialisation) who were visited once or twice a week, depending on their progress. Coaches provided ‘just-in-time’ training once a term, school-based workshops as well as ongoing support for, and monitoring of, teachers’ delivery of lesson plans. They modelled lesson plans in the classroom and observed teachers enacting them but did not always assist in adapting these to the classroom context while maintaining a high cognitive demand from learners. ‘The quality of coaches differed, even though each coach was allocated a senior supervisor for support and monitoring,’ according to a GPLMS manager. Reasons cited include the temporary nature of GPLMS posts that could not compete with the benefits of permanent jobs, and the fact that coaches hired for the Foundation Phase languages were asked subsequently to assist with Mathematics, in which they were often not competent.

The extent to which the GPLMS will lead to significant improvements in teachers’ practices and learners’ achievements is being assessed quantitatively through an examination of the change in ANA results (Fleisch 2013) and by small-scale studies that indicate some promising changes (Masterson, 2013; De Clercq 2014).

However, there are some limitations of this standardised approach to teaching and to teacher learning. Some teachers struggled, legitimately, with the content and pacing as this ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach did not fit in with their difficult classroom contexts.

Furthermore, being instructed on what and how to teach is unlikely to develop teachers' subject-matter knowledge and subject knowledge for teaching as these are embedded in the lesson plans and are therefore not obvious to learn from.

The GPLMS leadership explains that, at this point, the only way to ensure that school learners were exposed to the curriculum demands, sequence, pacing and coverage was through the bureaucratic controls of highly specified standardised teaching routines, backed up by expert-designed learning and teaching resources as well as the coaches' ongoing support and monitoring work. The leadership argues that it is a legitimate productive start to institute preferred (and, in many cases, improved) teaching practices, especially given the poor impact of most PDAs up to now.

The main organisational weakness of the GPLMS was its temporary management and delivery structure that ran parallel to the GDE's district management structures. It was the MEC who championed the GPLMS and wanted to test a new form of PDA with fully committed personnel, tasked to work solely on the intervention. The leadership and management team consisted of a few temporary appointees from outside the GDE, with some GDE officials perceiving the GPLMS as an MEC and not a GDE project. This state of affairs produced tensions between district officials, NGOs and their coaches, which manifested themselves at school level when teachers were given conflicting instructions by coaches and district advisors (De Clercq 2014). It also represented a costly exercise, difficult to sustain with reduced budgets. At the time of writing this chapter, there were discussions about raising extra funds from the private sector to sustain the intervention. Work is also underway on how the intervention could be institutionalised into the GDE's district and school structures, but serious capacity-building is needed in this regard.

Post-2009 changes

Three main points are worth making about this second period. The most significant change in how the GDE organised its PDAs is the new thinking about how teachers learn a preferred practice. Also, different organisational arrangements are adopted regarding specific targeting and the centralisation of provision.

Firstly, there was a change in the conception of how teachers learn to improve practice, by providing them with lesson plans containing scripted teaching routines. Together with a belief that teacher subject-matter knowledge and subject knowledge for teaching needed to be brought to the fore, there was a shift of thinking based on a different conceptualisation of teacher learning. Before 2009, GDE-driven PDAs gave teachers opportunities to learn discursively about aspects of the practice of teaching and, to a lesser extent, aspects of teacher knowledge needed for teaching the curriculum. In this kind of learning, teachers were encouraged to acquire experienced and research-based ideas with the expectation that they would use their discretion to apply or incorporate what they learnt to their practice, in accordance with their understanding of their

contexts. The novelty after 2009 is in targeting teachers in their site of practice with paced lesson plans. These post-2009 PDAs differed somewhat from one another, with the GPLMS working harder at designing quality lesson plans and continuously improving the resource materials.

Secondly, in line with its 'equity' mandate, the GDE focused on improving average learner performance by closing the gap between performing and underperforming schools. This means that its PDAs were targeted at a specific group of schools whose learners' results were below average and revealed that teachers were not able to teach according to the standards required by the curriculum.

Thirdly, the GDE's outsourcing of training to various service providers with their different methodologies and approaches was abandoned. The design, conceptualisation and delivery of PDAs now rest with the GDE and the recently established Gauteng teacher development institute, the MGSLG. Partnership with other training providers or researchers continues but these PDAs typically involve small-scale experimentation.

Teacher knowledge: Lessons to be learnt

Selecting a teaching focus is a most challenging task, subject to a great deal of debate. Research on professional knowledge suggests that to teach well, teachers need a specialised knowledge of what they teach, a broad sense of diverse methods of teaching and, most specifically, ways of explaining and representing the specific content they teach, with the view to imparting it to learners of specific age and cognitive level of development (Phelps & Schilling 2004; Bal et al. 2005). The overall position that is emerging is that teachers are specialists in what they know because they know it for the purpose of teaching it to others. This is an important point, as most South African teachers teach learners who are twice as challenging because of their serious content backlogs, lack of parental assistance, and poor – and, at times, violent – community contexts (Shalem & Hoadley 2009).

The clearest way to define the specialisation of teacher knowledge is to say that teachers need to have a good knowledge of the discipline they qualify to teach. They need to know facts and concepts but also the conceptual structure and the way in which ideas have been developed by experts who research the subject matter they teach. This is often referred to as discipline knowledge or subject-matter knowledge (Shulman 1986; Rowland & Turner 2008).

What is important to emphasise here is that, because South African classroom-based research continues to reveal teachers' weak subject-matter knowledge, well-designed and systematically presented formal courses on subject-matter knowledge continue to be necessary to improve both teacher knowledge and practice. Yet, few programmes have managed to address these issues, as the NEEDU report (NEEDU 2013) stated and of which the GDE was acutely aware when developing its post-2009 PD strategy. It is our claim that the learning derived from the main GDE-driven PDAs was poor because of

the way in which the more or less formal support programmes were conceptualised, delivered and monitored. The recent introduction of lesson plans may be an improvement in this regard but is unlikely to produce substantial improvement in teacher knowledge. At the time of writing, we understood that some GPLMS leaders were aware of this and were thinking of providing its Mathematics teachers with a six-module course on the subject-matter knowledge of mathematics to deliver the lesson plans more effectively. Decisions have to be made about what to impart, which subject-matter knowledge is necessary for teaching the curriculum and how to develop teachers' understanding of better ways of teaching it (or subject knowledge for teaching).

Researchers agree that subject-matter knowledge is necessary but not sufficient. They argue that teachers need to understand how best to teach the discipline to another, taking into account the requirements of the curriculum. Shulman (1986) and others after him argue that teachers need to decide on the best way to sequence and pace the content they teach, which explanations to give to learners, which examples to select in order to demonstrate concepts and which activities and assessment tasks to provide to learners. This subject knowledge for teaching involves making sound judgements and it is important particularly when teachers are faced with misunderstandings exhibited by learners when they learn new content, and for making decisions about how to scaffold learners' learning up to the complexity of the task (City et al. 2011: 29). There are, therefore, two different aspects of subject knowledge for teaching:

- Knowledge about ways of organising one's teaching over time (the sequencing and pacing of the content to be covered, using a coherent lesson structure, establishing routines of work, selecting learning material for teaching and designing learning and assessment activities focused on how to order and structure teaching) and
- Knowledge about helping learners to access the knowledge and understand the meaning, rules and procedures of the subject matter.

The GPLMS – with its lesson plans, coaches' support and monitoring – is a unique and important intervention with regard to the first aspect. It is the only PDA that takes care, systematically, of the teacher knowledge of coverage and pacing. As mentioned, there is small-scale evidence that some teachers develop more productive teaching routines by following the structure of the lesson. This is a significant achievement.

Helping learners to learn – the second aspect – is far more complicated. Morrow (1994) refers to this as teachers providing learners with epistemological access. In their work on the content knowledge needed by teachers to teach reading, Phelps and Schilling (2004) describe an interesting moment that is useful for understanding epistemological access. Learners, they say, often misrecognise the rules of reading and teachers need the knowledge about teaching letters and sounds to make judgements on how best to help learners follow the rule. In the example that follows, it becomes clear that the way in which learners make sense of the rules of 'word recognition' cannot be written for teachers.

All elementary teachers must figure out what to do when students misread words [...] How should a teacher respond? Should she tell the student the word, point out some feature of the word, ask the student to sound out the word, compare the word to another, ask the student to consider context, or something completely different? Although these sound like pedagogical choices, it is less obvious [...] choosing effectively for a particular word depends, in large part, on the word itself, the type of error and the surrounding text. The capacity to make good teaching decisions or moves rests in part on the teacher's knowledge of the subtleties of word and text structure. (Phelps & Schilling 2004: 35)

In this example, the teacher is confronted with learners' misrecognition. Correcting the learner, by telling her the word, would display poor teacher knowledge – in this case, poor knowledge of letters and sounds. Teacher knowledge of what readers of different ages do when they decode the sound of a word is embedded in the pedagogical choices mentioned above. Sufficiently classified curriculum, schemes of work and lesson plans can *partially* prepare teachers for such teaching challenges. These provide support to teachers by pre-empting developmental considerations known in the literature about reading and working these into the resource material that teachers are given to follow. However, they cannot replace solid and coherent professional judgements that teachers need to make in response to these kinds of situations so common in teaching. Appropriate judgement of how close to, or far from, what is correct a learner is, is core to teachers implementing appropriate assessment and feedback to learners.

The more specified the curriculum and its teaching resources are, the clearer a teacher is about what she needs to cover and how to pace it over time. But what is also needed is deeper teacher knowledge of subject matter and subject knowledge for teaching, as this will promote systematic teaching with the capacity to assist different learners to learn. Our main argument is that short courses and informal and formal learning motivated by employers' interest in curriculum legitimation are not suitable for developing this kind of knowledge.

Conclusion

The 2005 Report on Teacher Education argues that it is important to conceive of teachers as members of a profession who should invest in their professional growth but that 'where internal capacity is lacking, there will clearly be a greater need for "outside-in" strategies of development, but always with the purpose of growing the professional agency of teachers' (DOE 2005: 16). That said, what constitutes promising PD strategies that drive improved teacher practices and teacher agency?

In most PDAs reviewed here, teachers are expected to grasp meanings of ideas and show agency in implementing them into specific classroom contexts. However, there are no ways of knowing what teachers will select to take up and incorporate into their existing practices. If what they learn is of high quality and systematically supported with conceptually aligned resource material; if teacher learning is based in a systematic introduction into subject-matter knowledge; and if teachers are followed up and monitored for development in the site of practice, the chances are that teachers will be more interested and guided in applying the new ideas to improve their practice. But if the PDA is not conceptually aligned and systematic, if there is no incremental building of topics between courses, and aspects of subject-matter knowledge are only touched on as ad hoc responses to some immediate demand or need, the impact of PDAs will remain limited.

Recently, the GDE decided to experiment on a large scale with a more systematic conceptualisation and implementation of professional development for poorly performing schools. It developed tightly aligned support and controlling tools to make teachers follow standardised, prescribed teaching routines. In the process, teachers were spared (in our view, problematically) of decontextualising and incorporating what they learnt into their classroom context. It was hoped that, by being exposed to a reservoir of teaching routines, teachers' professional agency would increase, making them confident to draw from, and learn, the needed knowledge to develop improved practices that are responsive to their learners' needs. However, the question has to be asked: do they possess sufficient foundation in subject-matter knowledge to be able to learn more subject matter and subject knowledge for teaching and exercise more professional agency? This is the nub of the problem. If, as research continues to show, the subject-matter knowledge of the majority of teachers in South Africa is weak, systematically presented courses on subject-matter knowledge will have to be envisaged but will have to be carefully designed, delivered and managed to ensure teachers' take-up.

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Implementation Processes

CHAPTER 9

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE CASES OF SCI-BONO DISCOVERY CENTRE AND THE MATTHEW GONIWE SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Tony Bush

Introduction

The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) has chosen to implement its school improvement and professional development objectives and programmes partly through two specialist units:

- Sci-Bono Discovery Centre: for Maths, Science and Technology; and
- The Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance: for leadership, management, governance and teacher development.

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the work of these two bodies. For each body, the review examines the following issues:

- Origins and purposes;

- Governance;
- Activities;
- Impact;
- Achievements;
- Development needs; and
- Overview.

The review draws on relevant GDE, Sci-Bono and MGSLG documents and interviews with 11 key stakeholders. The 11 interviewees comprise:

- Four senior staff and one director of Sci-Bono;
- Four senior staff and one director of MGSLG; and
- One senior official of GDE (GDE 1).

Sci-Bono Discovery Centre

Origins and purposes

The Sci-Bono Discovery Centre was opened in 2004 by the GDE and the private sector. Its stated purpose is to address the scarce skills needs of South Africa by contributing to the effective delivery of quality Mathematics, Science and Technology education in all schools in the province. Its teacher development department is responsible for the training of all Gauteng Maths, Science and Technology (MST) educators (www.sci-bono.co.za).

The work of the Sci-Bono centre is significant because secondary school education in Mathematics and Science poses a significant challenge for South Africa. Few students study and pass the certificate examinations in these subjects. South Africa has struggled to deliver an acceptable quality of MST education in primary or high schools (Blum et al. 2010; GDE 2010; University of Pretoria 2010); '[t]here is a wealth of evidence that shows that our school system is failing our children in respect of MST education' (GDE 2010: 4).

The GDE's MST Improvement Strategy has four objectives:

- To strengthen MST teaching in all Gauteng schools;
- To improve the provision of MST resources;
- To provide programmes of learner support in MST; and
- To improve the management of MST teaching and learning (GDE 2010: 5–7).

The Sci-Bono Discovery Centre has what is described as 'a strong coordinative role' (GDE 2010: 7), so the evaluation of Sci-Bono should take these objectives into account. The fourth objective also relates to the role of the MGSLG (see below).

Sci-Bono's own goals link to the GDE objectives:

- To improve teaching and learning of Mathematics, Science and Technology in Gauteng schools;
- To provide career education to all learners in Gauteng; and
- To promote and improve public awareness of, and engagement with, science, engineering and technology.

All Sci-Bono interviewees refer to close alignment between the goals of the GDE and Sci-Bono. This is unsurprising given that the latter is the creation of the GDE, is largely funded by the parent body, and is following the former's mandates. One senior official says that Sci-Bono is 'an arm of the GDE'. Its mandate has evolved from managing traditional science centre activities to running key MST and learner improvement programmes for the GDE. One Sci-Bono official says that it may be regarded as a 'directorate' of the GDE, leading GDE's MST strategy, but this leads to some ambiguity about its status ('when are we part of the GDE and when are we independent?'), adding that 'Sci-Bono cannot exist without the GDE'. The director comments that the Board has had a lot of debate about Sci-Bono's new mandate – to develop and deliver the Maths and Science strategy – and about the nature of its accountability for this strategy. The GDE participant adds that Sci-Bono experienced some 'teething problems' in adapting to its teacher development role from 2010.

Governance

Sci-Bono is governed by a Board which, in 2011–2012, comprised of ten members. Sci-Bono's strategic plan (2013–2016) notes that it is legally an independent organisation but, in reality, 'it currently exists at the pleasure of GDE, funding from which Sci-Bono fully depends on' (Sci-Bono 2013: 18). This document also points to numerous risks arising from the GDE relationship, including funding lags, challenges to capacity arising from large projects, and the way in which the relationship undermines the Sci-Bono Board's capacity to function independently (Sci-Bono 2013: 19).

There is a contradiction between the formal status of Sci-Bono as a legally independent company, and the operational reality as perceived by two Sci-Bono officials: the GDE 'almost instructs us', and the two bodies are financially 'joined at the hip'. One official asks whether it would be better for Sci-Bono to be truly independent or to be more tightly linked with the GDE as an agency with a regular income. The director says that in respect of GDE work, the Board's role is largely fiduciary, but it takes full responsibility for the Science Centre.

Activities

Sci-Bono's activities arise from its goals. The Centre's activities have grown significantly since it opened nine years ago. For example, the Discovery Centre visitor numbers grew from 24 000 in 2004 tenfold to 240 000 in 2012 (Sci-Bono 2013: 53). The outreach programme also grew and, by 2012, worked with 100 000 learners. Other major activities include exhibitory, MST and SET programmes, teacher support and career education, and the strategic plan foreshadows increased activity in all these areas (Sci-Bono 2013: 56). Sci-Bono also manages the GDE's MST strategy. This includes two main interventions:

- Secondary School Improvement Programme (SSIP), which involves supporting 366 high schools;
- The Gauteng Provincial Language and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS), which involves teacher training and distribution of teaching and learning resources to 811 priority primary schools.

One Sci-Bono manager stated that Sci-Bono's activities are decided jointly by its Board and the GDE while another comments that the GDE has always 'had a say' but has become more powerful in recent years. Sci-Bono could not survive in its current form without GDE funding – 'it would become significantly smaller'. The Director of Sci-Bono comments that 'GDE leaders decide what Sci-Bono will do; it is effectively a project management agency', while a Sci-Bono manager claimed that 'Sci-Bono can act more quickly [than the GDE] without formal protocols and with greater value for money'.

Sci-Bono's traditional activities, which emanate from its Board, are greater in number, but the projects requested by the GDE are much bigger with substantially more funding. This inevitably places Sci-Bono in a subordinate position, although the relationship can also be seen as mutually beneficial.

Impact

Sci-Bono (2013: 71) recognises the importance of impact measurement and assessment and its strategic plan states that its 'credibility depends on its ability to measure its effectiveness'. However, this document suggests that such activities are planned, rather than currently implemented:

The collection, analysis and application of effective data for decision-making *will* be an important part of our management [...] all its programmes *must* build in effective monitoring and evaluation. (Sci-Bono 2013: 63, author's emphases)

Despite this comment, Sci-Bono's (2012) Monitoring and Evaluation report suggests that impact assessment is already in progress. The report provides an overview of its *internal* monitoring and evaluation. The report covers the BHP Billiton Career Centre, School Support including the SSIP, the Science Centre, and Teacher Development. Evaluation methods include surveys (career centre, science centre), analysis of client records (career centre), learner interviews (school support), educator interviews (teacher development), pre- and post-testing (school support, teacher development), and learner tracking (teacher development). These are appropriate evaluation tools but samples were sometimes very small and internal monitoring is not a satisfactory substitute for robust external evaluations.

One Sci-Bono official stated that monitoring and evaluation of some projects was introduced 'from the beginning' but that this was more difficult for some other activities. The director added that impact evaluations 'are not where they should be' but some processes are in place. Another Sci-Bono official confirmed the use of the evaluation methods outlined above but added that it remains difficult to judge the academic value of certain interventions – for example, the exhibits and the careers centre. There are also political aspects of evaluations. For example, learner progress cannot be wholly attributed to Sci-Bono, as this would undervalue the contributions of teachers and other school-level interventions.

According to the informants, the Secondary School Improvement Programme (SSIP) has been acknowledged as the key programme responsible for improved Grade 12 pass rates in Gauteng. In 2012, the CEO was given a special award by the MEC for Sci-Bono's contribution to improved matric results.

Achievements

Sci-Bono has grown very quickly in the nine years since its establishment and can claim a number of achievements. Its officials are proud of evolving a model for the Science Centre that does not exist elsewhere in South Africa, notably in its support for mainstream schooling. Following discussion with the Council of Education Ministers (CEM), the model may be replicated in other provinces.

One official pointed to the success of the extended teacher training programme, covering subject knowledge, pedagogy and assessment, with teachers out of school for three weeks, and substitute teachers employed. Another commented on the value of the SSIP, the exhibits collection, the large number of programmes that 'engage learners' and the career guidance programme. Sci-Bono can be proud of the successful project management of the SSIP with its effective systems and clean GDE audits and as an intervention that leads to improved matric pass rates.

Development needs

The rapid growth of Sci-Bono, from 27 staff and a R12 million budget, to 240 employees and a R300 million budget, has led to concerns about the sustainability of the organisation. Its heavy dependence on GDE funding leads to anxiety about its future shape and size, especially if political change leads to a different view about its role and scope.

Two senior staff are also concerned about recruitment and succession planning, given the quality criteria and the national skills shortage in science and technology. The overarching development need is to clarify Sci-Bono's relationship with the GDE; as one official asks, 'should it be more independent or more integrated' or maintain its current 'semi-detached' status? The director adds that Sci-Bono's stability is limited by short-term political and funding issues. In relation to teacher development, the respective roles of Sci-Bono and the GDE's teacher development section need to be clarified.

Overview

The Sci-Bono Discovery Centre is a relatively new body that plays a central role in implementing the GDE's improvement strategy for Mathematics, Science and Technology. Nominally an independent organisation, it relies on the GDE for most of its funding and its most expensive programmes are mandated by the parent body. The goals are closely aligned, partly because Sci-Bono is effectively the project manager for GDE programmes. The role of the Sci-Bono Board of Directors is ambiguous because GDE mandates effectively bypass the Board. Significantly, the GDE official has little contact with the Board, dealing directly with Sci-Bono managers. Sci-Bono staff is proud of its many achievements but anxious about the future, given the centre's financial and political dependence on the GDE. Providing greater clarity about its status, planning programmes and funding over a longer period may be the key to its ongoing success.

The Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance

Origins and purposes

The Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGSLG) was opened in 2003, following an initiative by the former MEC, Ignatius Jacobs. The MGSLG's aims are:

- To provide a central hub for the professional growth of school leaders and governors;
- To design and present cutting-edge school leadership, governance and management training programmes; and

- To focus on improving practice through research (www.mgslg.co.za).

The website adds that the MGSLG's main objective is to develop high-order leadership and governance skills and qualities underpinned by critical reflection based on a body of relevant leadership and governance theories and concepts. Its target clients are principals, deputies, school heads of subject departments, district officials and school governing bodies (SGBs).

The MGSLG's initial brief for school leadership, management and governance has been modified and extended to include teacher development. 'The GDE has transferred responsibility for teacher training in all non-MST subjects to the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance' (Sci-Bono 2013: 58). This is not reflected in the MGSLG's stated aims (see above) but it has significant implications for its focus, activities and target clients, as we will see.

The GDE official states that the teacher development brief links to the national teacher development framework, which includes the establishment of provincial institutions and centres for teacher development. There are draft national norms and standards for such institutes and centres. The official adds that there have been some 'teething problems' for the MGSLG and Sci-Bono in adapting to this new role.

There are different views among MGSLG senior staff about whether GDE and MGSLG goals are aligned. One states that the founding goals of the MGSLG align well with the GDE's strategic goals, for example in respect of research and programme development for schools. Another official agrees the goals are well aligned, commenting that the MGSLG is articulating the GDE's need to have effective schools with good leadership and good classroom teaching. Another official agrees that goals are aligned but adds that roles and responsibilities are not clarified, which leads to tension. In particular, the new mandate for teacher education has heightened tensions. A fourth official argues that the current goals of the MGSLG are 'totally unaligned' with its original mandate. Previously, it was semi-autonomous, but it now responds directly to the mandates of the GDE.

Linked to this point, one respondent commented that there should be a stronger focus on the MGSLG as a professional institute with an advisory role as well as a responsibility for project delivery: a two-way street with a feedback loop, not just a one-way street. The Board's director claims that there is now stronger alignment between the goals of the GDE and the MGSLG, with a better link between the MGSLG and GDE's political leadership. The GDE official also believes that the goals are aligned.

Governance

The MGSLG is a Section 21 company governed by a Board of Directors. The role of the Board links to the MGSLG's relationship with the GDE and the extent to which

a Section 21 company providing vital GDE services should be, and be perceived to be, independent of its parent body. An evaluation by the University of the Witwatersrand in 2009 summarises this dilemma:

Created by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE), MGSLG was founded as a Section 21 company to provide a certain level of independence and autonomy. But, with a Board of Directors chosen by, and largely populated by the GDE, MGSLG was intended to have a close relationship to the working of the Department. (University of the Witwatersrand 2009)

This evaluation also refers to a lack of clarity about the Board's role and to role conflict arising from GDE membership of the Board. These challenges are reiterated in the MGSLG's (2011) strategic plan and remain central for the GDE and for the MGSLG. A tight relationship with the Department provides the best prospect of GDE policies being implemented effectively. However, a degree of independence is essential to encourage innovation and to widen inputs about educational development. The National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) (formerly the National College for School Leadership) in England faces a similar challenge and the government has recently converted the NCTL from a semi-independent body with a governing board to a government agency with no board. This change, which is controversial, may not be appropriate for the MGSLG, but it does show one way of addressing this dilemma.

The role of the Board and its relationship to the MGSLG and the GDE was addressed by all five MGSLG interviewees. The Board's director notes that the original Board was semi-independent but became more GDE-dominated. Latterly, it has only independent members, but these are appointed by the political leader and serve 'at the MEC's pleasure'. The Board's role is mainly about audit and financial oversight, a view confirmed by the GDE official. The MGSLG interviewees largely confirm the director's view about Board membership and responsibilities but one argues that the Board's independence is compromised by the MEC's role in appointing its members. The Board's director adds that independence is also compromised by the MGSLG's dependence on GDE funding.

Activities

Many of the MGSLG's activities arise from its goals and include training and development activities for school principals, deputies and heads of department (HODs), as well as members of SGBs and district officials. However, its role and activities have changed significantly since it opened ten years ago. The strategic plan (MGSLG 2011) refers to seven activity areas arising from its mandate:

1. Teacher development on policy, curriculum content and pedagogy;
2. Management and leadership development to support schools and district offices;
3. Pre-grade R and Grade R development and support for practitioners;

4. Facilitation and family support in education through dialogue;
5. School governance development and support;
6. Effective partnerships and stakeholder management; and
7. School and district improvement programmes (MGSLG 2011: 6).

While activities 2, 5 and 7 in the list above can be seen as consistent with the MGSLG's aims, the other programme areas illustrate a significant extension of its role into teacher education and family support. These changes arose from discussion with the GDE, especially the MEC responsible for education (MGSLG 2011: 6). The addition of teacher development in particular is a major change, which began with the MGSLG's role in training teachers for the introduction of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and for specific aspects of the curriculum. The University of Witwatersrand (2009) evaluation shows that this was controversial:

There was considerable difference of opinion about the selection of MGSLG to conduct this training [...others] feared that this award was a dangerous expansion into areas that were not directly related to its original mandate. (University of the Witwatersrand 2009: 6)

If you were to teach people to lead institutions – you need to understand what happens in the classroom between learner and teacher – you should not divorce this from what you do for principals. (GDE official, cited in University of the Witwatersrand 2009: 7)

These extracts provide two contrasting views of the MGSLG's expanded mandate. If school leadership is primarily about the management of teaching and learning (MTL), as some would argue (see Bush 2013), then the extension of the MGSLG's role is logical – but should, then, be reflected in its aims. However, there is also a risk that its original distinctive mission will be blurred.

MGSLG interviewees expressed a range of views about this key issue. One respondent argued that the addition of teacher development is 'more than welcome', as leadership is not just for principals but also has a classroom dimension – teacher leadership. Another respondent agreed, as it is a 'beneficial change' that expands the MGSLG's mandate and provides the prospect of holistic development for teachers, focusing on the 'nuts and bolts' of teaching as well as leadership and governance: in other words, allowing relevant programmes to be integrated. This rationale arises partly from the 'not pleasing' performance of South African learners in international tests, as noted in the GDE's Five-Year Plan (2009–2014) and discussed elsewhere in this book.

However, the introduction of teacher development has created some pressure and tensions because the GDE and district units for teacher development were closed as the mandate was transferred to the MGSLG and Sci-Bono. This tension was captured by an MGSLG respondent who claims that the MGSLG is not fulfilling its 'original mandate' but is now focused on teacher development, notably Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) training, which 'is project management', not 'original thinking', and

means that the MGSLG is ‘neglecting school leadership’. The director agrees that teacher development is not part of the MGSLG’s original mission and adds that the Board has asked questions about ‘mission drift’. The director adds that management work is ‘tailing off’. However, the GDE official noted that the changes arise from a ‘national mandate and summit on teacher development’.

Research

A related issue concerns whether the MGSLG has achieved its intended focus on improving practice through research. The initial structure had a ‘research and school improvement’ directorate but this was closed several years ago. A strategic imperative for the MGSLG’s Board – and for the GDE – is whether it should be involved in research and knowledge creation and dissemination, as its aims imply. If so, the MGSLG’s structures and processes need to reflect this emphasis, a point acknowledged in its strategic plan (MGSLG 2011: 9, 17). This could be reflected in a research and evaluation directorate, for example.

One official stated that the MGSLG requires internal research capacity to carry out monitoring and evaluation, but it also needs external evaluations by universities to avoid the risk of bias. The director notes that the MGSLG is a source of information about governance and management but that evaluations of quality are also required.

Impact

Given its substantially extended role, it is essential that the impact of the MGSLG’s programmes is evaluated regularly and thoroughly. This is acknowledged in its School Capacity Building Model, which asks the key question: ‘monitoring, evaluation and support – how well are we doing?’ (MGSLG 2011: Figure 8). Its SWOT analysis (MGSLG 2011: 4) also refers to ‘a lack of evaluation on impact of programmes’. There have been programme evaluations – of, for example, the training programme for Institutional Development and Support Officers (IDSOs) (SAIDE 2006), SGB training (CEPD 2011) and the ACE: School Leadership programme (Bush et al. 2012) – but this area seems to require specific capacity.

Interviewee comments on the impact of the MGSLG include views about the process and about the nature of the impact. One official said that impact is assessed by including a research component within all projects. For example, the project on SMTs delivered by three universities is evaluated by an independent company, which also conducted a baseline survey for the project. Another respondent noted that the MGSLG assesses the impact of materials and of the trainers. Materials review is sound but there are some

problems with the trainers. The MGSLG also enhanced its own monitoring ratio to assess delivery.

A third official asserted that monitoring is based largely on ‘rather anecdotal’ teacher feedback. There are plans to commission an independent evaluation of teacher development activities. The director commented that there is ‘no concrete evidence’ that the MGSLG has made a big impact in schools. Services have been provided, and money has been spent as intended, but it is hard to judge its effectiveness. Similarly, the GDE notes that assessment of impact is ‘missing’ and will be a major focus in the future.

A research and evaluation directorate, as suggested above, may be the most effective way of enhancing capacity and ensuring that programme impact is assessed accurately.

Achievements

MGSLG has expanded its activities significantly and this alone could be seen as an achievement. One official pointed to the scale of its programmes as an achievement, with 1 600 early childhood specialists completing training and 36 000 teachers trained on CAPS implementation. Another claimed that it has broadened its scope from training to capacity-building and adds that project management, linked to specific standards, is an achievement.

A third official referred to several achievements – including a stronger strategic focus, resolution of previous financial problems and improved staff morale – with a move away from a ‘conveyor belt’ ‘delivery model’ towards a capacity-building approach. However, another official argued that its achievements are limited by having to serve GDE mandates rather than being semi-autonomous. The director says that the MGSLG is ‘an efficient arm of the state’, with a good record of delivering basic services, which he argues is better than the GDE itself. However, there is limited evidence to make such strong claims about its effectiveness.

Development needs

One MGSLG official argued that teacher attendance at events is varied but another claimed that the advent of continuing professional development (CPD) points, which requires educators to undertake a certain amount of CPD annually, which is computed using points, should help teachers to be well motivated to undertake training rather than being reluctant to do so. Another respondent commented that participant evaluation forms are often superficial rather than substantive and also noted that trainers and facilitators require more training. This links to another official’s view that more work is required to develop materials and to provide high-quality facilitation. The MGSLG is

also developing a longer-term approach to projects, including the CAPS intervention, allowing the GDE to move away from once-off workshops.

One of the respondents made wider and more ambitious points about development, noting an intention for the MGSLG to become a 'centre for excellence' and to develop district support programmes further, which were provided in the mid-2000s. The director says that the MGSLG needs to clarify and stabilise its mandate but one of his managers argued that the organisation needs to regain some autonomy, not just respond to GDE.

Overview

The MGSLG is still a relatively new body, celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2014, and it is playing an increasingly important role in implementing the GDE's school improvement and teacher, leadership and governance development strategies. As with Sci-Bono, it is nominally an independent organisation, but relies on the GDE for most of its funding. The goals are closely aligned, partly because the MGSLG is effectively the project manager for GDE programmes, but there is concern about 'mission drift' away from its original focus on leadership and governance towards a wider teacher development role.

The role of the MGSLG Board of Directors is affected by the MEC's power to appoint its members and by its dependence on GDE funding. The MGSLG appears to have been effective in delivering GDE-mandated programmes but there are anxieties about its ability to influence the agenda rather than simply to implement GDE imperatives. Greater clarity is also required about whether its teacher development role has served to limit and undermine its initial focus on leadership and governance development.

Conclusion

The Sci-Bono Discovery Centre and Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance are both relatively new bodies, having been in existence for barely a decade since the first democratic elections. The GDE's decision to create and support these centres was imaginative and far-sighted. As long ago as 1998, the National Department of Education planned to set up a school leadership institute. This has not come to fruition but the GDE recognised the need for a coordinated approach to development for principals, other leaders and governing bodies through the creation and subsequent expansion of the MGSLG. The GDE's recognition of the need for targeted action to improve learner outcomes in MST subjects led to the establishment and subsequent growth of Sci-Bono. The latter's success has led to the Council of Education Ministers' decision to encourage all provinces to establish similar centres. The GDE should be proud of the achievements of these bodies but certain problems remain, as we discuss below.

Sci-Bono and the MGSLG began as specialist organisations but their role has changed and expanded significantly during the past few years. The main innovation for both units is the addition of a substantial teacher development role to their previous activities. The driver for this change appeared to be partly the MEC at the time and partly a response to national policy, notably the national teacher development framework.

The decision to allocate these responsibilities to Sci-Bono and the MGSLG can be understood via the 'garbage can' model of decision-making (Bush 2011; Cohen & March 1986). In this model, 'problems' are attached to pre-existing 'solutions'. Sci-Bono and the MGSLG were already operational and appeared to provide ready-made 'solutions' to the 'problem' of teacher development. It is not clear whether the establishment of a separate teacher development unit was considered and, if so, why it was rejected.

There are mixed views about whether the teacher development role compromises the original mandate of the two organisations or serves to enhance it. There are concerns about 'mission drift', limited capacity, overlaps with the GDE teacher development function, and the shift to a project management role, focusing on delivery of GDE and national mandates rather than responding directly to teacher, leader and governing body development needs. However, there is also recognition that school leaders ought to engage with classroom activities and this view justifies the addition of a teacher development role, especially for the MGSLG. The two organisations also gain through significant additional income, although this may be at the expense of blurring their original distinctive missions.

A related issue concerns the relationship between the GDE and the two organisations' boards and senior staff. The boards have gone through different stages but are currently 'independent'. However, this is largely notional, as their members are appointed at the MEC's discretion and their budgets are largely dependent on the parent body. Some directors of the two organisations are concerned about the accountability implications of this three-way relationship and about their limited ability to influence the agenda.

The relationship can be interpreted using the 'coupling' metaphor (Bush 2011; Weick 2001). Tight coupling, common in hierarchical organisations such as government departments, means that political and bureaucratic mandates are more likely to be fulfilled. One interviewee warns of the risk of the two bodies being 'swallowed up' by the bureaucracy while another seeks a two-way relationship with the GDE, rather than passive implementation. Looser coupling recognises that expertise is widely distributed and provides greater scope for subordinate bodies to contribute to policy formation as well as implementation. This model is not as comfortable for officials who are used to top-down decision-making, but allowing Sci-Bono and the MGSLG to contribute to the agenda would be the best way of making use of their specialist expertise.

The two bodies have not impacted directly on the overall cross-cutting themes built into the review. It is clear that Sci-Bono has increased access to science through the very large numbers visiting the discovery centre. Similarly, both organisations have provided workshops for large numbers of teachers. However, there is only limited evidence for

whether and how these and other initiatives have contributed to the quality of leadership, governance, teaching and learning in Gauteng's schools. The GDE's Five-Year Plan (2009–2014) notes that South Africa was the worst-performing country in the 2003 Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Similarly, it was placed last in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in 2006. By 2011, however, there was a substantial improvement (63 points) in the TIMSS scores, with Gauteng achieving the highest increase of 86 points. It seems likely that Sci-Bono and the MGSLG have contributed significantly to this improved performance.

Recommendations

1. The GDE should continue to support Sci-Bono and the MGSLG as these bodies provide specialist capacity and capability to deliver key aspects of the Department's strategy.
2. The GDE should undertake a review of the impact of the teacher development mandate on the original foci of Sci-Bono and the MGSLG. A decision should be made about whether the two organisations should become fully acknowledged delivery agents for GDE policy initiatives or move closer to their original missions.
3. The formal status of the two organisations also requires review. The Boards of Directors are notionally independent but this is compromised by three factors. First, Board members are appointed by the MEC. Second, Sci-Bono and the MGSLG are dependent on the GDE for most of their funding. Third, GDE officials appear to be bypassing the Boards and discussing their requirements with Sci-Bono and MGSLG senior staff instead.

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CHAPTER 10

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELDS IN GAUTENG

Lorayne Excell

Introduction

Early childhood education (ECE)¹ has always been a poorly understood, fragmented and marginalised field within the South African context. The very nature of early childhood necessitates a multifaceted, integrated approach that includes civil society, various organisations as well as government departments, and since its inception this type of collaboration has not been part of the ECE landscape. This fragmentation, coupled with the racially segregated approach to service provisioning that privileged one racial group, ensured that when the democratic government came to power in 1994 the majority of South African children had little, if any, access to quality ECE provisioning.

However, based on the pre-1994 promises that under an ANC government ECE would receive new impetus and vision (NEPI 1992), the expectations of civil society for effective and efficient ECE provisioning were high. These expectations were further reinforced by one of the fundamental principles of the new education dispensation underpinning the 1994 democratic government – that of affirming the rights of the child. These rights were reinforced by the Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989), the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA 1996a) and the South African

¹ The names given to this field are many. I have specifically chosen the term ECE to signify that the emphasis is on education of the preschool child. In this chapter the preschool child refers to all children from birth until the commencement of formal schooling in Grade 1.

Schools Act (RSA 1996b). For the new Gauteng Department of Education (GDE), the challenges in providing effective ECE were huge, especially in the light of the rapid ongoing educational changes that were introduced by the new democratic government.

The challenges, successes and significant achievements of the GDE can be best understood against this backdrop of marginalisation, fragmentation and the tensions between different state departments and civil society, which were exacerbated by this rapid ongoing educational change. This chapter contextualises ECE and briefly sketches the complexities and challenges of the South African ECE movement until 1994. It then explores the significant educational changes that occurred in ECE after 1994 and their impact on provisioning in Gauteng. It then examines the position adopted towards ECE by the first provincial education department in Gauteng, traces the subsequent pathway of ECE delivery within the Gauteng province and outlines the substantial progress that has been made in recent years. Finally, it makes some recommendations for further planning.

Contextualising ECE

There are many reasons for the fragmentation and confusion that surrounds ECE. These include a lack of common or joint understanding of the importance and purpose of ECE; confusion about which government department or departments are responsible for this phase and what their various roles are; ambiguous policy documents; and the terminologies used to describe ECE practices (including the name given to this field). In addition, the inequalities that have always existed in ECE provisioning for different sectors of the population – including the types of ECE services offered and the reasons for offering these services, the level and types of qualifications of people working in the field, and their conditions of service – have added to the challenges faced by this sector. These inconsistencies have, since ECE's inception, frequently impacted (often negatively) ECE provisioning at both national and provincial levels.

In broad terms, ECE spans the period from conception until the commencement of formal schooling in Grade 1. Thus ECE embraces the first five or six years of a child's life. But this age range, like everything else in ECE, is a contested notion.² What has never been contested, however, is that the ECE phase is not part, and has never been included under the umbrella, of formal schooling. Hence, traditionally, even though ECE has a strong pedagogic component, the education department has not acknowledged full responsibility for this phase. But neither has any other government department,

2 The Education Laws Amendment Bill of 2002 set the admission to Grade 1 as the year in which the child turns seven. This meant that Grade R children were aged five, turning six. In 2004, after this policy was successfully challenged in court, the school's admission age was lowered to age five if children turn six before 30 June. By implication, the age cohort of the Grade R child has been lowered to age four turning five. This has obvious implications for ECE provisioning.

including Health and Welfare. As Webber (1978) wrote, ECE is everyone's concern but no one's responsibility.

This lack of government commitment has been apparent since the first preschool was opened in Johannesburg in 1930 for indigent white children (Webber 1958; 1978). Despite this lack of commitment, government did accept limited responsibility for the provisioning of ECE services for the white community. But little support was given to other racial groups. The Department of Social Welfare subsidised some preschool services for black and coloured children (if they met the subsidy criteria) under the guise of crèches. In reality, many of these institutions were no more than places of care for children of working parents. Little, if any, educational stimulation was offered to these children. For the majority of children, there were no quality preschool facilities (NEPI 1992).

In the early 1970s, the provisioning of preschool services and the training of teachers for white children was strengthened when ECE became a provincial competence following the National Education Policy Act of 1967 (RSA 1967). In the Transvaal province, the decision was taken to subsidise fully what became known as Transvaal Education Department (TED) preprimary schools. This meant that those selected schools were fully maintained and resourced, and the teachers' salaries were paid in full. In essence, the bulk of the provincial preschool budget went to support a privileged few.

During this time, a few shorter training courses were established for coloured and black teachers. These were, however, short-lived and began to be phased out in the late 1980s, as were many of the courses for white preschool teachers. In fact, by 2002, when the Norms and Standards for Teacher Qualifications were published (DOE 2002), stand-alone, formal teaching qualifications for all preschool teachers had been removed from the statute books.

Thus it was chiefly through private initiatives and community and parental involvement that the ECE movement continued to advance. Since the 1970s, the majority of preschool training has been offered by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Over 60% of preschool teachers have been trained via this non-formal route (DOE 2001a; 2001c).

In 1994, when educational transformation was ushered in, preschool provisioning for the majority of South African children was bleak; there was lack of access to and quality of service provisioning, and training was questionable (NEPI 1992; DOE 2001c). Childcare and education were regarded as women's work, and were undervalued. Funding varied and was generally inadequate. Preschool teachers, who were now called 'practitioners', received low salaries; they had low status and few, if any, career paths. In addition, the sector was fragmented. There was little collaboration between the various government departments, including local government. According to a senior GDE official, 'the ECE sector was looking for a "quick fix"' (personal interview, July 2013). The sector was impatient for change and redress of inequalities but, given the marginalisation and fragmentation at all levels, this could not happen overnight.

Possibilities for change: A new ECE initiative

The release in 1994 of a proposed new education dispensation raised the expectations of many in the preschool sector who envisaged an enlightened ECE policy. When ECE implementation was considered it appears as if the recommendations made by the De Lange Commission and the HSRC study on preschool education in the early 1980s were pivotal to later thinking and strategising about preschool and, in particular, Grade R provisioning. As noted by NEPI (1992:39),

[t]he option of providing a one year pre-school programme for all children prior to formal school entry, either within or linked to the schooling system has attracted a great deal of support from the broader education field, including the ANC Education Desk.

According to Mary Metcalfe, the first MEC for Education of the newly formed GDE, the ANC's education policy framework (the 'Yellow Book') was unequivocal about the importance of ECE and committed the ANC in government to filling the vacuum in state policy on early childhood educare. The long-term policy proposed rested on four pillars: (i) a policy for childcare and development in the community; (ii) early childhood educare forming part of a comprehensive, national community development strategy linking economic and social development, including housing, health, welfare and education; (iii) ECE being accorded appropriate priority in the national and provincial governments' reconstruction and development programme, including the deployment of state resources; and (iv) joint responsibility for planning ECE strategy and resourcing would be given to the relevant government departments at all levels (education and training, health, welfare).

It was envisaged that the Ministry of Education and Training and Provincial Education and Training Authorities would coordinate the process with representative consultative structures being established at national, provincial and local levels to guide policy and implementation. It was also envisaged that priorities for delivery would be planned at local level in relation to local needs and circumstances, in collaboration with all concerned interest groups, service organisations and funding agencies.

During the period of political transition, prior to the formation of the new democratic government in 1994, multiple stakeholders and documentation – including the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) (1992), the African National Congress's 'Yellow Book' (ANC 1994) and the National Training Strategy Initiative – contributed to the development of a new, restructured curriculum, which was first articulated in the White Paper on Education and Training (DOE 1995a). These changes were passed into law when the South African Schools Act (RSA 1996b) was promulgated. A new curriculum, with a new philosophical underpinning to be realised in Curriculum 2005, was envisaged. The Grade R year was included in this curriculum.

From an ECE perspective, far-reaching education changes were introduced. An important innovation was the introduction of the term ‘early childhood development’ (ECD). This was defined as ‘[a]n umbrella term which applies to the process by which children from birth to nine years grow and thrive, physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, morally and socially’ (DOE 1995a: 23).

This definition had many implications for both the preschool and junior primary phases of education. It blurred the boundaries between these phases and emphasised a more developmentally appropriate approach to the education of young children. However, other educational changes introduced by White Paper 1 (DOE 1995a) did not necessarily provide support for the implementation of this definition.

An important change in this regard was the reformulation of the formal schooling phases. What was previously the Junior Primary Phase became the Foundation Phase, which was to include Grades 1–3 plus an additional year of schooling – the reception year, known as Grade R. Grade R was to have become compulsory for all children by 2010. However, due to implementation constraints, this date was first postponed until 2014 and the status of Grade R reverted from compulsory to universal. It is now envisaged that by 2014 there will be full Grade R coverage, meaning that all public primary schools in Gauteng will house at least one Grade R class and that Grade R will become universal by 2019.

The White Paper on Education and Training (DOE 1995a) provided new possibilities for the realisation of ECD services. In February 1996, the Interim Policy for Early Childhood Development was released. This Interim Policy acknowledged the inherited situation, the challenges facing the ECD sector and the steps needed to address these challenges. It clearly situated the envisaged curriculum framework for ECD within a developmentally appropriate paradigm promoting a play-based approach to ECE, and acknowledged the role of the non-formally trained teacher in the roll-out of ECD provisioning. Furthermore, it reaffirmed the government’s commitment to ECD and stated that ‘a strategy has been devised to phase in the implementation of the reception year’ (DOE 1996a: 1).

Informing this strategy was the implementation (in the same year) of the National Early Childhood Development Reception Year Pilot Project. This National Pilot Project required all provinces to develop a plan to support all 5–6-year-old children from ultra-poor and at-risk backgrounds through a system of per capita allowance and the training of practitioners. A significant recommendation from this study, the findings of which were released in 2001, was that public primary schools were to become sites for Grade R and that approximately 85% of Grade R classes were to be situated at public schools. *The National ECD Pilot Project* (DOE 2001b) and *The Nationwide Audit of ECD Provisioning in South Africa* (DOE 2001c) – the aim of which was to provide accurate information on the nature and extent of ECD provisioning, services and resources – were the two important documents that informed *Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education*, which was released in October 2001. The principal recommendation in this paper is:

the establishment of a national system of provision of the Reception Year for children aged 5 turning 6 that combines a large public and smaller independent component. In this regard, our medium-term goal (2010) is for all children entering Grade 1 to have participated in an accredited Reception Year Programme. (DOE 2001a: 8)

This White Paper clearly locates the envisaged Grade R within an ECE paradigm. It also acknowledged the many challenges that plague the ECD sector. These include:

the measures to improve quality, equity and cost-effectiveness of Reception Year Programmes, the further development of the norms and standards, the qualifications framework and career paths for ECD practitioners; and ongoing development of the curriculum for the Reception Year, and the provision of more effective support to ECD practitioners to improve their teaching practices. (DOE 2001a: 58–59)

However, although the documentation acknowledges an informal approach to the realisation of Grade R and implicitly acknowledges the importance of high-quality ECD programmes and practices for both children and teachers, nowhere was it spelt out what such a programme would entail. In terms of the *Interim Policy for Early Childhood Development* (DOE 1996a), provision of a ‘reception programme’ had to demonstrate that the programme follows the national curriculum guidelines which are laid out in the Learning Programmes and in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) (DOE 2002). The policy documents gave very little input on how to implement an effective teaching and learning programme for the Grade R child.

In sum, within the first decade of democracy, the national Department of Education made enormous progress in restructuring the education system, including the ECE phase. However, the decisions made and policy developed was at times at odds with the broader ECE vision and the expectations of civil society, causing tensions at provincial level. As Porteus (2004) noted, the initial ECE policy and development choices did not necessarily support measures of redress. An important reason was probably the lack of fit between the nature of ECE and state apparatus (Porteus 2004). These tensions continue to dominate ECE provisioning.

The Gauteng Department of Education

The history of ECE and the choices made by national government obviously influenced how provinces responded to the call for ECE provisioning. The NGO sector had increased in strength and was responsible for the majority of the training. This was informal, of varying standards and had no recognition. A new union, The South African Congress

for Early Childhood Development, was formed in 1993 and under the Congress' leadership ECE stakeholders were looking for new direction and momentum. Thus, in 1995, the newly formed Gauteng Department of Education was faced with a volatile ECE community that had many expectations for increased support and recognition of the sector.

A time of transition

When speaking to Gauteng's first Minister of Education, Prof. Mary Metcalfe stressed that 'one has to remember the context.' She recalled that it was a period of great transition. There were many things to establish, including a new administrative and legal framework, while securing the confidence of the people who were impatient to see their own government running education and starting to deal with massive inequalities that existed and had to be addressed.

Prof. Metcalfe (interview, July 2013) mentioned that two key questions were considered when determining the path to follow in relation to ECE. These were, 'what age is appropriate to start school' and, 'what do you do with ECD in the years before [children] start school knowing that the four to five years before this is critical in the development of children'. She believed that an integrated ECE framework that allocated resources in a way that supported the transition into formal schooling and the years before in an integrated and coherent system was essential.

Furthermore, ECD was an underfunded area. There were 'no resources and no money' and a way had to be found to channel the existing preschool budget to ensure a more equitable distribution. Educational redress and equity were the driving force behind the GDE's decisions in relation to ECE.

In 1996 a development unit was formed. ECD was one of a number of departments housed in this unit. The brief was to coordinate ECD services and to restructure ECD programmes. The focus was on birth to six years even though the White Paper focused on the Grade R year.

Two major resolutions were taken. Both were subject to much criticism within certain sectors of the ECE community, but the emphasis was on attempting to right past wrongs. As previously mentioned, from their inception ECE services were not offered equally to all sectors of the population. The question became one of how to use the available resources to the benefit of those who needed them most and to meet the growing expectations of the people.

Firstly, a decision was made to restructure the TED preprimary schools and to withdraw provincial funding for previously subsidised white schools. Preschool teachers and principals, like some teachers in the formal schooling sector, were redeployed or offered retrenchment packages. Schools could also opt to become private, fee-paying schools. With hindsight, this might have been a costly decision. The GDE sacrificed

necessary ECE expertise and in the process many ECE resources were lost. But the emphasis dictated the provision of services to the poorest of the poor, and the majority of the ECE community was hungry for change.

The second decision (and these two processes ran concurrently) was the GDE's decision to conceptualise and implement the Impilo Project. While national government was calling for the implementation of a Grade R year (DOE 1996a) and had begun a process to explore this possibility through the establishment of the National Pilot Project, the GDE opted for a broader approach, which included the pre-Grade-R-focused Impilo Project.

Impilo aimed to provide services to poor children between the ages of three and six. According to Metcalfe, a large number of children were already in informal care environments. They were receiving care and a range of different education experiences, and the intention was to support and strengthen these existing nodes of support. Through the Gauteng Impilo Project, ECD sites were identified in townships and informal settlements. The practitioner was given some form of training (but not a qualification) and support. In addition, these informal caregivers were provided with appropriate resources and materials, and funding for food. An advantage of this model was that it could also accommodate children with special education needs (this, too, was an area of education that was marginalised and poorly funded). In Metcalfe's words, '[t]he intention was to find a model that would be scalable at cost and which would not leave the majority on the outside looking in' (personal interview, July 2013).

According to an interviewee from the GDE (personal interview, June 2013), 'the focus was on transforming. We were all hyped up, all excited and running with it but so many years later when I look back, there was a lot of confusion at that time ...'

The official added that in every district 'a big pilot within a pilot' project had to be established. In Johannesburg, for example, the Joubert Park Project was implemented. This included day-care services, an art centre and using the facility for other recreational activities geared at supporting children. It became a specialised pilot within the pilot.

During these early years, the GDE adopted a broad approach and attempted to focus on the entire ECE phase. But in 2001, after the ECD Audit (DOE 2001c) and the publication of White Paper 5 (DOE 2001a), the focus became more restricted. The Impilo Project slowly dissipated and the emphasis began to centre on the roll-out of the Grade R year. To support this process, a Grade R Project Unit was formed.

Narrowing the ECE lens: Implementing the Grade R year

By 2001, national ECD policy was strongly promoting the implementation of one preschool year (DOE 2001a). The GDE, presumably in compliance with national policy, began to narrow the ECE focus and announced that Grade R classes would be established in public primary schools. In addition, the brief incorporated the inclusion of

certain community-based ECD services that would serve children aged four to six (GDE 2001). This brief also acknowledged what has become an ongoing challenge. Because ECD services were not subsidised, many parents were sending their under-age children to Grade R classes as a cheaper alternative to crèches. Obviously this has profound implications for teaching and learning, and remains a challenge for the Department (Witwatersrand School of Education 2009).

But policy does not ensure implementation. Initially, most public primary schools in Gauteng were not equipped to offer a Grade R year. The challenges were immense. There was little precedent for offering a pre-Grade 1 year in public schools. Hence many public primary schools lacked geographical space to house the Grade R class; most Foundation Phase teachers, and especially heads of departments (HODs), were not familiar with the specific educational demands required of this year; schools principals, too, had no real insights into the unique pedagogical requirements that had to be met. In addition, there were insufficient numbers of adequately qualified teachers to ensure a quality roll-out of this year (Witwatersrand School of Education 2009).

Consequently, initial attempts to implement this year were fraught with obstacles. At the same time, civil society continued to press for extended and improved ECD services for children under the age of five. However, it must be acknowledged that these challenges were not unique to Gauteng. They were national challenges being experienced in all provinces.

These challenges could have been exacerbated by ambiguous policy decisions. On the one hand, the focus was on implementing Grade R (DOE 2001a; 2001b; 2001c). On the other hand, the National Development Plan (2000) made provision for a much broader approach to ECE and called for inter-sectoral collaboration. In addition, although civil society accepted that offering one pre-Grade 1 year (DOE 2001a) was better than nothing, people continued to call for improved ECE services for all children from birth to age six.

And although the GDE chose to adopt an approach that focused on Grade R implementation, the principle of inter-sectoral collaboration was recognised by the GDE in the rationale for the Gauteng ECD Strategy (GDE 2001). The integrated nature of ECD provisioning was recognised and the emphasis remained on equity and redress. Adverse factors – including poverty, HIV/Aids, residential and demographic residues of apartheid, segregation, unemployment and many social factors that are rooted in the political and economic discrimination practised under apartheid – were acknowledged. The document mentions that a ‘total package’ of comprehensive and interwoven services and programmes is required to ensure the holistic development of children under the umbrella of inter-sectoral collaboration. In addition, the document noted that in 2000, Gauteng statistics confirmed that despite various interventions, access to ECE services was still uneven and continued to favour the more privileged. Thus there was a critical need for improving ECE access and quality, especially for black children coming from impoverished homes.

However, it is interesting to note that even though this is a document produced by the GDE, no mention is made of pedagogical outcomes. It asks the question, 'How was early childhood education perceived by the education department?' At that time, aspects relating to redress were strongly emphasised; scant attention appeared to be given to educational necessities. Did these early decisions perhaps reflect an incomplete understanding of the ECE phase?

By 2003, ECE was in crisis. The roll-out of the Grade R year was problematic and providing adequate ECE services for the majority of children was fraught with difficulties. In November 2004, at national level, new proposals were made regarding the establishment of a coordinating structure within government to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to improve ECE provisioning. This proposal was realised when the Integrated Plan for ECD in South Africa was launched in 2005.

The GDE responded positively. Firstly, in 2005 a circular was drafted that contained definite strategies to improve the implementation of Grade R (Circular 28/2005). The circular stated that 760 sites had been registered from 2002–2004 through the implementation of the National Conditional Grant. This was the phasing-in period and it was envisaged that by 2010 approximately 5 000 sites would be registered. It is interesting to note that the adjusted school admissions age (the lower age) is advocated. The Circular states that '[t]hese Grade R classes will accommodate all learners aged four years (4) turning five years (5) by the 30 June in the year of admission and will become part of the compulsory 10 years of education (Grade R to Grade 9)'. For the first time, mention is made of a grant to be paid to school governing bodies (SGBs) to utilise towards payment of the practitioner. It further reinforces that the practitioner must follow an outcomes-based approach to teaching and learning, reinforcing the national curriculum.

The GDE was, however, faced with significant challenges in implementing Grade R. One of the tensions that are inherent in the implementation of this year was brought to the fore. Grade R is the first year of the Foundation Phase. However, Grade R does not necessarily sit comfortably in this phase. From a pedagogical perspective, the age of the Grade R child supports the notion of a less formal curriculum. According to the Interim ECD Policy document (DOE 1996a) and White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education (DOE 2001a), Grade R is a preschool year underpinned by a preschool methodological approach. But from a curriculum perspective, Grade R is the first year of the Foundation Phase (Biersteker et al. 2008) and, as such, must comply with the outcomes and assessment standards determined by the national curriculum. This has led to differing interpretations of Grade R implementation and classroom management and often to the over-formalisation of this year (Witwatersrand School of Education 2009).

Secondly, an integrated strategy for ECD in Gauteng was formulated. The notion of a coordinating body, the Early Childhood Development Institute (ECDI), was mooted. The role that the ECDI would play in supporting improved provisioning was also outlined (Summary of Notes and Decisions, Senior Executive Management Team 2006). It was,

however, going to take a number of years before positive changes in ECE provisioning were to be seen.

Expanding ECE services

Over the next couple of years, there were attempts to bring greater stability to the ECE field. The GDE announced that it would carry out a survey of ECD centres and primary schools in an attempt to improve implementation. However, there was still reluctance on the part of the Department of Education to embrace ECE fully. The role of both national and provincial departments was recognised as promoting quality ECD programmes within the NGO and private sector. The national Department stated that there were no plans to bring such provision to the formal sector (DOE 2007).

Meanwhile, the implementation of the Grade R year began to receive improved attention. In the GDE's strategic plan for 2007–2009, the department undertook to increase access to Grade R as funds become more accessible for the universalisation of the Grade R programme (GDE 2007b). The plan noted that 25% of the five-to-six-year-old cohort was in public, community and private Grade R programmes. In addition, it was stated that the GDE was undertaking a review of the progress made so far with a view to increasing the quality of the programmes and the competence of the ECD practitioners (GDE 2007b).

In the Annual Performance Plan 2007/8–2009/10, (GDE 2007a) the expansion of ECD – in particular, of Grade R – was mentioned as a priority area. Access was being increased; 1 360 Grade R sites had been selected and registered and Grade R practitioners were being appointed. Of these, 150 sites were community-based while the remainder were situated in public primary schools. This document further stated that a new Grade R programme, which had been designed to prepare children to meet the cognitive and motor skills demands of formal schooling, was being developed. To support practitioners and learners, the GDE also began to provide learning and teaching support material (LTSM) to these subsidised sites. The aim was to universalise Grade R by 2010.

By April 2009, the GDE had achieved 36% coverage (Senior Executive management Team 2009), far short of the ultimate aim. However, the president announced soon afterwards that the universalisation date of 2010 had been extended until 2014.

The appointment of practitioners necessitated curriculum training and orientation on the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). Practitioners were included in the NCS training. In addition, the Department noted that a total of 533 practitioners were attending accredited level 5 ECD training. It is important for practitioners to obtain a level 5 ECD qualification as it affords them some recognition by various education bodies. All qualifications are rated on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

and accredited by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). A level 5 ECD qualification is equivalent to a certificate in education and implies that a practitioner has a one-year post-matric qualification. A level 5 ECD qualification also allows the practitioner to be provisionally registered by the South African Council for Education (SACE). Hence a level 5 qualification has become an important step in opening a career path for practitioners.

The GDE's Annual Performance Plan acknowledged the need for better support for the pre-Grade R years. It announced the establishment of an interdepartmental agency to promote greater coordinated service delivery of early childhood health, social and education services focusing on children from birth to nine years through provincial and local government. The document noted that the absence of legislation to support the provision of services regarding ECD remained a challenge. This document represented a significant shift in departmental thinking. In essence, the development of a policy framework and appropriate and enabling legislation to support ECD in the province had been prioritised.

In addition, a strategic framework for the ECDI was in place and it was envisaged that once this was finalised the ECDI would be launched. The release of the Early Childhood Strategic Plan paved the path for the launch of the ECDI in 2009. The strategic plan outlined six strategic outcomes and associated indicators. The Department of Education was to be responsible for two of the strategic outcomes. These were outcomes 4 and 5. Outcome 4 was 'to promote high quality ECD practice to ensure that children are prepared and ready to enter Grade R', and was concerned with raising standards of ECD. Outcome 5 was to ensure that 'quality information is available to ECD stakeholders and role players'. This was a crucial outcome for both government and the general public as it aimed to ensure the accurate and efficient dissemination of information about ECD provisioning.

When the ECDI was launched on 25 March 2009, its key functions were outlined as:

- Mapping, monitoring and feedback for increased access and quality;
- Information to the public at multiple levels;
- Research and evaluations;
- Secretariat for consultation processes;
- Secretariat for quality management; and
- Secretariat for streamlining of the regulatory framework. (Gauteng Provincial Government 2009)

The ECDI was initially located within the GDE. It was envisaged that it would become a stand-alone entity and a powerful support structure to ensure the integration of ECD services (GDE n.d.).

Strengthening and supporting ECE services

In 2007, the national Department of Education stated that for the past 15 years it had been laying the foundation for non-racial education. It was now time to return to basics: ensuring effective teaching and learning in the classroom (DOE 2007).

Implementation of Grade R was problematic. Grade R practitioners lacked pedagogical depth and insights. Children's learning was not being adequately supported. Practitioners were generally under-qualified and their conditions of service were not on par with those in the formal sector (Witwatersrand School of Education 2009). The Curriculum Division of the GDE took these research findings seriously. In 2009 the Witwatersrand School of Education was contracted to offer level 5 Grade R training, with a specific focus on implementing the NCS to 1 200 Grade R practitioners. This was offered over a three-year period. A similar course was offered to district officials. This partnership between the Witwatersrand School of Education and Grade R officials opened a space to address issues relating to quality teaching and learning. It also provided a positive space to shift the GDE agenda from the single focus of access to include issues relating to classroom practice.

In recent years, it appears that the GDE has developed a more sensitive understanding of the nature and implementation of ECE. The ECDI has become a fully fledged institution, housing both Grade R and ECD units.

Grade R access has increased over the past few years. In keeping with the principles of redress and equity, the emphasis is still on ensuring that the more disadvantaged are targeted first. According to one respondent, Gauteng now has 5 000 classes that accommodate 150 000 children. If the GDE is to meet its 2014 target, another 27 121 children need to register for the Grade R year. In 2013, 535 Grade R classes were registered and at the time of writing only 109 public primary schools in the province did not have Grade R classes. The GDE is broadening its focus and will also target independent schools and community sites in order to achieve its objective. The GDE has already met its provisional targets (Draft Senior Executive Management Team 2013). Currently 90% of Grade R classes are situated in public schools and 10% at private sites. It appears that Gauteng will reach the universalisation target by 2014.

Another area of progress is the improvement of the practitioners' qualifications. The ECDI has done an audit and of the nearly 3 000 practitioners working in GDE schools, only 200 have a qualification lower than an ECD level 4. The others all have either a level 4 – which is the minimum acceptable qualification (DOE 2001a) – or a level 5 qualification. Gauteng is trying to raise the bar and all Grade R practitioners are being encouraged to have a minimum of a level 5 ECD qualification.

Funding has been allocated to improve Grade R classrooms. If there are space constraints, a fully equipped mobile classroom is provided. Appropriate location of the Grade R classrooms are also considered. If possible the Grade R classrooms are situated away from other classes to allow for more appropriate Grade R practices. The Grade R

classrooms are adequately resourced. Resources include a wide variety of appropriate indoor and outdoor educational toys and equipment as well as resource booklets in all official languages except siSwati. One respondent queried why Grade R was excluded from the Gauteng Provincial Language and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS) – after all, ‘Grade R is part of the Foundation Phase. If a school is underperforming, why not start with Grade R?’ But she answers her own question: ‘because Grade R is not yet universalised and it is not part of the formal schooling system’. Do we hear echoes of the past?

In addition to the curriculum unit, the GDE has also made provision for institutionalisation and support. A GDE interviewee indicated that she is confident that by 2019 Grade R would be universalised. She explained that this would ensure that the Grade R practitioner would become part of the whole school establishment. It is envisaged that by 2019 all practitioners in the GDE’s employ will have the minimum qualification of a level 6 Grade R Diploma. This is perhaps a pipe dream, as very few universities currently offer this qualification.

There also appears to be a renewed emphasis on providing services to younger children. This drive emanates from the Diagnostic Review of Early Childhood Development (Richter et al. 2012), which has highlighted the importance of the early years – from conception until two years – in underpinning later learning. As one respondent said, ‘Things are coming together. It is not easy. There are lots of gaps, but ...’

The GDE has also, since 2011, taken a much greater direct interest in ECD practitioner training. Prior to 2011, the training was predominantly in the hands of NGOs. The GDE did, however, fund much of this training. But in 2011 a decision was taken to charge a GDE entity, the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGSLG), with the responsibility of training ECE practitioners.

According to a project manager, the MGSLG was tasked to roll out ECD programmes at level 4 for practitioners working at community sites that are registered with the local Health Department as well as the Department of Social Welfare. Collaboration, she stressed, is necessary to ensure provincial and municipal coordination. Once registered, sites may send their staff for training. It is the task of the MGSLG to coordinate and implement the training. To date, the MGSLG has offered two courses. It was disturbing to hear that the criterion for the selection of the training material was that the MGSLG would be given copyright. One has to question why the quality of the material was not the criterion for material selection. It appears that practitioner training is an area that needs strengthening.

According to the project manager, the MGSLG is working with the ECDI but ‘synergy between the different departments is not yet well structured’. Ways have to be found to enhance the working relationship. ‘Plans for interdepartmental collaboration need to be refined and monitoring should be a joint venture between three departments.’ She also suggested that ‘norms and standards for dealing with the welfare of schools must

be established'. Like many other interviewees, she, too, reinforced the idea that the ECD sector needs to become formalised.

Conclusion: Challenges and recommendations

It appears that ECE has followed a long and arduous pathway in the past 20 years. But progress has been made. There is seemingly more order and structure to the Grade R year. Not only is it likely that the GDE will reach its access target, but it also appears that attention will be paid to achieving quality delivery. Quality Grade R provisioning has become one of the biggest challenges for the GDE. In addition, the ECD sector (serving children from birth to four years) also appears to be enjoying more attention. Recognising the importance of the early years and the education department's role in service provisioning seems to have been accepted by the GDE. The challenge is to breathe life into this role.

The successes deserve to be celebrated. It seems clear that the establishment of the ECDEI was a critical step in this regard. In fact, the GDE is the only province to have such an institute. Successes include improved stakeholder engagement. As a GDE manager commented, 'People are now talking to each other; this did not happen before.' The ECE sector now has a voice, which was not possible previously. Opportunities for networking and collaboration are the first step towards improving and ensuring effective service delivery.

The possibilities of rolling out a curriculum for children from birth to four has been explored and is currently being piloted in some areas in Gauteng. However, the GDE acknowledges that this remains one of their biggest challenges. ECE remains an extremely contested area. After all, what is it that young children should be acquiring and learning? And what is the role of the education department in this regard? These are questions that the GDE should interrogate more fully.

The wealth of expertise that exists in the area of ECE in Gauteng is acknowledged; now, 'we have to tap into it'. For example, the GDE has access to many valuable resources, such as a Manual on Special Needs Education that has a specific ECE focus. A senior official asks, 'How do we find the space to pilot this manual and to monitor the results?'

Access to Grade R services has been achieved, but quality provisioning remains a challenge. Many principals and HODs have a scant understanding of ECE and the unique requirements for provisioning Grade R. This includes managing the Grade R classroom and using relevant Grade R pedagogies. According to one official, plans to address this challenge are in the pipeline for 2014. This, of course, relates to programme delivery.

There are pockets of excellence but in many schools Grade R implementation is poor. Choosing appropriate content, pacing and sequencing of activities remains problematic for many practitioners (Witwatersrand School of Education 2009). There are no easy solutions. Some possibilities for improving practice include supporting practitioners in

the classroom through the appointment of coaches and mentors. Another possibility is twinning with functional Grade R and ECD centres. Grade R and ECD practitioners should be exposed to good practices. In essence, Grade R teachers should be assisted to move from being purely curriculum deliverers to becoming adaptors and even designers of their ECE/Grade R curriculum. This currently remains a dream.

One way of supporting this aim is to ensure that Grade R practitioners upgrade their qualifications. Not only will this assist with quality provisioning, but it will also allow practitioners to become part of the school establishment, which will afford them greater job security and encourage them to stay in the system. According to the GDE, practitioners do not constitute a stable body of workers. A GDE manager mentioned that the GDE trains practitioners, only for the practitioners to move to greener pastures. As she says, to retain staff they need to have adequate appointments, which are similar to those of their other FP teachers.

Finally, according to the officials interviewed, another challenge remains how to convince top management to continue investing in ECE. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the ECE field is poorly understood and, in the face of other pressing educational demands, often seems to be sidelined. One way to prevent this marginalisation within the GDE is to ensure that the ECDEI continues with its mandate. Then the myriad of issues besetting ECE – from ECE qualifications to quality service delivery, the promotion of inter-sectoral collaboration and advocating for the rights of the young child – will retain their rightful place on the education agenda.

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CHAPTER 11

WORKING TOWARDS EDUCATION FOR ALL IN GAUTENG

Elizabeth Walton

Gauteng has established itself as a province committed to educational excellence. Annual reports of standardised national assessments consistently show Gauteng learners performing well, relative to their peers in other provinces. As a result, there are high expectations of what the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) can provide. These expectations are not limited to high-achieving learners and their families. Parents and caregivers of children with disabilities or special needs are also looking to the GDE for equitable access to quality education for their children. The media has been quick to take up this concern, with headlines in Gauteng newspapers proclaiming: ‘Schools failing to educate children with disabilities’¹ and ‘Falling through the school cracks’.² Parents complain about the difficulty of accessing education for their children who face challenges as a result of disabilities such as cerebral palsy and autism. The waiting lists for places in special schools in Gauteng can be long, ordinary schools seem under-prepared to include children with disabilities and many children remain outside the schooling system altogether. These issues do not only affect Gauteng, but the province does have some unique challenges in responding to the learning needs of all its learners.

Background: Special needs provision in South Africa

South Africa’s history of provision for children deemed to have special needs or disabilities reflected apartheid’s segregationist policies. Special education was a separate education system, providing separate special schools almost exclusively for white

¹ *The Star*, 16 July 2013, p. 10

² *Pretoria News*, 17 July 2013, p. 6

children, with some schools for Indian and coloured learners. Special schools for black children, where available, were mostly established by missionary and philanthropic organisations. The challenges of the advent of democracy included not only unifying the education departments from the various homelands and apartheid racial groupings, but also incorporating the special education system. From 1994, then, the post-apartheid education system inherited a well-equipped special school sector with very limited capacity, mainly found in formerly white areas. To continue with separate provisioning for children with disabilities or special needs would require a massive drive to build special schools that are accessible to children in all communities. This option would have been problematic for a number of reasons, not least of which is cost. Instead, South Africa aligned itself with the growing trend internationally of building the capacity of ordinary schools, to enable them to meet the support needs of diverse learners – including those with disabilities or special needs.

Inclusive education as an international trend in education

The latter decades of the 20th century saw the codification of human rights in various forms, including the rights of children and the rights of persons with disabilities. Considerations of rights to equality, education and freedom from discrimination logically led to criticism of the practice whereby certain children and young people are educated separately from their peers. These criticisms focused on a number of issues. One of these is the process whereby certain children and young people are categorised as disabled or having special needs. Traditionally, educational difficulty was conceived and managed according to a model used in medicine and involved diagnosing the child's problem and referring the child to a specialist for treatment. This approach has been challenged for its focus on individual deficit, as determined by non-conformance with the 'norm', and its lack of appreciation of school and societal factors that may be responsible for a child or young person's educational difficulties. Other criticisms of separate special education concern the quality of separate special education, lowered employment opportunities for children and young people educated in separate special schools and whether special education can claim unique pedagogical knowledge. In the light of these concerns, countries in the developed and developing world have been moving their education systems towards being more inclusive, meaning that children and young people with diverse learning needs are being supported within ordinary (sometimes called regular or mainstream) classes.

The rationale and mechanisms of inclusive education have been captured in the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action, published by UNESCO in 1994. This document proclaims every child's fundamental right to education and maintains that because children are unique, education should be designed to take into account diverse characteristics and needs. It suggests that ordinary schools should be accessible to

children with special educational needs and that their learning should be secured through appropriate pedagogy. Importantly, this document sees inclusive regular schools as being a means of combating discrimination and achieving education for all in a cost-effective way. The Framework for Action in the Salamanca Statement describes the fundamental principle of inclusive schools, which is that all children should learn together while their individual differences and learning needs are accommodated and appropriate support is provided. The role of special schools in providing resources and training is affirmed, with the understanding, however, that developing countries should promote inclusivity in schools rather than establish additional special schools (UNESCO 1994: 11–12). A number of the provisions of this document are reflected in South African legislation, policy and publications that secure inclusive education.

Inclusive education in South Africa

Inclusive education in South Africa finds its foundation in constitutional provisions of the right to education and the right to be free from discrimination on any grounds, including disability. The South African Schools Act of 1996 (RSA 1996) then gave legislative impetus to inclusive education through the following provisions:

- Where it is ‘reasonably practicable’, learners with ‘special education needs’ should be served in the mainstream and relevant support should be provided for these learners – Section 12 (4); and
- Physical amenities at public schools should be made accessible to disabled learners – Section 12 (5).

A consultative process was completed in 1997, with the publication of a department of education report titled *Overcoming barriers to learning and development* that addressed issues of special education needs and learner support in education in South Africa. Many of the recommendations of this report were then included in the 2001 Department of Education (DoE) publication of White Paper 6: Special Needs Education (henceforth called WP6). WP6 outlined a framework for understanding and implementing inclusive education in South Africa, and this document remains the reference point for all efforts towards greater inclusivity in education in this country. WP6 outlines a 20-year strategic plan that includes, among other things:

- *Reaching the large number of disabled children and young people who are not in the school system*

At the time of publication of WP6, it was estimated that 280 000 children and young people were out of school. Current estimates of out-of-school children and young people

vary between 200 000 (RSA 2010) and 400 000 (Monama 2010). Poverty and disability/ special needs are the most common reasons for this.

- *Improving special schools and converting them to resource centres*

Special schools are to remain on the educational landscape in South Africa, within a continuum of services model of inclusive education. The resources and expertise located in these schools are acknowledged, and the schools are to be strengthened with a view to their being able to act as resource centres for inclusive education. Learners with moderate to high support needs would continue to be educated in these special schools. Specific guidelines for the functioning of special schools within an inclusive education system have been published since WP6.

- *Converting about 500 primary schools to full-service schools that are capable of responding to the full range of learning needs*

Full-service schools are designated ordinary schools, which will become examples of good inclusive practice and which will ultimately pave the way for all schools to become inclusive. These schools would expect to include, in proportion to the incidence in the community, learners with low to moderate additional learning support needs. An investment in infrastructural and human resource development is needed to ensure the successful establishment and support of full-service schools, and guidelines for full-service schools have been published since WP6.

- *Establishing district-based support teams to provide support services*

At district level, WP6 envisages teams made up of personnel who can provide indirect support to learners by supporting teachers and education managers, as well as by providing direct support to learners with specialised resources. Teams may be comprised of learning support teachers; occupational, speech and other therapists; psychologists; nurses; and social workers, as well as curriculum specialists and others who have expertise in institutional development.

WP6 also signalled a significant change in the way in which special needs and disabilities should be understood in the South African context. The term ‘barriers to learning’ has become the preferred alternative to ‘special needs’. Unlike ‘special needs’, which often signifies some deficit located in a learner, ‘barriers to learning’ signals that there may be a number of impediments to learning, and these may not necessarily be intrinsic to a learner. Thus, an inflexible curriculum, one-size-fits-all pedagogical choices, discrepancies between home and school languages, trauma, and other school, family and societal factors are acknowledged as reasons why learners may not succeed in school. This does not discount disabilities of various kinds, but accepts that learning needs arise from

a number of factors, many of which are interrelated. The ‘barriers to learning’ approach significantly broadens the providence of inclusive education in South Africa, situating its concerns in all aspects of educational exclusion. This broad orientation, while wholly justifiable, has led to contradictions in policy and practice and delays in implementation. Mostly, though, people think of inclusive education as a special education issue. Inclusive and special education are usually coupled or combined for the purposes of administration.

The uptake of inclusive education was generally slow in the first decade after the publication of WP6. While pockets of good practice became evident as individual schools responded to the diverse needs of learners in their communities (Walton 2011), funding and capacity constraints impeded efforts to implement inclusive education in all provinces (Wildeman & Nomdo 2007). A renewed impetus for inclusive education became evident after 2008, as various key strategy and guideline documents were published by the DBE. These offered greater clarity about the vision and process of inclusive education, with some indication of the relative responsibilities of agents at national, provincial, district and school levels. Provincial departments of education have the following responsibilities for inclusive education in South Africa (DBE 2012):

- To implement the legislative frameworks, the policy strategies and various guidelines and to mobilise the resources required for implementation;
- To develop action plans and to ensure that national priorities are realised, adhered to and recognised through these plans; and
- To monitor the implementation of policies and programmes at district and school level and report to the DBE.

In the sections that follow, the progress made by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) in fulfilling these responsibilities will be reviewed.

Inclusive education in Gauteng

While inclusive education has been a national concern since the advent of democracy in South Africa, Gauteng’s specific and strategic response (like that of most other provinces) is relatively recent. This review of inclusive education in the province begins with the Inclusion Strategy for 2011 to 2015, as this strategy has bearing on all the facets of inclusive education selected for discussion. Then, barriers to learning in the province are described, with a particular focus on learners with disabilities. Following this, three types of schools in Gauteng are critically examined: special schools, ordinary schools and full-service schools. Then, attention is given to developing teachers’ capacity for inclusive teaching, district-based support teams and budgetary allocation, all of which are necessary for the provision of learner support. Finally, some challenges to inclusive education in the province are highlighted.

Gauteng’s Inclusion Strategy

In 2011, Gauteng published a well-conceived and comprehensive Inclusion Strategy for the early identification and support provisioning for learners who experience various barriers to learning (GDE 2011). The purpose of the strategy is ‘to consolidate and expand inclusive education’ (GDE 2011: 14) and it is based on both national and international mandates and a realistic situational analysis. The Inclusion Strategy is based on four pillars: early screening and identification for appropriate learner support; teacher development and support; institutional and management development; and the involvement of stakeholder organisations. These pillars are described by a number of measurable targets which, if achieved, would significantly advance inclusive education in the province. There is also a sober appreciation of risks that may hamper the implementation of the plan, and suggestions for how these risks may be mitigated.

Barriers to learning in Gauteng

If we consider any and all barriers to learning that learners could experience, most Gauteng learners would be counted as needing additional support at some stage in their schooling (GDE 2011). Considering poverty as a barrier to learning, for example, Gauteng has responded to the nutritional needs of its learners and reports feeding 1 051 362 learners through the National School Nutrition Programme in 2012 (GDE 2013). This means that 50.5% of all learners in Gauteng public schools benefited from this initiative. In 2011–2012, the GDE reported screening 279 326 learners for possible barriers to learning and referring 12 052 for further intervention regarding sensory, physical and mental health challenges (GDE 2012a). In focusing specifically on disability as a barrier to learning, it is established that Gauteng has 12 397 learners with disabilities in ordinary schools and 30 865 learners with disabilities in public special schools (DBE 2012). These 30 865 learners make up 42.6% of the country’s learners with disabilities in special schools. But this percentage is not consistent across the disabilities surveyed. In a breakdown of disability category per province (DBE 2012), some concerning anomalies are evident. The disability categories of Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder (AD(H)D) and Specific Learning Disability (SLD) serve as examples:

Table 11.1: Learners with disabilities in Gauteng and RSA (DBE 2012)

Learners with disabilities in Gauteng and RSA				
	AD(H)D	SLD	All other disability categories	Total learners with disabilities
Gauteng	3 224	3 857	23 784	30 865
RSA as a whole	5 460	6 619	60 293	72 372

In the case of AD(H)D, Gauteng has 59% of the country's learners with this diagnosis; while AD(H)D accounts for a mere 7.54% of the total incidence of disability in the country, it accounts for 10.45% of the incidence of disability in Gauteng. A similar trend is evident with SLD. Gauteng has 58% of the country's learners with SLD. This diagnosis accounts for 9.15% of disabilities in the country as a whole, but 12.5% of disabilities in Gauteng. Together, learners with AD(H)D and SLD make up 22.94% of learners with disabilities in Gauteng special schools, but only 16.69% of the country's total.³ These anomalies raise questions such as: Are these disabilities over-diagnosed in Gauteng, or under-diagnosed in the rest of the country? To what extent could learners with these disabilities be supported in ordinary classrooms, rather than being placed in special schools? Is the potential for subjective interpretation of the criteria for diagnosing AD(H)D and SLD sufficient to explain Gauteng's relatively high incidence of these learners? Clearly, more investigation into these issues is required. Disability categorisation is in itself a contested practice, with different criteria used in defining the thresholds of certain categories compromising comparability. This is a concern that the South African Census of 2011 reported and it is demonstrated in the sometimes conflicting numbers of learners with disabilities reported in various sources. The National Strategy for Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support of 2008 (SIAS) specifically directs the education system away from a focus on disability categorisation, instead encouraging a focus on the level of additional support (i.e. low, moderate or high) that a learner may need.

It could be expected that since Gauteng has the largest number of school-going learners with disabilities, it would be the province with the largest number of learners with disabilities who write the National Senior Certificate. Not only is this true, but Gauteng has also shown an increase from 2010 to 2011 of 5.67% in the number of learners who wrote matric, and a 5.65% increase in their pass rate. Nationally, by contrast, there has been a year-to-year decline in the number of learners with disabilities who wrote and passed matric (DBE 2012). These numbers are not disaggregated by disability classification, so it is not known which learners are writing and passing the examination. The issue of school-leaving qualifications for learners with disabilities needs to remain a priority in Gauteng. If learners cannot achieve a National Senior Certificate, alternative qualification pathways need to be pursued to secure access to the labour market. Employers seeking to transform their workplaces by ensuring equitable employment for people with disabilities provide opportunities for learners, and the education system needs to be responsive to this demand.

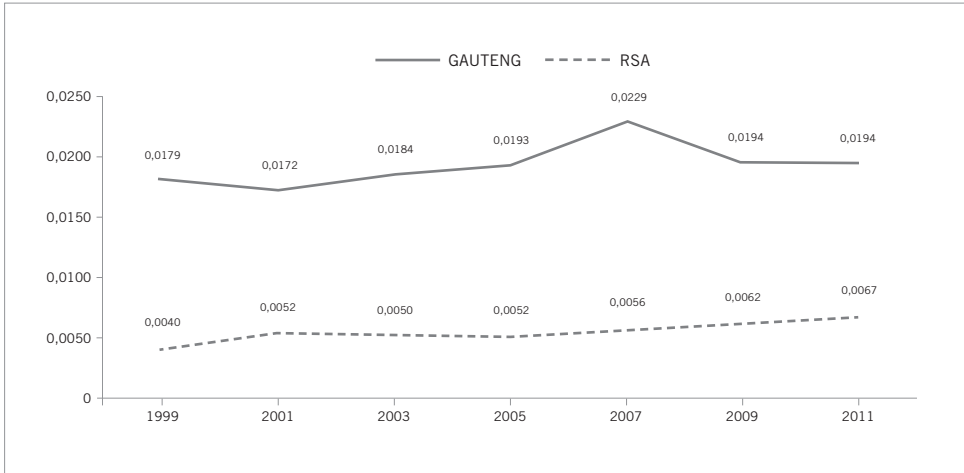
The GDE admits that it does not know how many of the country's out-of-school learners are in Gauteng, nor has it planned for their inclusion into the system (GDE 2011).

3 Comparing actual and expected values for ADD, SLD and all other disabilities, by RSA and Gauteng province, the Chi-square value is 1 513. This probability of obtaining that value under the null hypothesis is zero. It is reasonable to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that location (province) does contribute to the diagnosis of ADD, versus SLD versus other conditions, with ADD and SLD frequencies being higher in Gauteng.

Special schools

Since 1999, Gauteng has had the largest number of special schools of all the provinces, and the highest ratio of special to ordinary school learners, as revealed in Figure 11.1:⁴

Figure 11.1: Ratio of special to ordinary sector learners



The number of learners in special schools in Gauteng has grown over the past 20 years, mirroring the trend in South Africa as a whole – as seen in Figure 11.2 on page 218.

Gauteng has built only one new special school since 1994 (DBE 2012), and the increase in learner numbers has been absorbed by the existing schools. As a result, Gauteng has a higher ratio of learners to educators in special schools than the rest of the country, as seen in Figure 11.3 on page 218.

In line with WP6's mandate for special schools, by the end of 2012 Gauteng had strengthened 73 public special schools at a cost of R59 889 000. In addition, 15 special schools had been converted to function also as resource centres at a cost of R27 280 000 (DBE 2012).

There are, however, a number of challenges that Gauteng faces in terms of special school provisioning, some of which are linked to the apartheid legacy of special education. These include the geographical inaccessibility of many special schools, given that they are mostly located in former white areas, and funding norms that make education in a special school more costly for parents. No special schools are no-fee

⁴ Figures presented in this and subsequent figures are derived from the education statistics published by the DBE (see <http://www.education.gov.za/EMIS/StatisticalPublications/tabid/462/Default.aspx>), and reflect the 'global picture' that is supplied in each publication. It is important to note that independent special schools are included in these numbers. Gauteng numbers have been removed from the national numbers so that learners are not counted twice. Statistical analysis was done using Microsoft Office Excel 2007 with the Analysis ToolPak.

Figure 11.2: Special sector learners per year

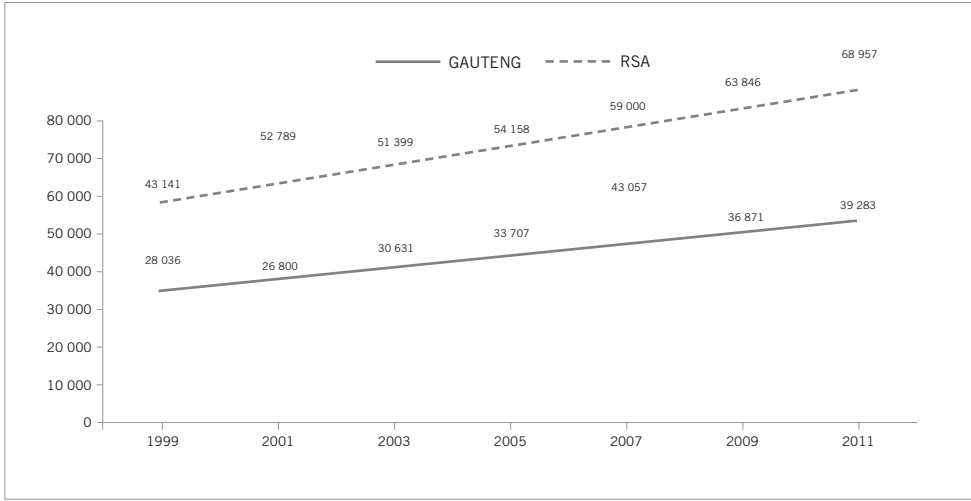
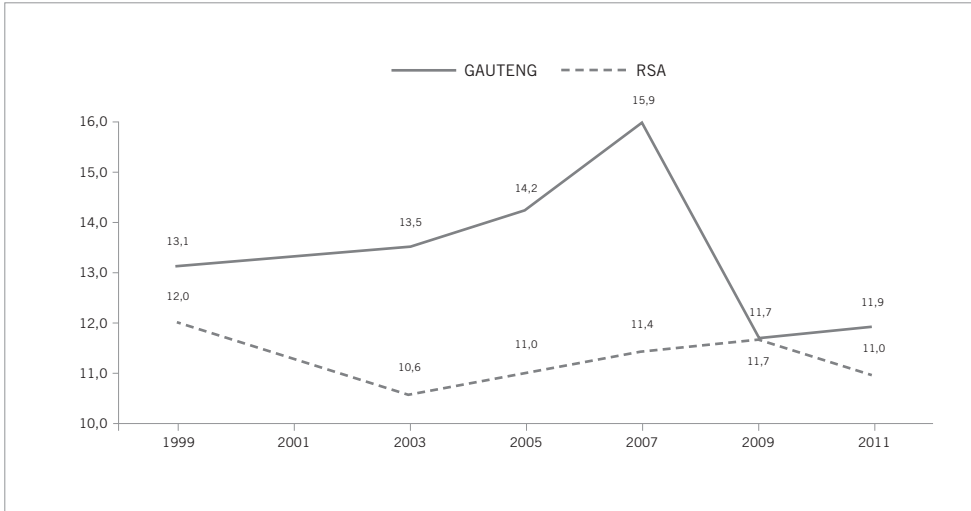


Figure 11.3: Special sector ratio of learners to educators⁵



schools, and transport costs must be borne by parents. As a result, while special education has been racially desegregated, it remains the preserve of families with some financial means. Learners with disabilities whose families do not have these means would find themselves staying in ordinary schools, possibly not receiving the support they require, or otherwise not attending school at all. This lack of equitable access to educational

⁵ Note that 2001 has been removed because this year showed a huge increase in educators, which was not sustained into 2003; it was assumed that there was a likely measurement problem with the data.

support needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Other challenges include the need to focus on school-to-work transitions for learners in special schools, and the need for recognised qualifications for skills-based learning. The GDE acknowledges that only 18 special schools offer vocational training and that there is little collaboration with Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) to offer learnerships or artisan programmes (GDE 2011).

Special schools, while envisaged as an integral part of South Africa's inclusive education system, also have the potential to undermine the inclusion effort. The presence and availability of special schools can serve as a disincentive for teachers in ordinary classrooms to embrace inclusive pedagogical practices. It can be easier to seek a referral to a special school for a learner than to make the effort to provide the necessary additional supports within an ordinary classroom. This is compounded by pressures on schools to perform well in standardised assessments. The international experience has found that the easiest and quickest way of improving a school's results is to exclude any learners whose academic performance may compromise those results. Gauteng acknowledges that 'a great number of learners are unnecessarily refer[red] to special schools' (GDE 2011: 12) and the province would do well to fight to ensure that maintaining its reputation as a top performer in education is not achieved by systematic exclusion of certain learners from ordinary schools. Critical in this regard is ensuring that special school places in Gauteng are preserved for learners with moderate to high support needs, and that the capacity of ordinary schools is strengthened to limit unnecessary referrals.

Ordinary schools

Progress in the implementation of inclusive education in ordinary schools (that are not designated as full-service schools) is hard to assess. A broad view of inclusive education, as concerned with all barriers to learning, would concede that every ordinary classroom includes learners with barriers to learning and diverse learning needs. A narrower view that relates to the inclusion of learners with disabilities in ordinary classrooms reveals Gauteng as lagging behind some of the other provinces. Based on the Education Management Information System (EMIS) numbers of 2009, the DBE (2012) reports that nationally there are 102 559 learners with disabilities in ordinary classrooms. Gauteng has 12 397 learners with disabilities in ordinary classrooms – fewer than the Eastern Cape, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape respectively. In terms of learners with disabilities in separate special classes within ordinary schools, nationally there are 21 976, with 3 726 in Gauteng. Gauteng has the third-highest number of such learners, after KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State respectively.

The reasons for Gauteng's relatively lower numbers of learners with disabilities in ordinary classrooms may include the availability of special schools – in provinces without easy special school accessibility, learners with disabilities may be included in

ordinary classrooms because there is no other option. Also, the GDE identifies a 'lack of infrastructure and learning facilities to accommodate learners with specialised needs in existing public ordinary schools' (GDE 2009). Research shows that barriers to the inclusion of learners with disabilities in ordinary classrooms in Gauteng include teachers' perceptions that they have not been adequately prepared for the demands of inclusive teaching, nor do they believe that they know enough about particular diagnoses (e.g. autism or Down Syndrome) to be able to include learners with these conditions. Large class sizes, unrealistic expectations, time constraints and the pressures of curriculum change (Blackie 2010; Klompas 2008) compound these teacher concerns. Too often, teachers in ordinary schools view the identification of barriers to learning as the precursor of referral, rather than support, and the (perceived) availability of special school placements works to exonerate these teachers from the responsibility of providing for the additional support needs of their learners.

Full-service schools

Ordinary and special schools have long been a feature of education provision in Gauteng. In the quest for inclusive education, however, full-service schools are of particular interest. Gauteng made a slow start in the process of identifying and converting primary schools to full-service schools. Between 2007 and 2010, only four such schools had been identified (Motshekga 2010). This process has been accelerated and by 2012, 74 schools had been identified and are being converted to be able to function as full-service schools. By the end of 2012, seven full-service schools in Gauteng had completed an infrastructure upgrade at a cost of R36 660 000 (DBE 2012). Full-service schools carry the weight of expectation for inclusive education in the country, but they also exemplify many of the challenges of implementing inclusive education. In Gauteng, these challenges include:

- *The ambiguous positioning of full-service schools*

Full-service schools are, by definition, ordinary schools with the capacity to respond to a range of learning support needs. This means that the full-service school expects to include learners with disabilities and must provide the support that these learners require. But, because of their ordinary school status, post provisioning is that of an ordinary school, and teachers have large classes that include a number of learners with significant additional support needs. A teacher in a full-service school in Johannesburg North District explains how she has '42 learners, all come from homes where there is poverty, one has mild intellectual impairment and can't learn and another is not a slow learner, but she cannot use her hands.' Class size is known to be a determinant of successful inclusion (Hunt & Goetz 1997) and teachers in full-service schools need reduced class

sizes to allow them to respond to all their learners' needs. Failure to consider this issue will sabotage the inclusion endeavour in the province.

- *Enhancing teachers' capacity to respond to diverse learning needs*

Teacher resistance to inclusion and negative attitudes to learners who experience barriers to learning is of greater concern in full-service schools. Not all teachers are equally positive about the transition to becoming a full-service school, and many do not regard themselves as having the requisite pedagogical skills for inclusive teaching and learning. A teacher in one Gauteng full-service school said, 'We were just told one morning that we are an inclusive school. We were too scared to say "no"'. Teachers in another full-service school in the province say that they are ill-equipped 'to work with the challenges that can be experienced in a full-service school'; 'to cater for children with severe difficulties, like those with brain damage'; and 'to reach those learners with different learning barriers'. While Gauteng has devoted significant time and resources to the professional development of teachers in full-service schools, ways need to be found to embed professional learning communities in these schools, rather than a reliance on 'workshopping' teachers.

One way of supporting teachers in full-service schools is the provision of site-based learning support teachers. Full-service schools in Gauteng should have one learning support teacher on staff for every 500 learners, and in 2012 it was reported that the province had a total of 216 learning support teachers in full-service schools (DBE 2012). The GDE envisages the role of these learning support teachers as 'coaches in managing a diversity of learning needs' (GDE 2011: 18). Such learning support teachers could meet the need, articulated by one teacher in a full-service school, for someone to 'go into our files and into our classrooms and be with us'. However, the risks of this appointment include learning support teachers being allocated their own classes to alleviate post shortages, or being consigned to a full-time pull-out remediation timetable. In both of these instances, the learning support teacher is not able to work with teachers to enhance their capacity for classroom-based support. In addition, the GDE notes limited availability of learning support teachers, concerns regarding the capacity of these teachers to provide the envisaged support, and unresolved issues regarding conditions of employment and post provisioning (GDE 2012b).

- *Conflicting curriculum and assessment demands*

Teachers in full-service schools perceive that they receive conflicting messages from education department officials. This is especially so where full-service schools are also 'underperforming' schools and part of the Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS). On the one hand, teachers are mandated to include all learners, and to make the pedagogical choices necessary to promote participation and epistemological

access for all. To this end, teachers are shown how to differentiate their instruction and assessment, and to make various accommodations to enable all learners to experience learning success. On the other hand, the same teachers are accountable for following a fast-paced and rigidly sequenced curriculum, implementing ‘one-size-fits-all’ scripted lesson plans and ensuring that their learners perform well in standardised national assessments. Teachers in Gauteng full-service schools perceive these demands as mutually incompatible, and their frustration is given expression in their comments about the Annual National Assessments (ANAs). They question why it is that they are expected to make access arrangements for learner assessment (sometimes called ‘concessions’) when the learners are assessed without these arrangements on the ANAs. They also wonder why the ANAs are not differentiated, and why full-service schools are reported on the same basis as ordinary schools that do not include learners with additional support needs. One full-service school teacher bemoaned the unfavourable comparison with a neighbouring school on the ANA results ‘regardless of the fact that we are now taking in children with lesser capability’. Anecdotal evidence abounds that on the ANA test days, learners who might compromise ANA results are either encouraged to stay at home or marked absent even if they are present.

There are certainly other challenges that Gauteng faces in developing functional full-service schools, not least of which is attention to infrastructure – even newly built schools are not all designed for universal access. In addition, extending the full-service model to secondary schooling needs to be prioritised, lest Grade 7s leaving full-service primary schools become lost to the system for want of an appropriate Grade 8 placement. The issues highlighted in the preceding paragraphs are, however, ones that need deliberate and combined attention from officials in different directorates, as they cannot be resolved by the Inclusion and Special Schools Directorate alone.

District-based support teams (DBSTs)

Gauteng has shown commitment to the establishment and staffing of DBSTs. At the end of 2012, Gauteng support teams across the districts consisted of 75 curriculum specialists (an average of five per district), 175 inclusive education officials (about 11 or 12 per district), 15 each of psychologists, therapists and social workers (one each per district), 216 learning support teachers (about 14 per district) and one person from infrastructure in each district (DBE 2012). The development of the DBSTs is targeted in two of the four pillars of the GDE’s Inclusion Strategy. As part of pillar two (teacher and expert staff development as well as support), the skills base of the DBSTs is to be broadened through the development of a manual to guide operations and through training. Pillar three (institutional and management development) describes various avenues by which the DBSTs should assist educational institutions in identifying and addressing barriers to learning and supporting effective teaching and learning. To achieve this, the district

director should assume leadership of the DBST, school-based support teams should be supported and developed and expertise from special schools, resource centres and full-service schools should be harnessed (GDE 2011). With DBSTs established, and plans for their development described, the challenge in the years ahead for the GDE is to see the teams becoming fully functional and realising their mandates for learner and institutional support.

Capacity-building among teachers

In response to teachers' reported lack of the knowledge and skills required for inclusive education, Gauteng, like other provinces, has engaged in in-service teacher education for inclusive education. The scope and reach of these initiatives in Gauteng is, however, not as wide as in other provinces. By 2012, 75 schools in Gauteng had been reached compared, for example, with 1 529 schools in the Western Cape and 478 schools in Mpumalanga. Gauteng reports 750 educators trained to use SIAS. In Mpumalanga, 6 090 educators have had such training, with 3 865 and 1 418 educators thus trained in North West and Free State provinces respectively (DBE 2012).

Gauteng is committed to teacher development, for the implementation of its Inclusion Strategy with 'teacher and expert staff development and support' as the second pillar. The development programmes envisaged here are specifically designed for teachers and staff in full-service and special schools. There are good logistical reasons for this focus, but urgent consideration needs to be given to developing the capacity of all teachers for inclusive teaching and learning. Failure to do so perpetuates the pressure for referral, as ordinary classroom teachers recognise special expertise as residing outside of themselves and their immediate colleagues. Given that stakeholder involvement is the fourth pillar of the inclusion strategy, it is recommended that the GDE continues to pursue collaboration with higher education institutions in the province to address teacher development for inclusive teaching. There is significant scope for mutually beneficial engagement, including research into aspects of inclusive education; the establishment of exemplary inclusive schools as Teaching Schools or Professional Practice Schools, as envisaged by the *Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa* (DBE 2011); and professional development of teachers and service learning.

Budgetary allocation

Inclusive education, while cost effective, is not without cost. There are many examples in Gauteng and other provinces of schools and school managers embracing the principles of inclusive education, and using the available resources to become more inclusive (Walton 2011). However, for sustainability, a financial commitment to inclusive education must

be made. Gauteng has been increasing its per capita spending on learners, with the learners with special education needs (LSEN) sector seeing the largest per capita increase (40%) in the years 2003/04 to 2008/09. The GDE's five-year strategic plan (GDE 2009) reports that '[e]xpenditure per learner in the LSEN sector came to R23 955, which was three times the cost of education for learners in public ordinary schools'. While additional resourcing of the special education sector must be welcomed, this does not necessarily translate into progress, in the implementation of inclusive education. In its 2012 report to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Basic Education, the DBE noted Gauteng as being one of five provinces that had not appropriated funding for the Programme on the Expansion of Inclusive Education. This had resulted in 'serious backlogs in the implementation of the policy in its entirety' (DBE 2012). The Gauteng Education Budget Vote 2012/13 does, however, allocate R1.47 billion to Programme 4: Special Education, with an additional R39.9 million allocated for the expansion of inclusive education in the province. This is to support the 'on-going commitment to learners with special needs' (GDE 2012c).

Challenges to inclusive education in the province

The brief mention of risks in a short table at the end of the GDE's Inclusion Strategy belies the enormity of some of the province's challenges. Funding, for example, is regarded as the chief impediment to the implementation of inclusive education by the Inclusion and Special Schools Directorate in Gauteng. Officials in the directorate feel that there is little further progress that can be made without substantial and ongoing increases in budgetary allocations. This funding is needed for infrastructural development, including building more special schools in areas where there are none and human resource provisioning. Other pressures that may mitigate the advancement of inclusive education in the province are the annual increase in numbers of learners, including learners who have additional support needs, and the growing and vocal pressure from parents and caregivers for appropriate and quality educational support for their children. The media has been instrumental in raising awareness of the possibilities of inclusive education, and of learners with disabilities' rights for access and reasonable accommodation. Much is expected of the GDE, and sometimes the expectations seem contradictory – maintain the province's reputation as a top achieving province, and at the same time, with limited resources, identify and reduce exclusionary pressures as well as practices plus provide the necessary additional support that each learner requires. Gauteng is, in the words of one head office official, 'a victim of its own success'.

Gauteng is mounting a credible and valiant effort to establish and embed inclusive education in the province, but educational exclusion cannot be seen or addressed separately from wider societal exclusions that are perpetuated by those who benefit from current arrangements. Apartheid's legacy, reflected in a schooling system that

still mostly benefits the affluent and the able, remains, even after 20 years, a threat to inclusive education.

Summary of conclusion and recommendations

The GDE is aware of the challenges it faces in meeting its responsibilities in implementing inclusive education, and the province has already identified priorities as it looks to future progress. This review has foregrounded a number of issues relevant to schools and support for learning, which are detailed below.

In thinking about special schools, there is a need to:

- Address inequitable patterns of access by extending poverty alleviation measures (nutrition, transport and no-fee schools) to special schools and building additional special schools in under-served communities;
- Understand more about patterns of disability incidence; and
- Promote the attainment of school-leaving and skills qualifications, and facilitate school-to-work transitions.

In thinking about ordinary schools, there is a need to:

- Make infrastructural adjustments, for access by learners with disabilities;
- Build teachers' capacity to support learning and diverse learners, and so limit unnecessary referrals to special schools; and
- Ensure that competitiveness does not result in the exclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning.

In thinking about full-service schools, there is a need to:

- Reduce class sizes, by increasing the post provisioning norms (PPN) to make the provision of additional teacher support feasible;
- Make infrastructural adjustments for access by learners with disabilities;
- Equip teachers with the knowledge and skills they need for inclusive teaching, through site-based support and learning;
- Consider how national curriculum and assessment demands should be realised in schools mandated, to include learners who have additional support needs; and
- Develop full-service secondary schools.

Addressing these needs will require significant and sustainable financial investment and cooperation across a number of directorates and tiers of educational governance. Ultimately, current and future provincial leaders need to ensure that inclusion is not

allowed to become another programme, which may or may not succeed. Increasingly, it must become a principle by which all educational decisions are made.

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CHAPTER 12

ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN GAUTENG 1994–2014: DREAM, REALITY, POSSIBILITY

Edward French and Barbara Dale-Jones

Introduction

For people passionate about Adult Education and Training (AET), the hard-won policy intentions at the start of the ‘new South Africa’ in 1994 looked like a dream about to be turned into reality. The harsh conditions of implementation in the following years left the vision shattered. This chapter looks into the dream of AET, the achievements of the GDE over 20 years of implementation in consolidating capacity, and the challenges of implementing new policy in 2014 and afterwards.

Adult education in the PWV (Gauteng) at the start of 1994

1994 was a year of great hope. In preparing for the ‘new South Africa’, there was an intense ferment of ideas and aspirations for a vital new Adult Education and Training to stand at the heart of a just and prosperous society. The PWV complex (Pretoria, Witwatersrand and Vereeniging) had housed a wide range of adult education institutions, associations and organisations – some of them operating from Johannesburg or Pretoria – for many decades. These had participated in multiple policy research initiatives and forums. Four years of consultation of all stakeholders led to a generous policy framework to be tabled by the ANC.

Adult education usually functions on the sidelines of formal education, or even outside of it. Now, it was given a new and noble status. There are two major reasons for this:

- Adult education, it was thought, would be an important instrument for transformation in the new South Africa. It would redress the loss of learning, skills and confidence of several generations who grew up under apartheid. At last there was a chance to fulfil the commitment of the Freedom Charter that [t]he Doors of Learning and Culture shall be opened! [...] Adult illiteracy shall be ended, by a mass state education plan'. The United Democratic Front (UDF), Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO), trade unions and civics had awakened a felt need for adult education in many communities; and
- Much of the opposition to apartheid education had come from influential non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in adult education. This neglected field was more accessible to outside intervention than schooling, which was dominated by the nationalist government's restrictive monopoly over the schooling system for black South Africans. Adult education was the place to challenge people to take control of their lives. As a result, some of the most passionate education policy intellectuals of 1994 came from adult education. Whether reformists, radical or revolutionary, their orientations were strongly represented in the policy forums designing future action.

Leading up to 1994, there were some serious disagreements about the future of adult education in the new South Africa. Many difficulties related to different views of the nature of adult education, the locus of control and the approach to curriculum. Battles were fought over whether national standards were needed. There was an uneasy settlement in proposed policy that a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) should create standards to assure quality in all learning. One of the toughest questions was the problem of where to locate adult education – within or outside of the formal schooling system.

Gauteng, therefore, had access to a wealth of intellectual leadership as it faced the challenge of setting up an entirely new education system, with adult education and especially Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) as a key component. There were significant NGOs and academic bodies that had used donor funding to develop world-class resources and methods for adult education. Labour, business and community agencies were engaged in lively development initiatives.

At the same time, the reality of actual provision of adult education in Gauteng in 1994 was that it was inadequate and problematic:

- Community- and union-based initiatives were scarce and weak, although they had a high political profile;

- A number of suburban initiatives were models for effective provision – but were limited in scope and not influential in education political forums;
- The largest actual provision was in mining and industry, as well as in the government night schools;
- A number of initiatives in the business sector were modeling best practices; and
- The official Department of Education and Training (DET) night schools, managed nationally from Pretoria, could be found in schools in almost every division of every township. The system was marginalised and depressed, with little direct influence on policy. Yet there was a core of dedicated night-school principals and teachers who were managing to make the most of an uncertain situation. Most were schoolteachers first, but some became long-term advocates for adult education.

What lay behind the dream of adult education policy?

Adult education has nearly always been motivated by an activist spirit in the interests of human dignity, usually in the face of discrimination based on class, race or gender. Adult educationists believe in the power of giving access to knowledge and skills to those who have been denied education and training in their childhood. For these reasons, adult education is often closely linked to movements fighting for social justice.

One of the most distinctive features of most forms of adult education is the idea of responsiveness to adults' needs. Whereas children may gain by following a well-designed general national curriculum, adults have learning needs decided by their particular contexts and situations. Adult educators who are serious about their role have to put a lot of thought into understanding and acting on these needs.

But the idea of learning needs is deeply problematic. Adults, even well-educated adults, are seldom clear about their learning needs. Some adults may need to catch up on a normal formal education. Some may be sure about their own targeted needs, like the need to learn for a driver's licence. Even here, though, the learners do not know what it is that they need to know in order to be qualified. Shifting local economic needs also require opportunistic responses from adult learners and educators. A new factory in the neighbourhood might demand previously unheard-of competencies.

When political objectives enter the situation, the curriculum may be determined entirely outside of the learner's own sense of need – for example, in the idea of a compulsory education for democracy. But, even in the most top-down decisions about courses and provision, the adult learners – their interests, culture, language, age, gender and so on – play determining roles in the success of their learning. They can always walk away from learning. Even if the physical attendance is compulsory, they can walk away from the tuition in spirit.

The point about needs and about individual and contextual responsiveness is important when we face the difficulties of formal, systematic implementation of adult education. The administration, management and structures of adult education pose tough challenges, rather different from the provision of schooling.

Since the 1940s, Johannesburg in particular had been the home of projects helping adults – workers, mothers, the unemployed – as they responded to the demands of life and work. Several organisations came into being to create methods, resources, literature and teacher training, especially in Literacy, English (for access) and Numeracy. These organisations supported a night school movement that was increasingly undermined by the regime. Later, as access to major universities was denied to black South Africans, the ‘alternative education’ movement came to include aspects of higher education. By the 1980s, a lively argumentative array of adult education NGOs drew on anti-apartheid donor funding. They focused on creating and trialling materials for the adult education of the future. At the same time, they published materials – often radical in content and methods – to guide people in the struggle. Some focused on community learning, some on industrial contexts.

After the Soweto uprising in 1976, the regime came to the conclusion that the unrest had been fomented by non-government adult education action. In 1977, the leaders of several key organisations were banned, and the *World Newspaper* that, together with the South African Council for Higher Education (SACHED), had published learning materials with a clear struggle message was closed down. To pre-empt the ‘alternative’ sector – and to cope with the fallout of a failing schooling system – the government set up its own system of night schools.

Administered from Pretoria, the official night schools had a special drawcard. Unlike other organisations, they alone were in a position to offer accredited exit certificates. Adults in night schools could enter national Standard 5 (now Grade 7) examinations, the Junior Certificate (JC, in Grade 10) and the normal matric. The curriculum tended to be an ‘adulterated’ form of the school curriculum. By far, the majority of learners were either registered for basic literacy or for second-chance matric.

The night schools were run in the classrooms of day schools and were staffed by moonlighting teachers. Some centre principals were full-time, and inspectors conducted what we now call quality assurance. The centres were established rapidly. Most township dwellers, especially in the concentrated PWV, could access a centre quite easily.

In spite of the sinister political intent, official adult classrooms could become small centres of resistance and critical thinking. Some of the centre principals, teachers and even the managing officials were won over to a passion for the special challenges and rewards of adult education. The bitter political demands of the time meant, however, that the night schools and their personnel were marginalised and even ostracised. At the time of the policy debates, their voices were scarcely raised, and when they were, they were not heard.

Nonetheless, official night school provision was the reality with which the GDE had to engage as it started to implement the policy dream of 1994.

The dream of 1994

The ANC's Policy Framework for Education and Training (known as the 'Yellow Book') provides a generous summary of the directions decided on after so much consultation and reflection. What follows is a brief description of what would have been in place if the dream had been realised.

The adult education for a new South Africa would be led by a major division of the national Department of Education and Training. The expectation was that the education and manpower (now labour) departments would be amalgamated into a single ministry of integrated lifelong learning.

The central division for AET would provide leadership and management for the state system, but also for stimulating, encouraging and monitoring adult education in industry and private provision. It was anticipated that this department would be staffed by more than 20 officials. The national office would be guided by the NQF, in which all stakeholders would create sets of standards for learning. These would allow for accreditation of different forms of learning, recognition of prior learning (RPL) and encouragement of learning to support access, mobility and redress. All learning would integrate theory and practice.

A major national institute of curriculum development would focus on course content, materials and the design of educator training to support the achievement of NQF standards. Delivery would be through a multitude of centres – state, industrial and private – with a favouring of pivotal Community Colleges. (The Community Colleges of the USA provided inspiration, but locally the possibility was being modelled to some extent in Gauteng by Soweto's Funda Centre, St Anthony's in Boksburg and Project Literacy in Pretoria.) Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) would have four levels, culminating in an adult General Education and Training Certificate (GETC), equivalent to the proposed school-leaving certificate at the end of Grade 9. The NQF would allow recognition of flexible modules that could add up to the adult equivalent of matric.

2004: Adult education in the complexity of implementation

By 2004, the achievement of the dream had remained mainly at the level of vision-creation and planning. The reality of implementation fell far below the ideal. Overwhelming financial constraints faced the new state. Simply maintaining capacity and reconstructing schooling systems was an inescapable priority. In addition, the virtual abandonment of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) – which would have gone hand

in hand with AET – and the failure to put in place an integrated ministry of education and training showed the low standing of AET among national and provincial priorities. Legacy structures and capacity proved both durable and incurable. AET scarcely appeared on the list of political priorities.

The most immediate contradiction of the dream was the maintenance of the split between education and training, at ministerial and departmental level. For political reasons, education and training were kept in separate ministries. This worked against the ideal of integration in many ways, and blurred any focus that might have developed around adult education.

With the massive challenges of creating unified provincial education systems in the new order, AET and Early Childhood Development (ECD), though priorities in the dream, found themselves further sidelined. The major reason for this was financial: the new government faced enormous inherited international debts, while the structure of the education system meant that a generous education budget was absorbed almost entirely by salaries.

The national department had a tiny staff for adult education. Its offices at times had only one official appointed, with a little administrative backup. The provincial departments were obliged to keep the institutional base of the night schools going, but their work was, in the first place, a matter of keeping existing capacity in place.

For a time, though, the transformation agenda had been lively. Interim Standards for ABET had been created. ABET standards were some of the first to be published on the NQF. They were thoughtful and well researched, and provided a model of how unit standards might look. An adult General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) was established to replace the old examinations. It was controversial and problematic from the start. The Department of Education did not have the capacity to implement the system of adult examinations from ABET 1 to an Adult Senior Certificate, developed by the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) and A Secondary Education Curriculum for Adults (ASECA) in SACHED with years of stakeholder participation and expert development.

Adult educators were eager to make the most of the new approach, but found themselves inadequately prepared and resourced to implement NQF principles. A Multi-year Implementation Plan for AET was devised with the wide-ranging participation of government, university, business and NGO stakeholders. Very little of it was actually implemented. The Department of Education launched, as a pilot programme for ABET, the Ithuteng Ready to Learn Campaign in 1996 (through which more than 90 000 adult learners were recruited). This drew from a plan developed in 1994 by National Literacy Cooperation. Work was in progress on the formulation of an ABET Act; the provincial education departments had started to grapple with the tricky governance challenges of adult education in a formal education context.

At a broader level, the legislation of a national skills levy and the creation of the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) had, in theory, directed unprecedented

funding to the AET sector. However, the complex establishment realities, and the favouring of higher technical skills by the SETAs, meant that the provision of AET was much more limited than expected. The Services SETA had started a fairly large-scale set of learning programmes, especially for domestic workers.

On the other hand, the vibrant activist movement for adult education had virtually ceased to exist by 2004. Funding by international donors was re-directed to a newly legitimate government and then largely phased out. In 1997, the oldest Freirean organisation, Learn and Teach, closed down, followed shortly by the ambitious, but ill-managed, National Literacy Cooperation. Much of the painstaking, world-class curriculum and materials development was pulped or never published on a large scale, because the expected public uptake never happened. UCT's Adult Education Department – arguably the flagship for academic Adult Education – was closed down because of a lack of market demand (a result of a declining interest in adult education as a serious career for educators).

By 2004, Project Literacy and Operation Upgrade were the only remaining ABET NGOs with impact. They were increasingly required to function on a commercial basis. Project Literacy became a major partner in various SETA and government development programmes. All university Adult Education divisions were dwindling, though the University of Natal and University of Western Cape managed to sustain some lively involvement.

In this context, the national Minister of Education, Prof. Kader Asmal, took a position that flew in the face of the thinking behind the planning reflected in the ANC's Policy Framework for Education and Training. Together with key leadership in the national Department of Education, he contested the standing and processes of the NQF and put the idea of a literacy campaign into action. Experienced Adult Education Specialists were dismayed by the appeal to charitable voluntarism in the development of a short-lived, largely stillborn, South African National Literacy Initiative (SANLI).

Implementing national AET policy in Gauteng

The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) had many urgent priorities before the AET. For example, it is difficult to estimate the effect of dramatic demographic movement of people from South Africa and Africa to the economic hub of Gauteng. The stress on education was, and remains, high.

Against this background, the GDE set in motion various innovative AET projects in the first decade after 1994. Poorly funded and often weakly led, these were doomed at best to a half-life. Material and administrative failures defeated the near-universal enthusiasm for change felt by AET educators and activists.

The structure and management of the former night schools were kept largely in place, while the name was changed to Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs). The first Gauteng MEC for Education hoped for a new focus on AET, but the head office

management of provision was tiny and disempowered, and provided no leadership for new development. Transformation workshops for AET educators, many at Johannesburg's City Deep Centre, were undermined by waves of grievance about the administration of salaries and other conditions of service.

By 2004, there had been an impressive protest march of adult educators supported by the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) through the streets of Johannesburg. The protest was partly about the official neglect of adult education, but more about the intractable problem of official conditions of service for adult educators and their effective management. The memorandum presented to the GDE by the marchers seemed to have fallen on deaf ears, but may have had longer-term influence. The department had more serious problems to deal with in the schools, notably in the examination system. At a later stage, departmental funding for the PALCs ran out entirely and educators were asked to work for several months without pay.

The GDE took what was seen by some as a progressive step by discouraging the use of full-time day-school teachers in the PALCs, requiring instead the appointment either of young teachers who had not found posts or people with relevant skills and knowledge but no qualifications in education. This policy was not well received by some PALC managers who found it destabilising and quality-sapping. A Gauteng Youth College (GYC), which was meant to model provision and provide for out-of-school youth using the ASECA curriculum, worked in discouraging circumstances.

And yet good work was possible in the PALCs. A generous annual national award running at the time for the best adult education centres in all sectors made few awards to state centres. A Gauteng PALC won the highest award for the range, relevance and vitality of its work, and another (semi-private GDE centre) won a lesser award. The success of centres depended almost entirely on the vision and leadership of their management against the odds.

However, it was in this respect that Gauteng AET suffered one of the gravest failures of the location of adult education in a schooling system. Enterprising PALC principals, excited by the promise of the NQF and the flexible curriculum for adult education, set about devising relationships with local industries and business. They planned and negotiated for their PALCs to link into industrial training programmes and share facilities and personnel in flexible ways. But their plans were frustrated by a range of regulations and standard procedures required for managing the formal school system. In some cases, these regulations were administered by district officials from the school system, with no sympathy for, or understanding of, the demands of a responsive and flexible adult education. The situation needed assertive, mission-driven, head-office leadership, with a willingness to fight a focused battle for adult education against bureaucratic and political interests. This was not forthcoming. It was only after 2004 that the GDE was in a position to develop leadership that was more supportive of the interests of AET.

An impressive achievement of the GDE at this time was the work of the Gauteng Institute for Curriculum Development (GICD). The GICD created Illustrative Learning

Programmes (ILPs) for key AET unit standards of the NQF in the early 2000s. These provided detailed, concrete guides for a sample of activities, and showed educators how to facilitate learning in a standards-based context. Resource-starved educators made enthusiastic use of these ILPs for a number of years. Few seem to have gone beyond the specific content in the ILPs to create materials and lessons of their own – an intention in the design. The GICD was closed, apparently because of lack of funding, and it is difficult to establish what remains of its work for AET.

2014: New life for AET on a stable institutional footing?

Since 2004, there have been various moves at national and provincial levels that may have stabilised the context for future growth in AET. There was consolidation in the national legislation and management systems. The situation of the NQF was clarified in the NQF Act of 2008. This cut back the emphasis on unit standards in the system at the same time as the Department of Education started to abandon outcomes-based education (OBE). The split in education was ended at a structural level by shifting AET into the domain of a new national Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). However, because of its location in provincial schools, provincial AET has continued to be overseen by the Department of Basic Education (DBE). Together with the struggle to create practices and relationships across the newly empowered Quality Councils, and especially to clarify the role of the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations in AET, this has led to as yet unresolved puzzles regarding bureaucratic structures.

The national Ministry of Higher Education and Training is treating learning beyond or outside of schooling with new urgency. This responds to the crises of skills and of the large adult population of people Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs). The policy environment for AET has been enriched by the Department of Higher Education and Training developing a Green Paper on Post-school Education and Training (which is in the process of becoming legislation) and an official report of a task team on Community Education and Training Centres (CETCs). Among many recommendations for the future, the institution of Community Colleges is back on the agenda again.

The policy recommendations include positive encouragement for the model of the Kha ri Gude Adult Literacy Campaign (KRG) for possible extension to other areas and levels of AET. This suggestion is being taken seriously at national level. Put in place by Minister of Education Naledi Pandor (2004–2009), KRG created tightly managed systems of the delivery of materials, educator support and records management. The materials in 11 languages are handsomely published and attractively designed. As important, KRG is backed by impressive outsourced logistics and a disciplined hierarchy of national, regional and district accountability. This ensures that the programme is prioritised and keeps running. Over 30 000 voluntary educators who do the teaching are provided with stipends, as long as they teach and recruit 18 learners for the six-month course each

year. The campaign has returned nearly 600 000 portfolios each year, which have been subjected to external quality assurance by SAQA through sample moderation plus site visits for verification.

KRG falls within the ambit of the Department of Basic Education (DBE), but has been run entirely independently of the provincial AET Centres (PALCs renamed). Anecdotal feedback from the site visits is that many participants are happy with the programme, while being sceptical of the value of what they still call PALCs. The KRG model is promising, but cannot be adopted without cautious examination of contexts and demand and without adaptation.

In Gauteng, by 2014 the most notable achievements had been the sheer survival of AET in the province, the establishment of realistic and feasible administrative measures to deal with the problems inherent in running a characteristically non-formal undertaking in a large formal education system, and – perhaps most important for the future – the growing ownership of provincial AET by local leadership.

The GDE's AET provision has improved over the past decade in terms of systems of management and administration. Hard-won agreed regulations have been put in place for the appointment, management and conditions of service of the staffing of Gauteng AET Centres. The bitter experience was for those who sought transformation after 1994 to learn just how essential tedious bureaucratic procedures and regulations are for any official work that aims at some level of quality, complexity and scale. The approach to the provisioning of learning materials has been much improved by the present leadership in the GDE.

A recent comprehensive audit of the GDE's AET provision reveals a picture that has similarities to the picture of the official night schools in 1984 – most notably in the difficulty of obtaining significant management information or performance data. The context of near civil war is in the past, but so is the passionate contention that gave a driven sense of mission to adult education then, and that could even be found in the apartheid night schools. The most positive change is the sense of ownership and control of the participants. This is expressed, sometimes against the bureaucrats, by organisations like the Council for Adult Education and Training (CATE), the Adult Education Association and the national Adult Learning Network (ALN), which replaced the Adult Education and Training Association of South Africa (AETASA). CATE, as a lobbying organisation, has played a significant role in ensuring labour peace within the ABET sector in Gauteng. It has engaged the GDE on matters related to the poor conditions of service of ABET educators in the province. In the absence of national regulations for improved conditions of service, CATE has managed to broker an interim agreement that seeks to improve the conditions under which ABET educators are employed. CATE and its social partners continue to fight on various fronts for the professionalisation of the sector.

Key innovations in the GDE's AET provision include centres' satellite campuses, which mitigate the high cost of running fully fledged centres. They typically have a unique function and differentiated offerings in that not all satellite sites offer the same

programmes; they operate without full-time staff as centre educators travel to them; and they are often situated in a vacant building on a school property. Added to this is the MEC's granting of special permission for the GDE to fund and run their matric equivalent programmes at AET centres, so that students who wish to complete matric or rewrite subjects can do this through the centres. AET is administered chaotically and there is uneven coverage, but uptake has been high, as evidenced by many centres having most enrolments in matric equivalent courses and not in ABET courses. While this is crucial for access to matric equivalent programmes, it highlights the limitations of the reach of AET itself in Gauteng. Furthermore, in spite of placement tests being conducted, there remains a high level of learner attrition in matric equivalent programmes in the province.

Perhaps most important is that the current leadership of the GDE's AET provision has taken a systemic approach, with a four-pillar strategy focused on resourcing, curriculum, skills development and the governance of centres. The GDE's commissioning of the audit of AET provision in the province talks to the kind of institutional landscape model that is envisaged, while its policies speak to national norms and standards and look to the DHET to take strategic leadership in this sector.

However, current enrolments for AET are low in Gauteng and the very people who should be participating in AET are rarely reached. Of particular concern is the number of learners who have completed Grade 9 but are unable to progress to Grades 10 or 11 as they are older than 20, while the current AET Centres are only providing the GETC and matric rewrite programmes. Similarly, many learners in Gauteng who are over 25 with Grade 9 or above will not be able to pursue a matric-equivalent qualification if NATED 550, the 'old matric' that is due to be phased out by the end of 2014, is phased out without the finalisation and implementation of the National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA), which is a matric-equivalent qualification. Overall, there is a need to rethink the relevance and appropriateness of qualifications towards which adults are moving, as well as to match provision with local requirements. Matric equivalent programmes are vital and should be retained with the moving of provision to DHET, but discussions about reconfiguring programmes have happened nationally so provinces are not au fait with NASCA or the General Education and Training Certificate – Adult, which is a Grade 9 equivalent qualification.

Skills programmes and short courses for soft skills are needed, a review of the ABET curriculum is necessary and the provincial adoption of the KRG model could possibly allow for provision that is not dependent on the uneven availability of infrastructure and resources. However, KRG seems divorced from what is happening provincially and the GDE seems cautious and sceptical about it, even though it has good throughput. In spite of this caution, the GDE has given the go-ahead for AET centres to use KRG's course material.

At the same time, the GDE is moving to transform AET centres into community education centres or community colleges. With sufficient new capacity, these could at

last start to fulfil the dream of 1994. However, past experience shows how challenging the change is likely to be.

Current provision in Gauteng inappropriately mirrors the schooling system in terms of operations, with the expensive use of full-time educators, while legislation constrains the use of centres on Saturdays. The move of AET to the DHET creates an opportunity for the reorganising and addressing of the conditions of service of educators who are currently employed under the South African Educators Act, which restricts working hours to weekdays, thereby preventing centres from providing lessons on a Saturday. However, in-service training is urgently required to assist educators in improving their qualifications and skills as about 40% of educators engaged in the AETs in Gauteng have no qualification in education at all. The bursary programme funded by the GDE that is currently in place to support AET educators to specialise in adult education through UNISA is an innovation that is responsive to this challenge.

Communicating with learners is not always effective and the tracking of students and their attendance is both insufficient and aggregated. This is not unusual in an education system that has not been especially output-focused, but the structure of AET provision is idiosyncratic in that any student can sign up at any time in the curriculum and teaching process. Throughput and promotion rates are consequently appalling.

Regarding resourcing, there appears to be little consistency in the provision of learner materials and a distributed resource-based learning model is needed: one which employs good learning resources, allowing students to study on their own in a self-directed and independent way and to be assessed formatively. Fewer classes with more intense student-focused activity, a more advantageous learner-teacher ratio and the combining of less popular subjects would allow for the improvement of provision without an increase in costs. All the centres have computers, but many are not used or are not functional.

Some thoughts about 2014 and beyond

This chapter has been informed by the comprehensive SAIDE (2013) audit of Gauteng PALCs and the DHET's 2013 Report of the Task Team on Community Education and Training Centres. These contain extensive recommendations that deserve serious attention. A few matters seem to be highlighted in the present account.

1. It is always difficult – worldwide – to balance the needs of flexible, responsive adult education with the needs of large-scale, official school and institution-focused implementation. The GDE has come a long way in learning how to manage some of the trade-offs needed. The hard-won capacity must be maintained for the ongoing trade-offs to satisfy the emerging policy environment and changes.

2. Properly functioning management information systems are desperately needed. Many years of putting such systems in place have led to very poor results. The reasons for the failure of these systems need to be interrogated.
3. Adult education worldwide depends in the first place on political will and vision at all levels to make it work. The political will in South Africa and in Gauteng have not gone sufficiently beyond good intentions, rhetoric and policy to serve a deeper vision of adult education beyond the formal frame.
4. Political will and vision need to be cultivated at all levels. The new plans for a focus on Community Centres and Community Colleges (linking into transformed Further Education and Training Colleges) with the integration of knowledge and skills are excellent, but need staffing at local, provincial and national levels that is newly educated in making the vision work. This is a huge challenge.
5. Sources of funding and other resources need to be researched. For example, the new Community Colleges might get SETA and local industry support if the colleges seem likely to deliver the goods, and if the thickets of regulations on all sides can be streamlined.
6. All ideals and approaches in the deepest notions of adult education pale before the sheer needs of the vast number of young adults who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET). New national approaches to labour market analysis, career guidance and skilling should help. The demand for effective action falls heavily on Community Learning Centres. But these also have the potential to improve provision of AET greatly. To achieve this, the system needs to train, develop and support its personnel in maintaining disciplined, cost-effective delivery while giving local AET leadership the freedom to exercise its vision, judgement and creativity in building local solutions. This new development might, however, take resources away from the current adult education provision. Special efforts will be needed to integrate current AET and future community centres and colleges.

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CHAPTER 13

A CASE OF UNFINISHED BUSINESS: THE TRANSFORMATION OF FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGES IN GAUTENG

Anthony Gewer and Makano Morojele

Introduction

The Further Education and Training (FET) college subsystem has undergone significant restructuring and change since 2000, the after-effects of which are still being felt today. This restructuring took the form of mergers, recapitalisation, rearticulation, expansion and, more recently, migration from provincial Departments of Education to the national Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). For the colleges in Gauteng, this meant the consolidation of 33 technical colleges into eight FET colleges and a substantial increase in access through growth in student numbers from a base of 39 395 full-time equivalents (FTEs) in 2000 (DOE 2002) to 57 436 FTEs in 2012 (DHET). It also resulted in significant changes in the equity profile of students, staff, management and councils from when the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) inherited the colleges in 1994. Until 2012, the GDE was vested with the administrative authority over the colleges in the province, within the national policy framework. With the promulgation of the FET Colleges Amendment Act (Act 3 of 2012), the colleges in Gauteng, as well as colleges located in the other eight provinces, have been transferred to the DHET.

This process of restructuring has been built upon a strong theme – as laid out originally in the Green Paper for FET (DOE 1998) – of a nationally coordinated strategy for transforming FET into a system that can make flexible, responsive, high-quality programmes *progressively* available to all who need them and thereby contribute to overcoming inequality and building the strong skills base needed to grow the economy. The extent to which restructuring has achieved this in Gauteng over the past 20 years is one important theme for this chapter. The manner in which the changes highlighted above have been managed and implemented is a key factor in achieving this. Therefore, the chapter examines the college transformation process in South Africa – and, more specifically, Gauteng – to date, analyses the achievements and highlights the challenges, and outlines their implications for the future role of FET in the province and the country.

One of the key overarching features of the transformation of FET colleges since 2000 is that transformation has been driven initially by the national Department of Education (pre-2009) and later by the DHET. The nature of this transformation programme has shifted significantly during this time, depending on the political imperatives and the associated ideological shifts within government. For much of the transformation period, the government was caught between a national imperative for redress, access and equity and a neo-liberal institutional approach to transformation. With the strong influence of international organisations, particularly from the United Kingdom, there was a pronounced emphasis on promotion of autonomy at the institutional level, but this approach was frustrated by weaknesses in capacity on the ground, resulting in a shift to a nationally driven and determined approach.

As a result, colleges were caught up in challenges associated with the democratic decentralisation principles, informed by the cooperative governance framework outlined in the South African Constitution. In terms of this framework, the Minister of Education determines national policy, norms and standards and provincial MECs for Education are responsible for the provision of FET programmes in the colleges under their jurisdiction and for the funding and administration of these colleges. The 1998 FET White Paper (RSA 1998a) also envisaged FET institutions to be autonomous and be granted ‘substantial powers’. As will be demonstrated throughout this chapter, the manner in which change was implemented restricted the effective application of the principles of decentralisation and cooperative governance, which undermined meaningful transformation.

This has had implications for the manner in which both the GDE and the colleges themselves have managed the change and, while the outcomes in terms of redress, access and equity have been positive, the process of change has created a perpetual context of instability and often confusion. To a large extent, the past two decades in Gauteng colleges provides a case study for the challenges associated with complex institutional transformation, particularly in terms of governance and management.

The chapter draws strongly on secondary quantitative and qualitative data, as well as a few targeted interviews with Gauteng Department of Education officials and selected

college principals at the time of the merger, to track both the system and institutional changes during each of the key periods of transformation.

The pre-merger context: 1994–1999

The technical college sector in the 1990s had begun to feel the impact of the decline of artisan training, particularly in parastatal companies, through ‘privatisation’ of the apprenticeship system that had resulted from market-driven training policies introduced by the apartheid government in the 1980s. Due to the low commitment of employers to training at the time, the number of white youth who benefited from the apprenticeship system and were being funded to attend colleges reduced significantly and students were not guaranteed access to workplaces. Chisholm (1992) quotes the then-principal of the Johannesburg Technical College, who indicated that the number of sponsored students had declined over the preceding couple of decades and that most students were enrolling at the time to upgrade their qualifications because they could not get employment. Similar findings emerged from historically advantaged colleges on the East Rand that had been set up to service the mining, manufacturing and motor industries (Chisholm 1992). For black students, the situation was worse, with students in historically disadvantaged township colleges (State Colleges) being limited to low-level technical and commercial subjects and getting minimal access to artisan training.

More generally, while there had been increased focus on technical education for black students in the 1980s, white students represented two-thirds of enrolments in colleges in 1991 (Chisholm 1992). Black students were restricted to State Colleges, while white students continued to benefit from better-resourced State-aided Colleges. The key difference between these two categories was their governance and funding arrangements.

- Councils in State Colleges (Historically Disadvantaged Institutions) had advisory functions only and college budgets were managed by the Education Departments, giving the college little financial autonomy; and
- Councils in State-aided Colleges (Historically Advantaged Colleges) were the institutional governing bodies and the colleges were responsible for their own budgets. These colleges could set their own fees and could derive additional income, which could be used for the appointment of staff and infrastructural improvements (NBI 1998).

The scope of this transformation in Gauteng is captured somewhat by Sooklal (2005), who describes the experiences of three such colleges in the Pretoria area – Atteridgeville, Centurion and Pretoria West – that reflected the distinct social and cultural histories of colleges in Gauteng. Centurion, with a strong history of training apprentices for the Defence Force, no longer received funding from the Department of Education as of 1992

for practical training and was forced, increasingly, to open its enrolments to the broader public. While it maintained its relationship with artisan training, it was thrust into a position of enrolling larger numbers of black students into Business Studies programmes and became a victim of the declining artisan training regime. Atteridgeville was a newly established college, specifically serving the township community and trying to become a more community-responsive institution. Pretoria West, originally established by Iscor, sought to fill the gap created by declining artisan training with the delivery of practical workshop programmes that would better prepare youth for placement in industry. In 2001, these three colleges merged to form the Tshwane South FET College, bringing together these complex histories and experiencing significant challenges in creating a united, stable and functional institution. The post-merger context for this college as a microcosm of the transformation of FET colleges in Gauteng is discussed further below.

The emerging ANC government sought to introduce a state-driven transformation of vocational education and training in order to realise equity and redress. This represented a shift back from the market-led system of the late 1980s and early 1990s towards a macro-institutional framework (Kraak 1997), which ultimately culminated in the establishment of the skills levy-grant system and the introduction of learnerships. Technical colleges were not incorporated into the emerging post-apartheid skills development regime of the Department of Labour, continuing to operate within the Ministry of Education and ultimately becoming victims of this divided system. Practically, it can be argued that this outcome was reflected in the increasing distance of colleges such as Centurion and Pretoria West, among others, from industry. It could equally be argued that the value of vocational education in providing general-vocational preparation for young pre-employed individuals may have been lost if colleges had become located within a narrow occupational training framework. The challenge was in finding a suitable and distinct identity for them in the FET band, which was overwhelmingly dominated by the secondary schools. This challenge persisted until the promulgation of the FET Colleges Act (Act 16 of 2006), which differentiated colleges from secondary schools, and the subsequent creation of the DHET in 2009, which finally extricated colleges from the periphery of the secondary schooling system. Throughout this period, this marginal role of the colleges limited the colleges' scope of growth and meaningful contribution to addressing the skills imbalances in society.

The GDE inherited 33 technical colleges, including one distance education college, TECHNISA. These 33 colleges made up 20% of the 152 colleges nationally. Thirteen of these colleges were based in township communities across Gauteng and were classified as State Colleges, while the remainder was classified as State-aided Colleges. According to the National Business Initiative (NBI) (1998), many of these were constructed in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and had modern and well-maintained infrastructure. When the NBI conducted fieldwork in a sample of colleges in the province in mid-1998, they found examples of 'specialised and well-equipped training facilities, such as industrial kitchens, hair care and cosmetology salons, computer laboratories, art studios,

training restaurants, educare schools and centres for entrepreneurial development' (NBI 1998: 13). In addition, some State-aided Colleges had recently been upgraded with new engineering workshops. However, while most of the State Colleges had engineering workshops, they were not well maintained, and their equipment was obsolete and unsafe. Student accommodation and recreational facilities were generally lacking across the colleges. More generally, the NBI audit also found limited evidence for a focus on learner support services, career counselling and job placement, and few examples of close relationships with employers.

The distinction between State-aided and State Colleges remained intact until all colleges were declared FET institutions in terms of the FET Act (Act 98 of 1998) in 2001, in preparation for the merger process. However, the racial make-up of students shifted significantly immediately after the onset of democracy in 1994. In 1991, white students made up 67% of students in technical colleges, while black students made up 19% and Indian and coloured students made up 7% each (Chisholm 1992). By 1996, the student population in Gauteng comprised 71% black, 26% white and 3% Indian and coloured students (Chisholm 1992). By 1998, this had shifted to 82% black, 15% white and 3% Indian and coloured students.

However, the institutional conditions – in terms of resources, racial make-up of staff and the racial profile of governing councils – did not change much during the pre-merger period. White teaching and management staff predominated, particularly in State-aided Colleges, and many were Afrikaans-speaking. State Colleges were governed by predominantly black councils, while councils in State-aided Colleges were white.

In 1998, there were approximately 35 000 FTE students in the 32 Gauteng colleges (excluding TECHNISA). This translated into a headcount that was approximately double the FTE count, using the weighting of the subjects across the different programmes. This represented a significant growth in numbers, given that there was a total of 38 998 FTEs across the entire 129 technical colleges in 1991 (Chisholm 1992).

The provincial budget allocation for technical colleges in 1998 was R175.9 million, which represented 3% of the total education budget in the province (NBI 1998). Within the GDE itself, there was limited capacity and a lack of common understanding of the strategic vision for technical colleges, evidenced by a view that technical colleges should be managed by district offices along with the schools in the province, which suggested the lack of a coherent strategy for college transformation. In addition, there was concern around the concentration of 33 colleges within a small province, many of which were offering the same programmes and some with small numbers of students in these programmes. Thus budgets range from R13 million in a State-aided College to less than R20 000 in a small State College. This represented a highly inequitable and inefficient use of resources, and formed part of the rationale for the eventual merger of the technical colleges into multi-campus colleges and the development of niche campuses in each college.

The FET White Paper and Act: 1998–2002

The release of the FET White Paper (RSA 1998a) and the promulgation of the FET Act, both in 1998, heralded the start of a meaningful focus on colleges. Having tackled transformation policies for the schooling and higher education sub-sectors, the colleges were the last sub-sector to be addressed and government deemed it important to have addressed all transformational policy issues before the first government had reached its term (Sooklal 2005). The Skills Development Act (which was also promulgated in 1998) was set up to be complemented by the FET Act, hence the need to get the latter finalised.

The FET White Paper advanced the notion of a nationally driven policy framework to overcome distinctions between ‘academic’ and ‘vocational’ education, as well as industry training. To do this, the policy framework should include a shift to a programme-based focus, a restructuring of the institutional context to allow for increasing autonomy and flexibility in the delivery of programmes, and the introduction of new qualifications and a new funding framework. The intention was to pilot the new framework through fast-tracking the declaration of a few stronger institutions and testing out the delegated budgetary authority that would be required under a new funding regime. The FET Act provided the legal framework for establishment of these new institution types, which would overcome the past distinctions between State and State-Aided Colleges, provide for the merger of institutions and spell out the scope of the institutions’ mandate. The responsibility for the implementation of the Act vested with provincial Departments of Education under the authority of the respective MEC. Given this tenet, it was expected that the provincial Departments of Education would actively take hold of FET policy and drive the process of implementation in their respective provinces.

Between 1998 and 2001, the technical college sector in Gauteng grew by about 10%, mainly due to increases in enrolments in non-Department of Education (DOE) courses (Sooklal 2005). The net participation in the province grew from 1.4% in 1998 to 4.6% in 2000. However, there was little activity around the implementation of the FET Act, with the exception of the specific programmes of the Colleges Collaboration Fund (CCF). The CCF was a Business Trust-funded intervention in partnership with the DOE, established in 1999 to kick-start and support the transformation of the technical college sector over a five-year period. The CCF was managed by the NBI and provided the DOE with the necessary capacity and resources to assist with the restructuring of colleges, including the mergers of colleges, development of governance and management capacity, and enhancing development of industry partnerships. The CCF model drew heavily on the market-driven systems of the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia, and sought to incentivise change in the college system.

In Gauteng, the NBI conducted a detailed situational analysis of the 33 colleges, which was to provide the basis for the restructuring plan in the province. It also initiated the Tirisano Fellowship, an international exchange programme facilitated through a government-to-government agreement between South Africa and the UK. In total,

16 middle managers from Gauteng colleges were placed in UK colleges for a three-month period between 2000 and 2004, and developed their skills in a specialised area of college management under the mentorship of a UK college mentor. The programme also sought to address equity issues in middle management by targeting black and female middle managers, hence building a management corps for the future. Initially, many of the returning Tirisano Fellows struggled to apply what they had learnt due to the level of instability in the colleges to which they were returning (in the midst of the merger process), but many were instrumental in the post-merger management of the colleges. As a result, management practices in many colleges in the post-merger period were strongly influenced by these UK experiences.

It was not until 2001 that NBI analysis became useful in guiding the restructuring of the technical colleges in the province. Given the delays in the implementation of the FET Act, the DOE sought to take control and drive the process nationally. A National Landscape Task Team (NLTT) was established, including representatives, and in each province a consultative process was undertaken to prepare a provincial plan for the merger and declaration processes. In Gauteng, the GDE prepared a Consultative Document titled 'Provincial Proposal for the Establishment of Further Education and Training in Gauteng', which formed the basis of the declaration of all technical colleges as FET institutions in September 2001 and the mergers of 33 FET institutions into eight FET institutions in December 2001 (Manota 2003). The GDE established a Provincial Merger Team to monitor and support the merger process. Merger Plans were developed through a facilitated process in each of the newly merged colleges and new councils were established in 2002.

The management of the merger process was a difficult period for GDE officials. The DOE was driving a rapid process of change nationally; officials in the GDE were not all conversant with the range of decisions that were taken during this intense period and the implications of these decisions for the system. All in all, the merger process was completed within a three-month period on the assumption that there was sufficient buy-in and support for the process. A merger facilitation process at college level had been put in place to ensure that the merger plans were completed timeously, but these facilitators did not engage much with change management issues.

There was also an assumption that there was sufficient capacity within the provincial departments to support the colleges through the merger process. For GDE officials, the challenge was supporting colleges to implement a plan in which they had had no role in drafting and which was implemented through a process in which they were not fully participating. The tight time frames also prevented effective engagement across the various units within the GDE, and as colleges had not been a priority for the GDE there was insufficient understanding of the sector. There was also an assumption that colleges were static entities and that the plan could therefore be implemented with a high degree of predictability. As a result, there was a sense of frustration and anxiety about having to meet deadlines, with officials not feeling fully equipped to provide the support necessary.

In the rush to meet deadlines, many of the fears and anxieties of college staff were also not effectively addressed.

The tensions within the colleges as a result of the manner in which the merger process was managed by the DOE and the absence of a change management process was evidenced in the studies of the three Tshwane South colleges by Sooklal (2005). In Atteridgeville, the staff indicated that there were no clear directives, that they were simply instructed to develop a merger plan within an already 'arranged marriage'. Not all the colleges concerned had accepted the merger – there were high levels of resistance from Centurion College, in particular, to the merger. Centurion College had not begun to embrace racial transformation in its staff make-up and had tried to petition to remain a stand-alone institution. As the merger unfolded, staff began to show resistance and sought to undermine the process. Pretoria West appeared to have experienced the least resistance because the principal at the time communicated as far as possible with his staff. However, the lack of communication from the DOE still featured strongly and it was indicated that clearer guidelines were needed.

College staff were not given insight into the purpose or basis of the mergers; which colleges should merge with each other; or how the mergers aligned with national policy. Part of the challenge related to how communication was managed within the colleges, given that the college principals were not necessarily equipped, and did not have the necessary information, to manage any resistance to, or concerns about, the change process. There was also a leadership vacuum and a lack of clarity in the colleges as to where the accountability lay for decision-making at any level of the system. Sooklal emphasizes that the historical contexts impacted on the cultural beliefs of the staff and on their willingness to accept change; an intensive intervention around change management was needed to address these underlying mindsets. Unfortunately, this intervention did not occur; this impeded the ultimate objectives of the merger process.

This merger process illustrated the weak capacity of the GDE to manage and support colleges during this period. It is questionable whether the GDE gave sufficient priority to supporting colleges or whether there was an expectation that the DOE would take the lead in driving the mergers and would provide the necessary guidance and instruction to make the mergers work. It could also be argued that the GDE viewed the merger process as a national, rather than a provincial, priority, and did not have the capacity for the strategic and operation steering. As such, the manner in which the mergers were handled was a missed opportunity to drive a meaningful transformation process. This dependency on the DOE with respect to the FET college sector set the tone for how the GDE would continue to manage the subsystem over the next period of transformation. In fact, by the time that Sooklal conducted her research in 2002, very little change had been seen in the colleges concerned. By 2007, there were mixed views on Pretoria West campus, with some staff feeling that the merger was unnecessary and had little benefit and others seeing it as a means to achieve equity among staff and get rid of whites (Haber 2007).

Post-merger transformation 2003–2008

In the period following the mergers of the 33 technical colleges into eight colleges, the focus was on establishing the identity of the new institutions and taking forward the transformation of the sector. The new chief executive officers and governing councils were put in place, as were new staff establishments and unified budgets (Haber 2007). The Gauteng colleges had experienced an increase in the percentage of black employees in management positions, from 9% in 1998 to 34% in 2002.

However, the colleges faced a number of persistent challenges that impacted on their ability to realise meaningful transformation. These included:

- Continued discrepancies in the fee structures across former State and State-aided Colleges;
- Insufficient funding to upgrade institutions to enable them to offer responsive programmes, particularly in terms of well-equipped workshops that enabled students to put theory into practice;
- Continued dominance of outdated curricula, particularly the trimester engineering programmes;
- A lack of clarity on roles of councils and management in the post-merger context to ensure that colleges could fully realise their role;
- A lack of financial assistance for students, which impacted on growth in numbers of youth who could access programmes; and
- Limited scope for engagement with the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), which limited scope for diversification of programmes and expansion of learnership provision in colleges.

Significant financial input was needed to overcome these challenges.

From an enrolment perspective, the number of FTEs in Gauteng colleges had grown from 41 909 in 1998 (including non-DOE programmes) to 47 163 in 2002 (DOE 2004), representing a 13% growth. By 2006, this number had increased to 72 015 and per capita expenditure had increased from R6 386 in 2002/03 to R1 243 in 2006/07 (GDE 2007). By 2008/09, total FTE enrolment dropped again from a high of 93 437 in 2007/08 to 67 482 in 2008/09 (GDE 2009). This drop was largely due to the introduction of the National Certificate (Vocational) (NCV) and the concomitant phasing out of the N-programmes, as discussed below. This was despite stabilisation in the funding stream from the provincial treasury.

The next phase of the college transformation programme and fluctuating enrolment trends in the post-merger period was informed by three key national interventions in the sector during the period 2005 to 2008. The first was the national FET College Recapitalisation Grant Programme, which sought to address infrastructural, resource and capacity challenges that were inherent in the system. The second was the promulgation

of the FET Colleges Act (Act 16 of 2006), which transferred the employment of teaching and administrative staff in colleges to College Councils. The third was the introduction of the NCV in 2007, and the concomitant phasing out of the N-programmes (albeit briefly as this was reversed in 2010) along with a National Bursary allocation through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) for college students enrolling in the NCV.

The N-Programmes refer to the N1–N6 trimester and semester programmes that have a limited focus, primarily on Business Studies and Engineering.

The NCV is a three-year programme with 19 fields, which combines the fundamental, core and elective subjects with practical training. It provides a broader base of knowledge that should prepare young people for a range of occupational pathways.

Recapitalisation

Through the CCF project, KPMG had been commissioned to conduct an analysis of financial trends in FET colleges for the period 2000–2002 (i.e. pre- and post-merger) as a basis for assessing financial sustainability. The KPMG report on Gauteng colleges (DOE 2004) found that colleges in Gauteng were financially sustainable with relatively good infrastructure, and that the financial risk status of colleges had improved as a result of the mergers. KPMG had also analysed the level of investment needed to level the playing field in the newly merged colleges with respect to infrastructure; it was estimated that an additional R327.3 million would need to be injected into the eight colleges to overcome infrastructure challenges, particularly in less-resourced campuses, as well as R136.7 million to establish best practice learner support functions.

In 2004/05, the National Treasury approved a R1.9 billion recapitalisation grant for all 50 colleges, of which Gauteng colleges were allocated the R414 million identified by KPMG. Much of this investment was aimed at the building or upgrading of infrastructure, purchasing of equipment and training of staff, all in preparation for the introduction of the NCV in 2007 and the phasing out of the N-programmes. The GDE provided colleges with support in developing recapitalisation plans and was responsible for monitoring the expenditure against the grants over the three-year period. A planning grant was provided to bring in the necessary expertise to assist with this. The key purpose of the recapitalisation plans was to ensure that colleges adopted clear strategies for programme implementation (based on 20 identified programme areas) at campus level – strategies that were aligned with provincial priorities, linked to market demand and avoided unnecessary duplication.

Generally, the Gauteng colleges were effective in managing their recapitalisation grants with the support of the GDE, with more than a quarter of funding going to the upgrading of physical infrastructure such as the electrical and engineering workshops, classrooms, computer laboratories and hospitality kitchens. The key requirement was that such investment needed to ensure that the infrastructure was fit for purpose to offer the NCV programmes.

The FET Colleges Act 2006

The implementation of the FET Colleges Act represented the next major challenge for the post-merger transformation of colleges. The Act was expected to consolidate the college transformation process in law, with colleges no longer being FET institutions (which could apply to any form of institution that offered programmes in the FET band) but being deemed to be FET colleges. This distinction gave colleges a distinct title in law and broke from the confusion created by the FET White Paper, which declared secondary schools one of the ‘unresolved policy issues’ (RSA 1998a: 22).

More significantly, however, the FET Colleges Act requires

FET Colleges educator staff and administration staff to transfer from State employment to the employment of the college, so as to make colleges responsive and flexible in dealing with the needs of the community they serve, needs of the province and national priorities.¹

This transfer of staff was made possible through an Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) Collective Agreement in 2007. It was highlighted as the ‘last piece of the puzzle’ by Minister Pandor, along with the recapitalisation programme and the introduction of the NCV and NSFAS bursary scheme.

In effect, the Act sought to increase the autonomy of colleges as a means to make them more accountable to the students they served and thereby to improve the quality of provision (Pule 2011). Pule argues that this Act formed part of a broader policy agenda that was strongly influenced by neo-liberal ideas as espoused by international agencies, seeking to devolve accountability from the state to the institutions. This would supposedly encourage market competition and efficiency. Pule argues that it also reinforces inequality by limiting access to those who can afford to attend.

This represented a policy shift from the rhetoric of the merger period. Initially, the FET White Paper and the FET Act indicated a developmental process towards institutional autonomy for FET institutions, although it highlighted that autonomy be granted on the basis of a realistic assessment of institutional capacity. In an analysis of

¹ Address by the Minister of Education Naledi Pandor during the South African Principals’ Association Conference, Johannesburg

the management capacity of the institutions during the merger period, the DOE found significant variation in the functionality of institutions. Policy discourse shifted to a notion of institutional *authority*, which still provided councils with substantial decision-making power but would not allow the council to become the employer of all staff in the institution. The FET Colleges Act reintroduced the notions of institutional autonomy as espoused in the White Paper. All public FET colleges were deemed to be autonomous, regardless of their governance capacity.

As with the merger process, the concern was the extent to which the implementation of the Act was accompanied by a strong change-management process. The Act created high levels of anxiety in the Gauteng colleges, as well as in colleges more broadly, as staff felt that the decision to have them moved to the employ of college councils from that of the GDE threatened the security of their jobs. This resulted in some staff members – mainly white and senior members (Post Level 3 and above) – opting to be transferred to school districts while others, mainly below Post Level 3, either agreed to teach in schools or resigned. At Sedibeng College, a campus manager reported that the staff losses were experienced even though the principal did his best to negotiate one-on-one with staff, and ‘[went] on a road-show from campus to campus’ to try to persuade them to stay.

This was confirmed by the principal of Sedibeng College, who indicated that the transfer of staff was not explained and risks for colleges and lecturers were not identified. He said that he had invested in developing staff with the hope of enticing them to stay on at the college, but that often the very same staff would leave the college ‘sometimes even without prior notice’.

This level of instability within the colleges was highlighted by Minister Nzimande when addressing the introduction of the FET colleges Amendment Bill in 2011 as follows:

The second objective of this legislation is [to] regularise the employment of college staff, in order to provide stability and enhance retention of staff employed in the Further Education and Training college sector. This will be a major improvement in our work, towards the development and expansion of a vibrant college sector. To date, the sector has not been able to effectively retain its skilled work-force, as jobs in colleges are seen as not secure. The exodus of experienced and qualified staff from the sector, mainly as a result of changes in employment conditions when the current FET Colleges landscape was crafted, has made it difficult to achieve the important goal of building a skilled workforce in the country.²

The GDE had achieved a positive shift in the racial make-up of college councils. The HSRC, in an audit of FET colleges, found that an average of eight council members

² Address by the Minister of Higher Education and Training during a parliamentary debate on the Further Education and Training colleges, Cape Town, 20 September 2011

in each of the eight colleges was black, which represented a significant change from councils that were previously dominated by white staff (Cosser et al. 2011). However, some of the instability associated with the shift to autonomous institutions may have been linked to a lack of effective preparation of college councils to take on this role. In a survey of all Gauteng college councils in 2008, Coetzer (2008) found that in the midst of varied levels of compliance with legislative requirements, the key response was that nearly 60% of council members surveyed said that they had not had training related to their roles as council members and showed substantial gaps in their understanding of their role. Coetzer also found that only 30% of council members were able to report on the existence of induction programmes for new members of council.

Curriculum transformation

The NCV was introduced in 2007 ‘to solve the problem of poor quality programmes, lack of relevance to the needs of the economy, as well as low technical and cognitive skills of the FET college graduates’ (DOE 2008). The introduction of the NCV coincided with the phasing out of the Report 191 or N-programmes. The NCV shifted the core delivery focus of colleges away from trimester and semester theory-driven courses to three-year qualifications, focused on priority areas of skills demand (see box on p. 251). The NCV was originally targeted at Grade 9 school-leavers, who could enroll in a general-vocational qualification that would provide the equivalent of a vocational matric at Level 4 of the National Qualifications Framework. The recapitalisation programme had been specifically geared towards funding the development of workshops for the purpose of delivery of the NCV.

In Gauteng, the NCV enrolled 10 108 FTE students at Level 2 in 2007. This represented 28% of the national enrolment of 26 541 FTEs. By 2009, there were 25 749 FTEs enrolled in the NCV in Gauteng colleges.

The N-programmes still retained high levels of enrolment nationally, despite their phasing out during the period 2007–2009. The DOE was actively promoting the NCV as the qualification of choice, and there was an expectation that the NCV would provide the basis of increased enrolment to reach the national target of 800 000 in FET colleges by 2014, as projected in the National Plan for FET (DOE 2008). The NCV did not realise this massive growth and in late 2009 the DHET extended the phasing out of the N-programmes, under pressure from industry bodies that still relied on these programmes for apprenticeships. By 2010, the N-programmes still accounted for 48% of enrolments in Gauteng colleges (Cosser et al. 2011).

There were two key challenges associated with the introduction of the NCV. The first challenge related to the profile of students being enrolled. The NCV was originally intended to provide an alternative route for post-Grade 9 youth to follow a vocational education pathway. However, the NCV is premised on the presumption that these youth

possess the necessary foundational skills at Grade 9 to cope with the cognitive demands of the curriculum. Given the challenges in the schooling system in achieving sufficient levels of literacy and numeracy at Grade 9, combined with the tendency of college enrolments from this level to be individuals who could not cope with the schooling curriculum and sought colleges as an easier option, the performance of students on the NCV in the first three years was poor. By the end of 2009, the Gauteng colleges had only produced 276 NCV graduates from the 10 108 that had originally enrolled in 2007, while nationally the colleges produced 1 100 graduates in total. After the weak results of the first cohort of NCV students in 2009, the DOE introduced a concession to allow NCV student progression to the next level of the qualification with passes in only four of the seven subjects. This created a backlog of students who were carrying subjects that they could not pass and having to extend their qualification or drop out.

In addition, it was clear that many of the students who were enrolling in NCV were, in fact, post-Grade 12 school-leavers, and that the NCV was not necessarily attracting the target group for which it was intended. A study by Gewer (2010) found that 53% of 2009 NCV students nationally already possessed a Grade 12 certificate. In Gauteng, the data indicated that 42% of NCV students were post-Grade 12, while 30% had completed Grade 11. Furthermore, the HSRC found in 2010 that 58% of college students in Gauteng fell within the 20–24 age bracket (Cosser et al. 2011). The wide age range, as well as the range of school qualifications with which students entered into the NCV, created a significant challenge for lecturers who had to cope with cohorts of students with various levels of foundational competence in the same classroom.

The second challenge related to the preparedness of the college lecturers to teach the NCV curriculum. As part of the recapitalisation programme, the DOE had earmarked R72 million in funding for the reskilling of college lecturers. Colleges themselves were expected to train 2 000 lecturers, while the DOE had targeted 6 000 lecturers for training over a three-year period. In Gauteng, a total of R16.7 million was allocated between 2006/07 and 2008/09 to train lecturing and support staff to prepare for the introduction of the NCV (DOE 2009). Lecturers were trained in outcomes-based facilitation and in the improvement of content knowledge.

As the initial poor results of the first cohort of the NCV emerged, the concern was whether sufficient training had been conducted to reskill lecturers and whether there was, in fact, sufficient capacity in place for such reskilling to take effect. In 2010, the HSRC (Cosser et al. 2011) found that 53% of lecturing staff in Gauteng colleges lacked a suitable qualification to enable them to teach. This finding was consistent with two other national surveys, one of which found that 50% of lecturers across Engineering, Construction and IT had an university qualification (NBI 2010), while the other found that only 44.5% of lecturers nationally reported having an education-related qualification (NBI 2011). The studies also found that many lecturers had five or fewer years of teaching and experience and had no industry experience. Considering the learning needs of college students, the teaching capacity of lecturing staff was clearly an obstacle to effective introduction

of the NCV. Despite the high level of investment in training of lecturers prior to the introduction of the NCV, the findings of these studies suggest that the capacity gaps of lecturers in Gauteng colleges was far deeper than anticipated and that a far more rigorous process of reskilling of lecturers was needed.

Post-2009: Formation of the DHET and the onset of migration

The post-2009 period of college transformation has been dominated by the establishment of the DHET, the emergence of the Green Paper on Post-School Education and Training and the eventual migration of colleges from provincial Departments of Education to the DHET. The establishment of the DHET in 2009 was followed by the signing of the Minister's Delivery Agreement with the president, as part of the government's Programme of Action. The Minister of Higher Education's delivery agreement to 2014 focused on increasing the output of NCV graduates and increased access to N4–N6 as a key form of post-Grade 12 school leavers (DHET n.d.). One of the first actions of the Minister of Higher Education and Training in late 2009 was to 'extend'³ the phasing out of the N-programmes in response to pressure from industries that were struggling to train sufficient artisans and needed the N-programmes to ensure more trade test candidates. The effect of this was that colleges that had been phasing out N-programmes were now expected immediately to begin enrolling students into these programmes.

In addition, the funding that had been allocated through a conditional grant to fund NCV students would now have to be split between students in NCV and N-programmes. Thus began the DHET's programme to speed up the rate of growth in FET colleges massively.

The reintroduction of the N-programmes caused instability in the Gauteng colleges. As one senior manager indicated, while the reintroduction of N-programmes worked well for the colleges (in the form of increased enrolments) and for employers, the 'readiness of the college was tested' as colleges had been preparing for phasing the programmes out and preparing their facilities and staff for the full-scale delivery of NCV.

Also, given the demand for N-programmes that had a shorter delivery time and were perceived to be easier than the NCV, there was a flood of students back into the N-programmes, as evidenced in N-programmes enrolments in Gauteng colleges jumping from 57 673 in 2011 to 94 509 in 2012. Colleges were placed under severe pressure in managing this influx during this period. Colleges were instructed by the

3 Originally the DOE intended to phase out N1–N3 programmes by the end of 2006, and N4–N6 programmes by December 2011. The Minister of Higher Education and Training then extended the phasing out of the N4–N6 programmes to December 2013 and the N1–N3 programmes until the Quality Council for Trade and Occupations (QCTO) had developed appropriate occupational qualifications.

DHET to expand according to their available resources and capacity, but many colleges began enrolling above their capacity, extending N-programmes into the afternoons and evenings and engaging lecturing staff on a contract basis or paying existing staff overtime to deliver these programmes. The dual delivery of NCV subjects and N-programmes during the day placed additional pressure on lecturers, impacting on preparation and marking time.

More broadly, the expansion programme was taking effect across the country, with enrolments in FET colleges increasing significantly in the period 2010 to 2012 from about 420 475 in 2009 to 650 690 in 2012. In Gauteng, there were 123 485 total enrolments in 2012. All of this boded well for achieving greater access, which was a key priority of the new Green Paper.

However, a Gauteng college principal observed that the ‘endless experimentation with the curriculum is one of the main factors that continue to create uncertainty in the sector’. He gave the example of such ‘experimentation in the scrapping and re-introduction of the N Courses’ that resulted in the decrease in NCV enrolments and increase in the N-programmes. The practical implication of this, he said, is that it is not always possible to swap lecturers. He gave the example that Mathematics lecturers for N-programmes found it difficult to teach Mathematics for NCV because of ‘the difference in the structure and pace of these programmes’.

The upside of this experimentation has been a gradual, but substantial, improvement in the performance of the NCV between 2007 and 2012. While detailed figures are not available, the DHET examination data indicates that Gauteng colleges were achieving average certification rates at NCV Level 2 (i.e. students who were passing all seven subjects) of 7.5%. By 2012, this had increased to 37%. While this increase still indicates serious weaknesses in the college system, it signals an upward trend and indicates some improvement in capacity that can be built upon if the focus on teaching and learning capacity-building is intensified. The performance in the N-programmes has similarly improved during this period, although the data is more difficult to analyse given the flexible nature of the delivery of these programmes in the colleges.

The shift of the colleges to the DHET also created another challenging period for the provincial Departments of Education. From 2010 onwards, it was accepted that colleges would be migrating to the DHET. Some provinces accepted this reality and deprioritised any focus on the monitoring of and support for colleges. However, the management teams in colleges continued to be employed by provinces; the conditional grant funding to colleges continued to flow through provincial treasuries; and while the college was ostensibly the employer of teaching and support staff, the transfer of staff to colleges had essentially never fully taken effect – the determination of staff establishment posts and payment of staff salaries was still managed by the province.

This created some confusion in terms of lines of accountability. As one senior manager indicated, the GDE still has full responsibility for human-resource-related issues such as payment of salaries and staff establishment, which is allocated relative to the number of

students in each college. In addition, the GDE continues to conduct moderation and to monitor examination, teaching and learning. However, when asked about the college's current relationship with the GDE, one principal acknowledged that there is a great deal of confusion. He said that 'there are times when I actually don't know who my boss is' – recently, he received correspondence that GDE officials will be visiting the college 'on behalf of DHET'. He said that he often responds to the GDE's requests 'out of respect [...] and not because [he] has to'. He surmised that GDE officials responsible for FET colleges most likely suffer the same kind of confusion, being unsure whether the 'GDE or DHET is their boss'.

However, this Gauteng college principal also expressed great relief at the establishment of the DHET and emphasised that this elevated the status of FET colleges. Until the establishment of the DHET in 2009, colleges had to deal with the uncertainty created by moving staff from the employ of the province to that of colleges. He indicated that the move towards a nationally funded framework gave colleges 'a sense of comfort', security and predictability. He noted that even the lecturers were upbeat, with the exception of those who were still under the college employ and whose 'salaries depended on the college's ability to pay them'.

He also acknowledged that while the sector has 'stabilised' with the migration to the DHET, there are still a few issues that need urgent attention. He said that even though funding was allocated for the recapitalisation of colleges, no allocation for staff was made: '[...] you can imagine sitting with new classrooms without lecturers [...]'. He noted that colleges from pre-merger to 2009 'had to limp along with a small staff establishment'.

Another senior manager further indicated that the 'migration of staff into DHET is underway and has not yet been completed'. She emphasised that the sooner this was completed the better, to ease the confusion that the college experiences. She indicated that she did not know the status of the transfer of principals and deputy principals or how colleges deal with the dual reporting to the GDE and DHET.

Lessons and conclusions

The transformation of the FET college sector over the past 20 years has highlighted important lessons for the management of change in a complex and constantly evolving political context. In transforming the colleges, the government has been caught in the continuous tension of achieving redress, access and equity within a context of creating institutions that needed to be flexible and responsive and have a diverse programme base that could contribute to the employability of young school-leavers.

As things stand today, FET colleges in Gauteng have massively increased their enrolment base and made significant strides towards equity. However, the manner in

which this process was managed has come at a substantial cost for individuals within the province and the colleges, and has impacted on the stability and quality of delivery.

The FET sector was the last part of the education system to be subjected to policy development towards the end of the first ANC government. The initial policy and legislative frameworks reflected the lack of a clear vision of the role of the FET colleges, and it was expected that provincial Departments of Education would drive college transformation alongside the secondary schooling system. This created a vacuum that was temporarily filled by the CCF and that attempted to bring influence from market-driven sectors to bear in incentivising and supporting change in the college sector.

Having realised that redress, access and equity ideals were not being realised, the DOE eventually took control of the transformation process, fast-tracking institutional restructuring through mergers and bringing in a large-scale recapitalisation and curriculum reform programme. Yet again, the DOE sought to set up the conditions for greater institutional autonomy and a market-driven system. However, the complexity of transformation in a context of weak capacity and the relative stagnation of the college system prior to 2009 pre-empted a move to elevate the colleges into a national post-schooling system, with the intention that this could achieve greater alignment with the emerging developmental framework for economic growth.

Within this shifting policy environment, little emphasis had been placed on managing the effects of these changes at provincial and institutional level. Within Gauteng, the GDE was faced with having to manage a rapid merger process, with high levels of resistance and cultural dissonance across the different institutions. Many of these issues were not resolved and continued into the post-merger period. The transfer of staff to the employ of college councils and the introduction of NCV, as well as the reintroduction of the N-programmes, created another challenging process for the GDE to manage in the face of high levels of resistance and weak capacity. The recent migration to the DHET has further destabilised the colleges. Throughout this period, the GDE's role has been to provide institutional and curriculum support while managing payroll and staff establishment. However, the extent of such support has not optimally created conditions for policy ideals to take effect and, in the end, has not enabled young people to gain quality vocational education and training that prepares them for the world of work, self-employment or further study.

To a large extent, the absence of an effective change-management strategy has limited the scope of transformation in the colleges and has, in fact, contributed to relative stagnation rather than to increased responsiveness and quality. The lessons that emerge from this are critical as the DHET moves to expand the college sector in the years ahead. While the migration to the DHET has created a degree of stability, the Gauteng colleges will continue to struggle with the residual destabilising effects of the past 20 years for as long as the necessary change-management mechanisms are not in place.

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CHAPTER 14

CHANGE, ACCESS, QUALITY AND CHOICE: THE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL SECTOR IN GAUTENG 1994–2014

Jane Hofmeyr

Introduction

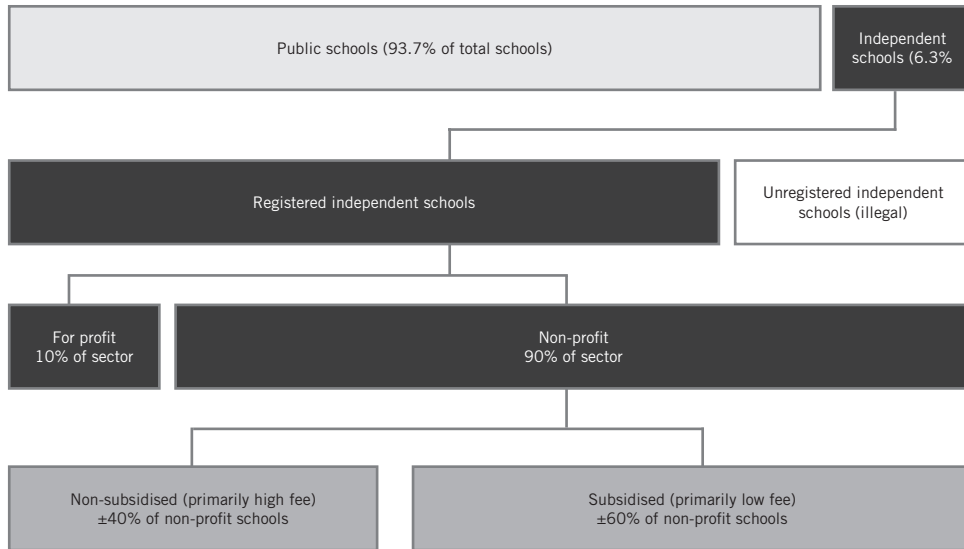
The size, range, diversity and socio-economic profile of the independent school sector in South Africa and Gauteng province has changed significantly in the past two decades. This chapter explores these changes, relations between the sector and the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) and key issues affecting the sector in order to illuminate the developments and make recommendations for the future in the best interests of all learners in Gauteng.

A changing sector

Although the private provision of schooling by people and institutions, separate from the state, has been part of South African society for hundreds of years, only with the advent of a democratic South Africa was the right of anyone to establish an independent school protected in the Constitution (RSA 1996). Section (29) (3) enshrines this right, provided an independent school does not discriminate on the basis of race, is registered with the state, and maintains standards that are not inferior to those of comparable public schools.

The 1996 South African Schools Act (SASA) recognises two categories of schools: public and independent (private). Public schools are state-controlled and independent schools are privately governed and operated. Prior to 1996, independent schools were known as private schools. There is no category of ‘semi-private’ schools: former white schools that are popularly known as ex-Model C schools are not independent but public schools, even though they raise much of their own funding.

Figure 14.1: The nature and size of the independent school sector



The key sub-divisions in the sector are first between registered and unregistered independent schools. By law all independent schools must be registered with the relevant Provincial Departments of Education (PDEs) to operate legally, but there are many unregistered ones.

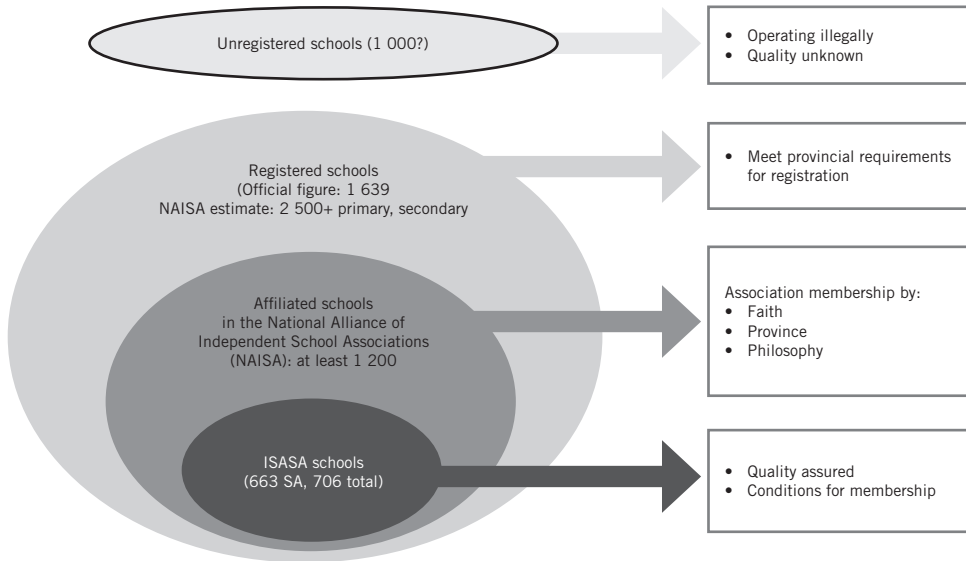
Registered schools are then divided into not-for-profit schools (the majority) and for-profit ones. Registered, not-for-profit independent schools that serve disadvantaged communities are the only ones that may receive a state subsidy and the amount varies according to their fee level. No high-fee school qualifies for a subsidy.

In South Africa there are eight main national associations of independent schools: Accelerated Christian Education (ACE), the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), the Association of Muslim Schools (AMS), the Catholic Schools Proprietors Association (CASPA)/Catholic Institute of Education (CIE), the Federation of Waldorf Schools in Southern Africa (FWSA), the Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa (ISASA), the South African Board of Jewish Education (SABJE) and the South African Montessori Association (SAMA). They represent some 1 200 primary and

high schools. When schools belong to one of these associations, they are provided with a varying range of services.

ISASA is the oldest and largest association, with 706 member schools, of which 663 are in South Africa. Many of these also belong to the other associations.

Figure 14.2: A 'concentric circle' view of the independent schools sector



ISASA estimates that more than half of the registered independent schools in the country belong to no association, although the ratio of affiliated to non-affiliated schools varies across the provinces. In the Eastern Cape, only 61 of 182 registered independent schools are affiliated to any association, but in the Free State, 49 of 74 are affiliated schools. Although the GDE does not collect this information, the national associations' databases suggest that about half of the registered independent schools in Gauteng are affiliated to an association.

The eight national associations and eight provincial bodies have formed the National Alliance of Independent School Associations (NAISA) to represent the sector in its interactions with the government.

In the provinces there are Joint Liaison Committees (JLCs), which represent independent school associations in their respective provinces. NAISA and the JLCs are formally recognised by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and PDEs as the official stakeholder bodies of the independent school sector. NAISA has representatives on all relevant statutory bodies and on the official committees concerned with curriculum and assessment matters.

Growth

The independent school sector has grown rapidly in the past 20 years. Preliminary figures from the DBE indicate that in 2013 there were 1 639 independent schools (DBE 2013), which constitutes 6.3% of all schools in South Africa. From 2000–2012, while public school enrolments grew by 2.3%, enrolments at independent schools almost doubled from 256 283 to 504 395 learners (DBE 2012).

However, the official figures are an undercount of the sector because many provincial databases are not comprehensive or up to date (Motala & Dieltiens 2008: 50). Research conducted by Du Toit (2004) indicates that there were about 2 000 independent schools in South Africa. Umalusi therefore estimated that in 2013 there were well over 3 500 independent schools that it had to accredit (Umalusi 2013).

Research undertaken by the Centre for Development and Enterprise (Schirmer et al. 2010) into the extent of low-fee independent schools in six selected areas with a high concentration of poor people revealed that 30% of the schools were independent, and many were unregistered. Schirmer et al. (2010: 11) point out that '[p]rivate schools exist in unexpected places, and in larger numbers than previously thought; that they are growing rapidly, and that they are playing an increasingly important role in providing poorer people with better education'.

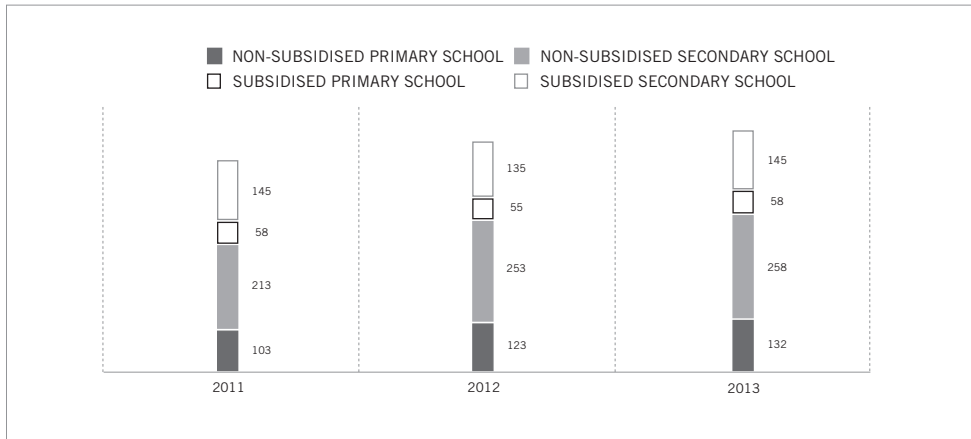
Significant growth is evident in Gauteng, which has the most independent schools in the country. The GDE's review and information from the Independent Schools Directorate (ISD) indicates that between 1995 and 2013 the number of independent ordinary schools increased by 363 to 593, compared with the increase in public ordinary schools from 229 to 2056 schools (GDE 2013a: 4).

However, public ordinary schools tend to be bigger than independent schools, especially when they open, because the demand for public schools in a particular area has been building up for a number of years, whereas new independent schools open with only a few grades, grow grade by grade each year, and then add more classes per grade. In Gauteng on average there are 336 learners in an ISASA primary school and 344 in a secondary school, whereas the average public primary school has 856 learners and the average secondary school has 1 056 learners (Text message, GDE, 13 November 2013).

In 2013, Gauteng public ordinary schools made up 72.2% of all schools in the province (73.7% in 1999). Independent ordinary schools account for 20.8% of schools in the province (13.1% in 1999), educating 10% of learners. Public and independent FET, LSEN and ABET institutions make up the remaining 7% of schools (GDE 2013a: 6).

From 2011 to 2013, the number of independent schools increased from 519 to 593, showing the rapid growth of the sector.

Figure 14.3: Gauteng independent ordinary schools, 2011–2013



The fact that in 2013 there were only 203 subsidised schools as opposed to 390 non-subsidised ones points to the dominance of high-fee schools in Gauteng, the wealthiest province.

It should be noted that different figures relating to the number of schools and learners were received from the EMIS Headcount and the ISD. The GDE’s explanation for this is that the EMIS 2013 data is based on GDE surveys very early in the year, while the figures from the ISD are produced in the second half of the year.

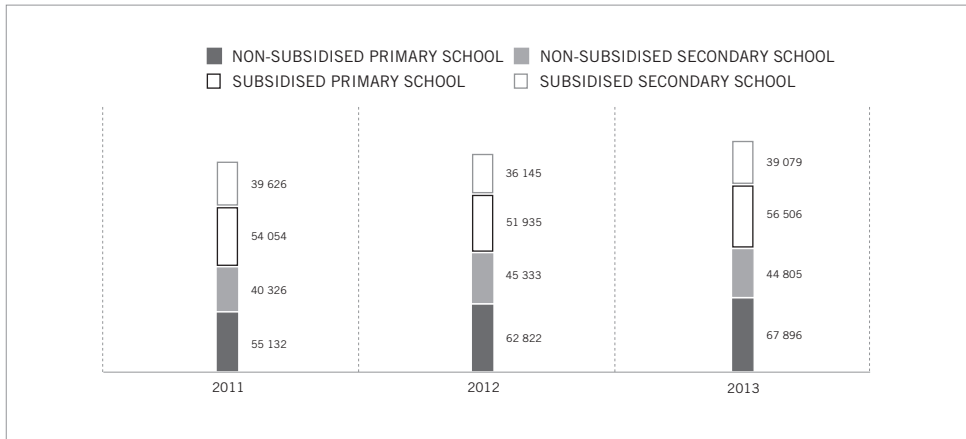
In addition to the timing factor, there is another factor that can explain this significant difference: EMIS categorises primary schools as Grades 1–7 and secondary schools as Grades 8–12, and it categorises a combined school with primary and secondary phases as one secondary school. However, for subsidy purposes, these two phases are separated because the subsidy formulas for primary and secondary schools are different.

This highlights the problem for researchers trying to obtain accurate, comparable statistics on independent schools.

The Gauteng EMIS database shows that learner enrolment in public ordinary schools grew from 1.3 million to close to 1.9 million between 1995 and 2013 – an increase of 44.9%. Over the same period, enrolment in independent ordinary schools grew nearly threefold, from 70 856 to 208 286 – an increase of 294% (GDE 2013a: 5). Between 2011 and 2013, the number of learners increased by 19, 148, as Figure 14.4 shows.

Thus in 2013 the learner enrolment in Gauteng independent schools is roughly three times the size it was in 1995, and the schools are ‘making a meaningful contribution to providing access to education for all Gauteng citizens’ (GDE 2013a: 24).

Figure 14.4: Growth in learner numbers in Gauteng independent ordinary schools 2011–2013



How can this rapid growth be explained?

Internationally, two main demand factors have been identified as responsible for the growth of private education: excess (unmet) demand for education above what the state can provide and differentiated demand for alternative types and quality of education to that provided by the state (James 1991). In South Africa, both types of demand exist: parents want more, better and different education for their children.

The growth of independent schools arises from communities' needs and values. Unmet demand comes from all population groups and it is very strong in Gauteng because of the annual influx of learners from other provinces and immigrants from the rest of Africa.

New independent schools are established in the rapidly expanding suburban areas where government provision lags behind population growth, such as Midrand and the new suburbs in the north-west of Johannesburg. In new informal settlements, independent schools arise to meet the need, as in the case of Masibambane College in Orange Farm.

Unmet demand also gives rise to schools in rural areas where there are too few public schools or none at the appropriate phase of education. Inner-city independent schools in office blocks are established to cater for learners desperate to obtain a national senior certificate, especially overage repeaters who are not allowed to re-enter public schools if they have failed more than once.

These schools and those near taxi ranks – such as Sekolo sa Borokgo, a low-fee school in Randburg – are often chosen by parents because they feel the children will be safer in these schools than in townships. Many black children travel for hours by taxi to attend these schools. Immigrant children are also catered for in inner-city schools (Motala & Dieltiens 2008).

Most of the growth in independent schools arises from the choice of black parents, from both the middle and working classes. Many are small business owners, even in the informal sector.

Socio-economic spread

Low-fee and mid-fee independent schools have been established in ever-increasing numbers since the 1990s to meet the needs of disadvantaged communities and the middle class. For the purpose of awarding subsidies, the state uses the fee level charged by a school as a proxy for determining the socio-economic level of the communities they serve.

The ISD of the GDE categorises subsidised independent schools in the following way:

Table 14.1: ISD categorisations of subsidised independent schools

Subsidy level	Number of learners (Primary Phase)	Number of learners (Secondary Phase)	Total
1 (60%)	19 110	6 722	25 832
2 (40%)	23 980	20 331	44 311
3 (25%)	8 471	6 274	14 745
4 (15%)	3 744	5 179	8 923
Total	55 305	38 506	93 811

Most significantly, the overwhelming majority of learners in subsidised schools (70 143) are in the lowest-fee schools that receive subsidies of 60% and 40% of the provincial average estimated spend on a public school learner (PAEPL). This shows that most *subsidised* independent schools in Gauteng are serving disadvantaged communities.

Although most of the high-fee schools in the province belong to ISASA, membership of ISASA has also shifted significantly in the past decade: one third of its members are now subsidised low- and mid-fee schools, and 36 of its national members charge fees below R7 400 a year.

Unfortunately, the independent sector also contains fly-by-night schools, most of which are unregistered and thus illegal. The fly-by-nights give independent education a bad name: uninformed parents are exploited with very poor schooling, absconding owners and examination irregularities. Although these schools should be closed by the PDEs, many continue to exist because they are below the official radar. Since 2012, the ISD has developed a database of schools operating illegally and a programme has been put in place to assist these schools to register.

However, not all unregistered schools are fly-by-nights. There are different reasons for why unregistered schools exist: many of them have never tried to be registered and want to operate below the radar, but others have tried unsuccessfully to register and navigate the complex regulatory environment. Others, whose registration applications

have not been processed timeously by the GDE, have to open before they receive a formal registration number.

The number of unregistered schools remains impossible to determine as they are not recorded on any official database.

Better education

The desire for quality schooling that has fanned much of the growth of the sector has come from communities and parents who are dissatisfied with government schooling and want a better-quality education for their children as the critical determinant of their life chances.

Schirmer et al. (2010) interviewed the principals of 136 public and 57 independent schools, administered tests to their Grade 6 learners and investigated other factors that influence quality of education, such as class size, resources and educator absenteeism. The research found that on the whole, the independent schools achieved better results than public schools and were supported by local parents, who chose to pay fees rather than to send their children to what they see as poorly performing public schools.

It is important to note that not all independent schools provide quality education. For example, in Gauteng, 23 registered independent schools were among the worst-performing schools in the 2012 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination. However, a closer analysis of these schools reveals that they are top-heavy high schools that accept learners in Grade 12 who have failed matric, offering them another chance of passing. There are very few learners in the grades below that. In one year it is very difficult for these schools to remediate the learning gaps of the repeaters. Consequently, the schools' NSC results are poor, and because they cannot achieve the high GDE matric pass rate (83.9% in 2012), they lose their subsidy. This makes their task even more difficult and results in a further drop in quality.

It has been argued by some researchers that the demand for quality education in South Africa is linked to the poor quality of public education as a whole (Motala & Dieltiens 2008). Indeed, a survey of the sector by the International Finance Corporation (Musker & Du Toit 2009: 41) predicted that the sector will continue to grow as the public schooling system continues to face quality challenges, especially in townships and rural areas. The fact that most of the best ex-Model C schools are full and their fees are very high (in 2015 the highest fees are likely to exceed R30 000 per annum) will provide an extra impetus.

However, a number of analysts have identified the beginning of a slow improvement in the quality of education as a result of the Schooling 2025 Action Plan and other key initiatives of the DBE and PDEs. This is particularly true in Gauteng where between 2009 and 2012, the Grade 12 pass rate improved from 71% to 83.9%. The number of

learners achieving a university entrance pass also rose from 33% in 2011 to 35% in 2012 (Creecy 2013).

Different education

The advent of democracy restored the universal right of parental choice of education, which apartheid had removed, and parents of all race groups are actively exercising that right. Parents' desire for education different to that provided by the public system has increased the range of independent schools available and thus the real choice for them.

The surveys of independent schools undertaken by Musker and Du Toit (2009) showed that the largest categories are community schools followed by religious schools. Most schools are Christian in ethos or denomination and there is considerable growth of schools linked to charismatic Christian churches. However, the sector also includes international schools writing foreign examinations, Montessori and Waldorf schools offering alternative educational approaches, online schools like Brainline and schools for expatriate groups such as the French, German and American schools.

Recent research on the key factors affecting parents' choice of independent primary schools in Gauteng by Immelman (2013) reveals that the top five factors influencing relatively affluent and middle-class parents' choice were small classes, a religious ethos, qualified and committed educators, positive discipline and individual attention for the child.

In the case of low-fee schools, Schirmer et al.'s 2010 CDE research indicated that black parents chose them because they achieved better results than public schools, were more accountable to parents because of fees, had English as the medium of instruction, had smaller classes, and had educators who were well prepared and committed and followed up on a child's performance.

The independent school sector is overwhelmingly not-for-profit, possibly because only these schools can qualify for a subsidy. Although for-profit independent schools in South Africa are still a small proportion of the sector by international standards, both the number of schools and their learner enrolments are growing rapidly.

Decades ago there were private colleges, run on a for-profit basis usually to provide focused provision in the last phase of schooling at the school-leaving grades, sometimes known as 'cram colleges'. However, in the last 20–30 years, more for-profit independent schools have been established, especially branded chains. Publicly listed, for-profit chains are a notable part of the sector. Advtech owns the well established Crawford College group of about 30 schools that provide secular education from preprimary to high school for the high-fee market segment. With its purchase of Trinity House, AdvTech entered a different segment of the market – one in which parents seek a religious-ethical ethos to their children's education.

In 2011 a new publicly listed chain was set up by Curro Holdings, which aims to grow its current 21 000 learners to 100 000 in 80 schools by 2020 (Govender 2013). As most Curro schools charge fees of between R30 000 and R45 000 per year, they are intended as affordable schools for the middle class.

A most significant recent development is low-fee chains of non-profit and for-profit schools. In July 2012, the Public Investment Corporation (PIC) of the state and Old Mutual Investment Group SA (OMIGSA) invested in Meridian Schools, another Curro brand, to expand quality low-fee education for poorer communities. Meridian schools charge fees of between R7 000 and R15 000 per annum.

Similarly, in March 2013 the PIC and OMIGSA signed an agreement to finance the renovation and expansion of BASA Educational Institute Trust schools. This black-owned chain was established in 1992 and operates four very-low-fee schools in Soweto, the Johannesburg inner city and Diepsloot, catering for 5 000 learners.

The Spark Schools chain, launched in 2013, aims to grow to 64 low-fee schools in 10 years. This is an innovative model of blended learning that integrates classroom teaching with digital learning and centralises administration, curricula and professional development.

Educators

Parallel to the growth in the number of Gauteng independent schools and learners, the number of educators also increased rapidly between 1995 and 2013 (from 4 810 to 15 744).

In 2012, ISASA member schools in Gauteng employed 5 346 full-time educators. Of these, about 29% had a qualification level of matric plus five years or higher (Honours with teaching diploma). About 5% had a qualification of matric plus seven years or higher (masters equivalent or above, with a teaching diploma). By law, as in public schools, educators in independent schools have to be registered with the South African Council for Educators (SACE). To be registered they have to have a professional qualification or be studying for one.

Although Schirmer et al.'s CDE research (2010) found that there were some unqualified educators in registered and unregistered low-fee independent schools, they tended to achieve better results than equivalent, local public schools. One of the major challenges for low-fee private schools is how to recruit high-quality educators. Musker and Du Toit (2009) found that across the whole sector, paying competitive, market-related salaries was the greatest financial challenge for schools.

The sector in general, and the low-fee schools in particular, cannot offer salaries that can compete with Post Level 1 educator salary packages in the public sector, not only in terms of the basic salaries themselves but because public sector educators receive some

35% to 37% on top of their salaries in benefits such as housing allowances and medical aid and pension contributions.

The cumulative effect of the significant salary hikes of public school educators in recent years has made their total remuneration unaffordable for most independent schools. As the annual 2013 ISASA Salary Survey shows, it is only the high-fee private schools that are able to match or exceed public school educator remuneration, particularly in the early years of employment. This reality impacts on independent schools' ability to recruit and retain talent. The general educator shortage does not help.

Although 85% or more of their budgets is spent on educator salaries, low-fee schools are only able to offer considerably lower salaries than the public sector (often without any benefits such as pension and medical aid contributions), and they regularly lose educators to public schools. Despite this, many educators enter, stay in or return to the low-fee independent sector for altruistic reasons, greater curricular freedom, or because the school is well managed with a strong values base and a more enabling environment.

In mid-fee and low-fee independent schools, many educators are from African countries (especially Zimbabwe, as well as from Kerala, India) on work permits because they are qualified to teach the scarce subjects, such as mathematics and science, where the shortage of South African educators is greatest.

The majority of educators in the independent school sector do not belong to any of the educator associations or unions and, if they do, it is usually to the National Professional Teachers' Association of South Africa (NAPTOSA).

Equity

The issue of racial equity in independent schools is complex and changing. Whereas in the early 1990s the independent school sector consisted of predominantly white, traditional, high-fee schools, today the sector is approaching racial equity. Responding to a parliamentary question in February 2010, the Minister of Basic Education indicated that 72% of learners at independent schools were black (58% were black African). Figure 14.5 highlights the racial breakdown of learners at Gauteng's registered independent schools, revealing a similar profile: 72% of the learners at independent schools are black, and 59% are black African.

Although this is the case for the independent schools sector as whole, it does not hold in the case of high-fee schools where diversity has made slower progress. As a result of the opening of public schools to all racial groups in the early 1990s, the traditional independent schools charging high fees initially became 'paler' with an exodus of black learners; the schools have had to reverse this trend.

ISASA's membership database shows that the national learner enrolment in high-fee member schools, which charge fees of more than R30 000 a year, is about 29% black,

Figure 14.5: Learners in Gauteng independent schools, by race



Source: Gauteng Department of Education, 2012 statistics

of whom 18% are African. In high-fee schools in Gauteng, the figures are virtually the same. Across all ISASA member schools in South Africa, the learner enrolment is 44% black (34% African). Many of the schools in the sector are world-class institutions and increasingly attract foreign learners from Africa and beyond.

Far slower progress has been made in ISASA schools in terms of educator diversity: across South African schools only 17% are black, with 8.5% being African. In Gauteng the figures are much the same: 16% black with 9% black African.

In the case of gender equity in Gauteng, female enrolment in independent schools is 50.9%, which is more than the 49.5% female enrolment in public schools (DBE 2012).

Most independent schools are co-educational. Contrary to popular perception, the number of single-sex independent schools is limited. Only two new girls' schools have been established in the last decade: St Peter's Preparatory School for Girls and the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy, both in Gauteng. However, single-sex schools are attractive to many white and black parents: for example, Indian parents often choose single-sex schools, especially for their daughters.

Scholarships and bursaries

Many independent schools, especially those charging high fees, offer merit-based scholarships to learners. Most independent schools offer full or partial bursaries to deserving children who apply.

Once public schools were opened to all races in the 1990s, high-fee independent schools lost donor bursaries for black children. Thus, today, very few high-fee independent schools benefit from external bursaries for disadvantaged black learners as they did during the apartheid era, although mid-fee and low-fee schools do still receive some donor bursaries.

However, independent schools have made progress in increasing their own financial support to learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. About 140 ISASA member schools in Gauteng completed the association's 2012 sustainability survey. The survey indicates that 4 685 learners received some form of bursary assistance directly from schools and that the total value of the bursary assistance was R145 million per annum. Across the country, the 329 schools that completed the survey provided approximately R317 million in financial aid to 10 273 learners a year.

What is most notable is the number of low-fee schools that provide financial aid to very needy learners. If children are orphaned or their parents suffer sudden financial hardship, many of these schools find donors to enable the children to stay at the school.

The facts disprove two dominant public misperceptions: that the sector consists mostly of wealthy, white, traditional, exclusive schools, or that independent schools are exploitative fly-by-nights.

Legislative and regulatory framework

International experience has shown that a positive policy environment is critical for the expansion of the independent school sector: unless it is enabling, the sector will not grow optimally, schools will not survive and thrive, and opportunities for public-private collaboration and partnerships to improve choice, access and quality of schooling for all children will be not optimised in the national interest (Schirmer et al. 2012).

In South Africa, the Constitution and the SASA provide a supportive environment. Other foundational legislation – such as the Income Tax Act (1962) and Municipal Property Rates Act (2004) – provide tax exemption to not-for-profit, registered public benefit organisations (PBOs), as well as reduced property rates for independent schools that qualify for these benefits.

However, the regulatory environment is rapidly becoming disabling because of ill-considered secondary legislation (with unintended consequences) from all levels and sectors of government, and incorrect policy implementation by PDEs.

Independent schools operate in a maze of legislation that is expanding every year and threatens the two pillars of their sustainability: enough independent 'space' to follow their distinctive missions and innovate, and sufficient resources to be viable. During the past three years, the policy unit of ISASA has identified 246 pieces of legislation that affect independent schools and published 78 analyses of those that most affect its members.

The sector and the GDE

The sector's relationship with the government is complex and multilayered: it ranges from cooperation and partnerships to legal action. At a national level, the sector's relationship with the DBE is cordial and constructive and its contribution to education is recognised. When Minister Angie Motshekga opened the ISASA Conference in September 2013, she emphasised: 'The independent school sector and ISASA in particular have a key role to play in education' (Motshekga 2013).

This positive relationship with the DBE extends to some provinces, with relationships with GDE officials varying between positive and negative over time. Formal engagement of independent schools with the GDE occurs through the Gauteng Joint Liaison Committee (GJLC), which consists of nine associations, including representatives of most of the national associations in NAISA and some that are specifically in Gauteng:

- The Alliance of Black Independent Schools (ABIS), which represents predominantly inner-city schools for disadvantaged black learners;
- The Akademie Reformatoriese Opleiding en Studies (AROS), with Afrikaans-medium member schools; and
- The Informal Settlement Independent School Forum (ISISF), which represents independent schools in informal settlements, mainly concentrated around Orange Farm.

Changing administration

Over the past 20 years, the GDE's administration of independent schools has changed significantly as it moved from a decentralised system to a centralised one.

Before 2010, the administration of independent schools within the GDE was largely decentralised and located in 12 districts. Policy implementation at the district level was poor and characterised by a lack of understanding of the key legislation applicable to independent schools.

The misapplication of the legislation or administrative injustice was taken up by individual associations and the GJLC to defend the rights and freedoms of the sector, and even to take legal action as a last resort. This led to a strained relationship between the GDE and the associations, which became distant at best, with the associations becoming marginalised at worst.

In an effort to remedy this, the GDE established a closer relationship with the GJLC by creating the Independent Schools Stakeholders Forum (ISSF), with which the GDE meets once a term to exchange information and address key issues.

In 2010, as a result of many problems with the administration of independent schools, MEC Barbara Creecy decided to centralise this function. The ISD was established at

head office, headed by a chief director, and the administration of independent schools and the relationship with the GJLC improved.

In addition, after 2010, the ISD instituted meetings with principals of independent schools, which take place once a term around the province. In 2013 MEC Creecy also established an MEC Task Team, which comprises the head of department and the chairperson and vice-chairperson of the GJLC to resolve critical issues.

In a meeting with ISASA on 12 November 2013, Len Davids (Deputy Director-General: Curriculum Management Development, responsible for independent schools) indicated that the significant growth of the sector in recent years has outstripped the capacity of the GDE to fulfil its functions with regard to independent schools and that this requires attention (Meeting with Davids 12 November 2013).

The two main areas of provincial control over independent schools are the registration of schools and granting of subsidies, and the monitoring thereof. However, implementation of the national curriculum and assessment and promotion requirements also fall under the control of the PDEs.

Registration

The SASA (1996) provides for the registration of independent schools and requires PDEs to promulgate regulations for the registration of independent schools in consultation with the schools and their associations.

In 2004, GDE officials engaged with the GJLC to draw up reasonable, fair and lawful requirements. ISASA obtained legal opinion on the GDE's draft regulations and on the basis of this, excellent registration conditions were jointly developed. These were endorsed by Minister Kader Asmal as a template that he recommended to the other PDEs.

Unfortunately, when it came to registering new independent schools, most district officials neglected this part of their duties and there were huge delays. Many independent schools had to wait years – some more than four years – for their registration to be finalised.

Subsidies

In the 1990s, all independent schools received a state subsidy. However, in 1998 the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF) limited subsidies to not-for-profit independent schools that serve disadvantaged communities, effective from 2000. The NNSSF makes provision for the PDEs to subsidise such schools according to a sliding scale based on each province's PAEPL. The subsidy ranges from 15%–60% of the PAEPL. In 2012, on average across the provinces, the PAEPL was R12 000, so an

independent school's fees had to be lower than R6 000 per annum in order to qualify for a 60% subsidy.

There are strict subsidy requirements that involve detailed annual reporting, adherence to a management checklist and submission of audited financial statements, as well as the achievement of specified learner results equal to or better than the provincial pass rate in the Annual National Assessments and NSC. If schools are subsidised they can have unannounced inspections by the PDE. In the case of a non-subsidised school, the PDE may undertake a visit but it has to inform the independent school of the intended visit and its purpose and negotiate a date. The statutory authority to quality-assure and accredit independent schools is given to Umalusi.

In 2000, a problem occurred in Gauteng with the incorrect implementation of the NNSSF. When all efforts to correct this had failed, Excelsior High School and the Association of Independent Schools for Black Children took legal action against the GDE for not implementing the subsidy formulas that differentiated between the PAEPLs applicable to a primary school and a secondary school for the year 2000. Judge Edwin Cameron (*Excelsior High School v Member of the Executive Council for Education, Gauteng 2000*) ruled that the independent high schools should be paid the higher per capita subsidy because they had legitimate expectations that they would be paid this amount based on meetings and correspondence with the GDE and this could not be unilaterally changed later. He cited Judge K O'Regan in a Constitutional Court judgment (*Premier, Province of Mpumalanga and Another v Executive Committee of the Association of Governing Bodies of State Aided Schools: Eastern Transvaal, 1999*):

Citizens are entitled to expect that government policy will ordinarily not be altered in ways which would threaten or harm their rights or legitimate expectations without their being given reasonable notice of the proposed change or an opportunity to make representations to the decision maker.

After this ruling, the GDE's implementation of the NNSSF improved and for many years it was one of the best PDEs in this regard. Recently, however, problems with late payments and new schools' applications for subsidies have occurred, which the GDE is currently investigating.

Unfortunately, many PDEs ignore the NNSSF when administering subsidies for independent schools. In 2010, the Kwazulu-Natal JLC instituted legal action against the KwaZulu-Natal PDE underpayment of subsidies. This resulted in a landmark Constitutional Court judgment on 25 April 2013 (*KwaZulu-Natal Joint Liaison Committee v Member of the Executive Council, Department of Education, KwaZulu-Natal and Others, 2013*) that has far-reaching implications for PDEs' administration of subsidies. The Court found that the right to basic education applies to all learners, whether in public or independent schools, and confirmed that 'independent schools

constitute a saving on the public purse'. The PDE was ordered to pay the schools the shortfall in the first tranche of the 2009 subsidy because it had retrospectively reduced it by 30%.

As independent schools educate 10% of the learners in Gauteng, they free up significant funds that could be spent on public school provision. Research undertaken by Cornerstone Economic Research (Carter & Abdoll 2013: 24) calculated that if all learners in subsidised independent schools in Gauteng had returned to public schools in 2012, it would have cost the province another R518 589 918 in operating costs alone. It is in nobody's interest if schools that are serving disadvantaged learners do not obtain the correct subsidy or lose their subsidy unnecessarily, which thus forces them to raise their fees, making them unaffordable for poor learners who then have to be accommodated in public schools.

Curriculum

Many education officials in the PDEs are unfamiliar with the legislation under which independent schools exist and function, and do not understand the differences between the rights and responsibilities of independent and public schools. Policies are misapplied, or those that apply to public schools only have been imposed on independent schools.

In Gauteng, this was the case with the implementation of Curriculum 2005 that district officials incorrectly insisted on imposing on subsidised independent schools. In terms of the SASA, independent schools have the freedom to decide on their own promotion and retention standards as long as they are not inferior to those of comparable public schools. However, district officials interfered in many cases and forced schools to promote children who, in the professional judgement of a school's educators, were not ready to learn effectively at the next grade.

More recently, these problems have been exacerbated by *The Regulations Pertaining to the National Curriculum Statement Grades R–12* gazetted in December 2012 that impose a prescriptive curriculum and assessment regime on both public and independent schools. The DBE's motivation is to improve the quality of public education, but the curriculum, assessment and promotion requirements severely constrain independent schools' independence because the content, methodology, pace, sequencing and assessment of all subject curricula intended for public schools are now legally binding on them. The promotion criteria also require independent schools to lower their standards and comply with the lower state promotion requirements.

After ISASA's engagement with Minister Motshekga, she indicated that the regulations were never intended to be imposed rigidly on independent schools, agreed to review them and instructed the PDEs not to enforce them.

However, in a number of provinces – including Gauteng – some district officials have been enforcing them, requiring schools to submit termly reports on assessment and

moderation, conducting curriculum compliance audits and interfering in promotion and retention of learners. The ISD was not aware of this.

As a result of the recommendations of a joint DBE/NAISA task team, changes to the regulations that exempt independent schools from the problematic ones have been accepted by all the education departments and will shortly be gazetted for public comment.

Accountability

In general terms, it can be argued that independent schools are among the most accountable schools in society – they will go out of business if they do not deliver to their clients.

They are subject to monitoring and inspection by numerous state authorities: they have to meet the conditions for registration with the province (which many public schools would fail); their educators have to be registered with SACE; schools that apply for a subsidy must meet additional management and financial conditions; and they undergo visits and inspections by PDE officials – and monitoring, quality assurance and inspections by Umalusi – to obtain accreditation. The requirements for accreditation determined by Umalusi (2013) are frequent, complex, onerous and expensive, involving schools in considerable time, money and effort.

Independent schools also have to meet the strict requirements of the key statutes that govern their legal status, such as the Companies Act.

Current problems

Despite the improvements brought about by the centralisation of the administration of independent schools in the ISD, there have been significant policy gaps and implementation problems. Policy gaps have occurred in two areas: registration and subsidies.

The original registration conditions of most PDEs are out of date with the emergence of new statutory bodies and legislation, so they have to be revised. In the GDE, these have been under review since 2010 and despite extensive consultations with the GJLC and agreed drafts, the *Notice for the Registration and Subsidy of Independent Schools* was only gazetted in October 2013. The Management Checklist is also part of the Notice. This is very important because it contains the additional conditions that a not-for-profit subsidised school must meet to obtain a subsidy and the application form for a subsidy is based on this. The long delay has created considerable uncertainty for the sector.

The GDE's current implementation of registration and subsidy legislation and policies has shortcomings. Although a few new schools have been registered timeously, there are

still delays in the finalisation of the registration of many independent schools. The policy provides for this process to be finalised in 90 days, but this rarely happens.

In the case of the management of subsidies, the main problems include the following:

- The PAEPLs used for independent school subsidies from 2010 show a puzzling trend. Although the PAEPLs for 2010/11 increased significantly from 2009/10, for the next two years they remained virtually static at some R11 000 for primary schools and R12 000 for secondary schools. This means that without an increase equal to inflation, independent schools received less subsidy per learner in real terms.

The 2014/2015 PAEPLs show an increase of only R157 for primary schools, while the secondary school one has risen by R778 to R13 490.

Since 2005, the GDE's actual spend on independent school subsidies has increased by only 14%, despite the significant growth in learner numbers. As a percentage of the total education budget, transfers to independent schools decreased from 1.59 % in 2010/11 to 1.45 % in 2012/13 (Carter & Abdoll 2013: 15–19).

As the average spend on public ordinary school learners in Gauteng has increased significantly since 2005, this raises the question whether the correct PAEPL was used and whether schools received the subsidy due to them in terms of the NNSSE.

- The payment of subsidies is erratic and not according to the prescribed dates in the NNSSE. A problem has emerged with the categorisation of new schools applying for a subsidy after 2009, which the ISD is investigating.
- Since 2011, subsidised independent schools have been subjected to multiple financial audits by different departments of the GDE, the province and external consultants. Following the much-publicised subsidy fraud in 2011 at two subsidised Ekhukhanyeni schools, the GDE instituted a rapid assessment inspection of all 205 subsidised independent schools to check compliance with subsidy conditions. Different external consultants were appointed to audit the finances of the 205 schools, resulting in many schools being repeatedly audited by different consultants, using different instruments. Most of the independent schools were found to have no financial management problems (112 schools) or only minor problems to address (57 schools). However, 36 were referred for a full forensic audit, after which 14 were referred to the police for further investigation.
- In addition, the GDE has established an inspectorate for independent schools to audit their finances, establish operational standards and check for compliance by rigorous monitoring of registration conditions through announced and unannounced visits.
- The Finance Department of the GDE also undertakes financial due diligence audits of the schools, believing that this is required by the Public Finance

Management Act, although that only applies to *public* entities that receive state funding. The National Treasury has confirmed that this is not required and no other PDE does this.

As a result of recent meetings the GDE has agreed that fully compliant, well-performing schools will not be inspected and audited every year, but only every three years. This differentiated approach will save the GDE considerable expense and effort.

- Subsidy fraud is unacceptable, but the multiple audits by different agencies have resulted in many well-managed, high-performing schools undergoing seven different audits – without receiving feedback reports. A lack of coordination between the GDE and other parts of the provincial government and inadequate control of the external agencies has involved the province in considerable unnecessary cost and the schools in an endless, time-consuming compliance process.
- On a number of occasions during the past 20 years, the GDE has had to instigate audits of subsidised independent schools. It is regrettable that fraud and mismanagement in a few independent schools required this, but there must also have been failures in GDE oversight because schools have to apply for a subsidy annually with considerable supporting documentation, including audited financial statements. It is of concern to the sector that no official announcement of an internal investigation and corrective action to prevent this from recurring has been made public.

Collaboration and partnerships

Independent schools have responded to requests for assistance from MEC Barbara Creecy and the GDE and are involved as service providers in its programmes.

Following meetings of the MEC with various leaders of faith-based organisations (FBOs), including independent schools, about how they could assist with the renewal of the schooling system, in March 2013 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the FBOs and the GDE to the effect that FBOs would use their own platforms to promote quality education as a right for every child in Gauteng. There is a template agreement that can be used by any school and FBO to enter into a local partnership.

Through their many partnerships and development programmes with disadvantaged public schools and communities, independent schools are making a significant contribution to improving the quality of education in the system. Irrespective of their fee level, most independent schools undertake initiatives to assist these schools and communities, reaching thousands more educators and learners than those in their own schools.

St Mary's Diocesan School for Girls in Pretoria is a partner in the Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS). It has been contracted to work with 1 585 educators in 132 schools educating 79 392 learners in the Tshwane West and Gauteng North areas. It receives funding from the GDE through the Joint Education Trust to employ ex-educators as coaches who are each allocated about five schools. Their job is to support and mentor educators to use best teaching practices in implementing the curriculum.

St Stithians College has established a Thandulwazi Maths and Science Academy, which annually benefits more than 2 000 historically disadvantaged learners and educators from schools across Gauteng and neighbouring regions. Its Teacher Development Programme offers professional development workshops and skills training for over 1 000 educators from 450 public schools on 11 Saturdays a year. The Saturday School provides extra tuition for more than 1 100 FET-phase learners from 160 high schools, with a special focus on Mathematics and Science.

Many independent schools in Gauteng are participating in the ISASA Mathematics and English Programme (M&E Programme) to increase the pool of high-quality black educators of Mathematics, Science and English and of black matriculants from disadvantaged backgrounds with university entrance passes in these subjects. The educator internship component of the programme involves school-based training of interns in ISASA member schools and completion of a UNISA education degree. In Gauteng, the interns are trained in 15 ISASA schools. The DBE, in conjunction with ISASA and Investec, has established a public-private partnership to expand the pool of interns with their combined resources. On graduation, 70% will teach in public schools and the rest in independent schools.

In the M&E Learner Programme, disadvantaged Grade 9 learners with potential are given bursaries to complete the FET phase of their schooling. In Gauteng there are five participating ISASA schools.

Recommendations

Independent school associations welcome the GDE's move to a centralised administration in the ISD because the coordination of this function within the GDE has improved. Communication is better; the relationship between the GDE and associations of independent schools has been formalised and they have participated more in the policy-making process; and the GDE has become more accessible and responsive. The MEC and the senior managers responsible for independent schools have taken action when serious problems have been brought to their attention by the GJLC and ISASA.

However, as the audit experience shows, there still needs to be better coordination among the different sections of the GDE to avoid duplication. The process of developing

new provincial legislation also needs to be closely coordinated between the different sections of the GDE and the legislature to ensure that new legislation is finalised timeously.

Clearly the processing of registration applications requires a more efficient system, especially given the high volume of new applications – some 126 in 2013. Without registration, independent schools cannot become legal, gain access to subsidies or be accredited.

Over time, there has been a considerable turnover of officials concerned with independent schools, making it essential that new officials in the Directorate are fully versed in all the foundational legislation affecting independent schools and understand their rights so that incorrect policies and practices do not result. In addition, policy implementation should be carefully monitored by senior GDE management.

In this regard, the *Rights and Responsibilities of Independent Schools* – part of the 2008 Communications Protocol agreement signed between the DBE and NAISA – is essential because '[t]his document, like the Communications Protocol, applies to the Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) as well' (DBE 2008: 2).

In NAISA's experience in other provinces, a workshop between the Directorate and the associations to specifically explore and discuss relevant national and provincial legislation and policies affecting independent schools is of mutual benefit.

Of concern to NAISA and the GJLC are the numerous unregistered independent schools operating below the official radar. The GDE needs to identify them and assist them to register or close them down if they cannot meet the conditions for registration.

The sector supports the need adequately and appropriately to be regulated and monitored, and to hold schools accountable for the use of public funds, but for schools to expand, survive and thrive, an enabling policy environment is critical. In the country and Gauteng, a disabling environment is being created through over-regulation, excessive controls and increasing government intrusion into a sector that the Constitution recognises as independent. Without substantive independence there will be no real choice for parents who want a different education from that which the state can provide.

There is a new dynamism in the independent school sector as more players and chain schools emerge with the aim of making independent schools affordable to more South African families. The GDE's support for the opening of new schools, especially low-fee ones, is critical, so that they can provide access to unserved and under-served learners, while still being held accountable for quality education by their users and subject to appropriate state monitoring.

A success story is the existing partnerships between the GDE and independent schools, which point to possibilities for more partnerships. The sector wants to be a valuable complementary partner to public education. School systems need diversity and experimentation and the GDE could spearhead and trial innovative strategies and programmes both in and with independent schools to great mutual benefit.

Conclusion

In 2013, the range of independent schools in South Africa was extensive, access for poor children was far greater, three quarters of the learners were black, the majority of schools were young (established since 1990) and co-educational, and half charged low to average fees. The vast majority of educators in independent schools had SACE registration, did not belong to an educator union and received less remuneration than public school educators. Most educators were white and a significant number was from other countries.

During the past 20 years in Gauteng, independent schools have grown at a significantly faster rate than public schools, with the number of schools more than doubling and the number of learners more than tripling. In providing more access and choice for parents, the sector is making a substantial contribution to the provision of schooling in the province at a considerable cost-saving to the province. By making public policy and implementation as facilitative as possible while maintaining appropriate regulatory oversight, the GDE can enable its future development. Through new partnerships and collaboration the resources of the sector can be harnessed to improve the quality of schooling and development in the province.

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**Interventions
to Improve
Schools, their
Measurement
and
Assessment
of Impact**

CHAPTER 15

EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES IN GAUTENG 1995–2011: AN OVERVIEW OF PROVINCIAL PERFORMANCE IN STANDARDISED ASSESSMENTS

Nicholas Spaul

Introduction

The quality of education in any country is central to the well-being of its citizens. Whether it is through increased social development or improved economic prospects, few would argue with the supposition that education is a wholly positive good. The social development motivation posits that the provision of quality education is a prerequisite for expanding the capabilities and freedoms of individuals, enabling them to pursue the sort of lives they have reason to value (Sen 1999). Without acquiring the basic knowledge, skills and values that they should be acquiring at school, it is difficult to argue that these children will ever be full members of a modern society. That is to say, they will not be able to contribute and participate fully in the social and political life of their community and country. The economic motivation, on the other hand, also prioritises education and sees it as the most important element of human capital. This theory suggests that educated workers are more competent, productive and innovative than uneducated workers, and

thus also have better labour market prospects than their un(der)educated counterparts. This is extrapolated to the aggregate level, with a more educated workforce leading to greater economic growth and financial prosperity.

Earlier research on education in developing countries focused almost exclusively on access to education rather than the quality of that education. However, more recent scholarship has shifted the focus towards ensuring that children are not only in school, but also learning. As Pritchett (2004: 1) explains: ‘Getting and keeping children “in school” is merely a means to the more fundamental objectives of [...] creating competencies and learning achievement’. Furthermore, the case for the economic importance of educational *quality* has also been made on empirical grounds, most notably by the pioneering work of Hanushek & Woessman (2008: 608): ‘Schooling that does not improve cognitive skills, measured here by comparable international tests of Mathematics, Science and Reading, has limited impact on aggregate economic outcomes and on economic development’. In this research, they go on to show that improving the cognitive skills of the student population is associated with significant economic gains for a country.

South Africa is in the fortunate position of having one of the highest rates of enrolment in the region, with almost universal access to schooling (around 98%) until Grade 10. The current focus is thus on the quality of education and on how much children are actually learning.

Given the above motivations, and the rationale behind the importance of education quality, it is unsurprising that there is now international consensus that educational administrations need information on what children have learnt by different grades. Without such information, it is not possible to determine if there has been any progress over time and which reforms (if any) are contributing to that improvement. This is particularly the case in South Africa. Educational outcomes at the time of the transition were highly unequal and exceedingly low for the majority of learners. Numerous local and international scholars have commented on the persistence of this low and unequal performance, both in the first decade after the transition (Taylor, Muller & Vinjevold 2003; Fiske & Ladd 2004) and in the subsequent decade (Van der Berg et al. 2011; World Bank 2012; OECD 2013). Consequently, the need to understand the inter-temporal dynamics and trends in educational outcomes is acute. Furthermore, given that the primary locus of control in the South African political system is the province, it is thus logical to report these educational outcomes at the provincial level. Provincial bureaucracies have considerable discretion over budget allocation, the selection of interventions and, more generally, how the system is run.

The current research hones in on the performance of Gauteng specifically and provides an overview of the changes in educational outcomes in this province over the 1995–2011 period. Using all the appropriate local and international assessments in

which the province has participated, it summarises the full range of available evidence on educational outcomes in the province.

Why measure what learners are learning?

There are a variety of reasons why governments may want to measure what learners are learning. Drawing from Kellaghan (2006: 52), the four most prominent of these are:

1. To monitor overall levels of achievement. Every political administration around the world aims to improve its education system. However, without systematically measuring educational outcomes in a way that makes comparison over time possible, one cannot determine if past interventions or increased expenditures have had any impact on student learning. Furthermore, policy-makers may be especially interested in changes in the relative performance of particular subgroups over time, such as children from rural areas, girls or the poor.
2. To assess whether children are actually learning. It cannot be assumed that children who are progressing through the schooling system learn as they go, especially when there are no externally evaluated standardised exams in the earlier grades. As Pritchett (2004: 11) notes, '[t]he completion of primary schooling or higher in itself does not guarantee that a child has mastered the needed skills and competencies. In fact, all of the available evidence suggests that in nearly all developing countries the levels of learning achievement are strikingly, abysmally low'. South Africa is no exception to this rule. As a result of this, it becomes important periodically to measure what children actually know at key grades, for example Grades 3, 6, 9 and 12.
3. To monitor international competitiveness. Due to globalisation and rapid technological change, for a country to remain economically competitive, it must ensure that learners are adequately equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in the workplace. Without monitoring the educational outcomes of the school system, governments will be unable to identify whether their economic goals are, in fact, attainable.
4. For political accountability. The increased drive towards evidence-based accountability internationally has meant that provincial and national administrations have a particular interest in information on the achievement of learners. Without objectively verifiable indicators of performance, constituencies cannot hold their political representatives to account, and politicians cannot show that they are (or are not) meeting their delivery agreements.

How do we measure what learners have learnt?

There are several different approaches to measuring student achievement, all of which differ, based on the question of interest. These can be broadly classified into: 1) sample-based national assessments; 2) population-based public examinations; and 3) cross-national assessments. In *sample-based national assessments*, the questions revolve around the performance of the country as a whole, or broad subgroupings like province or gender. The performance of any one individual student or school is not particularly important in these assessments, because the question of interest is *aggregated performance*. In South Africa, the most important sample-based national assessments are the Grade 3 Systemic Evaluations of 2001 and 2007, the Grade 6 Systemic Evaluation of 2004, the National School Effectiveness Study¹ (NSES) of 2007/8/9 and the Verification Annual National Assessments (V-ANA) of 2011.

Cross-national assessments are very similar to sample-based national assessments, because the aim is to compare South Africa's aggregate performance (national or provincial) to other countries or groupings of countries. In these assessments, a nationally representative sample of South African learners write the same test as learners from other countries, in order to facilitate cross-national comparisons of educational achievement. Using these studies, one can determine whether South African learners know more or less about Mathematics, Science or Reading than their international counterparts. The three major cross-national assessments in which South Africa participates, are the Grade 6 SACMEQ² study (Reading and Mathematics, 2000 and 2007), the Grade 4/5 PIRLS study (Reading, 2006 and 2011) and the Grade 8/9 TIMSS study (Mathematics and Science, 1995, 1999, 2002, 2011).

The last type of student assessment is population-based *public examinations*, where the focus is on assessing the performance of all children in a particular grade. In South Africa, the two most prominent examples of this are the matriculation exams (Grade 12), and more recently the Annual National Assessments (ANA – Grades 1–6 and 9). In each case, children from across the country write the same exam, at the same time. The major difference between these two is that the matric exams are externally marked and validated by Umalusi, while the ANAs are not externally marked or validated by an independent body.

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- 1 The National School Effectiveness Study (NSES) tested learners in numeracy and literacy in 2007 (Grade 3), 2008 (Grade 4) and 2009 (Grade 5). However, since other testing was being administered in Gauteng at the same time, Gauteng did not participate in the NSES study and this study is not discussed in this chapter. See Taylor (2011) for further discussion.
 - 2 SACMEQ: Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality; TIMSS: Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study; PIRLS: Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study. The most comprehensive reports for each of these data sets are as follows: SACMEQ (Moloi & Chetty 2011); TIMSS (Reddy 2006); PIRLS (Howie et al. 2008).

Provincial performance in standardised assessments: 1994–2002

After the transition in 1994, the first cross-national assessment of educational achievement in which South Africa participated, was the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). South Africa was one of over 45 countries that tested their Grade 8 learners in Mathematics and Science. The results showed that South Africa had the lowest scores, for both Mathematics and Science (Beaton et al. 1996). In 1999, the country participated in the TIMSS-Repeat study, and in 2002 also participated in the second wave of TIMSS, each time testing Grade 8 learners in Mathematics and Science. This allows for comparison between 1995, 1999 and 2002.

Before discussing the changes between 1995 and 2002, it is worth taking a small detour and briefly explaining an inconsistency in the South African TIMSS literature, which has not been dealt with to date. If one looks at the national average Grade 8 TIMSS 1995 scores for Mathematics in any report before 1999, one will notice that these differ from the scores found in reports issued after 1999. Looking at the IEA's TIMSS 1995 International report (Beaton et al. 1996), or the South African report by Howie & Hughes (1998: 58), one can see that the South African national average is reported as 356 for Mathematics (349 for Science). This is very different from the mean Mathematics score of 278 (263 for Science), reported in Howie (2001: 7). For some reason, this inconsistency is not discussed in either Howie (2001) or in the comprehensive book on TIMSS 2002 South Africa (Reddy 2006). If one looks at the international literature, the reason for the discrepancy is made clear. The psychometric model used for scaling student scores prior to 1999 was a one-parameter IRT model, whereas the one used from 1999 onwards is a three-parameter IRT model (NCES 2000: 79). The three-parameter model is more comprehensive and takes guessing into account, inter alia. The IEA³ has subsequently rescaled the old scores and one can now download the updated (5 April 1999) data, which is scaled to be comparable across years. On the IEA website (IEA 1995), they explain that '[t]hese scores were computed, using a different psychometric model (3 parameter model) from the one originally used (1 parameter model) and are set on the scale that will be used to measure trends in Mathematics and Science, in future TIMSS assessments'.

Figures 15.1 and 15.2 show the national and provincial averages for Mathematics and Science for the first three rounds of TIMSS (1995, 1999 and 2002). In addition to the average score, the 95% confidence interval is also reported for each estimate. In layman's terms, the 95% confidence interval around the mean provides an indication of the uncertainty that is introduced because this is a sample, rather than the population. We can be 95% certain that the true population estimate of average Mathematics achievement lies within the 95% confidence interval. Put differently, if we drew 100 different TIMSS

3 International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA)

samples of a similar size, the sample mean from 95 of the 100 samples would lie within our confidence interval. Figures 15.1 and 15.2 show that although there were some changes between 1995, 1999 and 2002 for Gauteng, these changes were not statistically significant. That is to say, one cannot rule out that they occurred by chance. In both Mathematics and Science, Gauteng has the third-highest score of the nine provinces, lagging behind the Northern Cape and the Western Cape, although not significantly so.

Figure 15.1: Provincial scores for Grade 8 Mathematics, TIMSS 1995*, 1999, 2002 (with 95% confidence interval)

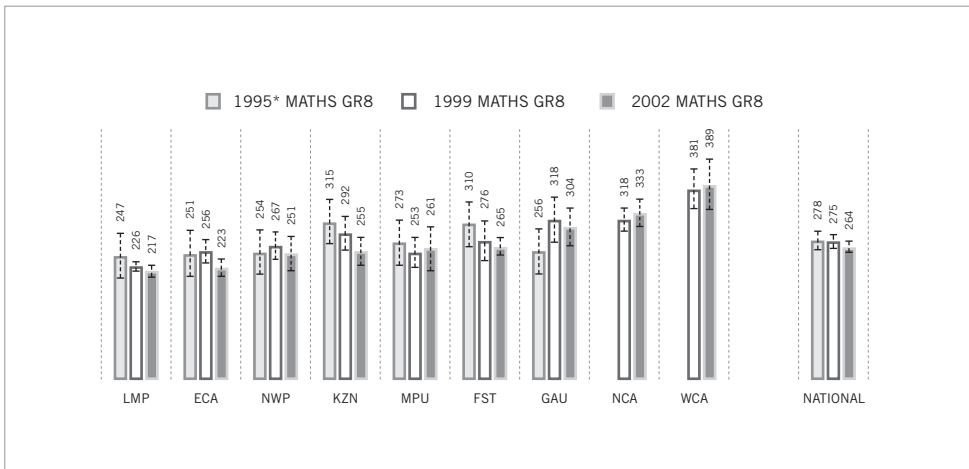
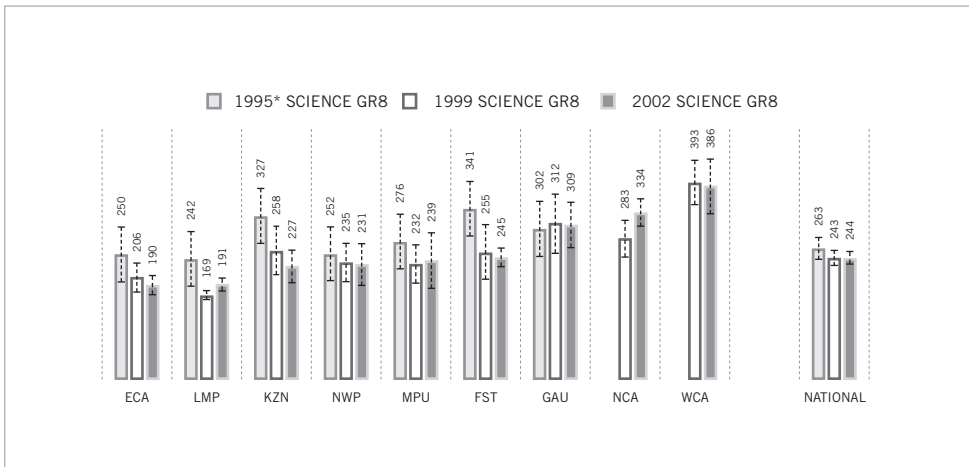


Figure 15.2: Provincial scores for Grade 8 Science, TIMSS 1995*, 1999, 2002 (with 95% confidence intervals)



* The provincial standard errors for 1995 were calculated from the national standard error since Howie and Hughes (1998) did not report the provincial standard errors and the data is not publicly available.

Provincial performance in standardised assessments 2000–2011

In addition to the TIMSS study, South Africa participated in the second and third rounds of the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) study. Unlike TIMSS, which tests mostly non-African countries, SACMEQ only tests countries in Southern and Eastern Africa (see Murimba 2005). SACMEQ tests Grade 6 learners in Mathematics and Reading. Figure 15.3 shows the change in performance for each province between SACMEQ 2000 and SACMEQ 2007. One will notice that the 95% confidence interval in SACMEQ 2000 is much larger than in SACMEQ 2007. This is because those conducting the survey underestimated the intraclass correlation coefficient (a measure of the variance within and between schools), estimating it to be around 0.4 when in fact it was closer to 0.7 (Moloi & Strauss 2005: 43). Thus the South African SACMEQ 2000 sample was far too small, with only 3 163 learners from 169 schools. In SACMEQ III (2007), however, the sample was expanded to include 9 071 learners from 392 schools. This led to a decrease in the standard errors and the confidence intervals.

From Figures 15.3 and 15.4, one can see that the only province to experience any statistically significant improvement in either Reading or Mathematics was the North West province, which improved by 80 points in both Reading and Mathematics. However, closer inspection of the data suggests that this is due to inconsistent sampling rather than a true increase in performance. The changes in Gauteng over this period were not statistically significant, showing that there was no change in Grade 6 Reading or Mathematics performance over this period. Both Figures 15.3 and 15.4 also show that Gauteng and the Western Cape are the only provinces to outperform the SACMEQ average by any real margin. In fact, the average Grade 6 student in Gauteng and the Western Cape was performing at about 1.5 grade levels⁴ above both the South African average and the SACMEQ average in 2007.

In addition to calculating the average score by province, it is also helpful to compare provincial performance for a given level of socio-economic status. Given that the average student in the Western Cape or Gauteng is far wealthier than the average student in Mpumalanga or the Eastern Cape, it is more meaningful to compare the performance of quintile 1 learners across the provinces, quintile 2 learners across the provinces, etc. rather than just provincial averages. Figure 15.5 (DBE 2011: 33) shows the relationship between reading performance and socio-economic status across the nine provinces using the SACMEQ III (2007) data for reading. As the DBE (DBE 2011: 33) report identifies: 'It is clear that similarly poor learners perform very differently, depending on which province they find themselves in [... for example ...] learners in the poorest quintile in Gauteng, perform as well as learners in the fourth quintile (percentile range 61 to 80) in

⁴ This is using the benchmark of 0.5 standard deviations being equal to approximately one year's worth of learning (for further discussion on using standard deviations as a measure of learning see Hill et al. (2007: 173).

Figure 15.3: Provincial scores for Grade 6 reading – SACMEQ 2000 and SACMEQ 2007 (with 95% confidence intervals)

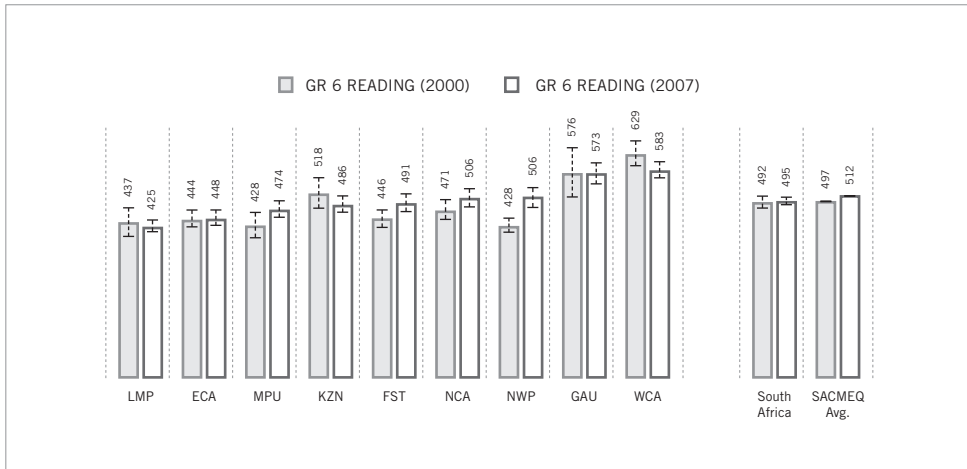
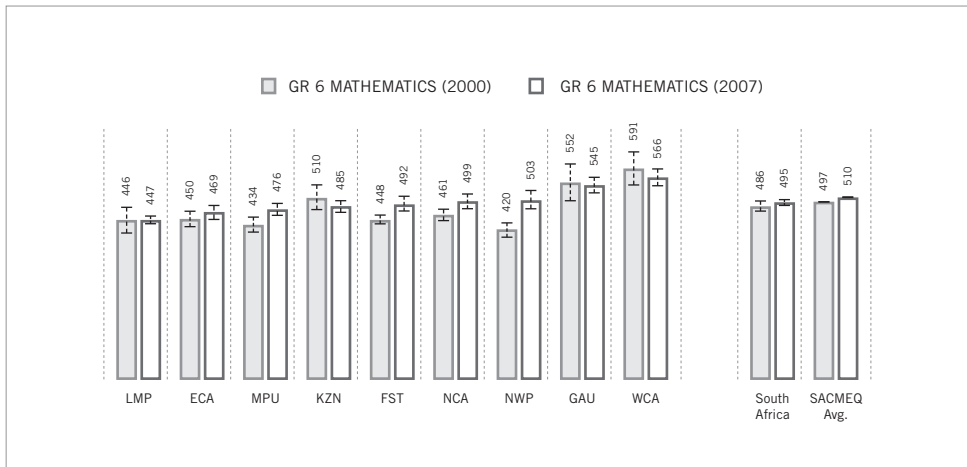
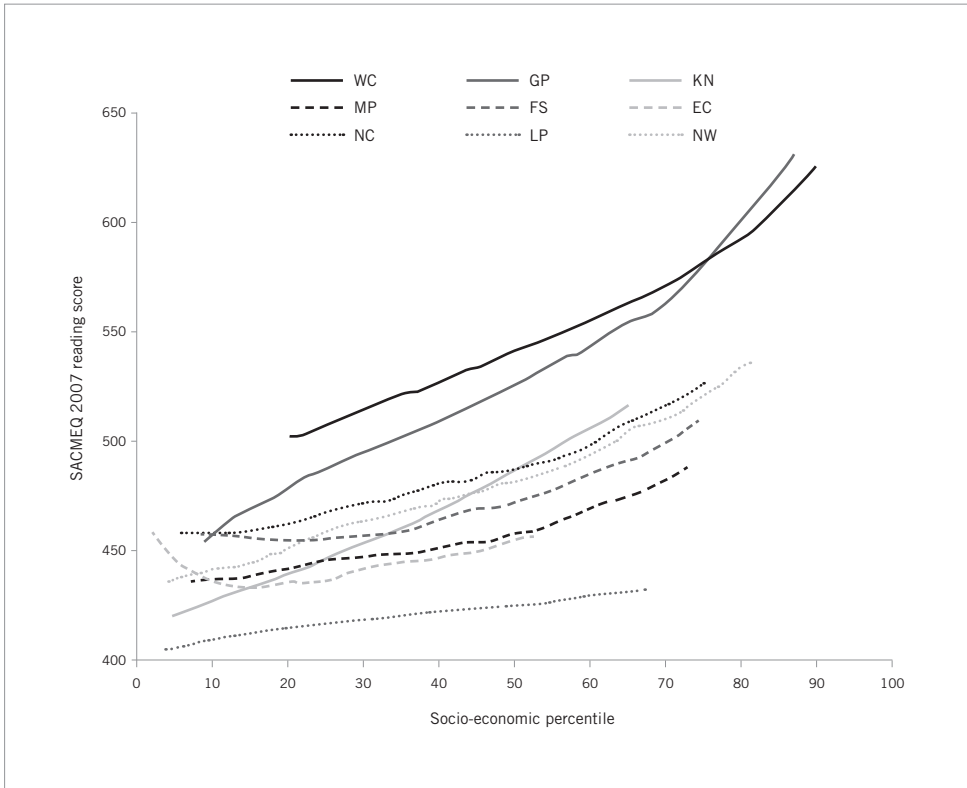


Figure 15.4: Provincial scores for Grade 6 Mathematics – SACMEQ 2000 and SACMEQ 2007 (with 95% confidence intervals)



Mpumalanga’. If one looks at learners from each province that are at the 40th percentile of the national socio-economic distribution, the average score for the student in the Western Cape is around 525 and for learners in Gauteng it is around 510, but for learners in Limpopo it is only 425 and in the Eastern Cape 450.

Figure 15.5: Relationship between SACMEQ 2007 reading score and socio-economic status across provinces (DBE 2011: 34)



Source: SACMEQ III data set (2007), DBE (2007: 34)

Note: Percentiles 1 to 20 represent the poorest one-fifth (or quintile) of learners, percentiles 21 to 40 represent the next poorest one-fifth, and so on. Socio-economic status is based on assets in the home reported by learners. Within each province, the curve excludes the left-hand 5% of the SES range and the top 30% in order to exclude outliers and focus on the more disadvantaged. Smoothing of curves occurs using loess smoothing.

TIMSS 2002 to TIMSS 2011 (Grade 9)

When South Africa chose to participate in the TIMSS study in 1995 and 1999, it decided to go along with the international norm and test its Grade 8 learners. However, due to exceedingly poor performance in TIMSS 1995 and TIMSS 1999, in TIMSS 2002 it was decided that South Africa would test its Grade 9 learners in addition to its Grade 8 learners, and in TIMSS 2011 it only tested its Grade 9 learners.

Figures 15.6 and 15.7 show the mean Mathematics and Science scores for Grade 9 learners in each of the nine provinces with the 95% confidence interval also included. In addition to provincial averages, the graphs also report the South African national average,

a TIMSS 2011 Grade 8 benchmark and the average score of independent schools in South Africa. The TIMSS Grade 8 benchmark used here is simply the average Grade 8 performance of the 21⁵ middle-income countries that participated in TIMSS 2011.

From Figures 15.6 and 15.7 one can see that independent schools perform better on average than non-independent schools. Disconcertingly, South African Grade 9 learners performed considerably worse than the average Grade 8 learners from 21 other middle-income countries in 2011. Looking specifically at Gauteng in 2011, the average Grade 9 student in Gauteng is slightly more than one grade level⁶ of learning (50 points) behind the average Grade 8 student from the 21 middle-income countries, and one and half grade levels of learning behind (63 points) in Science.

Between TIMSS 2002 and TIMSS 2011, the average performance of South African Grade 9 learners improved by one and half grade levels in both Mathematics (67 points) and Science (65 points). This is an impressive achievement, and marks the first time that either a local or an international assessment has shown any real improvement in educational outcomes since the transition in 1994. Furthermore, this does not seem to be driven by the selection of a wealthier sample in 2011 as compared to the one in 2002. A cursory analysis of three wealth variables is indicative: if one looks at the proportion of learners who have a computer in their home in 2002 (37%) compared to 2011 (36%), or the proportion that have 25 books or fewer in their home in 2002 (75%) compared to 2011 (77%), or the proportion that reported that they have their own desk in 2002 (58%) compared to 2011 (56%), it would seem that the samples are quite similar as far as student wealth is concerned. Given that the TIMSS data and results were only released in 2013, further analysis is still needed in order to understand *why* there was an improvement over this period. While one should certainly acknowledge that there has been an impressive improvement in South African performance over this period, it is useful to place this in perspective:

While there have been some recent improvements [in TIMSS], It is difficult to celebrate when one considers how low the post-improvement level of performance really is. Three quarters (76%) of grade nine learners in 2011 still had not acquired a basic understanding about whole numbers, decimals, operations or basic graphs, and this is at the improved level of performance. Part of the reason for the improvement is the fact that we started from an exceedingly low base in 2002. To place this in perspective, South Africa's post-improvement level of performance is still the lowest of all participating countries, with the

5 Of the 42 participating countries at the eighth grade, 21 are classified as middle-income countries according to the World Bank and these are used to calculate the TIMSS middle-income country Grade 8 mean (equally weighted). They are: Ghana, Morocco, Syria, Indonesia, Palestine, Jordan, Iran, Chile, Tunisia, Macedonia, Thailand, Georgia, Malaysia, Lebanon, Turkey, Romania, Armenia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Lithuania and Russia.

6 Reddy et al. (2012: 3) explain that TIMSS estimates that 40 TIMSS points are equivalent to approximately one grade level.

average South African Grade 9 child performing between two and three grade levels lower than the average Grade 8 child from middle-income countries. (Spaull 2013: 4)

Turning to a provincial analysis: of the nine provinces, the Western Cape performs the best in Mathematics and Science in both TIMSS 2002 and TIMSS 2011 (Figures 15.6 and 15.7). However, the Western Cape did not improve over the 2002–2011 period, unlike Gauteng, which recorded large improvements in both Mathematics (80 points) and Science (79 points). Using the TIMSS benchmark of 40 points being equivalent to one grade level of learning (Reddy et al. 2012: 3), one can say that the average Grade 9 student in Gauteng in 2011 was approximately two years of learning ahead of the average Grade 9 student in Gauteng in 2002. Figures 15.8 and 15.9 show the change in TIMSS points between 2002 and 2011, with the 95% confidence intervals superimposed on the graph. From these graphs, one can see that the Western Cape and the Northern Cape were the only provinces that did not improve over the period. Given that the 95% confidence interval overlaps with zero, one cannot rule out that there was no change over the period. In each of the other provinces, we can say with 95% confidence that the change was positive and statistically significant. Of all the provincial improvements between 2002 and 2011 shown in Figures 15.8 and 15.9, Gauteng registered the largest improvement in both Mathematics and Science.

Figure 15.6: Provincial average for Grade 9 Mathematics, TIMSS 2002 and TIMSS 2011 (with 95% confidence interval) – TIMSS benchmark used here is the average TIMSS middle-income Grade 8 Mathematics mean score

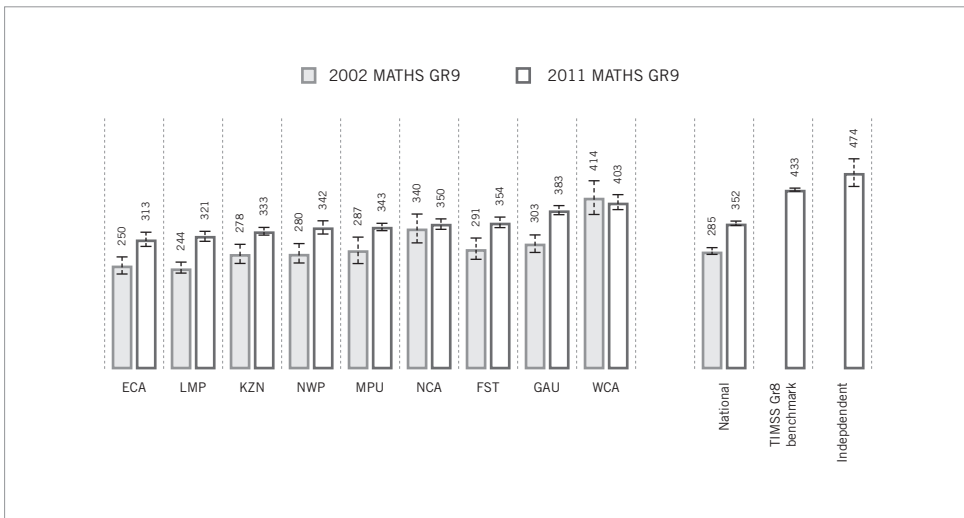


Figure 15.7: Provincial average for Grade 9 Science, TIMSS 2002 and TIMSS 2011 (with 95% confidence interval) – TIMSS benchmark used here is the average TIMSS middle-income Grade 8 Science mean score

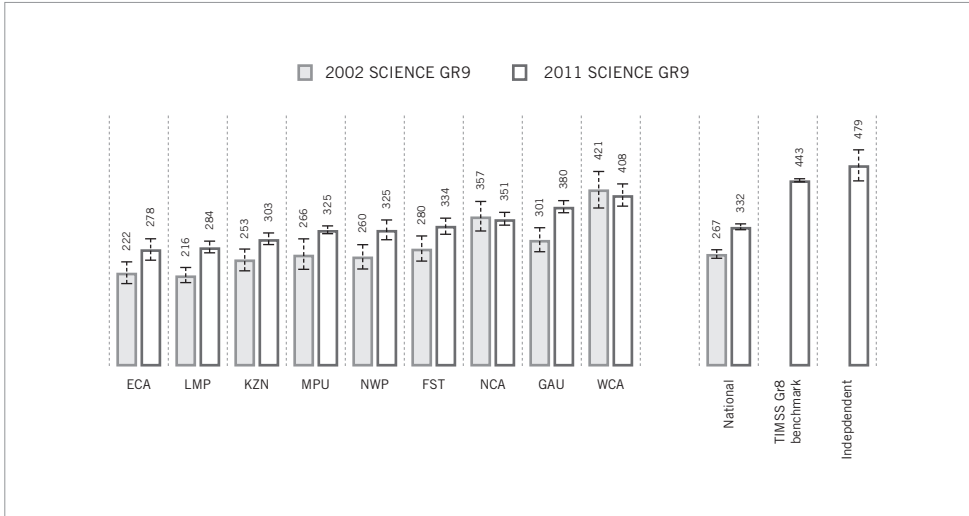
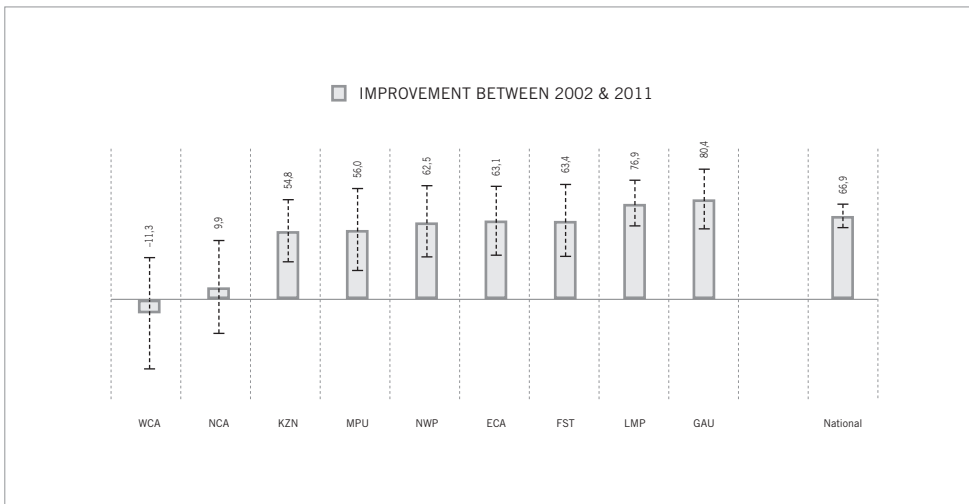


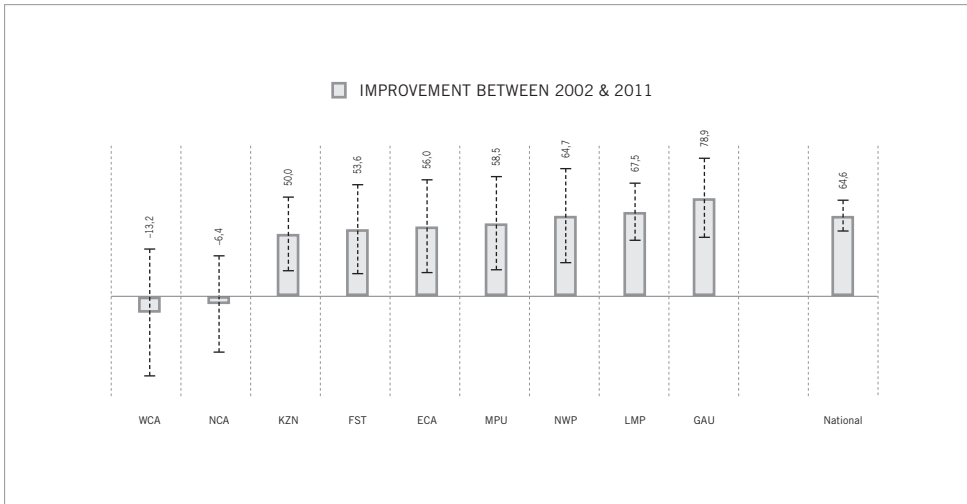
Figure 15.8: Provincial improvement between TIMSS 2002 and TIMSS 2011 – Grade 9 Mathematics (with 95% confidence interval)



Other assessments of educational achievement

The focus of the chapter thus far has been on TIMSS and SACMEQ. These were selected primarily because they report educational achievement over at least two points

Figure 15.9: Provincial improvements between TIMSS 2002 and TIMSS 2011 – Grade 9 Science (with 95% confidence interval)



in time. While SACMEQ reports Grade 6 performance between 2000 and 2007, TIMSS reports Grade 9 performance between 1995, 1999, 2002 and 2011. Furthermore, the organisations that run these surveys take great care to ensure that results are comparable across different years.

In addition to TIMSS and SACMEQ, South Africa has participated in the Progress In Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in 2006 and PIRLS and pre-PIRLS (an easier form of the PIRLS test) in 2011. However, it is not possible to compare results between 2006 and 2011, since only a very select sub-sample (English and Afrikaans schools) took the PIRLS test in 2011 and the PIRLS and pre-PIRLS tests are not comparable. Thus, PIRLS is not discussed in this chapter.

The major sample-based national assessments of student achievement in South Africa were the Grade 3 Systemic Evaluations of 2001 and 2007 and the Grade 6 Systemic Evaluation of 2004 – all run by the Department of Basic Education (DBE). In each case, a large representative sample of learners was selected to participate in order to determine the performance levels of the system. Given that there has only been one Grade 6 Systemic Evaluation (2004), one cannot compare performance over time using this assessment.

For the Grade 3 Systemic Evaluations, there is a public report for the 2001 assessment (DOE 2003) and a 12-page leaflet for the 2007 report (DOE 2008). A closer inspection of these reports shows that the 2008 report on the Systemic Evaluations indicates that the national average was 30% for literacy in 2001 (DOE 2008: 11). However, the 2003 report on the 2001 Systemic Evaluation reports that the 2001 average for literacy was 54% (DOE 2003: 32). It is unclear why there is such a large discrepancy between the

two reports and this issue is not discussed in the 2008 leaflet. As a result of this, there are serious concerns about the comparability of the Systemic Evaluation tests between 2001 and 2007. Consequently, the Grade 3 Systemic Evaluations have not been used to compare provincial performance over time.

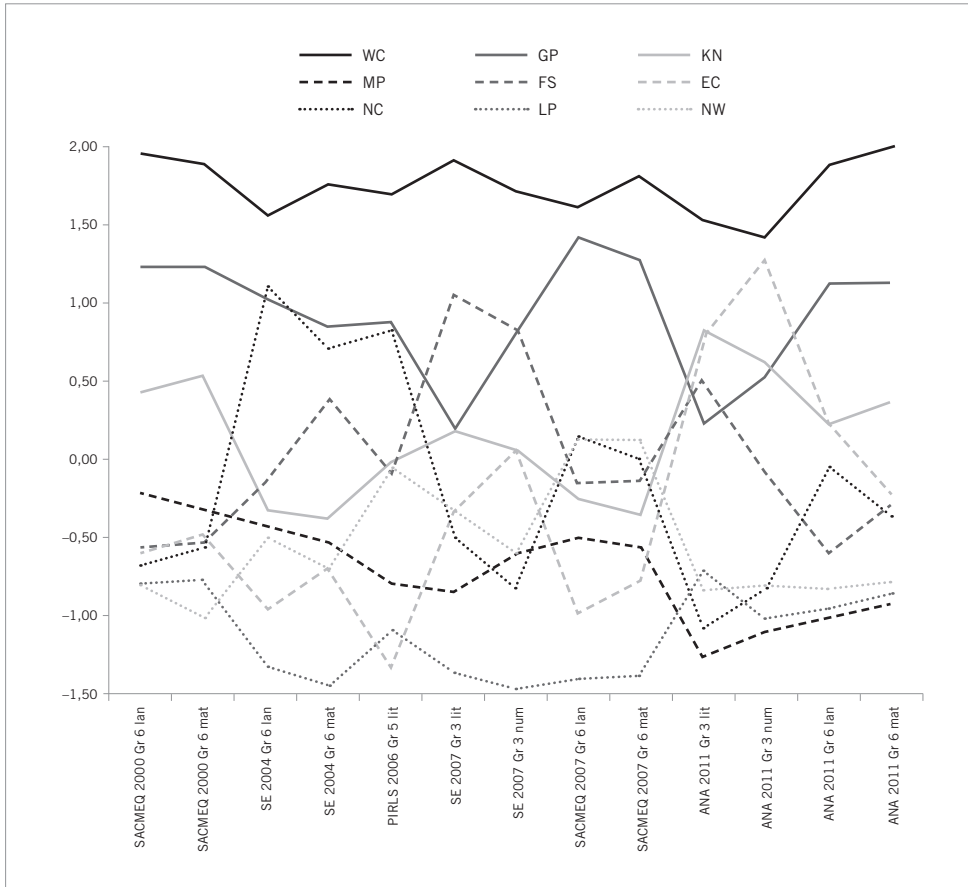
More recently, in 2011 the DBE implemented the Annual National Assessments (ANAs), a new population-based nationally standardised assessment for numeracy and literacy in Grades 1 to 6 and 9. The ANAs were also implemented in 2012 and are scheduled to continue indefinitely. The ANAs represent a hallmark achievement for the DBE and are of fundamental importance to raising the quality of education in the country. Prior to the ANAs, there was no nationally standardised exam prior to the school-leaving matric exam, a situation that was widely considered to be a major deficit of the South African schooling system. Notwithstanding the above, there are still major issues with the Annual National Assessments as they currently stand. The 2013 NEEDU report comments as follows:

There are many factors which raise questions about the validity and reliability of the ANA results, rendering comparisons between schools on the same test, or within the same school or unit of the system over time, prone to significant margins of error. These include psychometric comparability of successive question papers, the fidelity of administration, scoring and collating procedures. (NEEDU 2013: 55)

Further to the above, Van der Berg & Spaull (2012) highlight that many of the reported 'improvements' between ANA 2011 and ANA 2012 are highly improbable, if not impossible. For example, the Grade 3 literacy score improved from 35% in 2011 to 52% in 2012 (a 49% increase), which would make South Africa the fastest improving country in the history of standardised assessments around the world. More plausibly, the tests between 2011 and 2012 are not legitimately comparable.

Figure 15.10 (from DBE 2011: 32) provides a useful overview of various assessments, including PIRLS 2006 and ANA 2011. As a means of overcoming the different metrics used in each survey, the graph standardises the provincial mean for each survey to be zero and the standard deviation to be one, facilitating comparisons between different surveys. The fact that the Eastern Cape is the second-best-performing province (after the Western Cape) for the Grade 3 ANA for literacy highlights some of the problems with the 2011 ANAs. Looking specifically at Gauteng, the general trend across the various surveys is that the province outperforms the other provinces, with the exception of the Western Cape.

Figure 15.10: Provincial performance across various assessments (DBE 2011: 32)



Source: SACMEQ II dataset; DOE (2005) for Systemic Evaluation 2004; PIRLS 2006 dataset; DOE (2009) for Systemic Evaluation 2007; SACMEQ III dataset; DBE (2011) for Annual National Assessments 2011 (all cited in DBE, 2011: 32). Note: The standardised provincial mean is a recalculated provincial value where the mean across provincial means is zero and the standard deviation across provincial means is 1.0.

Provincial performance in Grade 12 (matric)

The matriculation exam (Grade 12) in South Africa has long been the single most important exam in the South African schooling system. Until recently, it was the only nationally standardised exam and it remains the only one that is externally evaluated. Although the ANAs are nationally standardised, they are not externally evaluated by Umalusi, as the matric exams are. Furthermore, performance in the matric exam has

important consequences for individual learners, since it is still used extensively as a selection criterion for university admissions.

Appendix A reports the number of learners writing matric, the percentage passing and the percentage achieving university endorsements for each year from 1994–2012 by province (with the exception of 1999 and 2000). These are the figures that are commonly reported to the public and frequently used as an assessment of progress over time. However, given that the matric pass rate is calculated as the proportion of Grade 12 learners who pass the matric exam, it does not take into account the dynamics of repetition and drop-out *pre*-matric. Given that rates of drop-out *pre*-matric are highly variable across the nine provinces, without taking cognisance of retention and completion, inter-provincial comparisons are necessarily inaccurate. As a result of this, Taylor (2012) and Van der Berg et al. (2011) have proposed a more inclusive statistic. Instead of calculating the matric pass rate as the number of learners passing matric relative to the number of learners in Grade 12, they calculate the proportion passing relative to the Grade 10 cohort two years earlier, or the Grade 2 cohort 10 years earlier. In doing so, they incorporate elements of quality by including the number of passes and retention/throughput by calculating the pass rate as a percentage of the original 'starting' cohort.

Figure 15.11 below illustrates this concept, using data from the cohort that matriculated in 2011. This same cohort was originally in Grade 2 in 2001, Grade 10 in 2009 and Grade 12 in 2011, assuming that learners progressed at one grade per year.

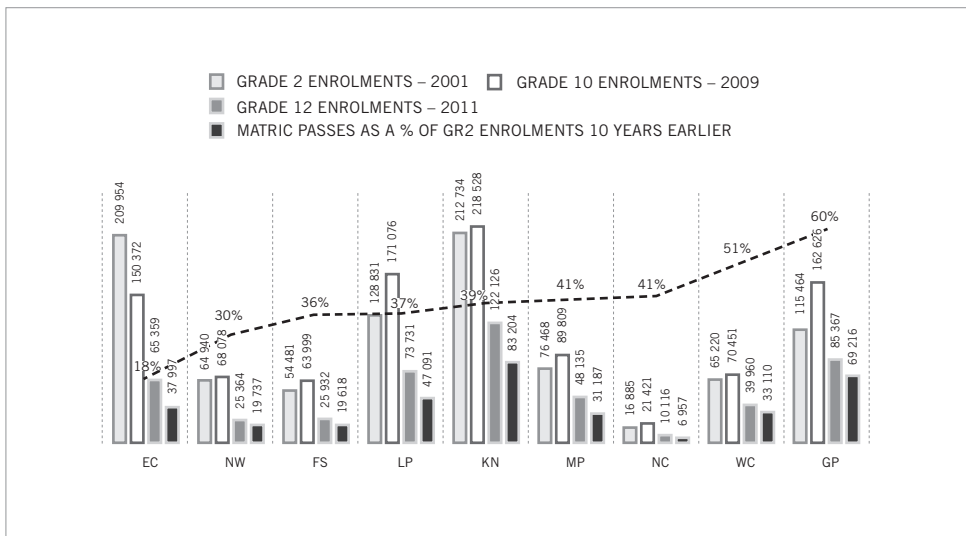
If one compares the traditional matric pass rate in the Eastern Cape with the new composite measure, this difference becomes obvious. Although the traditional matric pass rate is 58% in the Eastern Cape (Grade 12 passes in 2011 / Grade 12 enrolments in 2011), the 'comprehensive' pass rate is only 18% (Grade 12 passes in 2011 / Grade 2 enrolments in 2001). That is to say that of 100 learners in the Eastern Cape that were in Grade 2 in 2001, only 18 went on to pass matric in 2011. The dotted line-graph in Figure 15.11 reports the comprehensive pass rate for each of the nine provinces for 2011. By this measure, Gauteng performs considerably better than the other eight provinces. If one compared the Western Cape and Gauteng in 2011 using the traditional matric pass rate, the Western Cape would seem to be doing better than Gauteng, with a pass rate of 83% compared to 81% in Gauteng. However, this masks the fact that there are higher levels of dropping out *pre*-matric in the Western Cape. Clearly, the composite pass rate is a better measure of performance.

Figure 15.12 shows similar information to Figure 15.11, but represented in a different way (the data in this graph is also for matric 2011). In addition to reporting the proportion of learners who do not survive to Grade 12 (either due to dropout or slow progression) and those who pass and fail matric, it also reports the proportion who pass matric with a bachelors pass – i.e. those learners who qualify to go on to study a bachelors degree at university. Figure 15.12 shows quite clearly that Gauteng outperforms the other provinces by a large margin. Whereas 39% of the cohort in the Western Cape dropped out before Grade 12, the figure in Gauteng is only 26% – the lowest in the country. The

situation in the Eastern Cape and the North West are particularly striking, since the majority of learners (69% in the Eastern Cape and 61% in the North West) drop out pre-matric. Not only does Gauteng have the largest proportion of learners reaching matric in 2011, it also has the largest proportion obtaining bachelors passes, i.e. qualifying for university admission.

An important caveat to this method is that it assumes there is no inter-provincial migration. If a large number of learners are in one province (say Limpopo) in Grade 2⁷ and then migrate to another province (say Gauteng) sometime before matric and then pass matric in the new province, this will create a distorted picture – one that is harsh on ‘sending’ provinces and over-estimates success in ‘receiving’ provinces. As a result of this, the conversion rates in the Eastern Cape are likely to be underestimated and those in the Western Cape and Gauteng are likely to be overestimated. However, the size of inter-provincial migration would have to be exceedingly large to account for the different provincial conversion rates. Furthermore, if one compares Gauteng and the Western Cape – both of which are likely to be net receivers of learners – Gauteng still performs considerably better than the Western Cape.

Figure 15.11: Provincial 2011 matric pass rates as a percentage of Grade 2 enrolments 10 years earlier

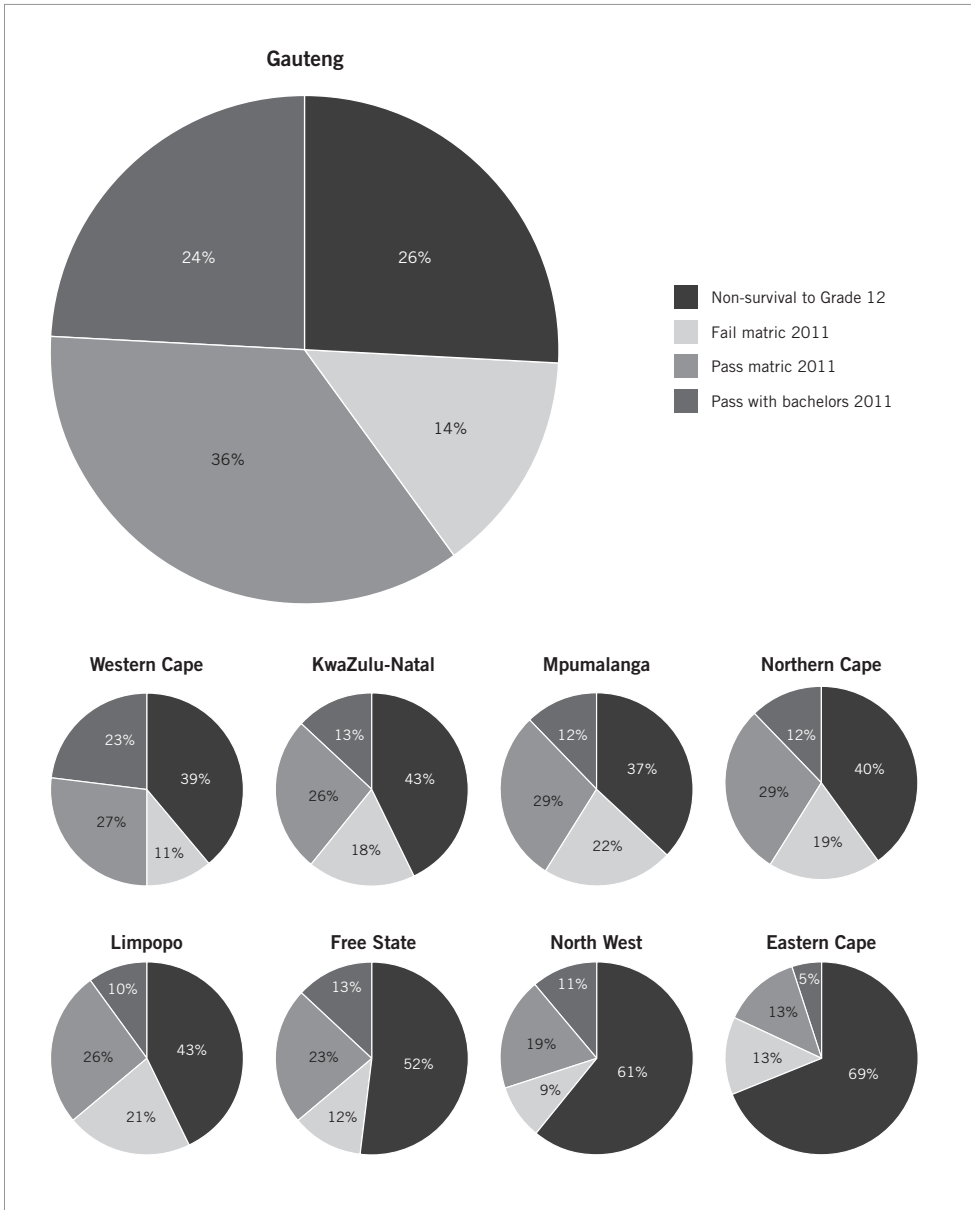


Both Figures 15.11 and Figure 15.12 report the performance of the matric cohort of 2011; however, isolating the performance of provinces in one year can be misleading.

7 Grade 2 is used as the baseline year since it is commonly accepted that enrolments in Grade 2 are a better indication of the size of the cohort than enrolments in Grade 1. Some schools accept learners into Grade 1 who are, in fact, too young for school, and then allow them to repeat Grade 1 – this can make the Grade 1 cohort seem unusually large.

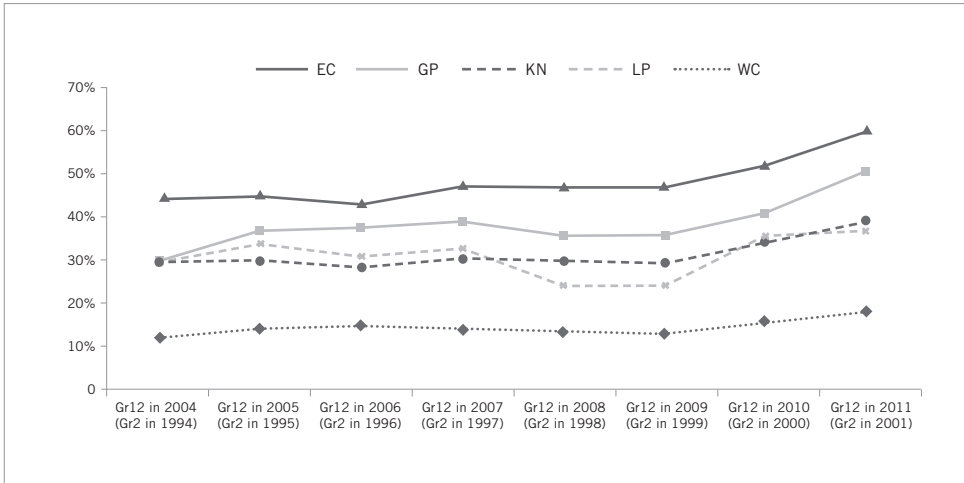
Taylor’s (2012: 9) analysis of matric trends since 2004 shows that Gauteng’s superior performance in 2011 is not an isolated instance. In fact, Gauteng has performed better than the other provinces for the last seven years (Figure 15.13; Taylor 2012). Looking at the matric performance of the five most populous provinces over the 2004–2011

Figure 15.12: Proportion of a cohort of learners who do not survive to Grade 12, fail matric, pass matric, and pass matric with a bachelors pass in each province in 2011



period, it becomes evident that there is considerable variation in the ability of provinces to ‘convert’ Grade 2 enrolments into matric passes (Figure 15.13). These findings are in agreement with Household Survey data, which shows that Gauteng consistently has the highest proportion (88%) of 19-year-olds that have finished Grade 9 (DBE 2012: 30).

Figure 15.13: Matric pass rates as a percentage of Grade 2 enrolments 10 years earlier for selected provinces (Taylor 2012: 9)



Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to present the evidence on provincial performance in standardised assessments over the 1995–2011 period. Of all the local and international assessments of educational achievement in which South Africa participates, the three most useful for comparing change over time are the SACMEQ (Grade 6), TIMSS (Grade 9), and matric (Grade 12) assessments. According to the weight of available evidence, over the 1995–2002 period there was no improvement in the Grade 8 Mathematics or Science outcomes for the average student in any province. Similarly, between 2000 and 2007 there was no observable improvement in numeracy or literacy outcomes for the average Grade 6 learner in any of the provinces. In contrast to this, comparing the performance of Grade 9 learners in TIMSS 2002 and TIMSS 2011 showed that there was a large national improvement (1.5 grade levels) in Mathematics and Science achievement. Of all the provinces, Gauteng experienced the largest improvement of 80 points (two grade levels) in both Mathematics and Science. That is to say, the average Grade 9 learner in Gauteng in 2011 was approximately two years of learning ahead of the average Grade 9 learner in Gauteng in 2002. While this is an impressive achievement, it must be noted that the improved level of performance is still very low by international standards.

Provincial performance in the Grade 12 school-leaving matric exams also reveals that Gauteng performs well in comparison with the other provinces, not only in the simple matric pass rate but especially when taking into account progression and retention. When comparing the true matric pass rate of any one particular cohort, Gauteng has the highest 'conversion ratio', i.e. the ability to convert Grade 2 enrolments into Grade 12 passes 10 years later. This is perhaps the best indication of the quality of education in a province. While these conversion ratios are slightly inflated due to migration, the large differences in provincial conversion rates cannot be explained solely by migration. Furthermore, Gauteng's superior performance is not simply a single-year peculiarity, but a stable trend extending back at least to 2004. Given that these conversion ratios could well be used as a measure of efficiency, one can say that of the nine provinces Gauteng has the most efficient education system.

While there have been some substantial improvements in educational outcomes in Gauteng over the past decade, the challenge remains to raise the quality of education in the province, and indeed the country, to levels comparable with other middle-income countries around the world.

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Appendix A

Table 1: Number of learners writing matric, percentage passing matric, and percentage passing matric with endorsement by province (1994–2012)

	Eastern Cape			Free State			Gauteng			KwaZulu-Natal			Limpopo		
	Participants	% passed	% passed with endorsement	Participants	% passed	% passed with endorsement	Participants	% passed	% passed with endorsement	Participants	% passed	% passed with endorsement	Participants	% passed	% passed with endorsement
1994	73 728	57%	14%	30 278	56%	15%	75 266	61%	21%	75 409	68%	26%	129 951	44%	12%
1995	67 397	48%	11%	33 147	50%	12%	79 215	58%	19%	87 053	69%	25%	138 816	38%	8%
1996	66 809	49%	11%	35 554	51%	12%	72 959	61%	20%	86 608	62%	23%	126 081	39%	8%
1997	76 700	45%	9%	40 027	42%	11%	75 700	52%	17%	104 434	53%	18%	127 337	32%	6%
1998	82 517	45%	8%	40 777	43%	11%	76 861	56%	16%	108 063	50%	17%	114 621	35%	7%
2002	64 257	52%	8%	25 156	71%	19%	65 260	78%	22%	97 489	71%	18%	71 444	70%	18%
2003	62 457	60%	10%	23 656	80%	23%	68 285	82%	23%	97 367	77%	21%	68 903	70%	19%
2004	63 426	54%	9%	24 731	79%	22%	71 382	77%	22%	110 635	74%	19%	77 774	71%	21%
2005		57%	9%		78%	22%		75%	21%		71%	17%		65%	18%
2006	69 561	59%	10%	29 884	72%	20%	73 216	78%	23%	125 777	66%	15%	105 775	56%	13%
2007	69 158	57%	9%	30 559	71%	19%	84 822	75%	20%	148 093	64%	14%	96 490	58%	12%
2008	60 294	51%		29 963	72%		92 723	76%		136 743	58%		84 614	54%	
2009	68 129	51%	14%	29 808	69%	20%	98 659	72%	29%	132 176	61%	20%	83 350	49%	12%
2010	64 090	58%	16%	27 586	71%	21%	92 241	79%	34%	122 444	71%	26%	94 632	58%	16%
2011	65 359	58%	16%	25 932	76%	26%	85 367	81%	35%	122 126	68%	22%	73 731	64%	18%
2012	63 989	62%	18%	24 265	81%	29%	89 627	84%	36%	127 253	73%	27%	77 360	67%	20%

Source: South African Institute of Race Relations (various years: 1994–2012)

	Mpumalanga			North West			Northern Cape			Western Cape		
	Participants	% passed	% passed with endorsement	Participants	% passed	% passed with endorsement	Participants	% passed	% passed with endorsement	Participants	% passed	% passed with endorsement
1994	40 113	48%	11%	34 984	70%	23%	5 855	78%	21%	29 824	86%	29%
1995	45 479	38%	8%	41 950	66%	17%	6 529	75%	17%	31 867	83%	27%
1996	41 731	47%	10%	46 349	70%	17%	7 111	74%	18%	34 830	80%	35%
1997	37 734	46%	9%	48 534	50%	11%	7 604	64%	15%	37 197	76%	24%
1998	41 612	53%	12%	42 436	55%	13%	7 429	65%	11%	38 546	79%	24%
2001	47%			63%			84%			83%		
2002	39 843	56%	11%	36 348	68%	15%	5 907	90%	18%	38 117	87%	27%
2003	39 032	58%	12%	35 567	71%	15%	6 250	91%	20%	38 750	87%	27%
2004	37 091	62%	13%	37 327	65%	12%	6 723	83%	19%	38 896	85%	27%
2005	59%			63%			79%			84%		
2006	39 040	65%	14%	37 953	67%	15%	7 495	77%	16%	39 824	84%	27%
2007	51 787	61%	13%	31 786	67%	16%	10 158	70%	12%	41 922	81%	25%
2008	42 153	52%	12%	33 157	68%	21%	9 948	73%	17%	43 966	78%	32%
2009	53 978	48%	12%	30 665	68%	21%	10 377	61%	17%	44 931	76%	32%
2010	51 695	57%	16%	28 909	76%	28%	10 182	72%	21%	45 764	76%	32%
2011	48 135	65%	18%	25 364	78%	28%	10 116	69%	20%	39 960	83%	38%
2012	47 889	70%	20%	27 174	80%	27%	8 925	75%	23%	44 670	83%	37%

CHAPTER 16

THE CARROT AND THE STICK: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT THROUGH SUPPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Veerle Dieltiens and Brian Mandipaza

Introduction

The indicator dial on Gauteng's school improvement measuring instruments, more commonly known as the matric exam, has moved up and down and then up again since 1994. The needle has traced the various points of pressure and support that the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) has applied over 20 years to try to turn a system around that at its lowest point in 1997 was flashing red when just 51.7% of those sitting matric passed.

The school change literature has pondered the stubbornness of schools to transform. Achievements celebrated prematurely can turn to disappointment when each step forward seems to be followed by two steps backwards. Strategies to turn schools around have included school-by-school reform models and adjustments at the systemic and policy levels. Theorists prescribe different mixtures of support, inducements and sanctions in their recipes for change, depending on whether the political environment will tolerate a show of force or whether a more quietly diplomatic approach would be more effective.

In the GDE, four main phases of school improvement can be discerned in retrospect, each calibrating levels of support and accountability differently.

1. The early years after 1994 were marked by setting up systems for changing practice, the development of a checklist of performance measures and the gentle encouragement of schools to use them (1994–1999).
2. The second phase was dominated by the Education Action Zones (EAZs) and their measures of compliance (2000–2004).
3. This robust approach was followed by the implementation of more systemic accountability processes in schools and the careful negotiation with stakeholders in schools, to take ownership of their own improvement plans. This phase also saw large-scale extra tuition provided to matric learners outside of schools (2005–2009).
4. In the final phase, attention turns on pressurising senior management in the GDE to reach targets while providing greater classroom support to educators (especially in the primary schools) (2010 to the present).

There is, of course, an overlap between these phases, and the beginning of one phase does not necessarily halt earlier interventions. But the stages in school improvement, which broadly coincide with the terms in office of the four MECs since 1994, introduce new elements into the mix in response to shifting diagnoses of what ails the system. This chapter explains how the strategies were meant to solve problems that were dragging performance down. It will also try to assess the success of each phase based on evaluations of the strategy and changes in the matric indicator, while noting that many extenuating reasons will interfere with the accuracy of the dial.

Phase I

The early years: Mainly carrot

When the journey to school improvement began in 1994, the systems for monitoring and accountability in the majority of black schools had been worn thin. Soweto was the centre from which the ripple of student resistance to Bantu Education spread. While the apartheid state was the target of the struggle at the local level, its paid employees – school principals and educators – increasingly had their authority challenged.

The creaking authority structures in many schools were then further strained by the formation of SADTU in 1990 and its organisation of young educators against authoritarian principals and departmental inspectors (Fleisch 2002). The union's 'defiance campaign' in the early 1990s succeeded in the final collapse of the mechanisms meant to hold educators to account.

On the one hand, this left the field open for the development of new democratic-style means of accountability. On the other hand, in a context of almost complete

dysfunctionality of schools where even the most basic rules of time and order were flouted, new accountability mechanisms had few hooks on which to hang.

In the early years of the new department, attention was taken up with restructuring the department to improve coordination in terms of quality assurance and developing system-wide monitoring and evaluation systems. School improvement would be largely experimental. There were few lessons to be learnt from local projects since prior to 1994 school improvement was dominated by NGO projects, which were generally small in scale and largely focused on educator development (Taylor 2007).

Initially, quality assurance was linked to performance indicators at school level. Between 1995 and 1998, the focus was on developing indicators for good school practice and workshopping these at school and district level. Based on the Strathclyde model from Scotland, the GDE developed a quality indicator framework for schools with 1250 indicators (Naidoo et al. 1998). At the same time, more efficient planning and monitoring processes were set up. This included the development of reporting formats and procedures, and timeframes (Naidoo et al. 1998).

Accountability systems were then extended to senior managers. The restructuring of the organogram in 1997 located quality assurance within the Policy and Planning Unit of the GDE and was intended to bring all levels of management (beyond schools) into a single monitoring and evaluation system. Senior managers were required to sign performance contracts detailing targets that would be achieved annually and how they would be reached, resource needs, and capacity-building activities. Structured meetings would measure progress throughout the year: 'the introduction of such a performance measuring system did not come into place without hitches. Various managers were reluctant to be part of such a system. It took a number of meetings and explanations for the majority of the managers to accept the measure' (Kibi 2002: 201).

While the bureaucracy for quality assurance was being established, the GDE was also working at encouraging self-managing schools. Indeed, the first school improvement initiative kick-started in 1994, with the Culture of Learning Programme that emphasised the need to develop stakeholder capacity at school level to drive school improvement. The first MEC, Mary Metcalfe, appointed a committee comprised of individuals recognised as leaders in the community. Together with school-based players, they were asked to establish the perceived weaknesses and strengths of each school and to work out recommendations for improvements. In addition, the underperforming schools were paired with better performers in their immediate catchment areas. Carrim and Shalem (1999: 69) argue that this:

was motivated by an understanding that school effectiveness research tends to primarily engage in 'fault-finding,' developing among researchers a rather pathological view of schools. CCOLT members, therefore, were asked to document not only what did not 'work' and why, but also what did 'work' and why, and how these could be built

upon to facilitate further improvements [...] there was an acknowledgment explicitly that whilst such schools may have many problems, it is quite possible that there were instances of 'good' practices within them, nonetheless.

The Culture of Learning and Teaching (COLT) campaign emphasised participatory democracy and the importance of gaining an insider perspective on schools (as school stakeholders were seen as the real experts on what schools needed to improve). As part of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), historically disadvantaged schools were allocated a small grant to improve physical infrastructure. The grant was intended as a seed to grow social partnerships. As Fleisch explains (2002: 108), '[t]he thinking behind the Culture of Learning Programme was that the processes that the school development committee would go through would strengthen school governance, which in turn would spin-off into improved teaching and learning'. Schools were required to set up RDP Committees, made up of various stakeholder representatives, to agree on a list of priorities. District offices helped schools with the technical aspects of the plan. The COLT project recognised the full extent of people and processes involved in school improvement – both inside the schooling system and in the wider community setting.

The mood in these early years was on assistance and teamwork. While external evaluation was not yet part of the process, the role of the inspectorate was being redefined within a developmental framework and schools were encouraged to accept former inspectors and subject advisors as part of a participative management strategy (Naidoo et al. 1998). The Provincial Framework for Effective and Efficient Secondary Schools, for example, provided step-by-step resources and support needed for curriculum development, creating systems for school management, ongoing improvement of matric results, motivating and inspiring stakeholders and addressing the needs of over aged learners (Naidoo et al. 1998).

Schools were encouraged to use the new systems. In 1997, the innovative 5% Plan dangled a R5000 incentive for schools to improve their matric results by 5%. Only 25 of the 98 schools in the Plan were able to claim the reward. The Plan was criticised for focusing only on the Grade 12 exam results as a measure of efficiency and quality, and in 1998 it was reconceptualised to reward visible quality outcomes at district level. It was renamed the Improved Performance and Excellence Award, and involved schools having to present school development plans that showed clear strategies for improvement in order to qualify.

Despite these efforts, matric results continued to fall. The schooling system was being tossed and turned on the waves of new legislation to restructure education and introduce Curriculum 2005 (C2005). To turn the tide, the gentle prodding approach to school improvement was about to be shaken up with a tough and forceful initiative.

Phase II

Education Action Zones: Mainly stick

At the turn of the millennium, following years of falling matric results (the most public and perhaps the only available indicator of the quality of schooling), the national Department of Education (DOE) moved to turn the statistics upwards urgently. Each province was required to institute a Senior Certificate Improvement Plan, with a special focus on underperforming schools, defined as those that achieved pass rates in the 0–20% category (Taylor 2006).

The GDE chose a muscular initiative. The Education Action Zone (EAZ) programme, adopted in October 1999 by the new MEC Ignatius Jacobs, sent special units into 70 earmarked schools for targeted intervention. The EAZ teams reported directly to the provincial MEC and the head of department. With a note of urgency and high-level backing, the EAZ units were something of a crack force.

A senior GDE manager at the time explained why EAZs were used:

Although we are moving in the direction of self-managing schools, conditions in South African education and in Gauteng in particular, are not conducive to us adopting the UK or the French model of EAZ. Firstly, while there may be a high level of community interest in the upliftment of quality and standards at many of our schools, most of our school communities appear to be completely unprepared or uncommitted to take on such a major task, unless direct leadership is provided by the state. Secondly, none of our dysfunctional schools are able, or willing, to take on a major venture. (Swartz 2001)

Research undertaken in dysfunctional schools in Gauteng during 1994–1995 characterised these schools as having poor physical and social facilities; serious organisational problems, including weak and unaccountable leadership; little administrative capacity; inadequate disciplinary and grievance procedures; and few or no relationships with surrounding communities, as well as poor communication between the schools and the education department (Fleisch & Christie 2004: 100).

The former head of the EAZ programme recalls his shock at just how serious conditions were. Learners would begin trickling in through the school gates almost an hour after the school day was meant to start. By 11a.m., there was still no teaching happening, and at midday the first learners began the exit. He said, ‘Maybe one or two teachers are trying to get into class and you hear them shouting, because they are trying to put order ... but generally it’s chaos.’

Initially, the schools were to receive a package of interventions: a special tutoring programme for learners; extra monitoring of educator progress on the official syllabi;

training for educators in high-risk subjects; establishment of education–business and education–religious fraternity partnerships; special security arrangements with the police services; and added support to the governing bodies of targeted schools (Jacobs 1999).

Few of the proposed educator training activities were implemented, however. According to Ntuta and Schurink (2010: 7), ‘the reasons were that the behavioural problems of the schools involved in the programme superseded their curricular problems’. The EAZ teams focused instead on establishing basic routines in the schools: timetables, attendance registers and locking the gates at the start of the day. Clear performance measurements and guidance were presented. Weekly School Management Team (SMT) meetings were held, heads of departments called to account and the syllabus was tracked to completion. School policies were developed. The GDE directed threats of disciplinary action against educators, kept regular surveillance and monitored compliance with basic bureaucratic rules.

The former head of EAZs described how daunting a task it was at first:

I am sure that what we saw in those schools did not start in 1999. It had started way back – possibly in the late 80s, in the periods of serious ungovernability. And now we were coming in and asking them 10 years later to put order. It was difficult. We had to think how to do it – we are not only dealing with a school that is chaotic. We are dealing with a school that is chaotic within a community that is chaotic itself. It was difficult. That is why we did not only deal with the school, but with the community around it.

The EAZ programme targeted parents and organised workshops for learners to encourage a positive attitude to schoolwork and to think of education as a right. Team-building and conflict-resolution workshops were organised. There would be some sweeteners for the school too – a typewriter, a computer.

The respondent continued:

We would stick with that school. In the first three months, there would be an official in the school every day. And then after that, when things are changing, we concentrate on working the teachers, assisting them ... Gradually, as the school changes, we don't go every day – maybe only twice a week to check. And when the school is right, they call me to call a meeting and I congratulate the teachers. We take all the schools that are pulling – we take the teachers out for a weekend for a workshop and give them the necessary encouragement to continue. The MEC will come and talk to them.

The EAZ programme worked on the idea that educators would respond positively once the conditions in the schools had stabilised and that bureaucratic controls were necessary to enforce routines. In a case study of one EAZ school, Ntuta and Schurink (2010:6) argue that:

It was clear that the external pressure that was placed on the educators, resulted in them working together towards school improvement [...] to these educators, internal motivation was a driving force for their high performance; although the external pressure was used as a vehicle to achieve this.

Although SADTU accused the EAZ teams of victimising educators, the EAZ schools immediately showed remarkable progress, jumping from an aggregate pass rate of 15.59% in 1999 to 33.09% in 2000. Moreover, the number of candidates passing higher grade increased and the number of A symbols leapt from 32 in 1999 to 200 in 2000. These improvements topped those of GDE schools generally (Fleisch 2006; Taylor 2006).

Fleisch (2006) claims that the increased matric pass rate may have had to do with a careful selection of learners most likely to pass. Weaker students were either excluded from the school altogether (where they were overaged) or held back to repeat Grade 11. Pass rates may also have been manipulated upwards by shifting learners from higher grade to standard grade, and eliminating matric repeaters.

Table 16.1: Senior Certificate results in Education Action Zone schools, 1996–2003

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Pass rate (%)	24.32	17.16	20.49	15.59	33.09	48.59	59.19	66.48
University pass rate (%)	2.25	1.76	1.62	0.99	2.10	3.53	4.59	6.52
Number passed higher grade	211	167	155	104	170	197	246	387
Number passed standard grade	2015	1455	1467	1530	2508	2515	2024	3631
Total passed	2226	1622	1622	1634	2678	2712	3170	4018
A symbols awarded	8	3	28	32	200	124	216	373
Number wrote higher grade	8455	7921	6254	4252	1778	1526	1383	1571
Number wrote standard grade	942	1551	3334	6229	6315	4055	3973	4468
Total wrote	9397	9472	9588	10481	8093	5581	5356	6039

Source: Fleisch (2006: 376)

Despite the dramatic increases in performance, the EAZ programme was hastily rolled up. The force of SADTU's opposition and a change in provincial political leadership meant that the programme no longer had a champion in the GDE. Moreover, the programme had always existed as a special programme, with short time frames, rather than being intended to strengthen the systems and capacity for school monitoring and support in the standard line functions of the GDE (Taylor 2006).

There is some debate about the legacy of the EAZ programme. Its bureaucratic regulations may have been seen as a necessary step to stabilise dysfunctional schools, but its outcome had fairly limited long-term impact on learning and teaching. Its effects were not sustainable and performance in many of the schools dropped once the EAZ teams exited. The majority of EAZ schools once again scored below 60% in the matric exam, with eight schools sinking to below 30% (Ntuta & Schurink 2010).

For the most part, its failure has been blamed on the model that was overly coercive, focusing on accountability measures without providing sufficient support (Fleisch 2002, 2006; Taylor 2006). That may have been its political downfall, but as Ntuta and Schurink (2010) argue, the immediate success of the EAZ programme in stabilising dysfunctional schools has been overshadowed by its failure to turn matric performance around in the long term. They write (2010: 6):

The reasons for not being able to sustain the positive changes, brought about by the EAZ mostly concerned decisions and changes made in the education system as a whole and more specifically the introduction of the new curriculum.

They argue that while the EAZ team had left the schools (or at least the one in their case study) with effective management systems and committed educators, there was insufficient follow-up guidance and support from the district in introducing the new curriculum, which educators were ill-equipped to handle. They explain (2010: 7):

This directly leads to teacher confidence dwindling and to their poor self-esteem and gives rise to unnecessary behavioural problems of educators, for example, a high rate of absenteeism, absconding from classes, sickness, et cetera. All these problems are only symptoms of the deeper underlying problem, which reflects the lack of confidence of the teachers to perform in front of learners due to their insufficient knowledge of subject content, poor assessment and teaching strategies.

Furthermore, an increase in enrolment figures was not matched with extra resources.

The lesson, then, from the EAZ programme – though it may not have been obvious at the time – was that performance-based regulation of educators was insufficient (albeit necessary in the short term) to improve schools. As Shalem (2003) has argued, changing educator practice requires sustained support. Inducing schools to chase after externally mandated targets through a variety of accountability measures and/or incentives will not work where there is no capacity to start the chase. The full import of the EAZ lesson would take some time to sink in. In the interim, more elements of support were introduced.

Turning the Soshanguve District around

While the EAZ programme was pushing hard to turn dysfunctional schools across the province around, in the North-West corner the Tshwane North District was making dramatic headway. It moved from being the 13th district out of 13 in matric results in the 1990s to first or second and third from 2002 until 2011.

Moss Nkonyane, the District's first director, remembers the early days as crisis management. Many of the school principals were being evicted from their schools by SADTU; student organisations, unions and the Soshanguve Education Coordinating Committee were at loggerheads and in the district office, the former DET officials were suspicious of new appointees. There were marches on the district office and calls for Nkonyane to be recalled. On one particularly memorable morning, 'I received a call that there was a sit-in in one school. As I was answering the landline, I received a call on the cell that there was a sit-in in another school. Then the secretary ran in with call that there were disruptions in another school.'

The troubles showed up in the matric results, which averaged at a 45% pass rate. 'I had to address the issue of the poor culture of learning and teaching,' says Nkonyane. 'Lateness, absenteeism, resistance – it was endemic... What I found challenging was the lack of policies – which meant we had to use common sense – we were on our own. In the absence of policies, the human element comes into play.'

Nkonyane invited an NGO, Link Community Development (LCD), to do a baseline study in the schools with district staff and based on the appalling results the district office's mantra became one of curriculum delivery and changing the culture of the schools. The Soshanguve School Development Project was established as a partnership between the district and LCD. A key focus was on getting the community directly involved in their school on their terms. As schools became community centres and stakeholders began to cooperate, so learner absenteeism dropped, cases of vandalism fell and general school safety improved. Income-generating opportunities developed around schools for indigent locals and as the results started an upward climb, learners who had been bussing into Pretoria to attend school returned. At the same time, the district office was restructured to provide responsive services to schools and the Teaching and Learning unit designed an educator classroom support programme that SADTU supported, as it was explicitly designed to support educators on their own terms.

Moreover, the project was sustainable. The key is that it was built into the culture and workings of the district office and the community. 'It's not something that died after I left in 2007,' says Nkonyane. 'Even last year, that district was position two in the province. Because of the system in that area – we made people understand much as we would like you to be accountable – but accountability is something that should be from within. Take collective accountability yourselves.'

Source: Interview, Moss Nkonyane, 4 July 2013

Phase III

Stick and carrot: Quality assurance

By the time the EAZ was folded away, another accountability strategy was already in the pipeline. But this time, the evaluation was conscious to avoid the criticisms of top-down policing that had put the EAZ on a collision course with SADTU. It would attempt a greater convergence model of change – tying support in with accountability.

In preparing the ground for implementing systemic measures that would touch all schools, the GDE set up the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) in 2000. It was later renamed the Directorate for Quality Assurance (QA) and tasked with implementing national policies, principally the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS). IQMS had been signed in by the Education Labour Relations Council (Resolution 8 of 2003) as a way of streamlining and integrating into a single system various evaluation mechanisms – including the Developmental Appraisal System (DAS), which focused on peer-educator assessments, and Whole School Evaluation (WSE), which reviewed the performance of schools (see box on page 325).

The Directorate for Quality Assurance is housed in what was once a clinic, the repurposed buildings now diagnosing afflictions of a different kind. Located in Boksburg, well away from the head office in Johannesburg's city centre, the directorate is the 'eyes and ears' of the GDE, testing the health of the schools and prescribing remedies for its improvement. Charged with finding out what ails schools, the directorate, like the EAZ programme, was easily the least popular of GDE units.

Although WSE was always touted as a supportive evaluation process aimed at directing schools on a route to self-improvement and not as a compliance measure, resistance to external evaluation was sharp. In 2002, SADTU called for a moratorium on the WSE implementation, urging its members to boycott the WSE process and refuse supervisors access to their schools (De Clercq 2010: 105).

The seeming setback, however, was turned into an opportunity when the QA manager used the downtime to build staff capacity and improve on the monitoring strategies. According to De Clercq (2010: 105):

This GDE QA division was dynamic and wanted to ensure that the WSE and IQMS implementation was enabling by strategising accordingly. It was aware of the political and educational tensions in the WSE policy and engaged seriously with the problems existing in the selected performance areas, in the balance between accountability and support, and in the relationship between internal and external evaluation.

De Clercq describes what followed as an intensive process of internal strategising workshops, in which the QA staff were able to assess how best to translate policy

intentions into practice. She explains: 'This work enabled the division's staff members to think creatively and in a non-technical manner, about the WSE implementation work' (2010: 106).

Although bound by national policy, the process enabled the QA division to take real ownership of the policy, and even to adapt it. It felt that the nine performance areas presented in the WSE policy omitted key aspects of schooling, such as learners' learning experiences and educators' pedagogical content knowledge (De Clercq 2010: 106). It also chose to prioritise the nine performance areas according to their influences on learners' achievement, privileging the quality of teaching and educator development, curriculum provisioning and school infrastructure over the others (De Clercq 2010).

The division produced a detailed provincial handbook, a step-by-step guide that has proved popular with a few other provincial departments (De Clercq 2010). De Clercq notes that the handbook specified that the performance areas should have a strong bearing on learners' achievement: 'an important conceptual addition, which shows how knowledgeable the division had become about school improvement factors' (2010: 107).

By 2003, when the Education Labour Relations Council hammered out an agreement for an IQMS (Resolution 8) with educator unions, the QA division was ready to test out its reporting forms.

A GDE respondent describes the evaluation as 'very, very intensive':

A team of four or five spend a week in a school. They conduct pre-evaluation visits, on-site visits, where they interview all stakeholders, analyse all documents in the school, policies and everything. They come up with what we call a hypothesis. When they go on-site, they already know how the school is. When they conduct the on-site evaluation they can test the hypothesis – if it agrees with what they are finding from the documents of the school. (Interview, 20 June 2013)

The final report is shared with the school and feeds into the School Improvement Plan. There are no punitive measures as a result of the evaluation and over the past few years GDE officials have become more conscious of ensuring that the recommendations are implementable. Schools are expected to make steady sustainable improvements.

WSE targets a sample of just 130 schools per annum, so follow-up evaluations can take several years. School improvement is therefore reliant on schools themselves taking the initiative. The South African Schools Act encourages greater institutional autonomy and decentralised decision-making. WSE is therefore intended to verify school improvement plans and to point out to districts and the province what support schools need. Where there is discrepancy between internal and external evaluations, WSE supervisors and school principals are asked to justify their assessment ratings with evidence (such as learners' books, assessment tasks and scores) (De Clercq 2010).

Coming in at the tail end of a school improvement process, the expectation is that the groundwork has been laid, consultative processes function and self-evaluations are reliable. As Carnoy et al. argue, the response of any particular school to *external accountability measures* depends on the state of its *internal accountability systems* (Taylor 2006).

Yet, for many schools, those first rungs to accountability are shaky. As the GDE respondent explains:

Many schools don't follow the processes as they are supposed to. A principal will just sit in his office and complete the self-evaluation without engaging the stakeholders – SGBs, Post Level 1 educators, SMT. Some principals just do it for compliance – instead of seeing it as a document that will improve their schools, in terms of the nine focus areas. So it's not happening authentically. It's not something people feel is a valuable document that can assist us to improve. (Interview, 20 June 2013)

Botha, in his study of School-Based Management in four Gauteng schools, shows that the principals of the poorer performing schools were somewhat antagonistic at having to take on school improvement responsibilities. He quotes one principal as saying that '[a]ll the work that the department does not want to do anymore is shifted towards us to do ourselves; I guess that is what is meant by school-based management' (Botha 2006: 346).

Another is quoted as responding:

I like to manage myself and my own school, but the responsibility is too much. They [the department] don't tell us exactly what to do, only to manage ourselves, but they are quick to criticize if we do something the wrong way. (Botha 2006: 346)

The GDE has more recently (since 2010) put effort into linking WSE more closely with schools' self-evaluations. Schools receive training on school improvement planning, ahead of scheduled external evaluations, and follow-ups are done to ensure that the recommendations made by the WSE teams are being implemented. The process is therefore tracked from beginning to end.

Increasingly, WSE has been used as a means to hold districts accountable and to ensure that it is providing the necessary support to schools. The Annual Report 2005/06, for example, notes that of 40 schools in which WSE was conducted in that year, 42.5% of the schools were in need of improvement, 30% were operating at an acceptable level, and 27.5% of the schools were graded as good or outstanding: 'Reports on findings and recommendations from processes of both Whole-School Evaluation and Systemic Evaluation were shared with districts, in order to develop intervention strategies in terms of guiding and assisting districts in providing informed support' (GDE 2006: 97).

Since 2008, the evaluations have concentrated in only one district each year, so it is possible to identify weaknesses and strengths in the work of a district office. The school evaluations are collated into a district-wide improvement plan. These are used to identify targets and indicators against which the district director's performance is measured.

Unlike the bureaucratic compliance of the EAZ strategy, WSE matches accountability with schools' self-initiated turnaround plans. The external evaluations provide the objective measures for setting targets and providing guidance to the districts and the province on the kind of support that schools need.

It is perhaps a measure of the success of WSE that, having once been barred from schools, the QA division now receives invitations from schools requesting evaluations. In 2012, the division was even able to enter Soweto schools, the final area of SADTU resistance to external evaluation.

Whole School Evaluation

The National Policy on Whole School Evaluation was designed to erase the judgemental and punitive reputation of the past inspectorate and turn supervision into a supportive and developmental process. The evaluators provide feedback to the school on strengthening its improvement plans and act as point persons to the district and province on the kind of support that schools need.

There are nine areas of evaluation.

1. Basic functionality

The first step is a check on whether basic conditions exist in the school, from the existence of school policies and procedures to the level of absenteeism, lateness and truancy and the procedures for dealing with them, learners' response to the school's provision, and the behaviour of the learners.

2. Leadership, management and communication

WSE supervisors make judgements on the leadership at various levels in the staffing structure and the extent to which the management communicates its intentions with the broader school community.

3. Governance and relationship

WSE supervisors report on the constitution of the SGB, its composition and the role it plays in the formulation and implementation of the school's aims and policies. The process also looks at the suitability and effectiveness of the policies and mechanisms that the SGB has for monitoring the quality of education.

4. Quality of teaching and learning and educator development

WSE evaluates the overall quality of teaching and of in-service professional development, as highlighted by the professional growth plans of Developmental Appraisal and Performance Measurement.

Supervisors make judgements on the effectiveness of educators' planning and schemes of work; educators' expectations of learners; educators' subject knowledge; teaching strategies; use of resources; the way educators manage and control learners; and the arrangements made for individuality, diversity and learners experiencing barriers to learning.

5. Curriculum provision and resources

WSE checks whether curriculum delivery meets the national requirements; the effectiveness of the planning process; the suitability of the curriculum for learners of different ages and different abilities; the school's assessment policies and practices; and their relevance to the curriculum and the provision for co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

6. Learner achievement

WSE must come to a conclusion about the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that learners have acquired. Particular attention is paid to performance in communication skills, problem-solving skills and the ability to work in groups and to make responsible decisions.

7. School safety security and discipline

Schools are evaluated on their knowledge of legislation (related to human rights) and the effectiveness with which it is implemented. They are also judged on the safety of learners, educators and support staff and the effectiveness of disciplinary procedures.

8. Infrastructure

Each school is audited for sufficient staff, resources and accommodation for its purpose. Particular attention is paid to the state of repair of infrastructure as well as accessibility for people with disabilities.

9. Parents and community

WSE examines how the school encourages parental/community involvement in the education of the learners and how it makes use of their contributions. Supervisors investigate the school's methods for communicating with parents and ways in which the school responds to complaints/suggestions from parents.

Source: Quality Assurance Directorate (2008)

Phase IV

Carrot and stick: Accountability at senior management level, support to schools

If the accountability systems described so far appear to have been focused on schools while leaving out the provincial and district levels in the system and on chasing after high-stakes matric results, some of the missing pieces are filled in in the final phase of the 20 years under review. On the one hand, the lens of accountability is refocused on senior management – and on the responsibilities of the provincial head office. On the other hand, a new intervention to support schools targets the primary school. For too long, attempts at a last-minute fix at the matriculation exit gate were plastering over a symptom that had deeper roots in the schooling system. Attention turned to getting the foundations right.

In 2009, at the beginning of her term of office, the MEC, Barbara Creecy, introduced an accountability strategy that linked the job descriptions of senior managers with clearly defined delivery targets. The measures work to improve quality in schools on a ratio of 80% support to 20% compliance.

The GDE's task list for each directorate, unit, unit manager, chief director, the DDG and the provincial head of department (HOD) is based on the targets laid out in the GDE's 2009–2014 strategy and annual performance plans. The head of department performance contract is published and every senior official has to report regularly on progress on his or her particular deliverables, which feeds into the performance of top management.

The reporting procedures are rigorous. A single reporting template lists the targets against deliverables and timelines. The end result is verified through regular monitoring and survey information. Each target is highlighted by green, orange or red, a quick visual indicator of what has been achieved, what is in danger of not being achieved and targets that have not been met.

Directorates report on a quarterly basis and regular meetings of the executive management team track delivery and ensure a quick response when blockages are picked up.

Performance appraisals take place four times a year. Two of those appraisals are formal one-on-one sessions with the HOD. And while appraisals identify support, officials need to meet their specific targets; those found wanting are required to account.

The targets for which senior management is accountable all relate back to the vision for improving quality education – and, in particular, to the interventions to support teaching and learning. Two important intervention strategies have been implemented for underperforming high schools and primary schools.

Secondary School Improvement Project (SSIP)

Support was always seen as a necessary adjunct to accountability. One of the most important provincial projects was the Secondary School Improvement Programme (SSIP), which has its genesis as far back as 2000 (when it was called the Secondary Schools Intervention Programme). The current programme was launched in 2003 and is managed by the Sci-Bono Discovery Centre. The programme is targeted at underperforming schools (or 'priority' schools). Initially, underperformance was defined as achieving a pass rate of less than 60% in matric, but now includes all schools with matric pass rates of less than 80%.

Despite its name, the SSIP is not directly involved in improving schools. Indeed, the focus of its work since its inception is to provide parallel tuition to matric learners on Saturdays and over school holidays. Learners from a cluster of schools attend classes at a single site. The Annual Report of 2005/06 describes it as essentially 'examination preparation'. The content of the classes is determined on the basis of moderator/examiner reports from the previous year's NSC exams as well as perceived areas of weakness in Grade 11 (GDE 2006: 104).

SSIP is an enormous undertaking. In 2004, for example, SSIP targeted 144 schools and 15 851 learners, so the logistics are daunting. Each week, facilitators must be in place, transport organised, caterers prepared, materials pre-arranged and sites cleaned. Given the huge investment, questions have been raised about the relative benefits of the programme – especially after a slide in the 2005 matric results. The MEC for Education, Ms Angie Motshekga, sounded a note of despair in the foreword to the 2005/06 annual report (GDE 2006: 7):

This is despite the increased monitoring of curriculum delivery in Grades 10, 11 and 12 and the intervention programme at school, district and individual level. [...] The Department has reviewed the 2005 performance of schools and is developing school level interventions, to ensure that all learners receive comprehensive support, so that they are able to perform optimally.

Although the 2005 matric pass rate declined, the quality of the learners' individual performance statements had improved (GDE 2006). Furthermore, initial indications about the SSIP schools were positive. Ninety percent of schools that had achieved pass rates of less than 30% in the 2003 matric exams managed to improve their results, while 56% that achieved between 30% and 50% improved their results in 2004 (GDE 2005).

The project therefore continued to receive support and its reach was enlarged. By 2012, there were 330 priority schools and 62000 Grade 12 learners with 2000 tutors in 227 sites. The holiday programme was also extended in 2012 to include learners in Grades 10 and 11. It costs R140 million annually for the tutoring component alone.

An educator development programme was added in April 2011 and is handled by the Matthew Goniwe School for Leadership and Governance (MGS LG). Grade 10, 11 and 12 educators attend four to five Saturdays of training in six subjects (not including Mathematics, Science and Technology – MST). Educator training is complemented by

the development of 150 lesson plans in each of the six non-MST subjects for Grades 10 to 12. The lesson plans are detailed and come with supporting documentation and worksheets that can be copied for learners.

The SSIP has not been smooth sailing, however. The project struggled to sustain attendance. Scholar transport and a feeding scheme were introduced to encourage learners to the Saturday lessons, yet attendance ranges from 90% in Tshwane to no more than 60% in Soweto. Attendance of learners at the SSIP centres is not monitored by their respective schools. According to an evaluation of the programme by the GDE Directorate: Strategic Policy Development, Monitoring and Evaluation:

This is an indication that there might be problems either with how the programme is organised, facilitated, and implemented or with the perception of learners and educators who might be viewing the programme delivery as not adding value towards academic performance. (Strategic Policy Development Monitoring and Evaluation 2012: 3).

An extra day of schooling that simply repeats content covered in weekly classes is little more than an added chore. A finding from a questionnaire administered to 275 learners in 33 sites revealed that:

Some learners did not understand the SSIP programme and that its aims are to their own benefit. This is why in some instances learners felt that they were learning the same material as during normal school hours, so they find attending the SSIP classes a waste of time and effort. (Strategic Policy Development Monitoring and Evaluation 2012: 40)

There were difficulties experienced with overcrowding and rowdiness, and inconsistent attendance and lack of information on learner numbers impacted on the distribution of materials. There was also fruitless expenditure on transport and catering. The mix of learners from various schools meant that levels of access to the content presented in the SSIP classes varied.

Neither can supplementary classes escape the usual traps of underperformance that dog schools: socio-economic factors, peer pressures, insufficient academic foundations.

On the upside, the SSIP materials were viewed (by learners filling in the evaluation questionnaire) as helpful preparation for answering exam questions. They also indicated benefits, where there was a variation in teaching style or the introduction of new approaches to solving Mathematics and Physical Science problems. At SSIP classes, learners are also able to cover all the work that was not dealt with during ordinary school hours, particularly on topics with which their usual educators struggle.

Educator turnout at training sessions has also been poor. In 2011, the attendance rate of the educators for the training sessions was an average of 44% over a five-month

period. It plummeted in 2012 to 35% after SADTU called a boycott. Some educators were even physically prevented from attending by members at the training venues. As a result, educator development was prematurely halted in 2012.

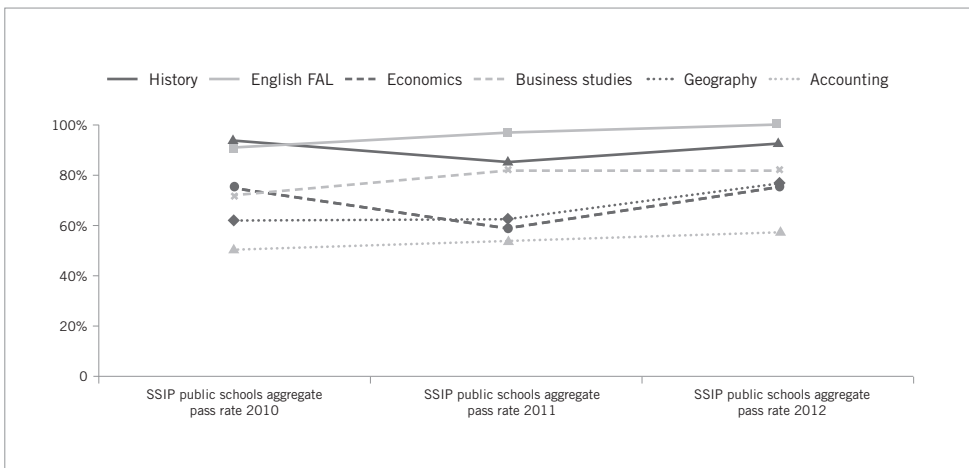
Although it is somewhat speculative to ascribe improvements in the performance of learners in the matric exam to the fact that they attended SSIP classes, it remains the only measure at hand. On average, the aggregate pass rates of SSIP learners across the six non-MST subjects improved by 8% from 2011 to 2012 and by 6.5% across the period 2010–2012 (see Figure 16.1).

The most significant performance increase occurred in Grade 12 Economics, with a remarkable 17.7% increase from 2011 to 2012. Business Studies in Grade 12 experienced a negligible decline of 0.1% from 2011 to 2012. Only Grade 12 English and Accounting appear to have experienced year-on-year performance increases: English has peaked at an aggregated pass rate of 99%, while Accounting in Grade 12 started from a very low base of 50% (2010) and now stands at 57%.

SSIP’s success at the top end showed up, more starkly, problems in other areas and opened up the next challenge. As matric results climbed, it became evident that more needed to be done to improve quality of instruction in the years leading up to Grade 12. There was increasing evidence – such as from the low scores in the Annual National Assessments – that the deficits in outcomes in high school were accumulating from earlier on in the schooling system. A GDE official pointed out that:

Whilst the matric pass rate is improving, the time has come and the system is ripe to start focusing on the quality of that pass rate. Too

Figure 16.1: Aggregate performance of non-MST subjects in public SSIP schools 2010–2012



Source: Farista (2013)

much time is spent looking and analysing the output, without analysing the input. (Interview, 15 July 2013)

For the most part, SSIP has been a provincial prop in response to the yearly competition between provinces in the matric stakes. While it has most recently included educator training and the development of lesson plans, it does not provide extensive support to schools. Its aim is to provide a last-minute lift to learners in the face of looming exams. It is therefore very limited as a turnaround strategy for school performance.

The GDE then turned its attention to primary schools. But, unlike earlier interventions that used incentives and/or chastisements to prod schools to heed to targets, the new approach located educator development at the heart of the strategy.

Getting the foundations right: The Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS)

The rickety foundations of the school system threatened to undo the work done on fixing the roof. Systemic evaluations and the ANAs showed that learners were not meeting competence benchmarks and were therefore losing their footing as they encountered higher-order knowledge and skills. As a result, many learners were failing to reach matric. Attention therefore increasingly turned to primary schools. If learners entered high schools better prepared and with the basics in place, there would be less need for expensive catch-up programmes and remediation.

Language, Mathematics and Science are most obviously structured on a ladder of accumulating knowledge and, once the basics are lost, are most difficult to remediate. The focus was therefore on improving these subject areas, and the GPLMS was born in 2009. Initially, the Language component was managed by a GDE team, while Mathematics component was outsourced to Sci-Bono. In February 2012, the two components were merged under a single strategy manager.

The strategy started with the development of a teaching approach – in the terminology of the documents, a Simple Language and Mathematics Approach. The approach was chosen based on ‘extensive research over the past twenty years’ (GDE 2012: 13). It was an approach that would return old-fashioned pedagogy to classrooms while holding onto the novel approaches to teaching and learning introduced in the democratic era. So, in Languages, phonetics is emphasised along with the more innovative whole language pedagogy. Word recognition and phonics had once dominated classroom practice, but had come to be discounted when learner-centred pedagogy replaced educator-centred chalk and talk. It would now be brought back alongside ‘comprehension’. The strategy calls it a ‘balanced approach’. Similarly, the Simple Mathematics Teaching Approach combines teaching for computational and procedural fluency (including the use of drill) with teaching for conceptual understanding and problem solving. According to the

Strategy Plan, '[t]he approach assumes that all components of Mathematics teaching are important and have the potential to be mutually reinforcing' (GDE 2012: 15).

Educators were then introduced to, and trained in, the approach. Moreover, an extensive network of tutors was recruited and managed through NGOs to provide on-site support to the educators. Paid assistants were trained to provide homework support. The project also provided prescribed textbooks, learner workbooks and readers. The focus was always on instructional leadership, and school- and district-level management were held accountable in terms of learner achievement.

The strategy, then, is multi-pronged and provides several means of supporting educators to improve their practice. It seems to have been borrowed from international best practice, such as New York City's community school district #2 described by Elmore (Elmore & Burney 1997). Shalem (2003: 40) argues that successful programmes for educator development are:

content focused and continuous over time, their pedagogy is labour intensive, and their institutional structures of a partnership type. In terms of educator learning they all require that educators observe, produce their own teaching tasks and lessons, be observed and subject their productions to critical evaluation.

As the planning document mentions:

The strategic approach in the Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics plan for 2010–2014 is built on a careful analysis of weaknesses of earlier efforts to shift classroom practices. Interventions, programmes and plans in the past had multiple and even contradictory objectives and targets. The 2010–2014 [GPLM Strategy] has identified a limited number of targets related to primary school Reading and Mathematics and have made them public. In the past, policies and interventions that had shown promise or had been implemented in other parts of the world, but had not been rigorously field trialled in underperforming South African schools, were adopted with limited success. (GDE 2012: 16).

Conclusion

In 20 years, the GDE has applied various pressures and inducements to improve the instructional environment in many of its low-functioning schools. Initially, it encouraged self-management, persuading schools to meet the list of targets that it had imported from abroad. The inducements had little effect. Matric results continued to slide. After many

years of malfunction, the worst-performing schools simply did not have the wherewithal to climb out of the morass. Systems and routines were non-existent and schools were children-holding-cells for a few hours a week. The inertia was jolted with the EAZ programme. It insisted on rule compliance and threatened punitive measures. In the short term, it appeared to have significant effect, but it faced serious resistance. Compliance without significant support was not a model that could be mainstreamed across the province, and any impact seemed to evaporate once the pressure was released.

The pendulum from compliance to support then swung through an accountability phase, where evaluation systems were carefully constructed with embedded support. Schools were expected to do introspection first, before being judged by outside evaluators. The training of management and the quality of the self-evaluations have picked up over time and the follow-up support after a cycle of evaluations has closed the distance between criticism and improvement.

But, even the convergence model did not correspond with an uptick in matric performance. And so, most recently, the lens of accountability has focused on senior management while systems of support have been strengthened at schools – particularly primary schools.

While each of the phases can be criticised, and it is acknowledged that huge amounts of money have been invested in improving learner performance in matric and the ANAs, the bottom line is that Gauteng's matric performance has been improving consistently and is the best in South Africa as we write.

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Twenty Years of Education Transformation in Gauteng 1994 to 2014: An Independent Review presents a collection of 15 important essays on different aspects of education in Gauteng since the advent of democracy in 1994. These essays talk to what a provincial education department does and how and why it does these things – whether it be about policy, resourcing or implementing projects. Each essay is written by one or more specialist in the relevant focus area.

The book is written to be accessible to the general reader as well as being informative and an essential resource for the specialist reader. It sheds light on aspects of how a provincial department operates and why and with what consequences certain decisions have been made in education over the last 20 turbulent years, both nationally and provincially.

There has been no attempt to fit the book's chapters into a particular ideological or educational paradigm, and as a result the reader will find differing views on various aspects of the Gauteng Department of Education's present and past. We leave the reader to decide to what extent the GDE has fulfilled its educational mandate over the last 20 years.

“*Twenty Years of Education Transformation in Gauteng 1994 to 2014: An Independent Review* is an invaluable contribution to understanding both the challenges and the successes of system-wide education change in South Africa. Authored by some of the leading public sector managers and university scholars, it offers judicious narratives of the complex passage from policy to implementation to institutionalisation.”

– **Prof. Brahm Fleisch**

Professor at the Wits School of Education
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