

CHAPTER 13: BUDGET ANALYSIS AND EXPLORATION OF ISSUES FOR IMPROVED PERFORMANCE IN BASIC EDUCATION

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13.1 Introduction and Background

If South Africa is to grow and develop, it must improve the quality and relevance of education. Low achievement rates, measured by various national and international assessments, indicate poor quality education. Supply issues relate to resource availability, schools finance equity, human and physical capital development limitations, teacher training, and quality of teaching. There are also shortcomings, monitoring and evaluation problems at provincial and school administrative and management levels. Demand issues relate to the socioeconomic status of students (including poverty, family background and disability), direct and indirect costs of schooling (e.g. transport), and other factors that keep children away from school (Arunatilake, 2006).

The challenge of access to basic education forms the core of this chapter. Formal access issues include the following:

- Adequacy of basic education funding and the effects on the intergovernmental fiscal relations (IGFR) system (known, unknown and changing costs of basic education).
- Adequacy of the physical teaching and learning environment and its impact on quality teaching and learner performance.
- Learner transport issues relating to long travel times, unsafe modes of travel and exposure to weather- and traffic-related dangers.
- Epistemological (transfer of knowledge) access issues.
- Methods used to distribute knowledge in South African schools (instructional time educators spend with learners, especially in township and rural schools).
- Changing curriculum and the effects on education and learner performance.
- Inclusive education and the challenge of dealing with the continued preference of granting access to able-bodied children over children with disabilities.

Education is regarded as the route to economic prosperity, the key to scientific and technological advancement, the means to combat unemployment and the foundation of social equity (Chimombo, 2005). Quality education is important, especially for a developing country such as South Africa, as it provides the knowledge, values and skills that form the foundation for lifelong learning and professional success. Quality education is based on a curriculum that is relevant to the needs and reality of all learners and is transmitted through professionally trained teachers who are equipped with appropriate learning materials and technologies. The school environment should be child-friendly, safe, clean and conducive to learning and extra mural activities (Hillman and Jenkner, 2004; Chimombo, 2005).

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A high standard of achievement at basic education level creates an enabling foundation for secondary schooling and post-secondary education performance. This in turn facilitates social inclusion and establishes the basis for effective participation in the economy and society.

This chapter presents an analysis of the basic education system in South Africa. After reviewing access to education from formal and epistemological perspectives, the problems examined include the intolerable physical conditions of schools, some of which present safety and health hazards for learners and educators, and the shortage of teaching space, which translates into overcrowding and ineffective teaching and learning environments. Transport is another major issue that links with the adequacy of the South African education infrastructure.

13.2 Methodology

A national analysis views the effects of basic education policy reforms on resource allocations and educational outcomes. The objectives are to trace the changing meanings of 'access to education' in post-apartheid South Africa. Literature from different sources was reviewed to trace the concept across legislation and policies. Empirical analysis is drawn from student assessments (National Senior Certificate, PIRLS, TIMMS and SACMEQII¹⁷⁷). Several broad basic education policy reforms, undertaken since the dawn of democracy in 1994, are reviewed. In general, these reforms concern legislative and policy changes, a number of professional and management reforms (such as curriculum reforms, learner training and teacher training), and changes in the education expenditure structure.

Epistemological analysis draws on the methods used to distribute knowledge in South African schools. The focus is on the access to, and costs of basic quality education, especially in township and rural schools. This centres on the curriculum, access to quality learning materials, infrastructure and committed, qualified teachers. It also covers the issue of inclusive education. Schools still grant access to able-bodied children more easily than they do to children with disabilities of various kinds (Jansen, 2008). The purpose of this chapter is to critically review the attainment of these multidimensional and complex education policy issues, which involve trade-offs.

13.3 Resource Allocation for Basic Education in South Africa

The right to basic education, including adult basic education, is entrenched in Section 29(1)(a) of the South African Constitution and the South African Schools Act (SASA), No. 84 of 1996. Basic education for school-aged children covers the General Education and Training (GET) band over three phases: foundation phase (Grades 1–3); intermediate phase (Grades 4–6); and senior phase (Grades 7–9). A reception grade, Grade R, became compulsory in 2010.

The Constitution does not indicate how a basic education is defined, leaving those decisions to the South African Parliament and Government (Reschovsky, 2009). The definition and interpretation of 'basic education' continues to evolve in South Africa – it must, by nature, take into account the changing circumstances and requirements of our society. This requires the government to develop policies and programmes and direct resources towards ensuring an individual's full enjoyment of the right to basic education (Taylor and Yu, 2009).

Education is a constitutionally concurrent function between national and provincial governments. National government is responsible for policy making and developing national priorities for achieving an adequate education. Basic education is funded mainly through the provincial equitable share (PES), which is an unconditional fiscal transfer system. Other education policy priorities are funded through conditional fiscal transfers, for example the Dinaledi project schools, HIV/AIDS, life skills education, the national school nutrition programme and technical secondary schools recapitalisation. The provinces are guided by the National Norms and Standards for School Funding policy in terms of the SASA.

On average, provinces spend 42% of their total provincial budgets on education. Public schools are allocated almost 83% of the total education expenditure. Some elements underpinning this large percentage are the expansion of no-fee schools and teacher salaries. However, in their allocations for education budgets, there is no obligation to divide provincial budget according to the components or weights of the PES formula. This is a constant source of tension be-

177 PIRLS: Progress in International Reading Literacy Study; TIMMS: Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, an international assessment of the mathematics and science knowledge of students around the world) PIRLS and TIMMS were developed by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) to allow participating nations to compare students' educational achievement across borders. SACMEQII: second Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality study conducted in 2000.

tween national and provincial education departments as well as the National Treasury. In the Annual Submission for the Division of Revenue for 2010/11, the FFC recommended a review of the PES formula, noting complaints that provinces do not fund education with their equitable share, but use it to fund other provincial priorities instead. The 2011 Division of Revenue Bill reflects the government's intention to implement substantial changes to the PES formula for the 2011 Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF).

The weights to the education component are reduced from 51% to 48%, while those of health are increased from 26% to 27%). The basic component is increased from 14% to 16%, and the other formula components are unchanged. The occupational specific dispensation (OSD) implementation of equity in the salaries of teachers has resulted in a substantial increase in labour costs, which has created considerable constraints for the public education system.

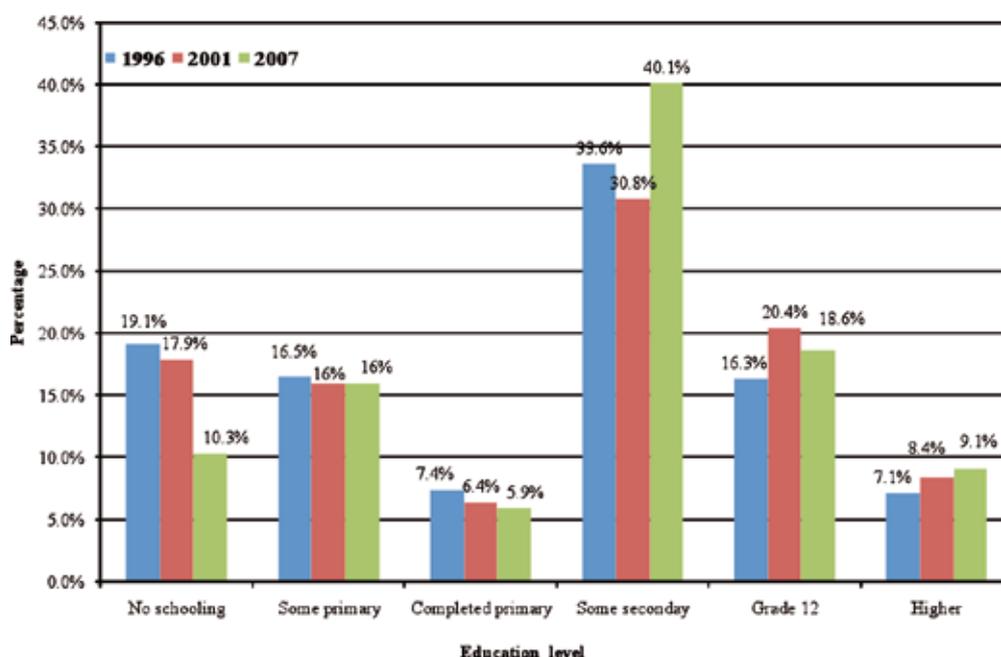
Education performance is not just about provincial funding, but relates to intergovernmental coordination in policy making and budgeting; failures in other areas of governance manifest in education resource allocations. The overall performance of education and health systems must strengthen, and the fiscal responsibility and accountability of provincial governments needs to improve.

13.4 The Performance of Basic Education in South Africa

Education plays a fundamental role in human development. However, the extent to which basic education reforms have succeeded in terms of Section 29 of the Constitution is the subject of much debate and analysis. The Bradshaw study (2008) shows that in South Africa, less than a third of the adult population have a National Senior Certificate (NSC) or higher qualification.

In 2007, 10% of the population aged 20 years and above had no education, compared with 19% in 1996 (see Figure 13.1). This trend is probably a consequence of changes in access to the education system since 1994. According to the 2003 South African Demographic and Health Survey, about 95% of the younger adult population of South Africa were able to read, but the proportion decreased with age (Bradshaw, 2008).

Figure 13.1 Highest level of education among population aged 20 years and above, 1996, 2001 and 2007



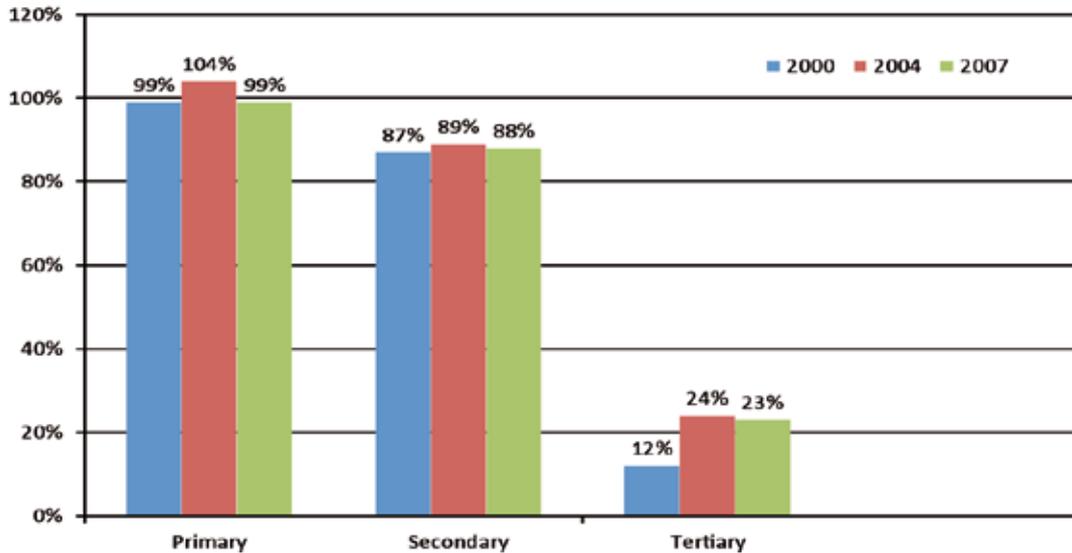
Source: Bradshaw, 2008

The challenge of illiteracy resulted in the launch of a national government programme called Kha ri Gude. The aim of the programme is for 4.7 million adults to become literate between 2008 and 2012 (Gustafsson *et al*, 2010).

Enrolment rates at primary level are high, which shows that South Africa has expanded access and is on track to meet Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2 of universal primary education. However, completion rates at secondary level

are low, mainly because of grade repetition and high drop-out rates, which reach about 20% by Grade 9, (Gustafsson and Morduchowicz, 2008). Figure 13.2 shows the gross enrolment ratio (GER) in South Africa for primary, secondary and tertiary education in South Africa.

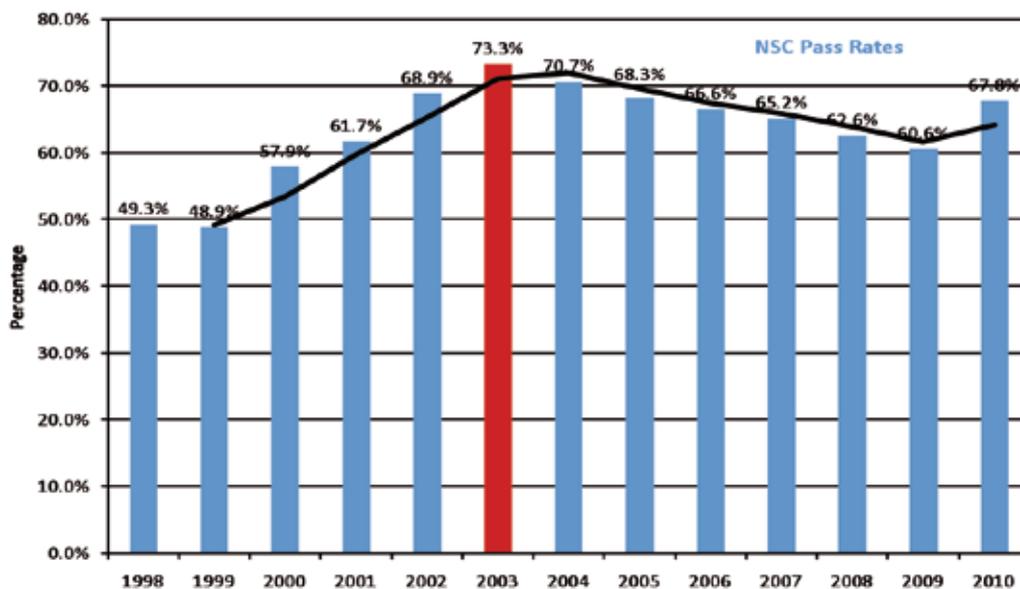
Figure 13.2 Gross enrolment ratio in South Africa



Source: Department of Education

Access to secondary education benefits mainly the better-off urban population and remains largely inaccessible for rural people, with girls at a particular disadvantage. Access to tertiary education is beyond the reach of many South African students, mainly because of entrance requirements, tuition fees and other socioeconomic reasons. Figure 13.3 shows that, of the learners who wrote Grade 12 examinations between 1998 and 2010, only 63.2% passed. Cronje (2010) notes that the university entrance pass rate for 2008 (13.4%) was significantly lower than that of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. The overall pass rate in 2010 was ten percentage points higher than in 1955 but lower than the peak years of the 1960s and early 1970s.

Figure 13.3 Grade 12 pass rates in South Africa



Source: Department of Basic Education

Table 13.1 shows that of the 3,341 learners who wrote the NSC in 2009 in quintile 1 schools, only 265 or 7.6% passed. Quintile 1 schools with fewer than 50 students are not included in the table. Bushbuckridge in Mpumalanga was South Africa’s worst-performing region in terms of NSC pass rates.

Table 13.1 Quintile 1 schools with a pass rate of 10% or less in 2009

Province	Region	District	School Name	Wrote	Passed	% pass
Eastern Cape	North Eastern	Mount Fletcher	1. Bethania Senior Secondary	77	1	1.3%
	North Eastern	Mount Fletcher	2. Edward Zibi Senior Secondary	77	8	10.4%
	Eastern	Mthatha	3. Menziwe Senior Secondary	122	11	9.0%
	North Eastern	Lusikisiki	4. Mfazwe Comprehensive Technical High	64	5	7.8%
	North Eastern	Maluti	5. Mnukwa Senior Secondary	86	9	10.5%
	Eastern	Mthatha	6. Sea View Secondary	65	6	9.2%
	Eastern	Qumbu	7. Welsh Senior Secondary	52	5	9.6%
KwaZulu-Natal	Zululand	Empangeni	8. Nqumizwe Secondary	109	8	7.3%
	Pietermaritzburg	Ugu	9. Sizanayo High	53	4	7.5%
	Zululand	Obonjeni	10. Thongwana Junior Secondary	118	9	7.6%
Limpopo	Greater Sekhukhune	Hlogotlou	11. Izikhali Zemfundo Senior Secondary	100	10	10.0%
	Mopani	Mamaila	12. Kheodi High	216	22	10.2%
	Vhembe	Vhumbedzi	13. Limbedzi Secondary	56	4	7.1%
	Greater Sekhukhune	Driekop	14. Mamogee Secondary	90	4	4.4%
	Greater Sekhukhune	Eensaam	15. Mmamokogolushi Secondary	60	5	8.3%
	Greater Sekhukhune	Seotlong	16. Morokalebole Secondary	87	6	6.9%
	Mpumalanga	Bushbuckridge Region	Cottondale	17. Babinatau Senior Secondary	57	6
Bushbuckridge Region		Casteel	18. Ben Matloshe High	86	5	5.8%
Gert Sibande		Mpuluzi	19. Enkhanini Secondary	75	5	6.7%
Bushbuckridge Region		Greenvalley	20. Germans Chiloane	136	9	6.6%
Bushbuckridge Region		Marite	21. Halemela Secondary	58	4	6.9%
Bushbuckridge Region		Agincourt	22. Langa Secondary	213	21	9.9%
Bushbuckridge Region		Arthurseat	23. Lethipele Senior Secondary	80	5	6.3%
Bushbuckridge Region		Arthurseat	24. Maakere High	82	6	7.3%
Bushbuckridge Region		Agincourt	25. Machaye Senior Secondary	104	10	9.6%
Bushbuckridge Region		Maviljan	26. Magabotse Secondary	51	2	3.9%
Bushbuckridge Region		Thulamahashe	27. Magigwana Secondary	77	4	5.2%
Bushbuckridge Region		Cottondale	28. Mhlangana Secondary	198	20	10.1%
Bushbuckridge Region		Cottondale	29. Moses Mnisi High	248	25	10.1%
Bushbuckridge Region	Casteel	30. Moseterata Secondary	58	4	6.9%	
Bushbuckridge Region	Dwarsloop	31. Qokiso Senior Secondary	177	7	4.0%	
Bushbuckridge Region	Cottondale	32. Tladishi High	209	15	7.2%	
Total				3341	265	7.6%

PLEASE NOTE: Any school with fewer than 50 pupils has been left out.

Source: Report on National Senior Certificate Results, 2009, Department of Basic Education

Table 13.2 shows that of the 1,096 learners who wrote the NSC in quintile 1 schools in 2010, only 71 or 6.5% passed. If quintile 1 schools with fewer than 50 students are included, of the 1,821 learners who wrote, only 113 or 6.2% passed. In 2010 the NSC pass rate showed no improvement in quintile 1 schools.

Table 13.2 Quintile 1 schools with a pass rate of 10% or less in 2010

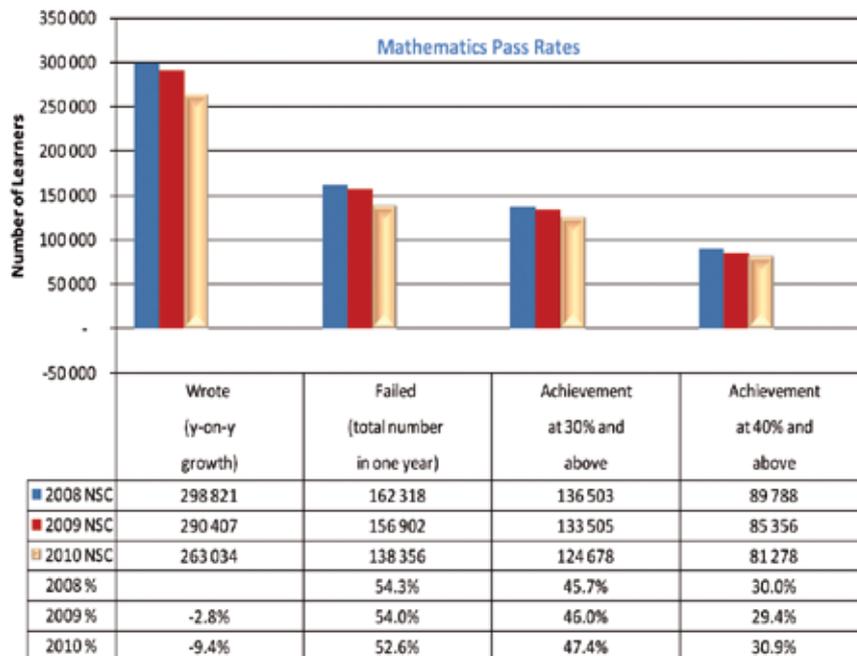
Province	Region	District	School Name	Wrote	Passed	% pass
Eastern Cape	Eastern	Libode	1. Ngqeleni Senior Secondary	172	15	8.7%
	Eastern	Libode	2. Ntshilini Senior Secondary	173	14	8.1%
	Eastern	Qumbu	3. Somagunya Senior Secondary	61	2	3.3%
Free State	Motheo	Region 1	4. Headstart High School	104	0	0.0%
KwaZulu-Natal	Pietermaritzburg	Ugu	5. Sam Mkhize High	71	3	4.2%
	Ukhahlamba	Umzinyathi	6. Esethu High School	52	3	5.8%
	Zululand	Empangeni	7. Velamuva High School	53	5	9.4%
Limpopo	Waterberg	Warmbad	8. Raeleng Secondary	67	3	4.5%
Mpumalanga	Bushbuckridge Region	Cottondale	9. Babinatau Senior Secondary	84	6	7.1%
	Bushbuckridge Region	Marite	10. Lamulelani High	124	7	5.6%
	Bushbuckridge Region	Marite	11. Mathipe High	135	13	9.6%
Total				1096	71	6.5%

PLEASE NOTE: Any school with fewer than 50 pupils has been left out.

Source: Report on National Senior Certificate Results, 2010, Department of Basic Education

Quintile 1 schools face not only financial but complex and varied challenges. Inequities in access to educational resources and knowledge play a significant role in determining performance and outcomes. Schools identified as ‘failing’ under current methods are in poor rural and township areas and often serve the most disadvantaged students (Thernstrom and Thernstrom, 2003). They have low test scores, struggle to attract and retain better-qualified teachers, have few resources and exhibit poor morale. In these schools, from 2008 to 2010 the pass rate in mathematics and physical science was below 50%, with on average only 30% of learners achieving marks above 40% in mathematics. Moreover, the number of NSC candidates writing the mathematics examination since 2008 has been declining (see Figure 13.4).

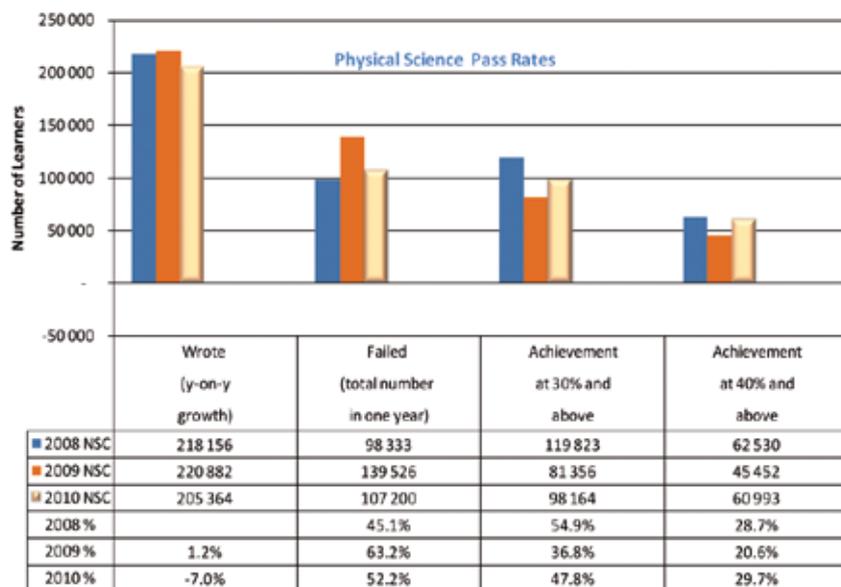
Figure 13.4 Mathematics pass rates (2008–2010)



Source: Department of Basic Education

The failure rate in physical science increased sharply between 2008 and 2009, from 45.1% to 63.2%, improving to 52.2% in 2010. Correspondingly, the percentage of candidates achieving marks of 40% and above increased from 20.6% in 2009 to just 29.7% in 2010 (see Figure 13.5).

Figure 13.5 Physical Science pass rates (2008–2010)



Source: Department of Basic Education

Continuing low pass rates do not augur well for the future and are cause for considerable concern, as mathematics and physical science have been identified as key subjects for providing the skills needed for growth in South Africa. There are currently more than 500 Dinaledi project schools in South Africa, which are designed to promote meaningful access to mathematics, science and technology, particularly in rural and township areas. In 2008, the Dinaledi schools accounted for over 50,000 of those writing maths and science exams. However, according to its 2008 performance report, 54 of the Dinaledi schools had fewer than 20 maths passes, and science passes fell below 2008 targets.

In addition to the NSC results, international assessments show that South Africa is still not yielding adequate returns in investment in basic education. Schools in South Africa have a long way to go to enable all, or even most, learners to learn to read, write, reason, and work with numbers.

The effect of poor performance in the public education system is migration to independent schools – even by learners from townships. The School Realities data (2009) produced by the Department of Basic Education shows that in 2009 there were 386,098 learners attending 1,174 independent schools (see Table 13.3).

The substantial growth in private schooling in South Africa is accompanied by socioeconomic and demographic diversification. African learners currently constitute more than 70% of all learners in independent schools, mainly in schools with low to average fees (Du Toit, 2004). This is because of the perceived quality in independent schools. However, private or independent schooling is selective, based on the willingness and ability to pay. The government, in partnership with civil society, has a responsibility to provide quality education in public schools in South Africa, as migration to independent schools cannot be a solution.

Table 13.3 Independent school statistics by province, 2009

	Numbers			Ratio	
	Learners	Educators	Schools	Learner: Educator	Learner: School
Eastern Cape	44,202	2,211	140	20	316
Free State	14,520	781	64	19	227
Gauteng	183,595	11,765	420	16	437
KwaZulu-Natal	43,638	3,095	159	14	274
Limpopo	35,608	1,797	117	20	304
Mpumalanga	18,990	1,229	89	15	213
Northern Cape	2,852	227	17	13	168
North West	12,792	935	52	14	246
Western	29,901	2,537	116	12	258
Total	386,098	24,577	1,174	16	329
Percentage of national total					
Eastern Cape	11.4	9.0	11.9		
Free State	3.8	3.2	5.5		
Gauteng	47.6	47.9	35.8		
KwaZulu-Natal	11.3	12.6	13.5		
Limpopo	9.2	7.3	10.0		
Mpumalanga	4.9	5.0	7.6		
Northern Cape	0.7	0.9	1.4		
North West	3.3	3.8	4.4		
Western	7.7	10.3	9.9		
Total	100	100	100		

Source: *School Realities in 2009, Department of Basic Education, 2009*

The quality of education is a strong predictor of the level of economic growth (Mullis *et al.*, 2007; Hanushek and Woessman, 2007). The sustained downward trend reflects significant shortcomings in the country’s basic education system, especially primary and secondary levels of schooling, and the continued poor performance poses serious challenges for national development. The economic costs are that the skills demands on school leavers are greater today than they were 30 or 40 years ago. Information technology and a change in South Africa’s industrial base mean that employers demand a greater level of skills from their employees. Much still needs to be done to improve epistemological access to education.

Quality education and learner performance are also affected by formal access issues to education, mainly learner transport and inclusive education.

13.5 Learner Transport

The institutional fragmentation is associated with the provision of learner transport at provincial level. While the shortage of schools and classrooms is a recognised problem, the combination of lack of transport, shortages of schools and low-density settlements in many rural areas remains largely unrecognised. According to the General Household Survey (2009), nearly three-quarters (73.6%) of those attending an educational institution walk there. A further 8% travel by private car, and 8% use buses and taxis (Jansen, 2008).

The Department of Basic Education's access norms and standards require learners to be within a three kilometre distance of a school. However, the average walking distance in rural areas is five kilometres. Poor learners should have either transport or hostel facilities if they live more than 1.5 hour's walking distance from the nearest school. Furthermore, learning transport policy is inconsistent across provinces, especially regarding institutional relationships, funding, procurement and coverage.

13.6 Inclusive Education

There is a general lack of knowledge, skills and training for effective implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. The lack of training, time, experience, facilities and learner materials mean that teachers are unprepared and ill-equipped to teach in inclusive classrooms (Cook, 2001). Investments in infrastructure, learner material, capacity and teacher support, as well as a change of attitude from both teachers and learners, are required if inclusive education is to gain momentum.

The 2001 Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education underpins the development of an inclusive education and training system in South Africa. In November 2007 the National Department of Education published guidelines to ensure that all special schools become fully functional and contain the preparatory steps for their development as special school resource centres. Such resource centres will have specialist support staff with physical infrastructure for learners with physical disabilities, therapy rooms, incontinence facilities, rooms for orientation and mobility training, and properly fitted assistive devices (Aston, 2008). However, "schools (and universities), as is the case with the broader society, still grant access to able-bodied children more easily than they do to children with disabilities of various kinds. A blind child, or a child in a wheelchair, or a child with diabetes, struggles much more to gain access to schools than children without special needs" (Jansen, 2008:7).

13.7 Observations and Recommendations

13.7.1 Redirect funding to quality improvements in basic education

Total provincial expenditure on education has increased, but providing basic education is labour intensive: on average, 80% of the funding goes to personnel costs. In South Africa teacher salaries are set through a national bargaining process, which restricts provincial discretion in funding, leaving little money for non-personnel expenditure. This can be regarded as a fracture of the IGFR system. Moreover, the dual system of fee paying and no-fee paying schools creates a complex system of education finance that affects the equal provision of basic education and performance.

The Commission submits that the current framework does not guarantee the distribution of funds to schools based on their expenditure needs. In the past, the Commission recommended that increases in education spending should be directed towards investments that will have the biggest impact on quality, including learner and teacher support materials. There should also be input indicators or measures to assure that learners have resources to ensure high-quality basic education (Reschovsky, 2009).

13.7.2 Improve quality and prioritise epistemological access to education

Increased access to education has not resulted in quality output. Even when students enjoy physical access to schools, they have highly uneven, even unequal, access to knowledge within those schools. Lack of access to knowledge has both direct and indirect effects on the economy and society. Moreover, quality education plays a significant part in improving the chances of poor children. As access to knowledge (epistemological access) is strongly dependent on the curriculum, teachers and institutional context of the school, a necessary pre-condition for measuring the epistemological access to schools should be evaluating learner performance throughout their academic careers.

13.7.3 Ensure and implement required amount of time spent on teaching

Educators, especially in townships and rural areas, spend less time actually teaching than is specified in policy (Chisholm and Sujee, 2005). They work an average of 41 hours a week, instead of 43 hours. An average of 16 hours a week is spent teaching out of an expected range of between 22.5–27.5 hours per week, while the remaining 25 hours are spent on administrative and non-administrative activities. Furthermore, as the week progresses, educators spend less and less time teaching and participating in other school-related activities, and in many schools very little teaching occurs on Fridays (ibid.). During the formal school day, taking together all the work of educators, teaching is crowded out by management and supervision, assessment and evaluation and extra-curricular activities. The Department of Basic Education needs to find solutions to relieve teachers of administrative burdens so that they can spend adequate time teaching. An inspection or monitoring and evaluation system should ensure that the required instruction time and assessment take place.

13.7.4 Support the training and development of teachers

Quality teaching is acknowledged to be a critical element of epistemological access to education. Therefore, teachers should be properly qualified to provide high-quality education. Through the Division of Revenue, the government must state clearly the amount spent on training and development of teachers and must regularly report on the outcomes and improvements. This relates to prospective teachers who are still being trained and those who are already in service. To improve teacher education, teacher-training colleges need to be resuscitated and recapitalised. These colleges should focus on teaching methods where teachers can specialise as either primary or secondary teachers.

13.7.5 Improve school accountability for learner performance

The curriculum assumes that parents and school governing bodies play active and supportive roles in their children's education. This is more apparent in middle class and well-to-do schools than in poor schools. The role played by semi-literate and illiterate parents in their children's education falls beyond the ambit of the current education policy, yet affects the performance of learners from poor backgrounds. Poor schools in quintiles 1 to 3 require a differentiated approach that is more than simply a financially based intervention. The intervention should separate school and non-school effects on children's learning. It is likely that a school's test scores are a function of both school practices (e.g. good teaching and efficient administration) and non-school characteristics (e.g. involved parenting and quality neighbourhoods). Therefore, it is important to measure the value that schools add and to acknowledge the widely varying non-school factors and socio-economic environments that affect children's learning. A differentiated approach involves the provision of adequate and relevant learner support materials, coaching, financial support, empowerment of parents, school governance development and extra lessons for learners. This support should be tied to accountability for improved and good performance. Financial incentives should be provided for schools in poor areas that perform well, which should not mean a dramatic increase in the amount of public spending on education.

13.7.6 Finalise the implementation of OSD and formalise teacher performance evaluation

Personnel remuneration accounts for the largest portion of education spending, and provinces regularly overspend, mainly as the result of OSD implementation. Since the 2007/08 financial year, the deficit in education budgets has been funded through provincial budget adjustments. The increased ratio of wage bill to total budgets has led to a reduction in funding of other priority programmes, especially infrastructure. This situation must change. The problem is a clear sign of inadequate costing, lack of norm specification and other challenges to the IGFR system. Personnel costs are centrally determined but funded by provinces through the PES, which does not specify spending norms. What is needed is a different fiscal framework that links performance and accountability to dispensation, cost of living adjustments and rank promotion. A formalised performance evaluation system is also required, which would to boost education performance by emphasising highly competent teachers.

13.7.7 Improve the coordination, financing and provisioning of learner transport

In the past, the Commission has raised inconsistencies about the regulation, coordination, financing and provisioning of learner transport. The provision of transport enhances access to education, promotes safety of learners on the roads and conserves their energy to concentrate (Rogan, 2006). Policies for learner transport include procurement, contract terms and budget allocations, which vary across provinces. Common issues are unsustainable contract rates for transport pro-

viders in most provinces; overloading of vehicles transporting learners, in some instances; and occasional non-payment of contractors. Intervention is needed to improve learner travel times, reduce excessive walking distances and improve the safety of travel to schools. This will help to curb absenteeism and drop-out rates.

Government must address five main areas affecting learners:

- Provide transport to learners from poor communities who live more than five kilometres from their nearest school and who do not have access to public transport.
- Clarify and finalise overall responsibility and accountability for determining a provincial learner transport policy between the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Transport.
- Finalise policy and implementation guidelines on learner transport subsidies (design of the subsidy, allocation criteria, method of payment and transfer mechanism).
- Agree on the manner and cost effectiveness in which learner transport should be provided (buses, taxis, bicycles).
- Address other issues affecting learner transport (e.g. safety, drop-off points, and time spent travelling/impact on learner performance).

Government should also consider building boarding schools, especially for children who do not have access to any form of public transport in rural areas.

13.7.8 Accelerate the implementation of inclusive education by gazetting norms and standards

It is alarming that inclusive education is not mentioned as a priority in the delivery agreement (Outcome One: Improved Quality of Basic Education) between the President and the Minister of Basic Education. For the practical application of inclusive education to be successful and provide meaningful access, substantial changes are needed in learner enrolment practices, attitudes, educational approaches and school facilities.

This will require setting the norms and standards for inclusive education before the fiscal framework can be designed and agreed upon. National government and provincial education departments must take reasonable measures to effect the inclusive education of intellectually disabled children. Input norms should indicate:

- The human, physical, administrative and regulatory resources to be dedicated to achieving targets for inclusive education.
- The resources required for staffing levels and training of special educators, development of adapted materials, and physical improvements to schools to make them accessible to learners with special needs.

Output norms should indicate:

- The curriculum and learner materials adapted for children with special needs and the number of teachers trained in inclusive practices (e.g. training in Braille, Sign Language, disability awareness, the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, educational techniques, and materials to support learners with special needs).
- The gross or net enrolment rate (%) of learners with special needs.
- The completion rate (%) of learners with special needs.
- The participation in tertiary education (%) of learners with special needs.

These norms and standards must inform the implementation of the inclusive education plan envisaged in the 2001 Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs, with regular reports on the performance of inclusive education.

13.8 Conclusion

The South African Constitution guarantees that all children, including children from poor households, should have access to basic education. However, this does not ensure the quality of that education. The shortcomings in instruction times spent by teachers in township and rural schools, as well as in the material resourcing of schools, play a significant part in limiting poor children's epistemological access to education and life opportunities comparable to those of other, well-to-do children.

Government has increased its expenditure on education, but returns have been sub-optimal. Education in South Africa is fraught with many challenges related not only to funding, but also to quality education in itself, the role of teachers, parents, structure of facilities, learner performance and the socioeconomic status of students. All these factors require robust intervention mainly by government as well as civil society, research and academic institutions. If these interventions are not made promptly, the school system will constrain South Africa's economic development prospects.

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