

Department of Basic Education Education for All (EFA)

2014 Country Progress Report



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ACRONYMS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
AET	Adult Education and Training
ANA	Annual National Assessments
ASER	Age-Specific Enrolment Ratio
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DBE	Department of Basic Education
EAC	English Across the Curriculum
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education for All
FET	Further Education and Training
GEM	Girls' Education Movement
GET	General Education and Training
GHS	General Household Survey
GPI	Gender Parity Index
HEDCOM	Heads of Education Departments Committee
IEB	Independent Examinations Board
LITNUM	Literacy and Numeracy
LoLT	Language of Teaching and Learning
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MST	Maths, Science and Technology
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
NDP	National Development Plan 2030
NEPA	National Education Policy Act, 1996
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NSLA	National Strategy for Learner Attainment
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PEDs	Provincial Education Departments
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SASA	The South African Schools Act, 1996
TIMSS	Trends in International Maths and Science Study
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training colleges
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund

I. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

Education for All (EFA) is a global initiative, launched at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. It is led by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), in partnership with governments, development agencies, civil society, non-governmental organisations and the media.

At the 1990 World Conference, a total of 155 countries, as well as representatives from some 150 organisations agreed to universalise primary education and massively reduce illiteracy by the end of that decade. The World Declaration on Education for All, adopted in Jomtien, endorsed education as a fundamental human right and urged countries to strengthen their efforts to ensure that the basic learning needs of all were met.

Six goals were later agreed to at the World Education Forum held in 2000 in Dakar, Senegal, that focus on access to early childhood development programmes, access to primary education, gender parity and equality, the learning needs of all young people and adults, adult literacy and quality education. This report assesses the progress made in South Africa towards the achievement of the EFA goals. It also summarises the government's policies and programmes aimed at realising the EFA goals and targets.

This report coincides with the country celebrating 20 years of democracy, as April 2014 marked the end the second decade of democracy in South Africa. The report provides the Department of Basic Education with the opportunity to commemorate the successes achieved in public education in the country in the democratic era and the work of the democratic government in providing quality education for all.

I.1 EDUCATION FOR ALL GOALS

The 2000 Dakar Framework for Action sets out six EFA goals. The goals are global in nature. Via a process of consultation with stakeholders, and with the assistance of the wider international community as well as EFA follow-up mechanisms, countries were expected to set their own goals, intermediate targets and timelines within existing or new national education plans (UNESCO, 2000).

The six EFA goals are:

Goal 1: Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Goal 2: Ensuring that by 2015, all children, particularly females, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to a completely free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

Goal 3: Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met via equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.

Goal 4: Achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

Goal 5: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2015, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with the focus on ensuring females' full and equal access to, and achievement in, basic education of good quality.

Goal 6: Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence for all, so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all – especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

1.2 EDUCATION LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

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

The fundamental policy framework of the Ministry of Basic Education is stated in the Ministry's first White Paper, *Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa: First Steps to Develop a New System*, published in February 1995.

The National Education Policy Act (NEPA), 1996 (Act 27 of 1996), brought into law the policies and legislative and monitoring responsibilities of the Minister of Education, as well as the formal relations between national and provincial authorities. It laid the foundation for the establishment of the Council of Education Ministers, as well as the Heads of Education Departments Committee (HEDCOM), as intergovernmental forums that would collaborate in the development of a new education system. NEPA therefore provided for the formulation of national policy in general, and FET policies for curriculum, assessment, language and quality assurance.

The South African Schools Act (SASA), 1996 (Act 84 of 1996), is aimed at ensuring that all learners have the right of access to quality education without discrimination, and makes schooling compulsory for children aged 7 to 15. It provides for two types of schools, namely independent and public schools. The provision in the Act for democratic school governance through school governing bodies has been effected in public schools countrywide. The school funding norms outlined in SASA prioritise redress and target poverty regarding the allocation of funds for the public schooling system.

SASA was amended by the Education Laws Amendment Act, 2005 (Act 24 of 2005), which authorises the declaration of schools in poverty-stricken areas as "no-fee schools", and by the Education Laws Amendment Act, 2007 (Act 31 of 2007), which provides for the functions and responsibilities of school principals.

The Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) Act, 2000 (Act 52 of 2000) regulates adult basic education and training; provides for the establishment, governance and funding of public adult learning centres; provides for the registration of private adult learning centres; and provides for quality assurance and quality promotion in adult basic education and training.

The Employment of Educators Act, 1998 (Act 76 of 1998), regulates the professional, moral and ethical responsibilities of educators, as well as teachers' competency requirements. The Act, and the South African Council for Educators (SACE) that the Act brought into being, regulate the teaching corps.

The National Curriculum Statement Grades R to 12, a policy statement for learning and teaching in schools, was replaced by the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). CAPS is a single, comprehensive and concise policy document that replaced subject and learning area statements, learning programme guidelines and subject assessment guidelines for all subjects listed in the National Curriculum Statement Grades R to 12.

CAPS was implemented in a phased approach over a three-year period. Following the 2012 implementation in Grades 1 to 3 and 10, it was implemented in Grades 4 to 6 and 11 in 2013. Implementation was completed in 2014, with Grades 7 to 9 and 12.

The Education White Paper on Early Childhood Development (2000) provides for the full participation of 5-year-olds in preschool Grade R education by 2010, and an improvement in the quality of programmes, curricula and teacher development for 0 to 4-year-olds and 6 to 9-year-olds.

Education White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education (2001) describes the then-Department of Education's intention to implement inclusive education at all levels in the system by 2020. The system will facilitate the inclusion of vulnerable learners and reduce the barriers to learning through targeted support structures and mechanisms that will improve the retention of learners in the education system, particularly learners who are prone to dropping out.

Government Notice 2433 of 1998 (Department of Education, 1998) set the age of admission to Grade 1 as the year in which a child turns 7. However, the Education Laws Amendment Act, 2002 (Act 50 of 2002) changed the school-going age of Grade 1 to age five for children who would turn six on or before 30 June in their Grade 1 year.

1.3 THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NDP)

In 2011, the government of South Africa developed a national plan called the *National Development Plan 2030* (NDP). The NDP argues that quality early childhood development, basic education, further and higher education are required to build national capabilities and proposes urgent action to improve the quality of the education system. Early childhood development should be provided to all children and be broadly defined, taking into account all the development needs of a child. The priorities in basic education are human capacity, school management, district support, infrastructure and results-oriented mutual accountability between schools and communities. Further Education and Training colleges, public adult learning centres, sector education and training authorities, professional colleges and community education and training centres are important elements of the post-school system that provide diverse learning opportunities (National Planning Commission, 2011).

Further education should expand moderately and, as quality improves, higher education should incorporate a range of different institutions that work together to serve different priorities, including effective regulatory and advisory institutions.

Distance education, aided by advanced information communication technology, will play a greater role in expanding learning opportunities for different groups of learners and promote lifelong learning and continuous professional development. Private providers will continue to be important partners in the delivery of education and training at all levels.

Research and innovation by universities, science councils, departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector have key roles to play in improving South Africa's global competitiveness. Coordination between the different role-players is important (National Planning Commission, 2011).

1.4 ACTION PLAN TO 2019: TOWARDS THE REALISATION OF SCHOOLING 2030

This sector plan, produced by the Department of Basic Education (DBE), represents another milestone in the journey towards quality schooling for all South Africans. This document takes stock of key developments in the basic education sector since the release in 2011 of the previous sector plan, *Action Plan to 2014: Towards the realisation of Schooling 2025*. It reiterates many of the priorities outlined in the earlier plan, as to a large extent these priorities remain relevant. However, there have been shifts of emphasis in the wake of lessons learnt and, very importantly, the priorities put forward by the National Development Plan (NDP) that was released by the President in 2012. In line with the NDP, the planning horizon in the current sector plan is 2030, and no longer 2025. The medium-term horizon is set at 2019, which is the end of the 2014 to 2019 electoral cycle.

The current plan is directed at a broad range of stakeholders involved in the momentous task of transforming South Africa's schools. These stakeholders include parents, teachers, school principals, officials at the district, provincial and national levels, members of Parliament, civil society organisations, including teacher unions, private sector partners and researchers, and international partner agencies such as UNICEF and the World Bank. The document also serves to share with people outside the country (including foreign investors), ideas and strategies that South Africans firmly believe will enhance our education levels, and hence our prosperity, social cohesion and ability to contribute to global development.

This sector plan is very well aligned to the achievement of the EFA goals and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Of its 27 goals, 13 deal with performance and participation outcomes and 14 goals deal with what actions need to be taken to strengthen the sector and realise these improvements. To promote focus within the system, five of the 27 goals remain priority goals. These deal with Grade R, teacher development, learning materials, school management and support by district offices.

1.5 EXPENDITURE IN EDUCATION

Education once more received the biggest slice of the country's R1.06 trillion 2013 National Budget – R232.5 billion. Among the expenditure priorities were improving numeracy and literacy, expanding enrolment in Grade R and reducing the school infrastructure backlog. South Africa spent more than R23 billion on upgrading school infrastructure and increasing the number of no-fee schools. R1 billion was allocated to the country's nine provinces to increase the number of teachers, while about R700 million was channelled to the technical secondary schools recapitalisation grant. This grant is used to finance the construction and refurbishment of workshops and to train technology teachers (SAnews.gov.za, 2013).

The education infrastructure grant is critical to government's efforts to eradicate unsafe and poor quality school structures, as it supplements the infrastructure programme in provinces to accelerate the construction, maintenance and upgrading of new and existing schools. Up to R8 billion has been allocated to the school infrastructure backlog grant, which was established in 2011. The grant aims to ensure that schools have basic services such as water, sanitation and electricity.

The allocation to higher education institutions will increase from R20.4 billion in 2012/13 to R24.6 billion in 2015/16. The construction of two new universities, in Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape, commenced in 2013. An increase in student enrolment from 910 000 to 990 000 was expected by 2015 at South Africa's higher education institutions.

In recent years, government has increased funding to help students from poor backgrounds to obtain tertiary education and vocational training. The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) provided loans and bursaries to students from poor backgrounds. Access to basic education continued to increase, with the expansion of no-fee schools in South Africa to 20 688 by the end of 2012 (SAnews.gov.za, 2013).

2. ACCESS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD) PROGRAMMES

Goal 1: Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

The early years of a child are critical for the acquisition of the concepts, skills and attitudes that lay the foundation for lifelong learning. These include the acquisition of language, perceptual/motor skills required for learning to read and write, basic numeracy concepts and skills, problem-solving skills and a love of learning. With quality ECD provision, educational efficiency would improve, as children would acquire the basic concepts, skills and attitudes required for successful learning and development prior to or shortly after entering the system, thus reducing their chances of failure. The system would also be freed of under-aged and under-prepared learners, who have proven to be the most at risk in terms of school failure and drop-out.

This programme is designed to improve the quality of early childhood development services in Grade R and registered ECD centres. This will impact on the lives of approximately 85% of the 5-year-olds in public primary schools and about 43% of 0 to 4-year-old children attending ECD facilities.

The key ECD activities for 2013 in the Department included:

- Costing of the Grade R policy towards universal access;
- Development of school readiness indicators and guidelines to improve the quality of ECD programmes in provinces;
- Management of the training of officials on the National Curriculum Framework for children nought to four years;
- Developing, printing and distributing the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) documents to improve the quality of pre-Grade R programmes; and
- Developing and distributing materials to guide pre-Grade R practitioners and parents in the early stimulation of young children.

2.1 PARTICIPATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD) PROGRAMMES

One of the most important interventions to improve quality and throughput in the Foundation Phase has been the introduction of a reception year, Grade R, at public primary schools, community-based sites and through independent provision. Education White Paper 5 set full coverage of Grade R by 2010 as a target, with 85% of provision located in public primary schools and 15% through community sites (Department of Education, 2001). The target was later shifted to 2014. Although funding has been a constraint on expansion, the Department of Basic Education has continued to provide ECD programmes to children aged five and six years through provision of Grade R classes in primary schools.

2.2 PARTICIPATION OF 0 TO 4-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN IN ECD PROGRAMMES

Participation of 0 to 4-year-olds has increased from 7% in 2002 to almost 45% in 2013, a 38-percentage point increase.

In 2013, Free State and Gauteng had the highest percentage of this age group attending ECD facilities at 59% and 59% respectively and Mpumalanga had the least percentage attending ECD facilities in 2013, at approximately 34%.

Table 1: Percentage of 0 to 4-year-old children attending ECD facilities, 2002 – 2013

Province	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Eastern Cape	9.4	14	12.1	17.8	19.0	19.3	20.3	29.5	32.6	32.9	37.8	37.7
Free State	6.5	10.6	10.4	19.6	19.4	20.9	18.0	36.8	33.4	38.2	46.7	59.1
Gauteng	11.4	18	16.9	20.5	26.9	24.1	25.4	43.5	42.6	43.6	45.7	59.3
KwaZulu-Natal	4.3	7.4	6.8	7.0	7.2	9.8	11.7	23.7	25.1	24.9	27.9	39.9
Limpopo	5.5	9.9	11.5	13.3	17.8	14.5	14.5	27.9	29.6	42.1	37.3	46.3
Mpumalanga	4.8	7.4	12.5	10.0	12.1	12.7	16.2	28.1	28.5	31.0	28.8	33.7
North West	6.4	10.5	8.4	10.5	7.7	14.0	8.0	21.8	26.7	29.0	32.9	34.8
Northern Cape	3.0	5.2	5.3	8.8	7.6	12.5	10.6	19.3	21.1	26.9	25.6	36.3
Western Cape	10.4	14.9	15.1	19.6	16.6	14.2	14.4	27.6	39.4	36.2	39.6	45.7
National	7.3	11.6	11.5	14.3	16.0	16.1	16.7	29.8	32.3	34.5	36.5	44.7

Sources: Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), General Household Survey, 2002 – 2013; DBE own calculations

2.3 PARTICIPATION OF 5-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN IN EDUCATION

Table 2 shows the participation of 5-year-old children in educational institutions. In 2013, 85% of this age group were attending educational institutions. This has increased from just 39% of 5-year-olds attending educational institutions in 2002.

There were some variations in the provinces in 2013. Limpopo and Eastern Cape had the highest participation of this age group at 96% and 94% respectively. Western Cape had the lowest percentage participation in this age group at 75%.

Table 2: Percentage of 5-year-old children attending educational institutions, 2002 – 2013

Province	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Eastern Cape	49.6	52.7	60.8	69.0	70.9	69.3	80.3	85.4	92.1	91.0	93.1	93.9
Free State	33.3	54.7	56.3	55.6	59.2	61.3	60.4	86.0	79.1	81.8	86.4	87.6
Gauteng	45.9	59.2	51.3	60.0	60.9	64.3	61.3	73.3	82.5	86.5	86.0	83.3
KwaZulu-Natal	33.4	35.0	38.7	50.1	54.3	51.5	57.5	70.1	84.8	78.0	77.1	81.9
Limpopo	43.1	55.7	68.4	73.2	76.6	71.8	74.3	92.7	95.9	95.0	93.8	96.3
Mpumalanga	28.9	37.9	60.1	55.5	57.0	63.6	65.1	83.2	73.1	86.3	84.5	82.7
North West	36.6	42.8	48.2	47.4	50.5	45.7	53.2	66.8	73.8	86.4	89.0	84.0
Northern Cape	21.5	34.2	25.9	55.2	46.7	59.1	50.0	80.1	78.3	78.1	71.1	85.4
Western Cape	41.2	53.7	49.6	63.3	65.7	52.2	53.5	79.1	69.5	75.9	73.9	75.4
National	39.3	48.1	51.9	59.3	61.6	60.2	63.2	78.3	83.4	84.8	84.6	85.3

Sources: Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), General Household Survey, 2002 – 2013; DBE own calculations

2.4 ENROLMENT IN GRADE R CLASSES

Enrolment in Grade R (a pre-school year at primary school) has more than doubled, increasing from 300 000 to 779 370 between 2003 and 2013, nearly reaching the level of universal access. By 2012, 93.9% of learners in Grade 1 in public schools had attended Grade R. This is a remarkable achievement, indicative of South Africa's investment in the foundation phase of education. The ECD programme is currently being extended to cover the first 1000 days of life (from conception to two years old) in line with the National Development Plan proposals.

Table 3: Number of learners enrolled in Grade R in public ordinary schools, 2003 – 2013

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
EC	46 203	75 562	105 231	93 553	112 873	133 249	154 514	164 803	157 184	158 363	151 831
FS	16 300	16 482	18 449	20 072	22 429	23 699	23 767	27 209	28 627	30 639	32 170
GP	31 666	34 690	41 073	48 760	49 933	54 979	64 935	76 460	86 240	95 374	104 508
KZN	71 581	72 911	79 276	95 759	118 870	129 742	154 881	175 541	181 585	189 169	187 972
LP	89 921	86 108	98 273	90 521	94 677	98 963	97 570	113 432	117 279	117 950	120 029
MP	19 196	25 181	14 171	37 947	33 264	40 671	46 194	51 758	56 726	59 202	57 974
NW	4 325	5 284	9 737	13 677	15 758	22 294	30 174	42 010	42 937	44 489	47 744
NC	5 313	5 677	6 598	7 682	8 584	9 575	11 508	12 387	13 153	15 036	16 834
WC	31 581	28 374	32 389	33 650	30 834	30 627	37 270	43 603	50 923	57 643	60 308
National	316 086	350 269	405 197	441 621	487 222	543 799	620 813	707 203	734 654	767 865	779 370

Sources: EMIS Snap Survey & School Realities, Department of Basic Education, 2003 – 2013

3. ACCESS TO PRIMARY AND COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Goal 2: Ensuring that by 2015, all children, particularly females, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to a completely free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

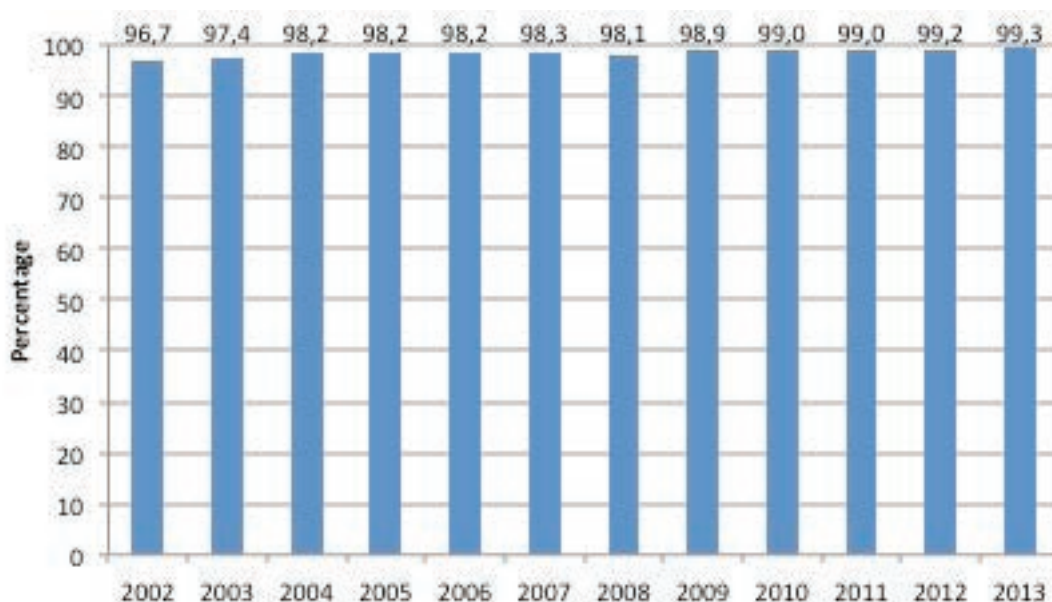
It is widely accepted that all children have the right to an education, because education gives people the skills they need to help themselves out of poverty and into prosperity. With education, people are better prepared to prevent disease and to use health services effectively. Education contributes immensely to higher wages and economic growth of the country. Education supports the growth of civil society, democracy and political stability, allowing people to learn about their rights and acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to exercise them (The Center for Global Development, 2002).

3.1 PARTICIPATION IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

In South Africa primary education spans Grades 1 to 7, and provides educational opportunities for children aged 7 to 13 years. Children in this age range are therefore regarded as being of the appropriate official age to be in the primary level of education. The Education Laws Amendment Bill of 2002 set the age of admission to Grade 1 as the year in which the child turns 7. However, a Constitutional Court challenge to the Bill in 2003 resulted in the school-going age to Grade 1 being changed to age five, for children who would turn six on or before 30 June in their Grade 1 year (Department of Education, 2004). This was implemented with effect from the 2004 school year and is still in place. It is more applicable in the South African context to measure access to primary schooling by using the Age-Specific Enrolment Ratio (ASER). This indicator provides information on the participation of 7 to 13-year-old children in educational institutions.

Attendance of 7 to 13-year-olds at primary schools has increased from an already high level of 96.7% in 2002 to 99.3% in 2013, according to the General Household Survey (GHS) conducted by Statistics South Africa.

Figure 1: Percentage of learners aged 7 to 13 attending educational institutions, 2002 – 2013



Sources: Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), General Household Survey, 2002 – 2013; DBE own calculations

3.1.1 PARTICIPATION OF 7 TO 13-YEAR-OLDS BY GENDER

Available data confirms that South Africa has generally performed well against the international indicators for Goal 2. South Africa made a great deal of progress in ensuring that both girls and boys had equal opportunities for schooling at all levels of education.

In 2013, the Gender Parity Index (GPI) for 7 to 13-year-old children was 1. This means that 7 to 13-year-old children of both genders had equal opportunity to attend primary education in South Africa and therefore, South Africa has reached gender parity at primary level.

Table 4: Participation of 7 to 13-year-olds in educational institutions by gender, 2002 – 2013

Gender	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male (%)	96.4	96.9	97.9	98.1	97.9	98.6	98.2	98.8	99.0	99.0	99.0	99.1
Female (%)	97.1	97.9	98.5	98.4	98.4	98	98	99	99.1	99.1	99.4	99.4
Total (%)	96.7	97.4	98.2	98.2	98.2	98.3	98.1	98.9	99.0	99.0	99.2	99.3
GPI	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.00	1.01	0.99	0.99	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

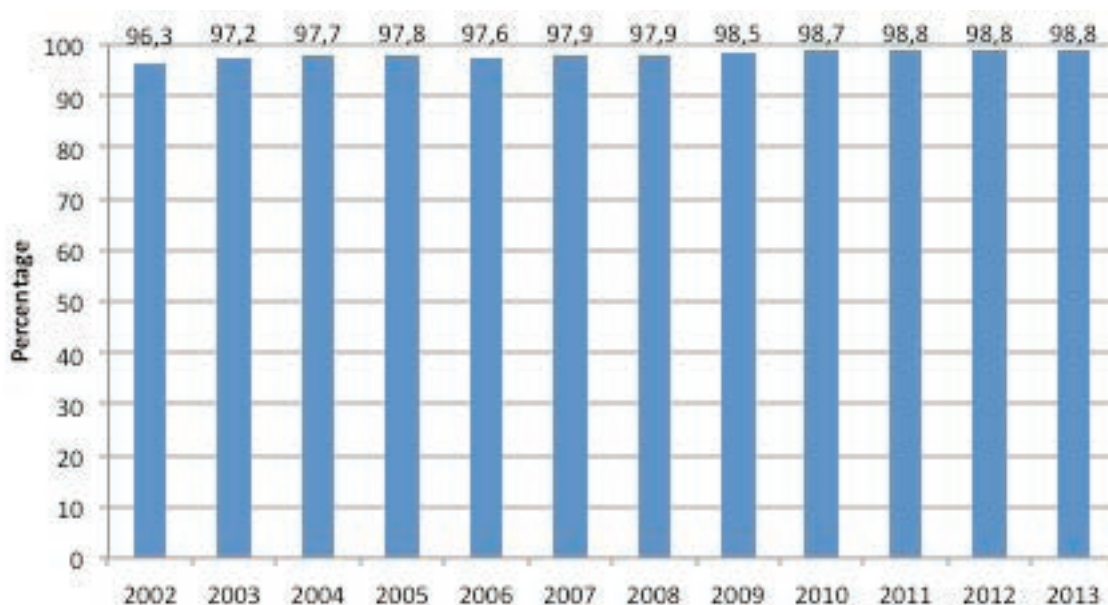
Sources: Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), General Household Survey, 2002 – 2013; DBE own calculations

3.2 PARTICIPATION IN COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Education in South Africa is mandatory between the ages of 7 and 15. This includes Grades 1 to 9 and the government aims to ensure that no child is denied this right by socio-economic factors (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Provision of primary education is the responsibility of the nine Provincial Education Departments (PEDS) as well as the national Department of Basic Education (DBE). In recent years government has also made more effort to include Grade R (pre-primary) as part of the formal education system.

The participation of 7 to 15-year-old children in educational institutions has been well above 96% since 2002. In 2013, almost 99% of this age group were attending educational institutions in South Africa. The participation of these children in education provides a good foundation for lifelong learning opportunities at different levels of education and post-school education.

Figure 2: Percentage of 7 to 15-year-old children attending educational institutions, 2002 – 2013



Sources: Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), General Household Survey, 2002 – 2013; DBE own calculations

This age group reveals high participation in all provinces. **Table 5** below shows that, in 2013, Gauteng had the highest number of this age group attending educational institutions at approximately 100%. All other provinces had participation rates above 98% in this group.

Table 5: Percentage of 7 to 15-year-old children attending educational institutions, 2002 – 2013

Province	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Eastern Cape	95.5	95.9	97.0	97.4	97.3	97.7	97.6	97.8	98.5	98.5	98.4	98.1
Free State	97.5	96.8	97.0	97.5	98.7	98.7	98.2	98.7	98.9	98.9	99.2	98.4
Gauteng	98.1	98.9	98.9	98.5	97.7	97.5	98.3	98.5	98.8	99.3	99.0	99.5
KwaZulu-Natal	94.8	96.4	97.0	97.7	97.2	97.5	97.9	98.0	98.2	98.7	98.8	98.6
Limpopo	97.4	98.0	98.8	99.0	98.9	98.5	98.2	98.8	99.1	99.1	99.2	99.2
Mpumalanga	97.2	98.1	98.6	97.9	98.1	97.9	98.2	98.3	99.1	99.0	99.0	99.2
North West	95.4	96.7	97.7	96.3	95.9	96.9	97.3	97.6	97.8	98.6	98.8	98.3
Northern Cape	93.6	95.7	96.6	97.5	97.6	97.5	97.5	98.5	98.2	98.6	98.6	98.9
Western Cape	97.3	97.1	98.1	98.2	97.6	98.2	97.0	98.1	99.1	97.9	98.2	98.1
National	96.3	97.1	97.8	97.9	97.7	97.8	97.9	98.5	98.7	98.8	98.8	98.8

Sources: Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), General Household Survey, 2002 – 2013; DBE own calculations

The above participation trends are also evident when the information for this age group is disaggregated by gender. Between 2002 and 2013, girls and boys aged 7 to 15 years had equal opportunities to access education institution in South Africa. Gender parity was achieved throughout the reporting period.

Table 6: Percentage of 7 to 15-year-old children attending an educational institution by gender, 2002 – 2013

Gender	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	96.0	96.7	97.4	97.6	97.4	97.6	97.8	98.3	98.6	98.7	98.5	98.6
Female	96.6	97.6	98.1	97.9	97.8	98.2	98.1	98.6	98.7	98.8	99.1	98.9
Total	96.3	97.2	97.7	97.8	97.6	97.9	97.9	98.5	98.7	98.8	98.8	98.8
GPI	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.00	1.00	1.01	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.01	1.00

Sources: Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), General Household Survey, 2002 – 2013; DBE own calculations

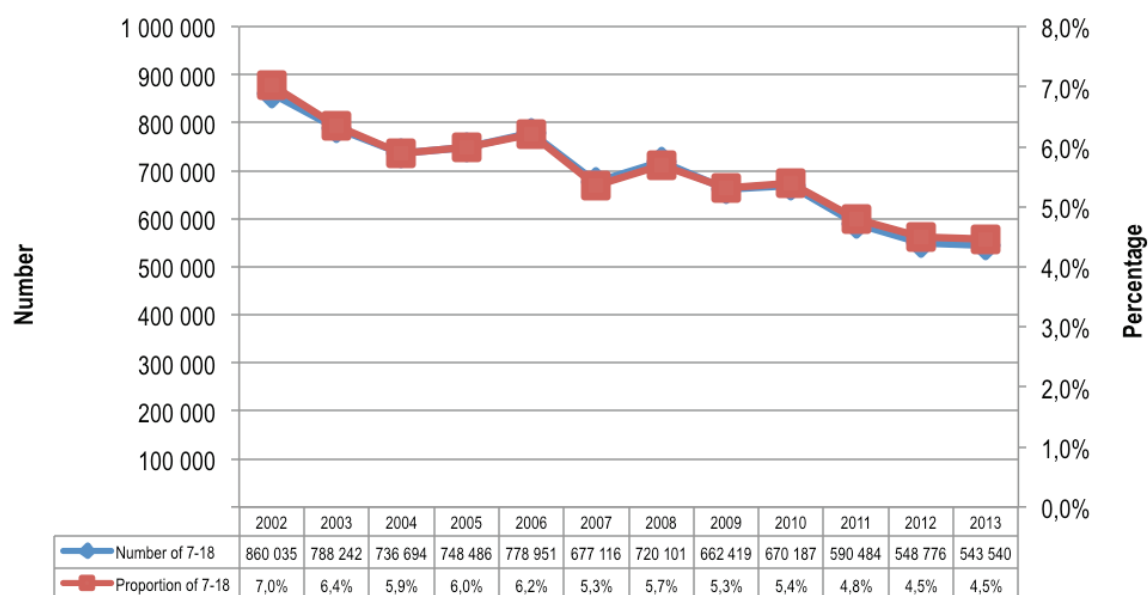
3.3 OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN

Out-of-school children of school-going age are defined as school-going-aged children who are not enrolled in either primary or secondary schools (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014). In South Africa, all children aged five to 18 years are expected to be attending an educational institution. This section will focus mainly on the 7 to 18-year-old children who are not attending any form of educational institution.

3.3.1 7 TO 18-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL

Figure 3 shows the numbers and proportions of 7 to 18-year-old children who were out of school between 2002 and 2013. In 2013, approximately 5% of this age group were not attending an educational institution, numbering over 500 000 children out of school. However, **Figure 3** also shows a general reduction in the number of children out of school since 2002. The number of 7 to 18-year-old children out of school in 2013 was 316 495 less than the 860 035 of 2002.

Figure 3: 7 to 18-year-old-children out of school, 2002 – 2013

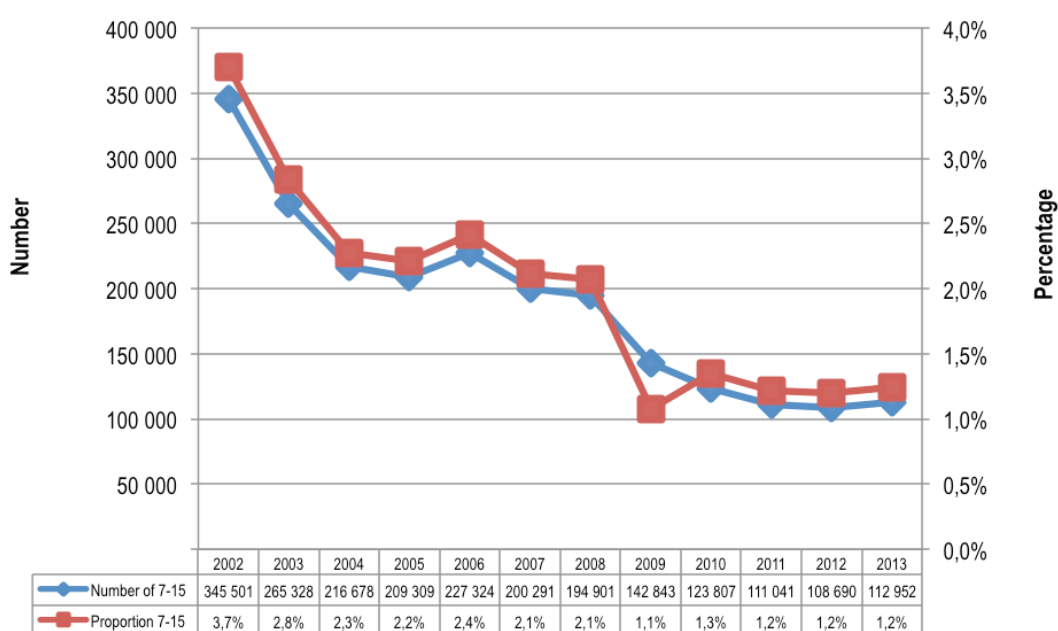


Sources: Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), General Household Survey, 2002 – 2013; DBE own calculations

3.3.2 7 TO 15-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL

Between 2002 and 2013, the number of children aged 7 to 15 who were out of school declined steadily from 345 501 in 2002 to 112 952 in 2013. Almost 1% of children in this age group were out of school. The Department is working together with other relevant branches of government to ensure that all children of compulsory school-going age attend educational institutions. **Figure 4** shows that the efforts of government are beginning to bear fruit, with the number of children out of school in this group holding steady at just above 1% for the past five years. Although 1% of children out of school may seem negligible, the Department of Basic Education, along with other government departments, will continue to work towards ensuring that all children aged 7 to 15 years attend educational institutions.

Figure 4: 7 to 15-year-old children out of school, 2002 – 2013



Sources: Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), General Household Survey, 2002 – 2013; DBE own calculations

4. LEARNING NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

Goal 3: Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met via equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.

The barriers to school attendance at the secondary level are similar to those at the primary level, but are intensified. The cost of secondary schooling is often higher and more difficult for families to afford; secondary schools tend to be farther from home, often requiring transportation; and the pressure to earn an income keeps many adolescents out of the classroom (The United Nations Children’s Fund, 2014).

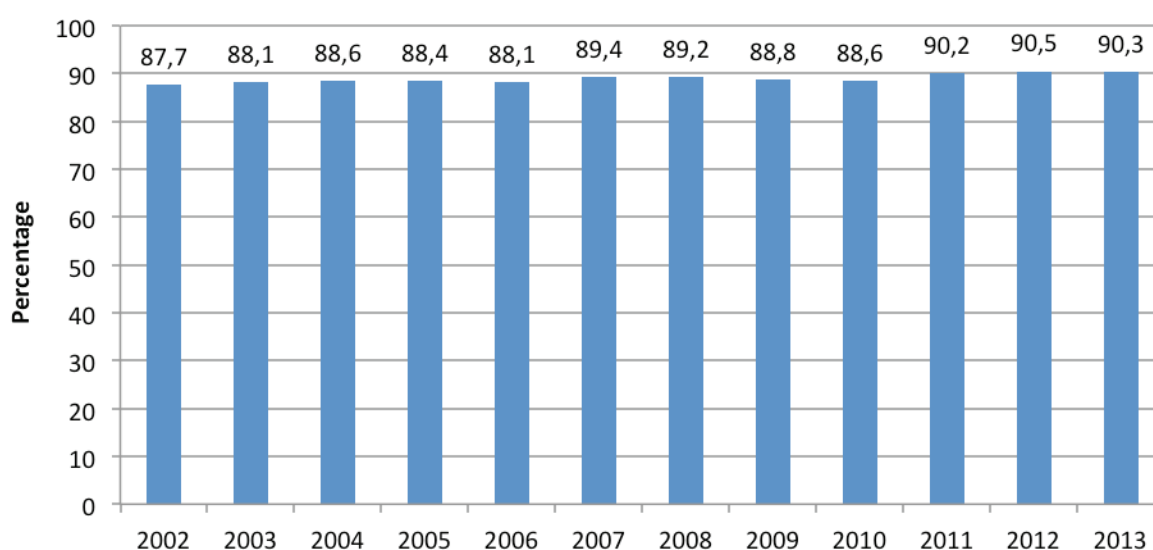
As a result, secondary education is still reserved for a privileged fraction of the population in many countries. In the majority of countries in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, less than half of secondary-school-age adolescents are enrolled in secondary schools, leaving millions of young people entering the workforce without the necessary academic and life skills. In Angola, the Central African Republic and Niger, more than 80% of adolescents of the appropriate age are not enrolled in secondary schools (The United Nations Children’s Fund, 2014).

4.1 PARTICIPATION OF 14 TO 18-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN IN EDUCATION

In South Africa, secondary education spans Grade 8 to 12. By the end of Grade 12, learners exit the schooling system after writing National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations. Some of the students may opt to register at a Higher Education Institution, depending on their Grade 12 performance, or to seek employment. The appropriate age for attending secondary school is 14 years and above. However, the age at entry varies, depending on the age of completion of primary education.

In contrast to the low percentage of children attending secondary schools in sub-Saharan Africa, participation in South Africa of 14 to 18-year-old children has increased from approximately 88% in 2002 to 90% in 2013. This achievement is supported by the strong legislative framework and policies that encourage children of school-going age to attend school regardless of their social or economic status. Policies such as the no-fee school policy and school fee exemptions are designed to encourage participation in primary and secondary education. These policies apply to all eligible children attending primary and secondary schools.

Figure 5: Percentage of 14 to 18-year-old children attending educational institutions, 2002 – 2013



Sources: Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), General Household Survey, 2002 – 2013; DBE own calculations

Gender parity has been achieved in the participation of children in secondary education. Between 2002 and 2013, all children aged 16 to 18 had an equal opportunity to attend school. Parity was achieved in 2013, contributing to the constitutional requirement of the country to ensure that citizens have equal rights regardless of gender.

Table 7: Percentage of 14 to 18-year-old children attending educational institutions by gender, 2002 – 2013

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	85.9	86.5	87.2	86.6	87.1	88.8	88.7	88.5	87.6	89.6	91.1	91.0
Female	89.3	89.5	89.9	90	88.9	90	89.6	89.1	89.6	90.7	89.8	89.6
Total (%)	87.7	88.1	88.6	88.4	88.1	89.4	89.2	88.8	88.6	90.2	90.5	90.3
GPI	1.04	1.03	1.03	1.04	1.02	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.02	1.01	0.99	1.02

Sources: Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), General Household Survey, 2002 – 2013; DBE own calculations

4.2 PARTICIPATION OF 16 TO 18-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

According to the Age Admission Policy, 16 to 18-year-olds are children who are of appropriate age for enrolment in the FET band of schooling, which corresponds to Grades 10, 11 and 12. However, children in this age group are also encouraged to enrol at other educational institutions after completing Grade 9, such as FET colleges, and indeed many do. Hence this section reports not only on school attendance, but on the attendance of 16 to 18-year-olds attending educational institutions in general.

Table 8 indicates the percentage of children aged 16 to 18 years attending educational institutions in South Africa. Since 2002, trends in enrolment figures reveal that attendance at educational institutions among the 16 to 18-year-old age group has not changed significantly over this period.

Table 8: Percentage of 16 to 18-year-old children attending educational institutions, 2002 – 2013

Province	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Eastern Cape	83.0	78.5	78.5	80.9	83.9	85.4	83.0	80.9	81.8	83.3	85.1	84.4
Free State	85.4	86.0	86.6	88.7	83.3	90.7	85.8	83.8	83.9	86.3	87.2	86.4
Gauteng	87.7	86.5	85.6	84.2	80.6	82.2	85.6	87.2	85.1	81.7	85.7	85.0
KwaZulu-Natal	79.3	81.9	82.0	81.4	83.3	83.7	84.6	80.7	80.5	85.7	85.3	87.7
Limpopo	88.2	89.3	91.5	87.4	89.3	92.1	90.0	91.5	92.0	93.1	94.2	94.5
Mpumalanga	86.2	57.7	88.1	86.7	85.5	93.2	87.1	84.5	85.2	86.7	85.4	84.4
North West	81.2	80.8	84.3	83.9	84.1	81.6	79.1	81.4	79.2	84.9	81.9	84.5
Northern Cape	71.0	67.7	68.8	75.4	71.9	77.8	76.0	73.4	79.6	79.2	80.6	82.7
Western Cape	72.6	73.2	72.6	69.7	66.0	73.7	71.6	73.7	73.6	76.4	80.4	78.6
National	82.9	79.3	83.3	82.4	82.5	85.0	83.9	82.9	82.9	84.9	85.9	86.1

Sources: Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), General Household Survey, 2002 – 2013; DBE own calculations

The participation of 16 to 18-year-old children in education varies between provinces. Limpopo had the highest proportion of 16 to 18-year-old children attending educational institutions at approximately 95% in 2013. The Western Cape had the lowest proportion of children in this age group attending educational institutions at approximately 79% in 2013.

Table 9: Percentage of 16 to 18-year-olds completing Grade 12 and above

Province	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Eastern Cape	2.9	6.8	2.9	3.0	2.4
Free State	5.2	10.9	4.2	3.1	3.2
Gauteng	11.5	14.9	11.2	9.5	7.6
KwaZulu-Natal	6.9	10.4	5.7	5.3	5.6
Limpopo	1.3	3.1	2.8	0.9	1.7
Mpumalanga	3.9	7.9	5.3	3.1	4.3
North West	2.8	5.3	3.2	2.3	4.4
Northern Cape	4.1	7.5	3.4	4.1	5.0
Western Cape	8.8	12.7	4.4	6.1	9.4
Total	5.6	9.1	5.2	4.6	4.9

Sources: Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), General Household Survey, 2009 – 2013; DBE own calculations

Although, Western Cape had the lowest percentage of 16 to 18-year-old children attending educational institutions, **Table 9** shows that the Western Cape had the highest percentage of 16 to 18-year-olds that had completed Grade 12 and above at 9% in 2013. This was followed by Gauteng at almost 8%. Limpopo and the Eastern Cape had the lowest percentage of this age group at 1.7% and 2.4% respectively.

Overall, the percentage of 16 to 18-year-old children attending educational institutions increased by 3% between 2002 and 2013, from almost 83% in 2002 to 86% in 2013.

The participation of 16 to 18-year-old children in educational institutions is still a cause for concern. Increasing the participation of 16 to 18-year-olds in education and training will not only makes a lasting difference to their individual lives, but is central to improving social mobility and stimulating economic growth.

The government of South Africa has put in place programmes for schools, vocational education, skills and welfare to enhance educational opportunities and support young people to acquire the necessary competence to gain employment and contribute positively to the economy.

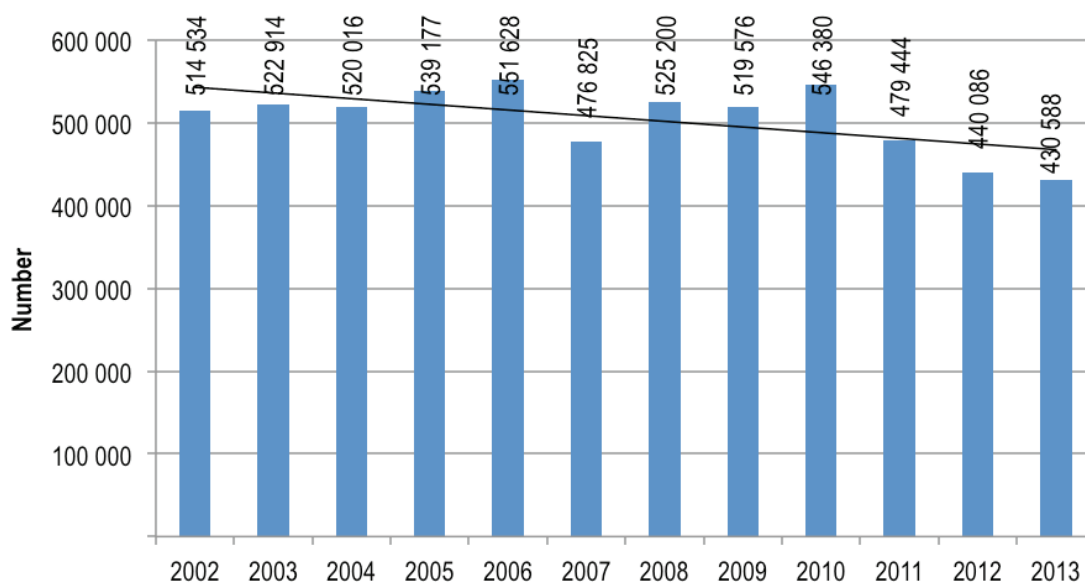
The government of South Africa cannot underestimate the scale of the challenge. Approximately 430 000 16 to 18-year-olds are not in education, employment or training. The impact of unemployment has a negative impact on an individual's long-term prosperity, health and well-being. Furthermore, disadvantaged and vulnerable young people are at greater risk of long-term disengagement.

Data gathered by the government shows that in fact, more 16 to 18-year-olds are participating in education or training than ever before and gaining the qualifications and skills they need to get good jobs. However, unemployment rates for young people have risen due to the effects of the prevailing global economic environment and slow economic growth. The National Development Plan describes how the country will create the conditions for economic growth and help to reduce cyclical youth unemployment by expediting the transfer of skills to young people. The NDP prioritises strengthening colleges, addressing quality teaching and learning, and improving performance. A critical indicator of performance is the throughput rate and the ability of college programmes to provide the skills South Africa needs (National Planning Commission, 2011).

4.2.1 16 TO 18-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL

The number of 16 to 18-year-old children out of school has decreased from over 500 000 in 2002 to approximately 430 000 in 2013.

Figure 6: Number of 16 to 18-year-old children out of school, 2002 – 2013



Sources: Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), General Household Survey, 2002 – 2013; DBE own calculations

4.3 POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The democratic government has focused on consolidating and increasing access to tertiary institutions. This included closing or absorbing 120 colleges of education whose quality was uneven into universities and universities of technology (formerly technikons) (OECD, 2008). Between 2003 and 2005, the original 36 universities and technikons were merged into 23 higher education institutions. Closing of teaching colleges unintentionally created a shortage of foundation phase school teachers, and a decision has since been taken to reopen some of them. Nevertheless, due to the Funza Lushaka bursary scheme, there has been progress in increasing the number of graduate teachers. The number of teachers graduating per year increased from 6315 in 2009 to 13 000 in 2012. However some of the provinces struggle to place these graduate teachers in schools that really need them because they have not dealt with the challenge posed by excess teachers (The Presidency, 2014).

University enrolment has almost doubled, increasing from 495 356 students (universities, technikons and teachers' training colleges) in 1994 to 938 201 students (public universities and universities of technology) in 2011. Between 1991 and 2011, 991 759 university beneficiaries received National Student Financial Aid Scheme loans and bursaries worth R25 billion.

Bursaries for Further Education and Training (FET) students increased from R100 million in 2007 to R1.7 billion in 2012, benefiting 237 908 students between 2009 and 2011. Enrolments in FET colleges increased from 271 900 in 2000 to over 400 000 in 2011. However, throughput rates at FET colleges are a challenge, with many learners failing, particularly in their first year of study, and leaving the higher education system. Reasons include learners being under-prepared when they enter FET colleges and inadequate lecturer skills in terms of both pedagogy and content.

Table 10: Number of students, lecturers and institutions in public TVET colleges, 2005 – 2013

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Students	377 584	361 186	320 679	418 053	420 475	345 566	400 273	657 690	457 124
Lecturers	6 407	7 096	5 987	5 753	6 255	8 126	8 686	9 877	10 106
Institutions	50	50	50	45*	49*	50	50	50	50

Sources: DoE, Education Statistics in South Africa, 2005 – 2009; Statistics on post-school education and training in South Africa, 2010 – 2012; DHET Annual Survey 2013

*Not all FET colleges submitted their data in 2008 and 2009.

Only 4% of the 2007 intake of FET colleges completed their qualifications in 2009. As long as the throughput rate is low and the reputation of FET qualifications remains poor, the NDP target for FET colleges to become an acceptable choice for post-school education and training will not be realised. The quality of FET colleges needs to be strengthened by improving administration and the quality of staff (The Presidency, 2014).

By 2011, women made up 54% of all students enrolled in contact university programmes. More black students than ever before enrolled in higher education institutions, comprising 81% of all students in 2011, indicating the changing face of higher education institutions (DHET, 2013). However, participation rates remain skewed in favour of white and Indian students, with only 14% of African and 14% of Coloured people of university-going age enrolled in higher education institutions, as opposed to 57% and 58% of white and Indian young people respectively (DHET, 2013). Overall, African and female students are under-represented in science, engineering, technology, business and commerce programmes, which are critical areas needed in the economy. This will affect the pace of transformation of the economy and ensuring representivity in the workforce.

To address the problem of unemployed and unskilled youth, the National Senior Certificate for adults was registered. The National Certificate Vocational system was introduced in 2011. This is a significant milestone in developing alternative avenues for skills development.

There has been some progress in artisanal training, with more FET enrolments and increased numbers of qualifying artisans. A total of 3430 artisans successfully completed trade tests between 2000 and 2006, while 6030 artisans successfully completed trade tests between 2007 and 2008. This number increased further to 11 778 qualifications during 2010/11.

Access to learnership programmes has improved. The number of unemployed people completing learnerships increased from about 16 000 in 2009 to about 22 000 in 2013. However, placing learners in experiential learning and sustainable employment remains a challenge while relations between training institutions and industries are weak (The Presidency, 2014).

There has also been progress in increasing the number of Honours, Master's and doctoral graduates. However, the means to produce these skills in the long term is threatened by an ageing lecturer workforce. Concerted effort is needed to improve lecturer qualifications, replenish the stock of current lecturers and attract more female and African lecturers, especially to the science fields. Although a university teaching development grant was introduced in 2009 to develop younger lecturers, greater focus is needed to grow the number of graduates from disadvantaged communities and attract them to academic careers.

Lack of infrastructure and equipment, particularly at historically disadvantaged universities, has also been gradually addressed since 1994. More recently, decisions have been taken to establish new universities in Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape, which will improve access to higher education. Going forward, increased funding of universities needs to translate into better graduation rates, while still promoting research (The Presidency, 2014).

5. ADULT LITERACY

Goal 4: Achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

Literacy, according to UNESCO's 1958 definition, is the ability of an individual to read and write with understanding a simple short statement related to his/her everyday life. The concept of literacy has since evolved to embrace multiple skill domains, each conceived on a scale of different mastery levels and serving different purposes (UNESCO, 2006).

5.1 PUBLIC POLICIES IN SUPPORT OF ADULT LEARNING AND TRAINING

There are a number of Acts and programmes that have been promulgated and introduced to eradicate illiteracy in the country. These include the Adult Education and Training Act, (Act 52 of 2000, as amended) and the Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign. The Adult Education and Training Act aims to regulate adult education and training; to provide for the establishment, governance and funding of public adult learning centres; to provide for the registration of private adult learning centres; to provide for quality assurance and quality promotion in adult education and training; to provide for transitional arrangements; and to provide for related matters. The Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign teaches adults to read and write.

5.2 KHA RI GUDE MASS LITERACY CAMPAIGN

Reaching the target of reducing the numbers of illiterate adults in South Africa through the Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign is on track. The Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign is designed to fulfil the Education for All commitment of reducing the illiteracy rate by half by 2015, thereby improving the knowledge base of the economy. The campaign aims to reach 4.7 million illiterate adults by 2015. It caters for illiterate adult learners who are 15 years and above, in all nine provinces and covers all the official languages. The programme also caters for disabled learners.

As at 2012, the Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign reached 2 922 427 illiterate adults within five years (2008: 360 000; 2009: 613 643; 2010: 609 199; 2011: 660 924 and 2012: 678 661) against the set target of 4.7 million illiterate adults by 2015. The rate of completion since 2008 averaged 89.8% and is regarded as extraordinarily high for literacy campaigns of this magnitude.

The campaign, which extends until 2016, has employed over 42 000 volunteers who are paid monthly stipends on short-term contracts of six months. These volunteers comprise 37 252 females, 5377 males, 577 disabled and 26 291 youth.

Workbooks for the Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign are workbooks for adult learners developed by the Kha Ri Gude unit. The printing and distribution of the workbooks are undertaken by service providers to the Department. 2 796 876 workbooks were printed and distributed. Kha Ri Gude employs 46 staff on operations and 60 as data capturers. The contracted logistics and distribution company has 433 employees, of which 150 are temporary staff. The campaign is therefore also contributing to the reduction of unemployment in the country.

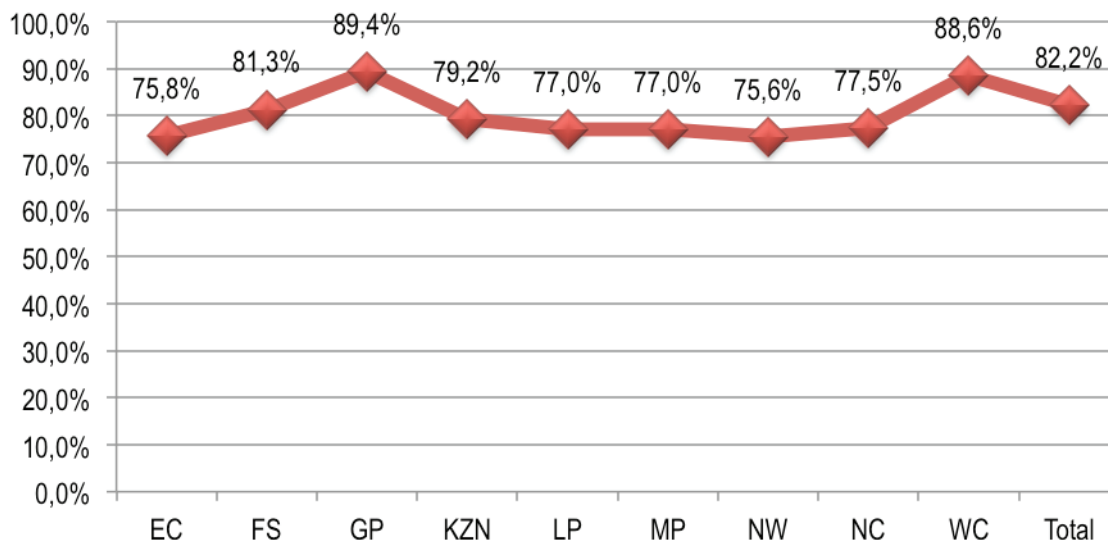
5.3 ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING

'Adult education and training' means all learning and training programmes for adults on level 1, where level 4 is equivalent to Grade 9 in public schools; or registered on the national qualifications framework contemplated in the National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act 67 of 2008) (Republic of South Africa, 2010).

In 2013, 82% of adults aged 20 years and above had completed Grade 7. Gauteng and the Western Cape had the highest percentage of adults with Grade 7 and above as their highest level of education at 89.4% and 88.6% respectively. North West and Eastern Cape had the lowest percentage of adults with Grade 7 and above at 75.6% and 75.8% respectively.

5.4 ADULT LITERACY: FINDINGS FROM THE GENERAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY, 2002 – 2013

Figure 7: Percentage of 20-year-olds and above who completed Grade 7 and above, 2013

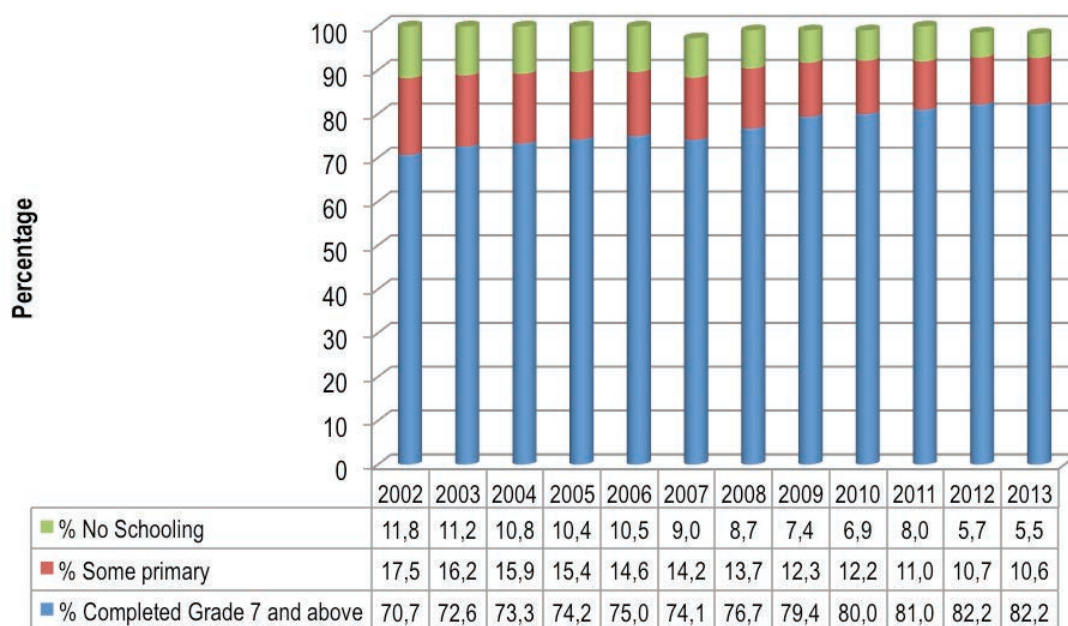


Sources: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2013; DBE own calculations

Figure 8 shows the percentage of adults 20 years old and above by highest level of education. The percentage of literate adults has increased from approximately 71% in 2002 to 82% in 2013. Meanwhile, the percentage of adults with no schooling has decreased to approximately 6% in 2013 from almost 12% in 2002.

The percentage of adults aged 20 years and older that have some primary education has decreased from approximately 18% in 2002 to 11% in 2013. This may indicate that some adults are upgrading their education through adult training and literacy programmes.

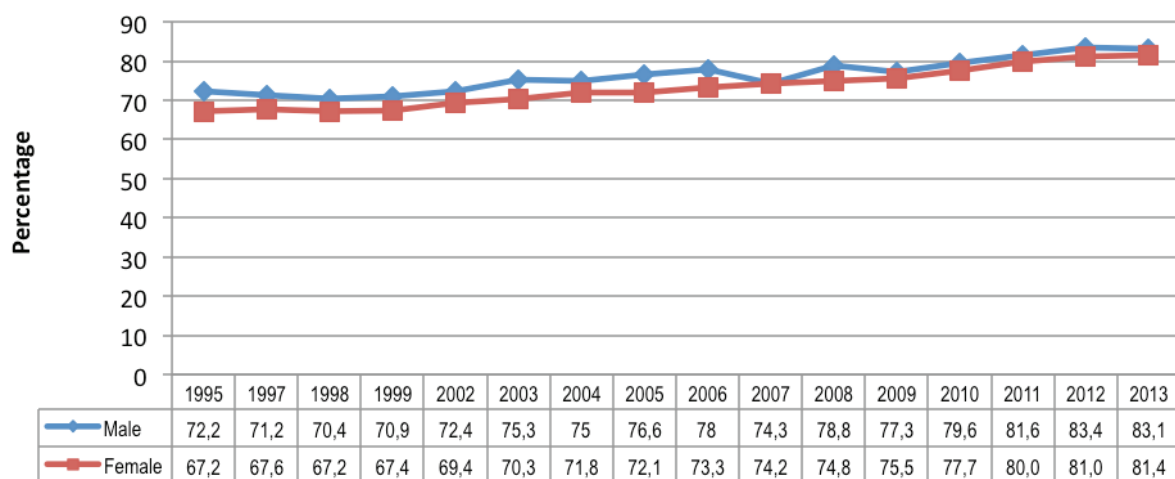
Figure 8: Percentage of 20-year-olds and above by highest level of education, 2002 – 2013



Sources: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2002 – 2013; DBE own calculations

In 2013, over 80% of male and female adults aged 20 years and older had completed Grade 7 as their highest level of education. Although a higher percentage of males are literate compared to females, the gap has almost closed. Gender parity has been achieved as male and female adults aged 20 years and above had equal opportunity to have completed Grade 7 and to have been able to read and write in 2013.

Figure 9: Percentage of 20-year-olds and above who completed Grade 7 by gender, 1995 – 2013



Sources: DBE Macro Indicator Report, Stats for 1995 – 1999; Statistics South Africa, GHS stats, 2002 – 2013; DBE own calculations

6. ELIMINATING GENDER DISPARITIES IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Goal 5: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2015, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with the focus on ensuring females' full and equal access to, and achievement in, basic education of good quality.

This section focuses on the international context and commitments by the Republic of South Africa to eliminate all forms of inequality between women and men, in regard to the provision of quality education to all learners in the country, with a particular focus on girl learners.

6.1 DEFINITIONS OF EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

Educational equity (also referred to as equity in education) is a measure of achievement, fairness and opportunity in education. Educational equity requires fairness and inclusion. Fairness implies that factors specific to one's personal conditions should not interfere with the potential of academic success, and inclusion refers to a comprehensive standard that applies to everyone in a certain education system. These two factors are interrelated and are dependent on each other for true academic success in an educational system.

The growing importance of education equity is based on the premise that now, more than ever before, an individual's level of education is strongly correlated to the quality of life he or she will achieve in the future. Therefore, an academic system that practices educational equity is a strong foundation for a society that is fair and thriving. However, inequity in education is challenging to avoid, and can be associated with socio-economic standing, race, gender or disability.

6.2 INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The most significant expressions of the rights of girl learners are found in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989) and the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education.

Governments further committed themselves to ensuring gender equality in education in the Dakar Framework for Action (2000), the Millennium Development Goals (2000), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the World Declaration on Education For All (1990) – which stated that “the most urgent priority is to ensure access to, and improve the quality of, education for girls and women, and to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation.” Yet despite these numerous treaties, states and the international community still largely treat education as a development goal and not as a right (GCE, 2012).

South Africa is a signatory to these international conventions and agreements and has ratified the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All goals. This shows commitment to addressing the issues that affect equality in the country.

MDG 2 and 3 specifically address the issues of gender equity at school and women empowerment. According to the 2013 South African MDG country report, South Africa could be considered to have reached most gender equality targets, if not exceeding them (Republic of South Africa, 2013). While the country performs well on the international indicators, South Africa does face a range of socio-economic and cultural challenges that continue to underpin aspects of gender inequality. South Africa's good performance in gender matters is evident on both international and regional indices. On the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), South Africa ranked fourth out of 87 countries in the 2012 index and was the top-ranked country in Africa (OECD Development Centre, 2012). On the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Gender and Development Index, South Africa ranked second in 2012, with a score slightly lower than that of the top performer, Seychelles (Lowe-Morna and Nyakujarah, 2012).

However, while South Africa's overall achievement on indices such as these is pleasing, the overall scores mask differences, such as those related to population groups and location. Secondly, indicators that are based on legislation generally do not take into account how well the legislation is implemented and enforced. Further, there are some issues, most notably gender-based violence, which are not well-captured in any of the indices.

6.3 LEGISLATIVE MANDATE ON GENDER EQUITY

The Republic of South Africa has a number of legislative procedures in place to uphold the right of women and girls, such as the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (Act 4 of 2000), the Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998), the Domestic Violence Act (Act 116 of 1998), and the Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996).

When it comes to gender equity in schools, however, it should be clear from the provisions made in Section 9 of the Constitution that female learners are entitled to equal opportunities and equal treatment in South African schools.

The South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) is a good example of how national legislation is fulfilling its constitutional duty to ensure equal opportunities for boys and girls. Section 3 makes provision for compulsory school attendance and places a legal obligation on parents to send their children to school. The purpose of Section 3 is to protect children's right to education, while Section 5 of the Act guarantees equal access to public schools (Republic of South Africa, 1996b).

6.4 CURRENT STATUS OF GENDER EQUITY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

6.4.1 PERCENTAGE OF 0 TO 4-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN ATTENDING ECD FACILITIES BY GENDER, 2002 – 2013

In 2013, approximately 44.7% of children aged nought to four years were attending an ECD facility, an increase of over 30% since 2002, when approximately 7% of this cohort attended an ECD facility. Gender parity has been reached for this age cohort as illustrated on **Table 11** below.

With regard to attendance of ECD facilities of this age group by gender, there is gender parity. Although there were more female children in 2002, this changed from 2006 to 2013 where the percentages of children attending ECD facilities by gender were almost identical.

Table 11: Percentage of 0 to 4-year-old children attending ECD facilities by gender, 2002 – 2013

Gender	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	6.8	11.4	11.4	13.7	16.0	16.5	16.6	29.4	32.3	34.3	36.2	44.2
Female	7.7	11.8	11.5	14.9	16.1	15.7	16.7	29.4	32.4	34.7	36.9	45.2
Total	7.3	11.6	11.5	14.3	16.0	16.1	16.7	29.4	32.3	34.5	36.5	44.7
GPI	1.14	1.04	1.01	1.09	1.01	0.95	1.01	1.00	1.00	1.01	1.02	0.98

Sources: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2002 – 2013; DBE own calculations

6.4.2 NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF 5-YEAR-OLDS ATTENDING EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

In 2012, approximately 85% of 5-year-old children were attending ECD educational institutions as opposed to 39% in 2002. This indicates an increase of 46% of 5-year-old children attending educational institutions between 2002 and 2012.

Gender parity was achieved in 2012 among 5-year-old children attending educational institutions at 0.98. **Table 12** below shows that there is no gender difference in the percentage of 5-year-olds attending educational institutions between 2002 and 2012. In 2002, there were fewer female children aged five years attending educational institutions, but this changed between 2004 and 2005, when almost equal numbers of male and female children in this age cohort were attending educational institutions.

Table 12: Percentage of 5-year-old children attending an educational institution by gender, 2002 – 2013

Gender	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	39.8	48.5	49.8	58.9	62.6	62.2	60.6	76.5	82.8	84.8	85.5	85.6
Female	38.8	47.7	54.0	59.6	60.5	58.3	65.7	80.2	84.1	84.8	83.7	85.0
Total	39.3	48.1	51.9	59.3	61.6	60.2	63.2	78.3	83.4	84.8	84.6	85.3
GPI	0.97	0.98	1.08	1.01	0.97	0.94	1.08	1.05	1.01	1.00	0.98	1.01

Sources: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2002 – 2013; DBE own calculations

6.4.3 NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF 7 TO 15-YEAR-OLDS ATTENDING EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS BY GENDER

In 2013, gender parity for children 7 to 15 years old was achieved. **Table 13** below shows the participation of 7 to 15-year-olds in educational institutions by gender from 2002 to 2013. Between 2002 and 2013, there was no significant difference between the percentage of males and females in this age group who were attending an educational institution.

Table 13: Percentage of 7 to 15-year-old children attending an educational institution by gender, 2002 – 2013

Gender	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	96.0	96.7	97.4	97.6	97.4	97.6	97.8	98.3	98.6	98.7	98.5	98.6
Female	96.6	97.6	98.1	97.9	97.8	98.2	98.1	98.6	98.7	98.8	99.1	98.9
Total	96.3	97.2	97.7	97.8	97.6	97.9	97.9	98.5	98.7	98.8	98.8	98.8
GPI	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.00	1.00	1.01	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.01	1.00

Sources: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2002 – 2013; DBE own calculations

6.4.4 OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN BY GENDER

Percentage of 7 to 18-year-old out-of-school children

The 2013 General Household Survey (GHS) found that over half a million children aged 7 to 18 years were out of school. That means that they were not attending any form of educational institution. In 2013, of the 548 776 children out of school, approximately 440 000 were children aged 16 to 18 years. This shows a decrease from 480 000 youth not attending educational institutions in 2011.

In 2013, there were 1.2% of children aged 7 to 15 years who were not attending educational institutions. Of this number, 1.1% were females and 1.4% were male.

Table 14 shows that in 2002, more male compared to female children were out of school, with the gap closing between 2010 and 2012. In 2013, almost the same proportions of female and male children aged 7 to 15 years were out of school.

Table 14: Percentage of 7 to 15-year-old children out of school by gender, 2002 – 2013

Gender	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	4.0	3.3	2.6	2.4	2.6	2.4	2.2	1.7	1.4	1.3	1.5	1.4
Female	3.4	2.4	1.9	2.1	2.2	1.8	1.9	1.4	1.3	1.2	0.9	1.1
Average	3.7	2.8	2.3	2.2	2.4	2.1	2.1	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.2

Sources: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2002 – 2013; DBE own calculations

Furthermore, **Table 15** below shows that more females are likely to be out of school than males in children aged 16 to 18 years. In 2013, 15% of females aged 16 to 18 years were not attending an educational institution compared to almost 13% of males in the same age group. While the percentage of females that were not attending educational institutions had decreased from approximately 21% in 2002 to almost 15% in 2013, the percentage of males remained stable at an average of 14% between 2002 and 2013.

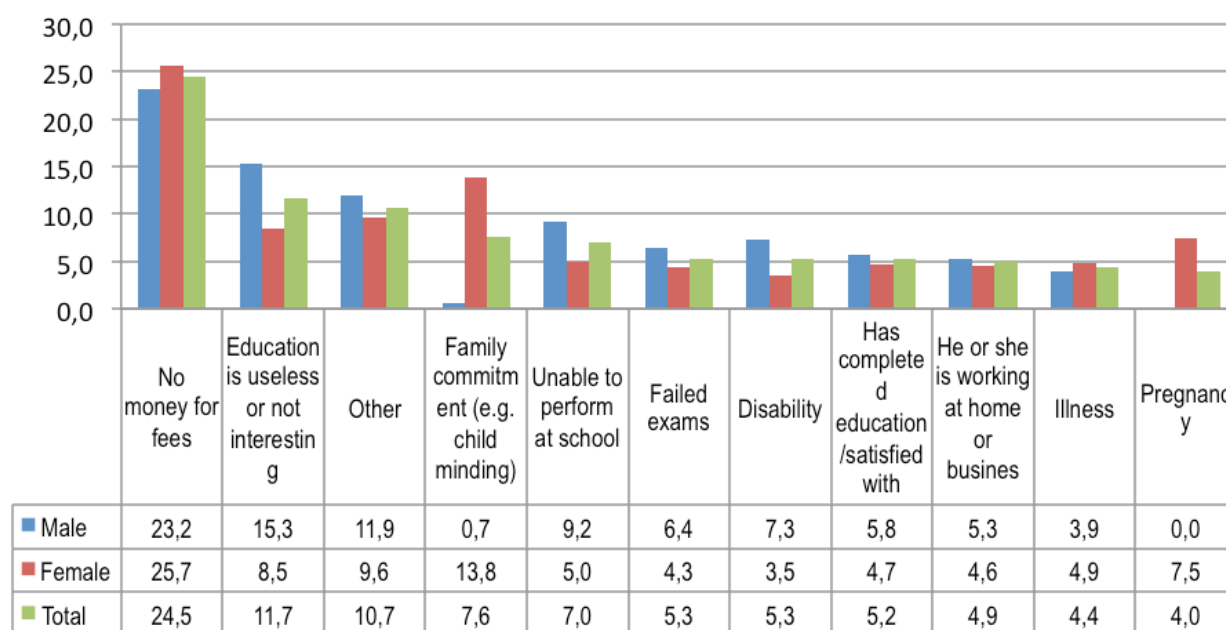
Table 15: Percentage of 16 to 18-year-old youth not attending educational institutions by gender, 2002 – 2013

Gender	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	14.3	14.6	14.1	14.8	15.7	13.4	15.5	15.9	15.2	14.3	12.8	12.6
Female	20.9	19.8	20.5	20.9	19.5	16.3	16.9	17.5	19.0	16.0	15.4	15.1
Total	17.6	17.2	17.3	17.8	17.5	14.8	16.2	16.7	17.1	15.1	14.1	13.9

Sources: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2002 – 2013; DBE own calculations

6.4.5 REASONS FOR NON-ATTENDANCE, 7 TO 18-YEAR-OLDS

Figure 10: 7 to 18-year-olds' reasons for non-attendance of educational institutions, 2013



Sources: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2013; DBE own calculations

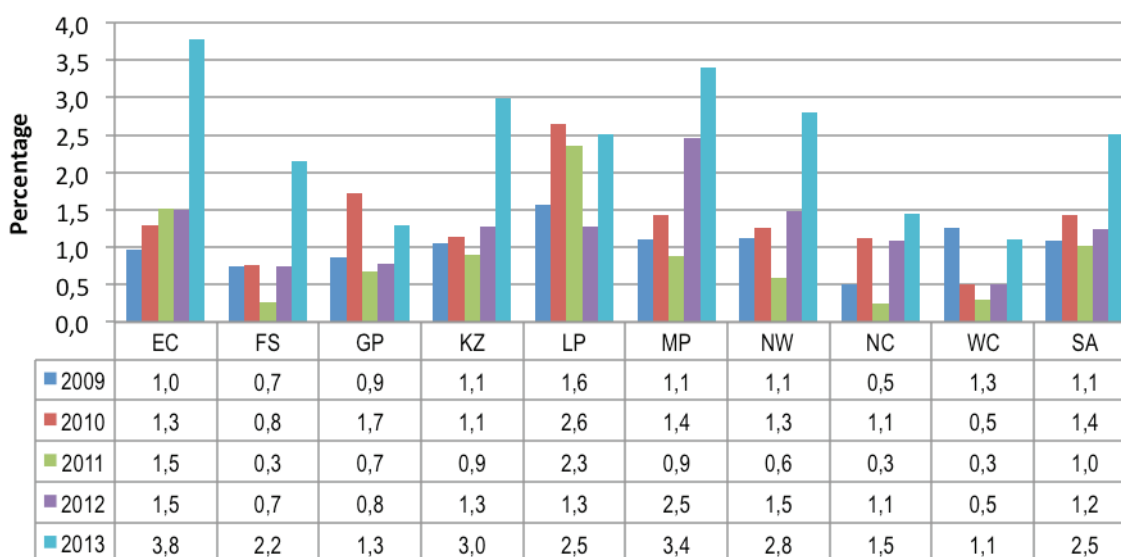
6.5 LEARNER PREGNANCY

School drop-out rates are a serious concern for the authorities. For girls this is frequently explained by high rates of teenage pregnancies (African Development Bank, 2009). Socio-economic factors such as poverty, unemployment and peer pressure can contribute to learners falling pregnant. The problem of teenage pregnancy among schoolgirls is a major concern in many countries and a constraint in the elimination of gender disparities in education. The repercussions for girls dropping out of school due to pregnancy cannot be underestimated.

The importance of education has long been cited as a critical factor in the development of nations and in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. There can be no argument about the value and benefit of knowledge and learning. Education allows children to learn the skills they need to negotiate an increasingly technical world. The social benefits of educating women in particular include improved agricultural productivity, improved health, reductions in fertility, and reductions in infant and child mortality rates (Hubbard, 2008).

Figure 11 shows that in 2013, the percentage of learners attending schools who fell pregnant increased, compared to 2009. In 2013, 2.5% of female learners nationally were pregnant in schools compared to 1% in 2009. The Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga have the highest percentage of learners that fell pregnant in 2013 at approximately 4% and 3% respectively.

Figure 11: Percentage of female learners who fell pregnant, 2009 – 2013

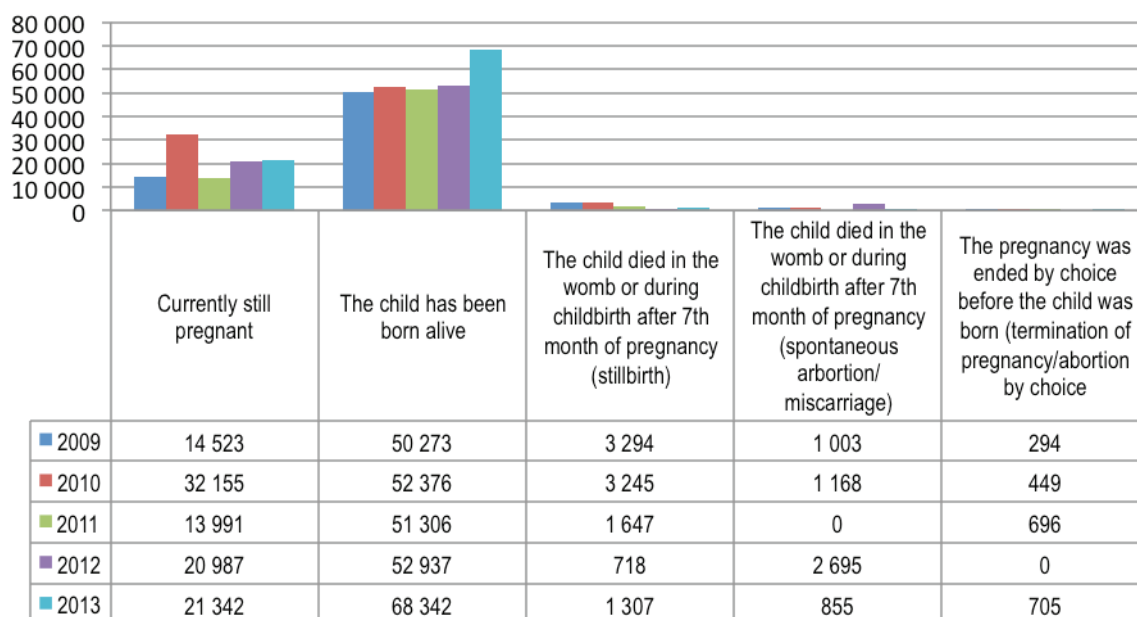


Sources: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2009 – 2013; DBE own calculations

Figure 12 shows that in 2013, just over 68 000 learners attending schools had given birth to a child. This is considerably higher than 2009 when just over 50 000 learners indicated that they had given birth to a child. In 2013, of all the female learners attending school, approximately 21 000 were still pregnant. The Department of Basic Education is working closely with other government departments to reduce learner pregnancy.

In 2007 the Department of Education developed measures aimed at reducing the prevalence of learner pregnancy at schools. These measures provided a framework for assisting learners to live a healthy lifestyle, guiding and supporting vulnerable children and involving all relevant role-players such as parents, NGOs, the Department of Safety and Security, the Department of Social Development and the Department of Health (Department of Education, 2007).

Figure 12: Status of learner pregnancy, 2009 – 2013

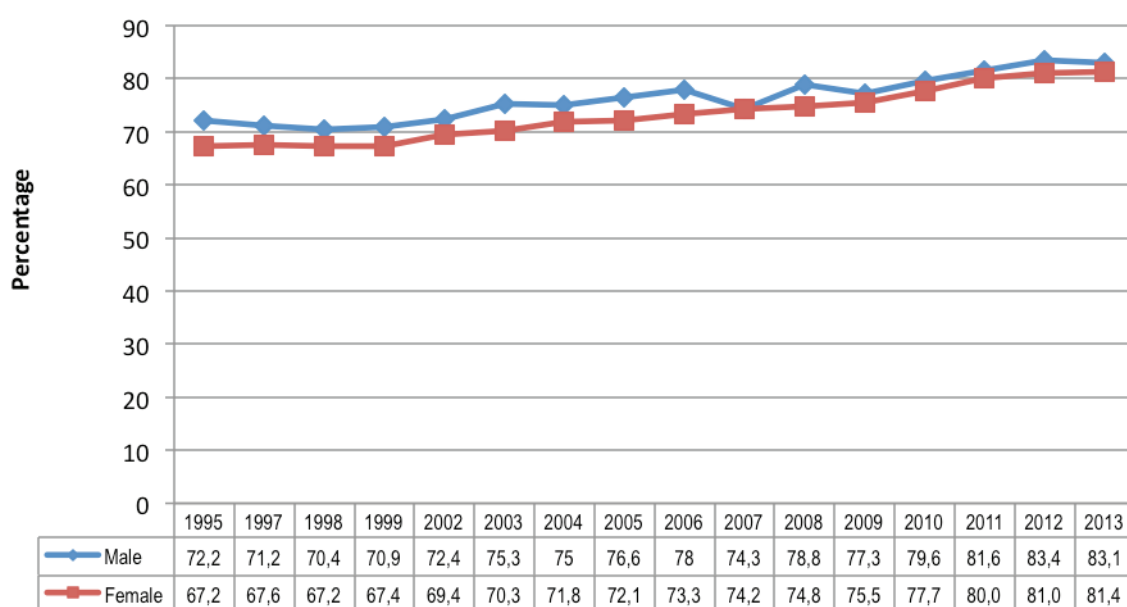


Sources: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2009 – 2013; DBE own calculations

6.6 LITERACY BY GENDER

In 2013, more males, at 83%, were functionally literate compared to 81% of women. However, gender differentiation is not as skewed as it was in 2009 where women represented 33% of the illiterate and functionally illiterate. To some extent, **Figure 13** indicates that a higher percentage of adult men, aged 20 and older, are literate compared to women, when assuming the attainment of a Grade 7 education as a proxy for functional literacy. South Africa therefore has not yet achieved gender parity in terms of literacy among adults, although the 2013 GHS figures suggest that the gap may be closing. However, gender parity in adult literacy is likely to be achieved by 2015.

Figure 13: Percentage of the population aged 20 years and above who completed Grade 7 and above by gender, 1995 – 2013



Sources: Statistics South Africa, literacy reports 1995 – 1999, General Household Survey, 2002 – 2012; DBE own calculations

6.7 INITIATIVES FOR MAINSTREAMING GENDER EQUITY IN EDUCATION

Specific measures aimed at facilitating the education of girls and women have been introduced. The Girls' Education Movement (GEM) is a programme aimed at enhancing the school environment for girls and ensuring sustained access and retention. GEM is implemented through school-based clubs which include boys as 'strategic partners' in gender transformation. Moreover, programmes aimed at increasing access and opportunities for girls in the areas of mathematics and science, which have been male-dominated, also exist. These include the introduction of Dinaledi schools where all learners have equal opportunities to enrol in and study maths and science.

The Department strongly advocates abstinence from sexual activity among learners and that programmes emphasising abstinence that target both boys and girls should be in place in all public schools. In accordance with the Constitution, the South African Schools Act and the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, schoolchildren who are pregnant should not be unfairly discriminated against.

The Department of Basic Education is currently developing a policy on learner pregnancy management in schools. It is envisaged that this policy will provide a framework in prevention context, the prevention and reduction in learner pregnancy, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, in order to promote learning and development and healthy lifestyles of learners. It will also support school managements and teachers to manage the effects of learner pregnancy in schools.

7. PROVISION OF QUALITY EDUCATION

Goal 6: Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence for all, so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all – especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

The outcomes-based curriculum introduced in 2005 proved to be difficult to implement and was subsequently replaced by various revisions, including the National Curriculum Statement Grade R–12 and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) between 2011 and 2014. The CAPS spelt out what teachers should teach and assess, how lesson plans should be prepared, and how teaching should take place. This was crucial for addressing curriculum gaps that were apparent in the outcomes-based curriculum. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements also introduced English as a subject in the early grades to ease the transition to instruction in English for learners who were not first-language English speakers.

To strengthen teaching and learning, CAPS was accompanied by the following measures:

- 114 million workbooks were distributed to schools between 2011 and 2013 to increase access to quality written learning materials and help learners and teachers to understand the expected assessment standards and how to cover the curriculum.
- The Annual National Assessments (ANA) system was introduced to enable objective assessment of the education system below Grade 12. ANA tests are set nationally which means that they enable all learners below Grade 12 to be assessed against the same standards. Such tests did not exist before.

The generally poor results provide an indication of the extent of the remaining challenge to improve literacy and numeracy levels among learners. However, the results also indicate that the system appears to be starting to improve at Grades 3 and 6. The low Grade 9 results may be an indication that an improvement in results at higher grades may first require an improvement in the foundation provided at lower grades, which will take time to flow through.

7.1 ANNUAL NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS RESULTS, 2012 – 2013¹

7.1.1 GRADE 3 ANA RESULTS

- Average literacy result decreased marginally from 52% in 2012 to 51% in 2013.
- Average numeracy result increased from 41% in 2012 to 53% in 2013.
- In 2013, 59% of learners scored above 50% for numeracy and 57% scored above 50% for literacy, compared to 36% and 57% respectively for 2012.

7.1.2 GRADE 6 ANA RESULTS

- Average result for mathematics increased from 27% in 2012 to 39% in 2013.
- Average result for home language increased from 43% in 2012 to 59% in 2013.
- Average result for first language increased from 36% in 2012 to 46% in 2013.
- Only 27% of learners scored above 50% for Grade 6 mathematics in 2013 (up from 11% in 2012).
- 68% scored above 50% for Grade 6 home language and 41% in first additional language in 2013, compared to 39% and 24% respectively for 2012.

¹ Although this report provides the results for 2012 and 2013, the results of 2012 are not comparable to the results of 2013.

7.1.3 GRADE 9 ANA RESULTS

- Results in 2012 and 2013 were very similar for Grade 9.
- Average mathematics result for Grade 9 learners was 14% in 2013; however, only 2% scored above 50%.
- Average home language result for Grade 9 learners was 43% in 2013, with only 37% scoring above 50%.
- Average result for first additional language was 33% in 2013, with only 17% scoring above 50%.

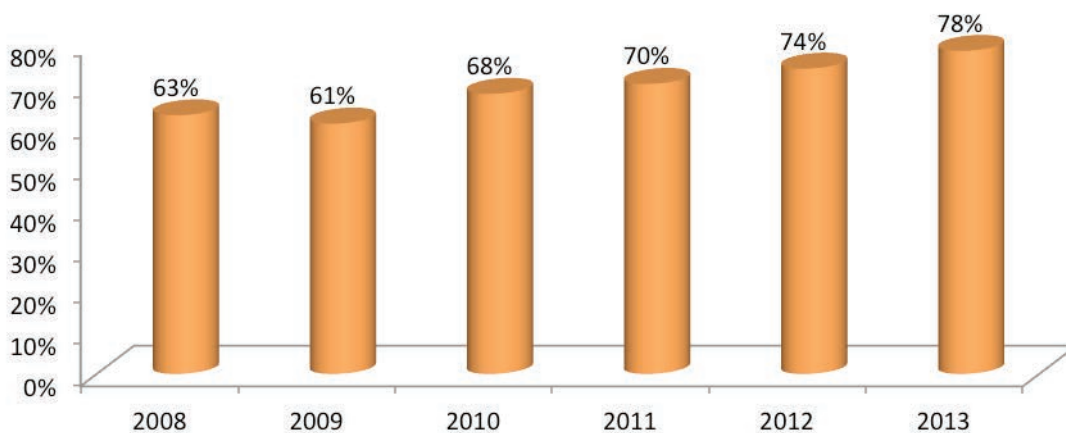
To strengthen the quality of education, the Funza Lushaka bursary scheme was introduced to encourage learners to pursue a teaching qualification. However, the long time it takes to place qualified teachers in some provinces is a key concern that needs to be addressed. For teachers already in the system, a teacher development plan with a multipronged approach has been introduced, especially in the worst-performing schools. In future, minimum competency requirements for teachers, coupled with strengthened teacher-support programmes, may need to be introduced.

7.2 LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN THE NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE (NSC)

As outlined in **Figure 14**, Grade 12 pass rates increased from 61% in 2009 to 78% in 2013. This was partly due to increased matric support programmes introduced by the Department to improve the learning outcomes of Grade 12 candidates. Between 2010 and 2012, 128 000 learners obtained university entry qualifications each year (bachelor passes) on average, compared to 70 000 per year for the period 2000 to 2002. However, the number of Grade 12 learners passing mathematics with a mark above 50% has not improved substantially.

Research (Gustafsson, 2011; Taylor et al, 2011) showed that poor subject choices were the cause of many students not passing matric. In particular, many students were taking mathematics who were completely unprepared (in terms of earlier skills development) to do so. This was partly the result of the introduction of mathematics and maths literacy, replacing higher grade and standard grade, with schools needing time to adjust to the new offerings. In part, weak school-based assessment practices were leading to poorly informed subject choices. The DBE has since addressed these problems by offering better guidance around subject choices and by improving assessment practices in earlier grades, such as through the Annual National Assessments.

Figure 14: National Senior Certificate overall pass rate, 2008 – 2013



Source: Department of Basic Education, National Senior Certificate Examination, 2013

Better school management and administration, with a focus on school performance, are also critical. This includes monitoring teacher absenteeism and the time spent teaching, improving performance management of principals, and strengthening district management over schools (including monitoring of curriculum coverage). There also needs to be increased accountability to the community for the performance of schools.

7.3 MATHEMATICS OUTCOMES IN THE NSC SINCE 2008

The table below displays various statistics pertaining to matric mathematics outputs since 2008. The first trend is that the numbers taking mathematics (as opposed to maths literacy) have declined since 2008. This is not necessarily a worrisome trend as it may be that the system initially entered too many candidates for mathematics, many of whom would have been better advised to opt for maths literacy, and that schools have since been adjusting to the new system that was introduced in 2008. It was, however concerning that, despite the lower proportions of matriculants taking mathematics, the pass rate in mathematics remained essentially the same between 2008 and 2011. This has now changed in 2012 and 2013 with higher pass rates in mathematics. The proportion of all matric candidates that achieved a mathematics pass has also now started to reverse a declining trend. Importantly, in 2013 there were more mathematics passes than in any previous year. The same is true for physical sciences as Table 17 shows. Although the participation rate has declined since 2008, the numbers passing are now higher than before.

Table 16: Trends in NSC mathematics since 2008

	Number wrote maths	Number passed maths	Maths pass rate	Proportion taking maths	Proportion of all matriculants passing maths
2008	298 821	136 503	45.70%	56.10%	25.60%
2009	290 407	133 505	46.00%	52.60%	24.20%
2010	263 034	124 749	47.40%	48.80%	23.20%
2011	224 635	104 033	46.30%	45.30%	21.00%
2012	225 874	121 970	54.00%	44.19%	23.86%
2013	241 509	142 666	59.10%	42.96%	25.38%

Note: This does not include IEB candidates.

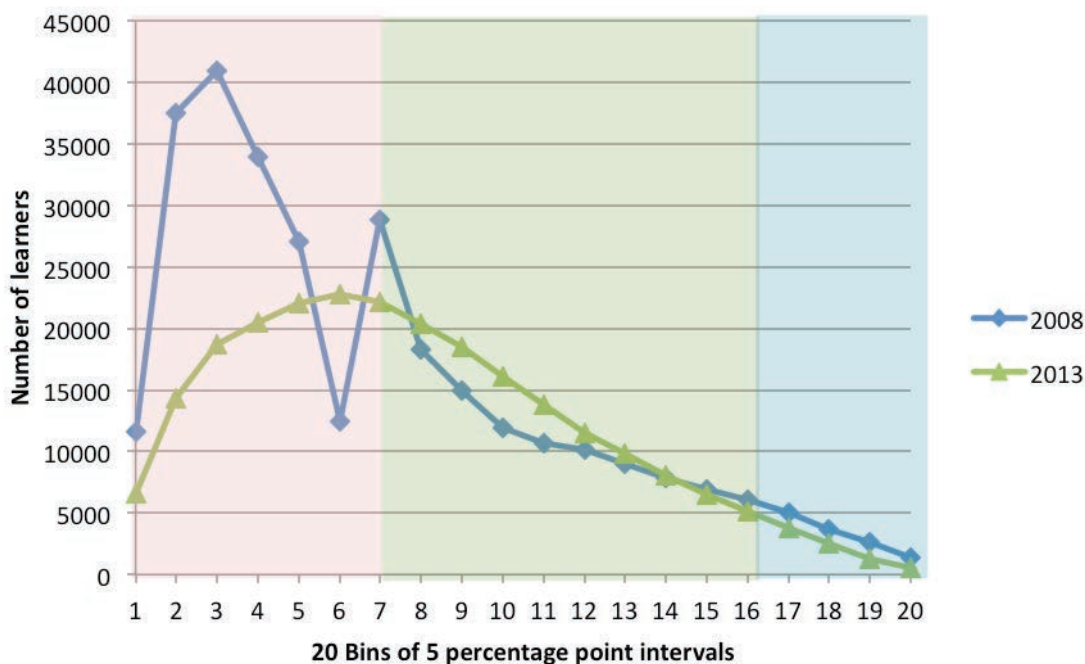
Table 17: Trends in NSC physical sciences since 2008

	Total wrote	Participation rate	Passed (30%)	Pass rate
2008	218 156	41.0%	119 823	54.9%
2009	220 882	40.0%	81 356	36.8%
2010	205 364	38.1%	98 260	47.8%
2011	180 585	36.4%	96 441	53.4%
2012	179 194	35.1%	109 918	61.3%
2013	184 383	32.8%	124 206	67.4%

Note: This does not include IEB candidates.

Figure 15 below is particularly encouraging as it indicates that in 2008 and 2013, similar numbers of learners were achieving scores above 30% (in fact about 6000 more passed in 2013). However, the main difference is that in 2008 there were far too many mathematics participants who scored below 30%. In fact, 163 498 out of the total of 532 561 NSC candidates wrote mathematics and failed, which was 31% of all candidates (see **Table 17** below). Therefore, the decline in mathematics participation since 2008 appears to have been largely as a result of weak candidates wisely opting for maths literacy. A concerning aspect is that there were somewhat fewer top-end achievers (scoring 80% and above) in 2013 than in 2008.

Figure 15: Density distributions of mathematics marks in 2008 and 2013



Note: Each of the 20 bins in the graph are 5 percentage points wide. For example, bin 1 includes all mathematics scores between 0% and 4%, bin 2 includes scores between 5% and 9%, bin 3 has scores of 10% to 14%, etc.

Table 17: Proportions of all NSC candidates with various mathematics outcomes, 2008 and 2013

	Proportions		Numbers	
	2008	2013	2008	2013
Proportion of all matriculants failing mathematics	30.7%	18.7%	163 498	105 033
Proportion of all matriculants passing with 30% plus	25.8%	25.0%	137 447	140 311
Proportion of all matriculants passing with 40% plus	17.0%	17.4%	90 376	97 754
Proportion of all matriculants passing with 50% plus	11.9%	11.2%	63 477	63 153
Proportion of all matriculants passing with 80% plus	2.4%	1.5%	12 721	8 217

Note: The numbers in this table differ slightly from official numbers as these were calculated using raw individual-level data.

Analyses of trends in matric performance (especially in subject-specific performance) have tended to assume that the standards of papers have remained the same across the years. International research on item development and test design would suggest that this assumption is unlikely to prove accurate. Only with common items and equating of papers across years will it be possible to be more certain about standards across years.

7.4 LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN INTERNATIONAL TESTS

International comparisons through the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) confirm that South Africa fares poorly in terms of learner performance and teacher content knowledge when compared to countries that spend the same or less on education per capita. The 2011 Trends in International Maths and Science Study (TIMSS) points to improvements in the performance of Grade 9 learners between 2002 and 2011, especially for learners attending the poorest schools. However, South Africa still has a low average in mathematics and science performance, below the level expected for Grade 9 learners.

7.5 TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

In 2006, the Department of Education developed a National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa. The policy provides an overall strategy for the successful recruitment, retention and professional development of teachers to meet the social and economic needs of South Africa.

Table 18 below shows that in 2008, 94% of the teacher workforce in South Africa had the required qualification to teach in schools. This increased to 97% in 2013. Although the remaining 3% is a cause of concern in the endeavour of government and the Department to provide quality education, the Department has put measures in place to upgrade the qualifications of unqualified teachers. This includes working closely with higher education institutions in developing relevant programmes to improve the competencies of teachers.

Table 18: Percentage of qualified teachers, 2008 – 2013

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Eastern Cape	95	95	98	97	99	99
Free State	91	92	95	96	96	98
Gauteng	98	98	99	99	99	99
KwaZulu-Natal	88	87	89	90	92	92
Limpopo	97	98	99	99	100	100
Mpumalanga	95	96	98	99	99	99
North West	93	94	99	99	99	99
Northern Cape	92	92	93	94	95	95
Western Cape	95	94	94	96	97	97
Average	94	94	96	96	97	97

Source: PERSAL, 2008 – 2013

8. INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF BASIC EDUCATION

The matric pass rate increased from around 61% in 2009 to 78% in 2013 and bachelor passes improve each year. Improving performance and bachelor passes requires more effort and concentration. The Department has set targets for improving learner performance through a number of initiatives, including:

- The National Strategy For Learner Attainment (NSLA) Framework calls for accountability from all layers of the sector; that is, national, provinces, districts and schools.
- All languages' development strategies in the DBE have been collated in the Framework for Strengthening Languages in the Department of Basic Education.
- The Strategy for Teaching English Across the Curriculum (EAC) seeks to strengthen the Language of Teaching and Learning (LoLT) as well as its use across the curriculum. A strengthened LoLT should enhance content acquisition.
- The Maths, Science and Technology (MST) Strategy and Implementation Plan seek to improve enrolment in maths, science and technical subjects and improve the performance of learners in these subjects.
- The Literacy and Numeracy (LITNUM) Strategy seeks to develop reading and writing, and the issue of numbers (mathematics) in the General Education and Training (GET) band. This strategy flows into the MST and the EAC strategies in the FET.
- The Department completed the examinations item analysis and a diagnostic report was subsequently compiled which specifies challenging content per subject.
- The Department has developed an improvement plan on how to deal with the challenges cited in the diagnostic report, per subject. It specifies what the national Department, provinces, districts and teachers at schools should do to address the challenges.
- A monitoring plan for curriculum coverage has been developed and will be implemented in all provinces.

Engagements between DBE and the provinces were planned for 2014 to mediate all the strategies for improvement of learner performance.

9. CONCLUSION

South Africa has made remarkable progress towards achieving the Education for All goals. These include promulgating regulations and policies to progressively ensure that children, youth and adults have access to some form of educational institution and skills development programmes.

South Africa has achieved universal primary education. In 2013, 99% of primary learners were attending educational institutions. More girls have enrolled in primary schools and secondary schools. The South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996), with its strong provisions in respect of equality, lays the basis for ensuring that the rights of a girl learner are realised. South Africa has also, since 1994, introduced a raft of laws that directly address gender issues, has ratified a range of gender-relevant international conventions and instruments, and has established structures to address gender issues. However, the Constitution cannot ensure social responsibility, changed attitudes of individuals and groups, assumptions, stereotypes or prejudices. The values entrenched in the Bill of Rights must therefore be realised in the society. The citizens of the country must realise that education is a societal priority that needs collective effort to ensure that all learners regardless of gender receive quality education without barriers.

The number of secondary students has risen substantially. The number of 14 to 18-year-old children attending educational institutions reached 90% in 2013.

The Department has undertaken several initiatives to improve the quality provision of ECD programmes in the country. These include reviewing all ECD qualifications to address the training needs of practitioners working with children from nought to four years and Grade R, gazetting the Draft National Curriculum Framework and a Draft ECD Policy Framework for Universal Access to Grade R, and aligning the sector priorities with the National Development Plan (NDP) in order to provide a two-year ECD programme to children in collaboration with the Department of Social Development.

Progress has also been made in increasing access to schools for children with disabilities, with more public special schools being built. More work is required in this regard because access is still limited, with less than 40% of children with disabilities accessing formal education, either through special schools or mainstream education.

The Department acknowledges that the South African schooling system is characterised by some weaknesses – particularly in relation to the poor learning outcomes. However, the Department's turnaround plan published in October 2011, now called *Action Plan 2019: Towards the realisation of Schooling 2030*, in combination with other interventions and strategies developed to improve the overall quality of education, has already begun to show some positive steps to changing the status quo and towards achieving all the Education for All (EFA) goals.

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