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Education

■ Introduction

Education has clearly been a government priority during the period under review. Between 2005/06 and 2008/09, government spending on education as a percentage of total government expenditure was an average of 17.7 per cent. In his state of the nation address in June 2009, President Zuma identified education as a key priority of the new government over the next five years. By 2011/12, spending on education is projected to be 18.2 per cent of total government expenditure, the largest slice of government spending. This is appropriate in a developing country like South Africa, where there is a pressing need for skills to drive the country's economic growth and broader development.

The investment in education has resulted in great progress in improving access to education in South Africa over the past 15 years. However, educational outcomes have not always matched the investment. This is illustrated by learner performance, which has been measured in various national, regional and international performance evaluations that include: the matric exam; the local systemic evaluation, whose key focus is on learner performance and literacy, but which also looks at management capacity, the learning context of learners and the school community, and teacher qualifications; the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality; and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study. South Africa's poor performance in this range of evaluations shows that, despite the notable improvement in access to education, much still needs to be done to improve quality in education. The president's address recognised this, highlighting areas that need particular attention over the next five years. These include: the expansion of ECD and Grade R; skills development, with the FET

By 2011/12, spending on education is projected to be 18.2 per cent of total government expenditure

Educational outcomes have not always matched the investment

colleges being the primary site for the development of essential skills; school infrastructure; and school management.

This chapter focuses on expenditure and allocations of the provincial departments of education, which are responsible for the implementation of basic education (excluding higher education). It gives an overview of:

- the current education landscape
- budgets and expenditure trends
- education outputs and outcomes
- policy developments and the outlook for the next five years.

■ The current education landscape

The past 15 years have seen increased enrolment at the upper and lower ends of the system

The education system has experienced major growth over the past 15 years as access to education has broadened. Growth has been especially significant at the upper and lower ends of the system. At the upper end, enrolment at higher education institutions has increased from just over 530 000 students in 1999 to 761 067 students in 2007. This significant increase can be attributed to the increased number of learners who are completing grade 12, as well as the role of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme in providing financial aid to needy and deserving students to enable them to enrol at higher education institutions.

Similarly, enrolment levels at the lower end of the system (early childhood development (ECD), and Grade R) have grown significantly, more than doubling from 142 741 in 1999 to 289 312 in 2007.

By 2007, there were 14.2 million learners and students enrolled in 35 240 education institutions served by 452 971 educators and lecturers in the various education sub-sectors in South Africa.

Table 3.1 breaks these figures down further.

Table 3.1 Education in South Africa: A global picture, 2007

National		Learners	%	Educators	Institutions
Public schools		12 048 821	85.0%	372 342	24 979
Independent schools		352 396	2.5%	21 883	1 086
Total (Public and Independent)		12 401 217	87.5%	394 225	26 065
Other educational programmes	Public ABET	292 734	2.1%	19 200	2 476
	SEN	102 057	0.7%	7 874	416
	Public FET	320 679	2.3%	5 987	50
	ECD	289 312	2.0%	10 096	6 210
	Public HE	761 087	5.4%	15 589	23
Total (Other)		1 765 869	12.5%	58 746	9 175
Grand Total		14 167 086	100.0%	452 971	35 240

Source: Education Statistics in South Africa at a Glance in 2007, National Department of Education

Table 3.2 shows that South Africa spent R127.5 billion, or 5.5 per cent of GDP, on education in 2008/09. At just under 70 per cent, public school education (administered by provinces) received the largest share, as it constitutes the bulk of learners in the system. Primary and secondary school education's share of the education budget declines over the review period as other components of the system like ECD and Grade R begin to receive a larger share of the total education spend. Higher education's share of the total spend has been consistently above 12.5 per cent over the review period, except in 2008/09, when it was 12.2 per cent. This is mainly due to the major expansion of the school infrastructure programme, the national school nutrition programme, ECD and allocations to public special schools in 2008/09.

In 2008/09, South Africa spent 5.5 per cent of its GDP on education

The additional allocations to higher education see its share recovering over the MTEF period, and by 2011/12, this is expected to comprise 12.8 per cent of the total spent on education. There is a decline in further education and training's (FET) share in 2009/10, mainly due to the FET recapitalisation conditional grant coming to an end in 2008/09. The prioritisation of ECD and Grade R is reflected in the increasing share of ECD.

ECD and Grade R are prioritised over the medium term

Table 3.2 Education components and shares, 2005/06 – 2011/12

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	Outcome			Pre-audited outcome	Medium-term estimates		
R million							
Education	85 471	94 238	105 121	127 451	140 297	156 003	169 683
<i>of which</i>							
Higher education	10 647	11 957	13 323	15 560	17 498	19 908	21 774
Primary and secondary school education	57 819	63 066	69 719	84 143	90 237	98 607	106 084
Further education and training (FET)	1 452	1 974	2 425	3 005	3 168	3 373	3 542
Adult basic education and training (ABET)	710	718	845	832	1 123	1 198	1 264
Early childhood development (ECD)	440	546	691	1 132	1 996	3 174	3 591
Percentage share of total education							
Higher education	12.5%	12.7%	12.7%	12.2%	12.5%	12.8%	12.8%
Primary and secondary school education	67.6%	66.9%	66.3%	66.0%	64.3%	63.2%	62.5%
Further education and training (FET)	1.7%	2.1%	2.3%	2.4%	2.3%	2.2%	2.1%
Adult basic education and training (ABET)	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%
Early childhood development (ECD)	0.5%	0.6%	0.7%	0.9%	1.4%	2.0%	2.1%
GDP (R billion)	1 586	1 811	2 068	2 304	2 474	2 686	2 953
Education total as % of GDP	5.4%	5.2%	5.1%	5.5%	5.7%	5.8%	5.7%

Source: National Treasury database

Education budgets see an average annual growth of 10 per cent over the medium term

The total education spend in South Africa was at 5.5 per cent of GDP in 2008/09, and is projected to increase to 5.7 per cent over the medium term. While this compares favourably with other middle income countries, it is still below the 6 per cent benchmark that the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) recommends for optimal growth and development. However, the total amount spent on education should be assessed in the context of the many other key priorities competing for limited resources in South Africa, such as health, social welfare, housing and sanitation. Nevertheless, education budgets still see an average annual growth of 10 per cent over the medium term.

Public schools

The learner: school ratio in public schools is lower in rural provinces

Enrolment in public schools has seen steady growth since 1994. Nearly 12 million learners enrolled in 24 751 public ordinary schools in 2008, taught by 378 060 educators. There was an average of 31 learners to each educator and an average of 480 learners for each public ordinary school. The learner: school ratio in the predominantly rural provinces like Eastern Cape (358), Free State (406) and Limpopo (431) was lower than for the mostly urban provinces like Gauteng (863) and Western Cape (646). This is mainly due to the sparser population in the rural provinces. This trend gives rise to small schools with multi-grade classes in the predominantly rural provinces. As most educators are not well prepared for multi-grade teaching, learner performance in these classes is often compromised.

Table 3.3 Public ordinary school statistics by province, 2008

	Number			Ratio	
	Learners	Educators	Schools	Learner : Educator	Learner : School
Eastern Cape	2 037 777	64 371	5 686	32	358
Free State	656 074	22 696	1 614	29	406
Gauteng	1 716 196	53 017	1 989	32	863
KwaZulu-Natal	2 725 855	83 760	5 783	33	471
Limpopo	1 735 806	55 647	4 023	31	431
Mpumalanga	1 034 719	32 784	1 873	32	552
Northern Cape	263 086	8 835	602	30	437
North West	765 762	25 736	1 730	30	443
Western Cape	937 887	31 214	1 451	30	646
Total	11 873 162	378 060	24 751	31	480
Percentage of national total					
Eastern Cape	17.2%	17.0%	23.0%		
Free State	5.5%	6.0%	6.5%		
Gauteng	14.5%	14.0%	8.0%		
KwaZulu-Natal	23.0%	22.2%	23.4%		
Limpopo	14.6%	14.7%	16.3%		
Mpumalanga	8.7%	8.7%	7.6%		
Northern Cape	2.2%	2.3%	2.4%		
North West	6.4%	6.8%	7.0%		
Western Cape	7.9%	8.3%	5.9%		
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

Source: *School Realities in 2008, National Department of Education*

The learner: educator ratios indicated in table 3.3 are relatively close to the average, with the Free State at 29:1 and KwaZulu-Natal at 33:1. The ratios include state employed educators as well as educators employed by school governing bodies. Once school governing body-employed educators are excluded, the average learner: educator ratio increases to 34:1 and to 36:1 in both Western Cape and Gauteng. This shows that educators employed by the school governing bodies are significant enough in number to reduce the ratio in schools where they are employed. It also explains why class sizes in schools that cannot employ additional educators are much larger than the average, particularly in these two provinces.

Independent schools

In 2008, there were 366 201 learners attending 1 124 independent schools, being taught by 22 893 educators. Gauteng has the largest share of independent schools, with 416 of the 1 124 independent schools located there. The learner: educator ratios at independent schools are much lower than for public ordinary schools, ranging from 11:1 in Western Cape to 21:1 in the Free State.

Approximately one-third of independent schools are in Gauteng

Table 3.4 Independent school statistics by province, 2008

	Number			Ratio	
	Learners	Educators	Schools	Learner : Educator	Learner : School
Eastern Cape	42 217	2 165	139	19	304
Free State	14 514	687	61	21	238
Gauteng	177 831	11 290	416	16	427
KwaZulu-Natal	45 565	3 223	155	14	294
Limpopo	28 863	1 436	99	20	292
Mpumalanga	16 812	860	86	20	195
Northern Cape	2 780	184	15	15	185
North West	13 498	884	54	15	250
Western Cape	24 121	2 164	99	11	244
Total	366 201	22 893	1 124	16	326
Percentage of national total					
Eastern Cape	11.5%	9.5%	12.4%		
Free State	4.0%	3.0%	5.4%		
Gauteng	48.6%	49.3%	37.0%		
KwaZulu-Natal	12.4%	14.1%	13.8%		
Limpopo	7.9%	6.3%	8.8%		
Mpumalanga	4.6%	3.8%	7.7%		
Northern Cape	0.8%	0.8%	1.3%		
North West	3.7%	3.9%	4.8%		
Western Cape	6.6%	9.5%	8.8%		
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

Source: *School Realities in 2008, National Department of Education*

Further education and training colleges

The curriculum of the vocational NC(V) qualification reflects the needs of industry and ASGISA

The FET system is key in meeting the skilled labour demands of an increasingly competitive global economy. The recapitalisation of the FET colleges has included measures that have significantly changed the further education and training landscape. Among them is the reduced number of colleges to 50, with most colleges being located on many campuses. Another key measure is the phasing out and eventual replacement of the national technical education (NATED) courses with the new national curriculum (vocational) (NC(V)) qualification. The NATED courses are viewed as outdated and inappropriate for producing the skills that the South African economy currently requires. As the NC(V) is a qualification equivalent to the national senior certificate, it is an alternative school leaving qualification. It has 12 new curriculum programmes that have been designed in consultation with business and labour to ensure that the sector is responsive to the general needs of industry and the overarching goals of achieving accelerated growth. These include programmes for engineering, business, tourism and hospitality, IT and agriculture.

The introduction of these programmes has been accompanied by the recapitalisation of the FET college sector, which began in 2005/06 with the introduction of the FET college recapitalisation conditional grant. R2 billion was allocated to the 50 FET colleges across the country. R50 million was allocated in 2005/06 for the development of project plans. A further R470 million, R595 million and R795 million for the subsequent years up to 2008/09 was allocated for the actual refurbishment, equipping and upgrading of the facilities and lecturers' qualifications over this period, to enable FET colleges to deliver the new programmes. The programme is further supported by a bursary scheme administered by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme.

The first NC (V) cohort qualifies in 2009

There is an expectation that the NC (V) will produce graduates who are better equipped to match the skills needed by the country's growing economy. However, student performance in these programmes in 2007 was very poor: of the 25 000 enrolled in 2007, 38 per cent dropped out before completing the year and only 23 per cent of the remainder passed all their subjects. This is a major concern because of the prevailing pressure to meet the skills requirements. 2007 was the first year of the new FET vocational curriculum offering these new programmes, so the results may partly reflect teething problems. It may therefore be too early to draw conclusions about whether the recapitalisation of FET colleges and the introduction of the new curriculum will deliver on these expectations. Two key indicators of the success of the new programmes would be the fit between the qualifying students and the available jobs, and their preparedness to do the jobs for which they are employed. A proper assessment can therefore only be made after 2009, when the first NC (V) cohort qualifies.

Gross enrolment ratio

The gross enrolment ratio (GER) is the number of learners, regardless of age, enrolled in a specific school phase as a percentage of the total

appropriate school-age population. A ratio of 100 will indicate that the system is in balance, a ratio below 100 indicates that there are missing learners, while a ratio above 100 indicates that there are under- and over-age learners in the system. Generally, ratios less than 90 and above 105 are unacceptable as they indicate major inefficiencies in the system.

Table 3.5 Gross enrolment ratio, 2008

	School phrases (Gr.1-12)		Total (Gr. 1-12)
	Primary phase (Gr. 1-7)	Secondary phase (Gr. 8-12)	
Eastern Cape	119.0%	75.0%	100.0%
Free State	90.0%	85.0%	88.0%
Gauteng	87.0%	88.0%	87.0%
KwaZulu-Natal	99.0%	83.0%	92.0%
Limpopo	101.0%	102.0%	102.0%
Mpumalanga	102.0%	95.0%	99.0%
Northern Cape	94.0%	81.0%	89.0%
North West	93.0%	76.0%	86.0%
Western Cape	84.0%	71.0%	79.0%
Total/average	98.0%	85.0%	92.0%

Source: National Department of Education

Table 3.5 shows that South Africa is on track to meeting the Millennium Development Goal of education for all. The overall GER of 98 for grades 1 to 7 suggests that the system is very close to universal age appropriate enrolment in the primary phase. However, the ratios in Eastern Cape (119), Gauteng (87) and Free State (92), suggest that there are still inefficiencies in some provinces, which are hidden by the averages. Similarly, the total GER (grades 1 to 12) for Eastern Cape of 100 suggests a very efficient system. However, this average masks the high number of over/under-age learners in the primary phase and the high number of school leavers in the secondary phase (mostly in the FET band, where the GER is 68 per cent).

The low GER for the secondary phase indicates that far too many learners are leaving the system before completing grades 10 to 12. This is cause for concern, as students who have passed Grade 12 have a much better chance of finding employment. These students can further their studies, which increases their opportunities for gainful employment. At the societal level, it also increases the return on the social investment made in an individual.

South Africa's gross enrolment ratio shows that the country is on track to meeting the Millennium Development Goals for education

Budgets and expenditure trends

Provincial education budgets

The provincial education budget is expected to grow by an average annual rate of 10.2 per cent to R143.8 billion in 2011/12

The aggregate provincial education budget increases by 9.2 per cent from R107.5 billion in 2008/09 to R118.5 billion in 2009/10. It is expected to grow by an average annual rate of 10.2 per cent to R143.8 billion in 2011/12. This is down from the average annual growth of 14.3 per cent between 2005/06 and 2008/09, which was mainly driven by expanding personnel budgets with the introduction of the occupational specific dispensation (OSD) for educators in 2008, the introduction of no-fee schools in 2007, and an expanding infrastructure programme in all provinces over this period.

Table 3.6 Provincial education expenditure¹, 2005/06 – 2011/12

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	Outcome			Pre-audited outcome	Medium-term estimates		
R million							
Eastern Cape	11 523	12 873	14 475	17 869	19 448	21 887	23 771
Free State	4 916	5 346	5 797	6 713	7 383	8 124	8 734
Gauteng	10 406	11 623	13 829	16 709	18 987	20 945	23 147
KwaZulu-Natal	15 030	16 219	18 407	22 983	24 810	27 878	30 372
Limpopo	10 362	11 367	11 815	14 692	16 362	18 095	19 594
Mpumalanga	5 780	6 273	7 823	9 361	10 073	11 208	12 157
Northern Cape	1 563	1 643	2 288	2 852	2 979	3 309	3 621
North West	5 951	6 686	6 206	7 179	8 145	9 223	10 078
Western Cape	6 449	6 920	7 738	9 192	10 346	11 333	12 303
Total	71 981	78 948	88 377	107 550	118 534	132 002	143 776
Percentage growth (average annual)	2005/06 – 2008/09			2008/09 – 2011/12			
Eastern Cape	15.7%			10.0%			
Free State	10.9%			9.2%			
Gauteng	17.1%			11.5%			
KwaZulu-Natal	15.2%			9.7%			
Limpopo	12.3%			10.1%			
Mpumalanga	17.4%			9.1%			
Northern Cape	22.2%			8.3%			
North West	6.5%			12.0%			
Western Cape	12.5%			10.2%			
Total	14.3%			10.2%			

1. Includes National school nutrition programme.

Source: National Treasury provincial database

North West's education budget is expected to grow more strongly than other provinces over the medium term, with projected growth of 12 per cent.

The education budget in Northern Cape is expected to grow at an average annual rate of 8.3 per cent over the MTEF period. This relatively low growth rate is mainly due to the province's growth of 4.4 per cent in 2009/10, after a spike in expenditure in 2008/09 to fund additional posts for support staff. In Free State, the infrastructure budget drops by 31.2 per cent in 2009/10, this is the main reason for the relatively low growth in the overall budget in 2009/10. However,

the drop is due to a major drive to speed up the delivery of school infrastructure in 2008/09, which saw the province's infrastructure budget grow by 89.1 per cent in that year. In Northern Cape, the relatively low growth is mainly due to decreases in the budgets for administration, FET colleges and adult basic education in 2008/09.

Table 3.7 Education expenditure as a percentage of total provincial expenditure, 2005/06 – 2011/12

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	Outcome			Pre-audited outcome	Medium-term estimates		
Eastern Cape	48.6%	47.8%	47.9%	45.8%	45.6%	47.7%	47.9%
Free State	46.0%	43.5%	43.7%	41.8%	40.2%	40.0%	40.2%
Gauteng	38.4%	33.5%	33.1%	32.1%	34.4%	37.5%	38.1%
KwaZulu-Natal	45.1%	44.0%	41.4%	41.4%	41.0%	42.1%	42.4%
Limpopo	49.5%	47.6%	47.8%	47.9%	47.5%	47.5%	47.6%
Mpumalanga	49.8%	49.4%	48.1%	46.6%	44.7%	45.5%	45.6%
Northern Cape	39.5%	36.0%	38.5%	40.2%	37.5%	37.6%	38.0%
North West	45.3%	44.5%	40.7%	40.8%	41.0%	41.6%	41.4%
Western Cape	38.5%	36.7%	36.0%	35.9%	35.6%	36.5%	36.7%
Total	44.7%	42.5%	41.4%	40.8%	40.8%	42.2%	42.4%

Source: National Treasury provincial database

Table 3.7 shows the overall declining share of provincial expenditure on education, as it drops from 44.7 per cent in 2005/06 to 40.8 per cent in 2008/09. Some factors responsible for the decline are the increased investment in other key service delivery functions like health, social development, housing and roads. Despite these factors, there is still some concern about the declining share of education in provincial budgets, as education has consistently been a priority for government. But a turnaround is evident in the current MTEF period, with education's share expected to increase from 40.8 per cent in 2008/09 to 42.4 per cent in 2011/12.

The overall share of provincial expenditure on education declined from 44.7 per cent in 2005/06 to 40.8 per cent in 2008/09

Expenditure and budgets by programme

Spending on the Public ordinary school education programme dominates provincial education expenditure as this is where most education delivery takes place, with spending in primary schools marginally higher than in secondary schools. Spending in all programmes grew strongly between 2005/06 and 2008/09, with expenditure on the Early childhood development programme growing by 37.0 per cent. This programme continues to grow strongly over the medium term, with projected growth of 46.9 per cent. This shows that this crucial component is being prioritised. Expenditure on Further education and training grew by 27.4 per cent between 2005/06 and 2008/09, mainly due to the impetus from the FET colleges recapitalisation conditional grant. The low growth of 5.4 per cent in 2009/10 and 5.6 per cent over the rest of the MTEF period is because 2008/09 was the last year of the grant.

Spending on the Public ordinary school education programme dominates provincial education expenditure

Table 3.8 Provincial education expenditure by programme, 2005/06 – 2011/12

R million	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	Outcome			Pre-audited outcome	Medium-term estimates		
Administration	5 050	5 271	6 364	7 742	8 326	8 839	9 199
Public ordinary school education	60 477	66 358	73 420	88 967	97 400	107 850	116 951
<i>of which:</i>							
<i>Primary schools</i>	32 577	34 832	38 379	46 265	48 927	53 635	57 904
<i>Secondary schools</i>	25 242	28 233	31 340	37 877	41 310	44 973	48 180
<i>Other subprogrammes</i>	2 658	3 293	3 701	4 824	7 163	9 243	10 867
Independent school subsidies	334	403	445	514	605	641	676
Public special school education	1 932	2 129	2 416	3 008	3 389	4 094	5 027
Further education and training	1 452	1 974	2 425	3 005	3 168	3 373	3 542
Adult basic education and training	710	718	845	832	1 123	1 198	1 264
Early childhood development	440	546	691	1 132	1 996	3 174	3 591
Auxiliary and associated services	1 586	1 550	1 771	2 350	2 526	2 832	3 526
Total	71 981	78 948	88 377	107 550	118 534	132 002	143 776
Percentage growth (average annual)		2005/06–2008/09		2008/09–2009/10		2008/09 – 2011/12	
Administration		15.3%		7.5%		5.9%	
Public ordinary school education		13.7%		9.5%		9.5%	
Independent school subsidies		15.5%		17.6%		9.6%	
Public special school education		15.9%		12.7%		18.7%	
Further education and training		27.4%		5.4%		5.6%	
Adult basic education and training		5.4%		35.0%		15.0%	
Early childhood development		37.0%		76.3%		46.9%	
Auxiliary and associated services		14.0%		7.5%		14.5%	
Total		14.3%		10.2%		10.2%	

Source: National Treasury provincial database

Public ordinary school education

Constituting 82.6 per cent of total provincial education expenditure, the Public ordinary school education programme dominates education budgets. Spending on the programme is expected to grow by 9.5 per cent over the medium term, closely matching overall growth in expenditure. Some of the elements underpinning this growth in expenditure are the planned expansion of no-fee schools to include quintile three schools in 2009/10, increased investment in ECD, the OSD for educators, and accelerated investment in school infrastructure.

Table 3.9 Expenditure in public ordinary schools per province, 2005/06 – 2011/12

R million	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	Outcome			Pre-audited outcome	Medium-term estimates		
Eastern Cape	10 009	11 153	12 370	15 001	15 966	17 967	19 455
Free State	3 929	4 215	4 461	5 075	5 723	6 315	6 742
Gauteng	8 254	9 059	10 908	13 262	14 732	15 905	17 390
KwaZulu-Natal	13 061	14 187	15 802	19 349	21 461	23 878	25 759
Limpopo	8 627	9 919	10 116	12 810	13 515	14 874	16 373
Mpumalanga	4 867	5 225	6 521	7 849	8 405	9 343	10 005
Northern Cape	1 238	1 297	1 798	2 232	2 366	2 595	2 733
North West	5 157	5 702	5 222	5 978	6 846	7 744	8 510
Western Cape	5 335	5 602	6 222	7 411	8 386	9 228	9 982
Total	60 477	66 358	73 420	88 967	97 400	107 850	116 951

Source: National Treasury provincial database

Independent school subsidies

Independent schools are privately run with minimal support from government. They have to meet specific criteria set by the Department of Education in order to be allowed to operate as a school. These criteria relate to the curriculum followed, qualifications of educators and resources available. Accredited independent schools receive a subsidy from provincial education departments based on learner enrolment. The independent school sector in South Africa has remained relatively small, which reflects the high level of confidence in the public school sector.

The independent school sector in South Africa is relatively small

Public special schools

This is an often neglected segment of the education sector. Table 3.10 shows that learner and school numbers for special needs education do not follow the trends for public ordinary schools. Western Cape and Gauteng have a disproportionately high number of learners and schools for special needs education than other provinces. This means that either special needs learners in other provinces are incorrectly placed in public ordinary schools or are not in any school. In either case, many learners with special educational needs are not able to access an appropriate education. Additional resources have been allocated to the Public special schools programme in the 2008/09 budgets of provincial education departments, which accounts for the 18.7 per cent growth in projected expenditure in this programme over the medium term.

The medium term sees growth in spending on public special schools

The education sector has identified the general lack of access of learners with special needs to an appropriate school as a priority. Additional resources have thus been allocated for special needs education in the 2008 and 2009 budgets, which accounts for the 18.7 per cent growth in projected expenditure in the Public special schools programme over the medium term. The 2009 additions are specifically for the upgrading and provision of additional infrastructure for special needs education.

Table 3.10 Learners, educators and schools in public special schools, 2007

	Learners	Educators	Schools
Eastern Cape	8 915	771	40
Free State	5 663	489	20
Gauteng	43 057	2 709	117
KwaZulu-Natal	13 797	1 165	66
Limpopo	6 993	543	27
Mpumalanga	3 158	208	18
Northern Cape	1 737	157	10
North West	2 401	375	37
Western Cape	16 336	1 457	81
Total	102 057	7 874	416

Source: National Department of Education

Further education and training

The Further education and training programme sees low growth over the medium term as the further education and training recapitalisation conditional grant came to an end in 2008/09

There is low growth or even a decline in projected expenditure in the Further education and training programme in most provinces in 2009/10. This accounts for the 5.4 per cent growth in aggregate expenditure on the programme in 2009/10 and an expected average annual growth of 5.6 per cent over the medium term. This is mainly due to the further education and training recapitalisation conditional grant coming to an end in 2008/09, and provinces redirecting these funds (which have been phased into the equitable share allocated to provinces) to other areas within and outside education in 2009/10.

Spending in the Further education and training programme in Mpumalanga and Free State sees average annual growth rates of 9.7 per cent and 6.7 per cent over the MTEF period. However, budgets for the programme in Northern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal are projected to show negative growth of 1.7 per cent and 4.5 per cent over the medium term, with average growth of 5.6 per cent across provinces. In KwaZulu-Natal, the negative growth rate is mainly due to additional allocations for the provision of connectivity to all its FET colleges, which was concluded in the period to 2008/09. However, the relatively low growth rates in most provinces do not reflect government's prioritisation of skills development. Allocations to this programme will need to increase if the FET colleges are to deliver the necessary skills for South Africa's planned economic development in sufficient numbers, especially as the FET colleges have been identified as the primary sites for the development of essential skills.

Table 3.11 Expenditure and budgets of FET colleges per province, 2005/06 – 2011/12

R million	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	Outcome			Pre-audited outcome	Medium-term estimates		
Eastern Cape	168	222	322	413	485	509	532
Free State	120	162	181	198	202	227	241
Gauteng	327	442	534	591	751	784	822
KwaZulu-Natal	318	373	480	712	564	585	620
Limpopo	136	178	241	277	348	383	396
Mpumalanga	121	168	207	206	223	256	272
Northern Cape	34	42	45	49	46	47	47
North West	61	116	98	191	191	201	209
Western Cape	168	271	317	367	358	381	403
Total	1 452	1 974	2 425	3 005	3 168	3 373	3 542
Percentage growth (average annual)	2005/06 – 2008/09		2008/09 – 2011/12				
Eastern Cape	35.0%		8.8%				
Free State	18.3%		6.7%				
Gauteng	21.8%		11.6%				
KwaZulu-Natal	30.9%		-4.5%				
Limpopo	26.8%		12.6%				
Mpumalanga	19.4%		9.7%				
Northern Cape	13.0%		-1.7%				
North West	46.3%		3.1%				
Western Cape	29.7%		3.2%				
Total	27.4%		5.6%				

Source: National Treasury provincial database

Adult basic education and training

There are two components to adult basic education and training (ABET). The first is the basic adult literacy programme that teaches basic literacy and numeracy to adults. A national mass literacy programme, Kha ri Gude, implemented and funded through the national Department of Education, was rolled out in 2008/09. This programme has largely replaced the basic literacy programmes formerly run by provincial departments. The second component to ABET is for adults who have failed to complete their schooling to return to upgrade their qualifications, thus improving their prospects of getting work or promotion. ABET therefore serves individuals and society: individuals gain skills that improve their quality of life, and society benefits from a larger pool of skilled workers and more meaningful participation in political, social and economic spheres by a more literate population.

The delivery of ABET programmes is mostly very poor and is not prioritised by most provinces. Table 3.2 shows the allocations to this programme, with ABET budgets in provinces comprising less than 1 per cent of the total of education budgets. Considering the vital role that ABET plays in improving skills and opportunities for individuals, as well as the increasing number of unemployed people, provinces should put measures in place to improve the delivery of ABET programmes.

Unfortunately, most provinces do not view ABET as a priority

Early childhood development and Grade R

Early childhood development and Grade R have been prioritised, and expenditure is set to grow strongly over the medium term

Education research has shown that learners who have been exposed to a quality early childhood development programme, especially at Grade R level, perform much better at school. The sector has thus prioritised early childhood development and Grade R, and has set a target of universal Grade R enrolment by 2010. This is reflected in the expenditure on the Early childhood development programme, which is projected to grow strongly over the medium term at an average annual rate of 46.9 per cent, increasing from R440 million in 2005/06 to R3.6 billion by 2011/12, after growing by 37.0 per cent between 2005/06 and 2008/09.

Table 3.12 ECD budgets and expenditure trends by province, 2005/06 – 2011/12

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	Outcome			Pre-audited outcome	Medium-term estimates		
R thousand							
Eastern Cape	38 823	46 313	79 298	249 108	367 316	595 864	704 324
Free State	32 054	46 533	52 679	64 274	80 555	88 582	93 928
Gauteng	41 507	35 706	43 439	82 958	309 146	555 077	636 977
KwaZulu-Natal	61 760	97 723	131 969	202 646	343 169	636 992	737 600
Limpopo	22 031	43 223	49 745	80 285	228 615	445 775	452 248
Mpumalanga	41 867	45 252	60 042	63 096	96 922	164 676	229 417
Northern Cape	13 909	14 169	25 561	25 725	63 350	102 197	108 929
North West	113 689	126 784	106 214	135 161	193 156	261 119	273 514
Western Cape	74 477	90 195	142 259	228 748	313 468	324 167	354 282
Total	440 117	545 898	691 206	1 132 001	1 995 697	3 174 449	3 591 219
Percentage growth (average annual)	2005/06 – 2008/09		2008/09 – 2011/12				
Eastern Cape	85.8%		41.4%				
Free State	26.1%		13.5%				
Gauteng	26.0%		97.3%				
KwaZulu-Natal	48.6%		53.8%				
Limpopo	53.9%		77.9%				
Mpumalanga	14.7%		53.8%				
Northern Cape	22.7%		61.8%				
North West	5.9%		26.5%				
Western Cape	45.4%		15.7%				
Total	37.0%		46.9%				

Source: National Treasury provincial database

The initial growth in expenditure in North West is considerably lower than other provinces. This is because the province's expenditure on early childhood development was initially much higher than other provinces, which had to catch up to its level of funding. Expenditure in North West is expected to increase by 26.5 per cent over the MTEF period, which is still lower than the 46.9 per cent average growth for provinces. Expenditure in Free State is also expected to slow to 13.5 per cent over the medium term after initially growing by 26.1 per cent between 2005/06 and 2008/09. The relatively low growth in Free State is unlikely to yield the expected outcome of universal Grade R enrolment by 2010, as the 26.1 per cent growth in

the province's expenditure on the programme between 2005/06 and 2008/09 was significantly less than the 37.0 per cent average growth for provinces over the same period. In contrast, the relatively slow growth of 15.7 per cent in Western Cape over the medium term is offset by the relatively high growth of 45.4 per cent between 2005/06 and 2008/09.

Auxiliary and associated services

Expenditure in the Auxiliary and associated services programme grows by 7.5 per cent in 2009/10. Examinations are funded from this programme and there was a major supplementary examination (the Second Chance examination) for the failures of the last examination under the old curriculum in 2008/09.

Expenditure and budgets by economic classification

The bulk of the education budget is spent on compensation of employees, as education is a personnel intensive sector. However, its share of expenditure declines over the medium term, while expenditure increases in other areas like goods and services and infrastructure.

Growth in personnel expenditure is set to decline over the medium term

Table 3.13 Provincial education expenditure by economic classification, 2005/06 – 2011/12

R million	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	Outcome			Pre-audited outcome	Medium-term estimates		
Current payments	65 381	70 563	78 816	94 953	104 421	115 211	124 921
<i>of which:</i>							
<i>Compensation of</i>	58 175	62 597	69 712	84 023	90 523	98 426	106 117
<i>Goods and services</i>	7 188	7 909	9 005	10 919	13 733	16 631	18 796
Transfers and subsidies	3 793	4 754	6 343	7 886	8 629	9 616	10 349
Payments for capital assets	2 808	3 630	3 219	4 711	5 483	7 174	8 506
Total	71 981	78 948	88 377	107 550	118 534	132 002	143 776
Percentage of provincial education expenditure							
Current payments	90.8%	89.4%	89.2%	88.3%	88.1%	87.3%	86.9%
<i>of which:</i>							
<i>Compensation of</i>	80.8%	79.3%	78.9%	78.1%	76.4%	74.6%	73.8%
<i>Goods and services</i>	10.0%	10.0%	10.2%	10.2%	11.6%	12.6%	13.1%
Transfers and subsidies	5.3%	6.0%	7.2%	7.3%	7.3%	7.3%	7.2%
Payments for capital assets	3.9%	4.6%	3.6%	4.4%	4.6%	5.4%	5.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Percentage growth (average annual)							
	2005/06 – 2008/09		2008/09 – 2009/10		2008/09– 2011/12		
Current payments	13.2%		10.0%		9.6%		
<i>of which:</i>							
<i>Compensation of</i>	13.0%		7.7%		8.1%		
<i>Goods and services</i>	15.0%		25.8%		19.8%		
Transfers and subsidies	27.6%		9.4%		9.5%		
Payments for capital assets	18.8%		16.4%		21.8%		
Total	14.3%		10.2%		10.2%		

Source: National Treasury provincial database

It is particularly through expenditure on goods and services and capital payments that expenditure can be redistributed to schools that have been historically disadvantaged in terms of resources and infrastructure backlogs. Personnel expenditure, on the other hand, follows the post-provisioning norms, which are merely determined by enrolment patterns, and are thus less redistributive.

Compensation of employees

Compensation of educators at public schools is mostly reflected in the Public ordinary schools programme and is projected to increase to R106.1 billion, at an average annual growth rate of 8.1 per cent over the medium term. The 13.0 per cent increase in expenditure on compensation of employees between 2005/06 and 2008/09 is mainly due to additional allocations for the OSD for educators that were finally implemented in 2008. The OSD both improves remuneration and offers a career path for educators. Some of the projected growth in expenditure on compensation of employees over the MTEF period is expected to accommodate the provision of additional teachers to quintile one schools, aimed at reducing class sizes. These schools serve the poorest learners who do not have the resources to employ more teachers themselves. The additional allocations will enable these schools to also benefit from smaller classes, which have proven educational benefits.

Goods and services

The shift in expenditure towards goods and services results in the increased provision of resources to schools, reflected in the projected 19.8 per cent growth in expenditure on goods and services over the MTEF period. Expenditure on goods and services can be redistributive, and through the school funding norms and standards, allocations to schools for goods and services are clearly redistributive in favour of schools in poorer areas. Learner and teacher support material, including text books, is part of goods and services expenditure and is a core component of a successful education system. However, there are still cases where learners do not have the required text books or receive them too late in the year. This has a significant impact on their ability to perform well, compromising the quality of education. Growth in spending on goods and services over the review period suggests that budgets are available for this core component, but that inefficiencies in the delivery of learner and teacher support material need to be addressed. Ensuring that learners receive text books at the start of the school year will improve their performance.

Transfers and subsidies

Growth in this area is linked to the increased number of schools being granted section 21 status. In these cases, the power and the funds to procure goods and services are transferred to schools. Some provincial departments transfer some of these powers to schools, but retain the power to procure text books. Many schools that have been declared no-fee schools have a portion of their allocation administered by the provincial education departments.

The medium term sees 19.8 per cent growth in expenditure on goods and services

No-fee schools							
	Number of learners	% of learners exempted from school fees	Number of no-fee schools	% of schools not charging fees	Per learner allocation Q1	Per learner allocation Q2	Total spent (Rand thousand)
Eastern Cape	1 158 053	56.8%	3 725	65.5%	807	740	2 887 699
Free State	502 674	76.6%	1 202	74.5%	807	740	956 733
Gauteng	391 378	22.8%	443	22.3%	807	740	357 501
KwaZulu-Natal	1 139 592	41.8%	3 174	54.9%	807	740	2 473 645
Limpopo	1 106 681	63.8%	2 836	70.5%	807	740	2 206 175
Mpumalanga	420 395	40.6%	952	50.8%	807	740	734 496
Northern Cape	143 160	54.4%	395	65.6%	807	740	308 849
North West	296 468	38.7%	895	51.7%	807	740	703 706
Western Cape	136 109	14.5%	407	28.0%	807	740	320 208
Total/Average	5 294 510	44.6%	14 029	56.7%			10 949 012

Source: National Department of Education

Many learners have found it difficult or have been unable to pay school fees, which has led to high dropout rates among learners from the poorest households. In 2007, the introduction of no-fee schools removed the burden of paying school fees from the poorest 40 per cent of learners by declaring schools in quintiles one and two to be no-fee schools. The introduction of this policy has allowed learners from the poorest households to remain in school for longer and has thus had an impact on broadening access to education.

In 2009/10, provinces will spend R10.9 billion on no-fee schools, which will benefit 5.3 million learners at 14 029 schools. The target allocation per learner in 2009 for quintile one schools is R807 and R740 for quintile two schools, with all provinces meeting this target in 2009.

The introduction of the no-fee policy has seen much improved resourcing of schools serving the poorest learners. However, there have also been challenges. One is the delay in transferring allocations to schools. If a school, which gets no income from school fees, does not receive its allocation at the expected time, it is unable to manage its day-to-day expenses. The school funding norms and standards (the legislation underpinning the no-fee schools policy) have been amended and now stipulate the date by when schools should receive their allocations.

Many schools in quintile three argue that they also serve very poor learners. This results in low income from fees, together with the low allocations from their departments. The extension of the no-fee policy to quintile three schools over the MTEF period is intended to address this problem.

Payments for capital assets

The projected growth of 21.8 per cent in payment for capital assets over the medium term reflects the prioritisation of the school infrastructure programme as the sector seeks to reduce and eventually eliminate the infrastructure backlog that still exists in most provinces. The allocation for capital assets has thus increased from R2.8 billion in 2005/06 to R8.5 billion in 2011/12. The increasing infrastructure

In 2009/10, provinces will spend R10.9 billion on no-fee schools, which will benefit 5.3 million learners at 14 029 schools

The infrastructure budget is set to increase significantly over the medium term

budget is also meant to provide Grade R facilities over the medium term to accommodate the expected expansion of Grade R. In addition, the sector is also committed to upgrading facilities at public special schools and to ensuring that sufficient funds are allocated for ongoing maintenance, which has been neglected in the past.

Per learner spending by province: 2005/06 – 2011/12

The gap in funding per learner across provinces has been narrowing over time

One of government's objectives is to ensure the equitable distribution of resources in education, as this is the basis for equalising opportunities. Spending per learner is but one of the measures of equity. As the figures on spending per learner in table 3.14 show, the gap in funding per learner across provinces has been narrowing over time. However, the per learner allocation has consistently remained below the national average in Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and Mpumalanga.

Table 3.14 Per learner¹ allocations per province, 2005/06 – 2011/12

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
R million	Outcome			Pre-audited outcome	Medium-term estimates		
Eastern Cape	5 222	6 129	6 765	8 591	9 350	10 523	11 428
Free State	7 133	7 793	8 516	10 011	11 010	12 115	13 025
Gauteng	5 963	6 237	7 342	8 822	10 025	11 058	12 221
KwaZulu-Natal	5 526	5 859	6 461	8 293	8 952	10 059	10 959
Limpopo	5 435	6 417	6 626	8 326	9 272	10 254	11 104
Mpumalanga	6 322	5 742	7 192	8 902	9 580	10 659	11 561
Northern Cape	7 440	6 276	8 648	10 727	11 206	12 445	13 618
North West	7 034	8 660	8 238	9 212	10 453	11 836	12 932
Western Cape	6 580	7 072	7 985	9 555	10 755	11 780	12 789
National average	6 295	6 687	7 530	9 160	10 067	11 192	12 182

1. 2008/09 learner numbers were used for the period 2009/10 – 2011/12.

The implementation of specific pro-poor policies, like the no-fee schools policy introduced in 2007, has begun to address the aim of more equitable funding of the education system. Provinces are now channelling funds more effectively for non-personnel non-capital items to poorer schools to achieve equity in spending. However, to sustain this trend, provinces where per learner expenditure tapers off in the outer years of the MTEF period will need to provide more funds for non-personnel non-capital resources to narrow the gap more quickly. Considering the ongoing need for non-personnel non-capital resources, a key question is whether resources within the education sector are allocated appropriately.

Education outputs and outcomes

Grade 12 performance

The Grade 12 (matric) exam results are an imperfect measure of the quality of teaching and learning due to a range of factors, other than the current education system, which affect learner performance. These include the level of education of parents of learners, the relative

poverty and socioeconomic circumstances of learners, and so on. Nonetheless, it is still a reasonably credible measure of the education system as it comes at the end of 12 years of schooling and as an exit examination, it allows for meaningful comparison.

The 2008 Grade 12 examination results are the first for the national curriculum statement (NCS), which replaced the senior certificate. The NCS did away with the previous higher and standard grades, which were used to determine whether or not a candidate qualified for a university entrance, replacing them with a single grade. The new system to determine university entry requirements is the “bachelor pass”, which qualifies a student to study for a bachelor’s degree at university, with specific criteria for passing. A “bachelor pass” is attained when a candidate scores more than 50 per cent in four subjects from the designated list of subjects (the list of subjects is agreed by the Minister of Education and universities) and a minimum of 40 per cent in the other three subjects. Another change is that all examination papers were set at the national level and not the provincial level. This was only the case for selected subjects in the past.

The first NCS exit examination was in 2008

Table 3.15 Number of matric passes and pass rate, 2006 – 2008

	2006		2007		2008	
	Number of learners who passed	Percentage pass rate	Number of learners who passed	Percentage pass rate	Number of learners who passed	Percentage pass rate
Eastern Cape	41 268	59.3%	39 358	57.1%	30 525	50.6%
Free State	21 582	72.2%	21 522	70.5%	21 644	71.6%
Gauteng	57 355	78.3%	63 287	74.6%	71 797	76.3%
KwaZulu-Natal	82 460	65.7%	94 421	63.8%	80 301	57.2%
Limpopo	58 850	55.7%	55 880	58.0%	48 530	52.7%
Mpumalanga	25 479	65.3%	31 449	60.7%	27 883	51.7%
Northern Cape	5 753	76.8%	7 141	70.3%	7 251	72.7%
North West	25 440	67.0%	21 372	67.2%	22 470	67.9%
Western Cape	33 316	83.7%	33 787	80.6%	34 393	62.2%
Total/average	351 503	66.6%	368 217	65.2%	344 794	62.2%

Source: National Department of Education

The results in the table show a decline in the overall pass rate and number of passes in 2008. This is not unexpected for a number of reasons: this was the first exit examination for the NCS and thus unfamiliar for learners and educators; there was no longer a standard grade option for learners; all learners had to do maths or maths literacy; and learners had to do seven subjects, not six, and score a minimum of 30 per cent in their weakest subject.

Table 3.16 Number and percentage of candidates who obtained university endorsement per province, 2005 – 2008

	2005		2006		2007		2008	
	Number of learners with endorsements	Endorsements percentage rate	Number of learners with endorsements	Endorsement percentage rate	Number of learners with endorsements	Endorsements percentage rate	Number of learners with endorsements	Endorsements percentage rate
Eastern Cape	6 176	8.8%	7 002	10.1%	6 466	9.4%	8 447	14.0%
Free State	5 729	21.9%	5 901	19.7%	5 776	18.9%	6 293	20.8%
Gauteng	16 109	21.1%	17 012	23.2%	17 307	20.4%	27 608	29.3%
KwaZulu-Natal	21 005	17.4%	19 116	15.2%	21 443	14.5%	23 846	17.0%
Limpopo	16 434	17.7%	14 029	13.3%	11 333	11.8%	11 043	12.4%
Mpumalanga	4 918	12.7%	5 481	14.0%	6 561	12.7%	6 493	12.0%
Northern Cape	1 198	15.3%	1 163	15.5%	1 208	11.9%	1 937	19.4%
North West	4 568	12.1%	5 537	14.6%	5 060	15.9%	6 213	18.8%
Western Cape	10 394	26.9%	10 589	26.6%	10 300	24.6%	14 167	32.4%
Total/average	86 531	17.0%	85 830	16.3%	85 454	15.1%	106 047	19.1%

Source: National Department of Education

Improved university-entrance results have led to a huge demand for places at universities

Table 3.16 shows that the number and percentage of candidates obtaining a pass that enables them to enrol for a degree at university has risen dramatically. The number of passes remained fairly constant at just above 85 000 between 2005 and 2007, but increased by over 20 000 in 2008. The percentage of candidates achieving a pass at this level more than doubled from 15.1 per cent to 31.2 per cent in 2008. This has resulted in a huge increase in demand for places at universities in 2009, placing great strain on the higher education sector as it is forced to cope with this increased demand. The performance of first-year students enrolled at universities in 2009 will be a good indicator of the quality of the bachelor pass, compared to the former endorsements, as they will not have had a curriculum change since 2008.

National school nutrition programme

The aim of the national school nutrition programme is to enhance children's active learning capacity

Many young children living in poverty are food-deprived and are therefore not able to participate fully in their own development. The national school nutrition programme aims to promote better quality education for the poorest learners by providing a meal to learners benefiting from the programme. The aim is to enhance children's active learning capacity, providing an incentive for children to attend school regularly and punctually, and addressing particular micro-nutrient deficiencies.

In 2008, the programme provided meals to learners at all quintile one, two and three primary schools - about 6 million learners in over 18 000 schools during the 156-day school year. During the period under review, R200 million was provided as additional funding to provinces to improve food related infrastructure at schools, such as kitchen equipment, garden tools, and eating and serving utensils. Many workshops have provided information on food safety and hygiene, and food production.

Since its introduction, just under R5 billion has been spent by provinces and a further R10.6 billion is allocated for this programme over the MTEF period. The additional funds over the medium term will be used to improve the quality of meals and to extend the programme to quintiles one, two and three secondary school learners.

Additional funds over the medium term will be used to improve the quality of meals and the reach of the programme

■ Policy developments and outlook for the next five years

Teacher education

- Continuing professional teacher development:** A major contributor to the poor quality of education at many schools is the low skills levels of many teachers. Continuing professional teacher development (CPTD) is thus of major importance. Currently, provincial education departments provide CPTD or facilitate its provision in areas where a need is recognised. Besides the training in support of the new curriculum, CPTD is not well coordinated (both within and between provinces) and the quality of programmes is sometimes questionable. A national CPTD system is currently being designed by the South African Council for Educators and a three-year system is being considered. This would involve teachers taking three years to complete a specific number of accredited training hours to maintain their accreditation as teachers. Considering the low skill levels of many teachers, a well coordinated and quality CPTD system could impact positively on the quality of teaching, but it will have to be supported by teacher unions to ensure its success.
- Teacher training:** Recognising the need to encourage more students to consider the teaching profession, the Funza Lushaka bursaries were introduced in 2007. Awarded on a work-back basis, the bursary obliges students to work back the number of years they received a full bursary, in a specified province. Bursaries are specifically aimed at teachers in scarce skill areas (maths, science, technology and indigenous language teachers in the foundation phase). While it is acknowledged that the Funza Lushaka bursary scheme is doing much to encourage students to consider teaching as a profession, the re-opening of teacher training colleges is also being considered to increase the number of teachers, particularly in rural areas. These colleges were run by provincial departments but were closed, mainly because the quality of education was poor. The programmes offered at many of the colleges were of a very low standard, evident in the current low skills level of many of the graduates. However, many colleges were able to provide opportunities for those interested in teaching in rural areas where they were located – often far away from universities. Closing them has meant that many students from these areas who are interested in teaching have found it hard to access teaching at universities. While re-opening the colleges could address this problem, the quality of programmes offered needs to improve. A way of ensuring this could be linking college programmes to university programmes, with colleges operating as satellites of university

Many teachers have very low skills levels

Bursaries are specifically aimed at teachers in scarce skill areas

faculties. Colleges would thus benefit from the association with the university programme. While all provinces will gain from a bigger pool of qualified teachers, it is the mostly rural provinces (for example, Eastern Cape and Limpopo), and those without a university (Northern Cape and Mpumalanga) that have the most to gain from teacher training colleges re-opening. As management has been highlighted as an important area to be developed, appropriate management training courses would also need to be provided.

Focus on Grade R and the foundation phase

Literacy and numeracy levels in South Africa are very poor

Poor performance in various assessment tasks (both local and international) indicates that literacy and numeracy levels in South Africa are very poor. To adequately address this, the teaching and learning of these crucial competencies in the foundation phase has to be improved. The Foundations for Learning campaign was thus introduced in April 2008, focusing specifically on literacy and numeracy in the foundation phase. It included the provision of support material to teachers and schools for use in the classroom as well as actual training and support for teachers. A key focus of the campaign is a back to basics approach, so the basics of reading and numeracy are emphasised and developed.

Resources for the campaign are developed and delivered to the schools by the national Department of Education. Provincial departments are to ensure that the necessary support and development for schools and teachers is provided so the resources can be effectively used.

FET colleges and skills development

The FET colleges and the new NC(V) programmes are meant to play a key role in the provision of the skills required to enhance economic development in South Africa. The programmes have been developed in conjunction with business and labour to ensure that they are relevant in the current socioeconomic context. Links with these sectors need to be maintained, to ensure the ongoing relevance of the programmes.

The recent split of the national Department of Education into two will ensure a closer link between skills initiatives and vocational education

The recent split of the national Department of Education into two has seen vocational education, skills and higher education separated from basic education, which will fall under a separate ministry that focuses on school education. The programmes that focus on skills development in the Department of Labour will be transferred to the new ministry for higher education and training. It is hoped that this will ensure a closer link between skills initiatives and vocational education, which has often been lacking. It should also ensure that the necessary links between vocational education, skills development and business and labour are more closely maintained. It is not yet clear how the delivery of the FET college programme will be affected by this shift, as the colleges have not been separated from provincial education departments.

The poor performance record of students in the first two years of the NC(V) is of major concern. The departments of education, FET

colleges and all other stakeholders need to identify and address the weaknesses in the system. If this is delayed for too long, the NC(V) will lose credibility as more and more students fail to complete their qualifications and not enough students will want to follow this alternative route to a matric qualification.

Learner transport

Currently, provincial education departments provide transport for learners who have to travel more than 5 kms to their nearest school. This is proving to be a drain on provincial education budgets, particularly in 2008/09, when fuel prices were very high. However, it is not clear whether the education or transport sector should have the mandate to provide learner transport where necessary. Bus companies receive a transport subsidy from the Department of Transport to provide transport services to commuters. However, this does not include the learner transport system, which is funded by the provincial education departments. The issue needs to be resolved so that either the provincial education departments receive the subsidy or the Department of Transport takes responsibility for transporting learners to school.

Conclusion

The expected growth of 9.8 per cent in education budgets over the medium term reflects a continued commitment to improving the delivery of quality education. There is particularly strong growth in priority areas like Grade R and infrastructure delivery. However, the quality of education is not only dependent on the provision of appropriate and sufficient resources. Effective school management, a committed teacher corps and appropriate support for teachers and schools are also key elements in improving the quality of education at schools.

This is well summarised by Naledi Pandor, the former Minister of Education. She was of the opinion that the education system does not need something spectacular to improve education outcomes. Instead, everyone merely has to do what is required of them. “This means [as a teacher] you go to school, you stay at school the whole day, you are prepared and there are certain routine things that happen in schools: you do the class register, there is a proper timetable, there is testing, there are text books, and you use the text books.” (The Teacher, Volume 14, Number 5, May 2009).

