REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Achieve universal primary education 2015

The South Africa I know, the home I understand

Millennium Development Goals 2: Achieve universal primary education 2015 / Statistics South Africa

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
AET	Adult Education and Training
ANA	Annual National Assessment
ANER	Adjusted Net Enrolment Rate
ASIDI	Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative
BEd	Bachelor of Education
CPTD	Continuous Professional Teacher Development
DBE	Department of Basic Education (Established in 2009)
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training (Established in 2009)
DoE	Department of Education (In 2009 split into two departments: DBE and DHET)
DoL	Department of Labour (Functions transferred to DHET in 2009)
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ERC	Education Resource Centres
FET	Further Education and Training
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GET	General Education and Training
GHS	General Household Survey
HE	Higher education
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
LER	Learner-to-educator ratio
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NASCA	National Senior Certificate for Adults
NDP	National Development Plan
NEEDU	National Education Evaluation and Development Unit
NEET	Young people 'Not in Employment, Education or Training'
NEIMS	National Education Infrastructure Management System
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NSF	National Skills Fund
NW	North West
PALC	Public Adult Learning Centre
PPN	Post-provisioning Norm
PSE	Post-school Education System
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SASA	South African Schools Act
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SRN	School Register of Needs
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TDI	Teacher Development Institutes
UN	United Nations

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Six Millennium Development Goal (MDG) reports covering South Africa have appeared since 2005. This 2015 report is the latest in the series, covering more than a decade of South African progress towards MDG Goal 2 since 1994 – the year of democracy. Since 1994, the country has made great strides towards ensuring that all citizens can exercise their rights to basic education. The 2010 MDG report determined that South Africa had attained the goal of universal primary education, and this attainment has been sustained since then.

Over the period, South Africa has made considerable progress in support of education: integrating disparate systems; expanding and improving infrastructure; a cycle of improvements to the curriculum; strategies and programmes to improve equitable access, opportunity and outcomes; and retaining allocations to education as the largest beneficiary of government's expenditure. The relative proportion of expenditure to education continues to compare well with the average for developing countries, and sub-Saharan Africa.

Since South Africa had met the key goal of achieving universal access to education, the 2013 MDG report drew attention to the importance of improving the 'quality and functionality of education'; not only in primary education, but also in post-basic education. Accordingly, it reported on a set of indicators that extended beyond primary education, encompassing efficiency, quality and outcomes in the broader education system.

This report pursues a similar approach to the 2013 discussion of indicators. It takes account of recent policy changes whereby government has reshaped the post-school education and training space in order to unblock the potential for integrated planning across all education, training and skills systems, and to achieve more effective intermediation with the labour market to benefit work-seekers and employers.

This supports the view of education as an interconnected process where the prior or earlier steps in education are vitally important to the following steps. Measures of success for each phase or element in an education system each on its own cannot fully support understanding of how the performance of one phase or grade level can affect the performance of the next phase or grade. Measures of success are therefore interconnected, and need to be mutually reinforcing. Education quality cannot be sacrificed in any one of these phases: 'Building national capabilities requires quality early childhood development, basic education, further and higher education' (National Planning Commission [NPC] 2011). With this background in mind, this report will attempt to draw attention to how successes or failures of parts of the system can impact on how other parts or levels meet the goals set. We present below in Section 1.2 facts and figures painting a picture of targets that have been achieved. The table shows that although less than half of the targets set for 2015 have been achieved, many of the targets are close to being achieved. Further details and discussion are provided in the following sections.

1.2 STATUS AT A GLANCE

Table 1: Summary of Goal 2 indicators, current status and target achievability

Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education							
Indicators		**1994 baseline (or nearest year)**	**2010 status (or nearest year)**	**Current status (2014 or nearest year)**	**2015 target**	**Target achiev-ability**	**Indicator type**
Adjusted net enrolment ratio in primary education	M	96.5 (2002)	99.0	99.1 (2013)	100	Achieved	MDG Domesticated
	F	96.8 (2002)	99.0	99.4 (2013)	100		
Proportion of learners starting Grade 1 who reach last Grade of primary	M	89.2 (2002)	93.4	94.5 (2013)	100	Not achieved	MDG Domesticated
	F	90.1 (2002)	95.8	97.5 (2013)	100		
Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds	M	83.3 (2002)	90.4	91.9 (2013)	100	Not achieved	MDG
	F	88.4 (2002)	94.6	96.1 (2013)	100		
Indicators of Access							
Five-year-olds attending educational institutions	M	39.8 (2002)	82.8	85.6 (2013)	No target	NA	Domesticated
	F	38.8 (2002)	84.1	85.0 (2013)	No target	NA	
Gross Enrolment Rates for Grade R in ordinary schools	M	15.0 (1999)	66.5	74.9 (2012)	No target	NA	Domesticated
	F	15.3 (1999)	66.8	75.2 (2012)	No target	NA	
Secondary school completion rate	M	35.5 (2002)	41.0	41.5 (2013)	No target	NA	Domesticated
	F	37.0 (2002)	47.2	50.7 (2013)	No target	NA	
Enrolment in FET/TVET Colleges		534 719 (2011)		794 250 (2013)	1 million	Not achieved	Domesticated
First time entrants into higher education	M	53 396 (2002)	72 475	68 055 (2013)	No target	NA	Domesticated
	F	59 212 (2002)	95 885	90 330 (2013)	No target	NA	
Adjusted net enrolment ratio in tertiary education	M	13 (2009)	15	16 (2013)	20%	Not achieved	Domesticated
	F	15 (2009)	20	22.8 (2013)	20%	Achieved	
Measures of Quality							
Qualified teachers		94 (2008)	96	98 (2013)	No target	NA	Domesticated
Learner-to-educator ratio		33:1	30:1	31:1	30:1	Achieved	Domesticated

Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education							
Indicators		**1994 baseline (or nearest year)**	**2010 status (or nearest year)**	**Current status (2014 or nearest year)**	**2015 target**	**Target achiev-ability**	**Indicator type**
		(2005)		(2014)			
Electricity Infrastructure (% of schools)		Not available	86 (2011)	95 (2014)	100	Not achieved	Domesticated
Water Infrastructure (% of schools)		Not available	90 (2011)	97 (2014)	100	Not achieved	Domesticated
Sanitation Infrastructure (% of schools)		Not available	96 (2011)	98 (2014)	100	Not achieved	Domesticated
Perimeter fencing Infrastructure (% of schools)		Not available	89 (2011)	93 (2014)	100	Not achieved	Domesticated
Outcome Indicators							
Adult literacy rate: 18 years and older	M	74.9 (2002)	83.6	85.4 (2013)	No target	NA	Domesticated
	F	72.5 (2002)	80.5	83.3 (2013)	No target	NA	
National Senior Certificate (NSC) pass rate (% of learners)	M	62.0 (2009)	69.3	78 (2014)	75	Achieved	Domesticated
	F	59.5 (2009)	66.5	74 (2014)	75	Achieved	
Bachelor pass (% of learners)		19.9 (2009)	24.3	28 (2014)	35.6	Not achieved	Domesticated

1.3 MDG 2: TARGETS AND PROGRESS

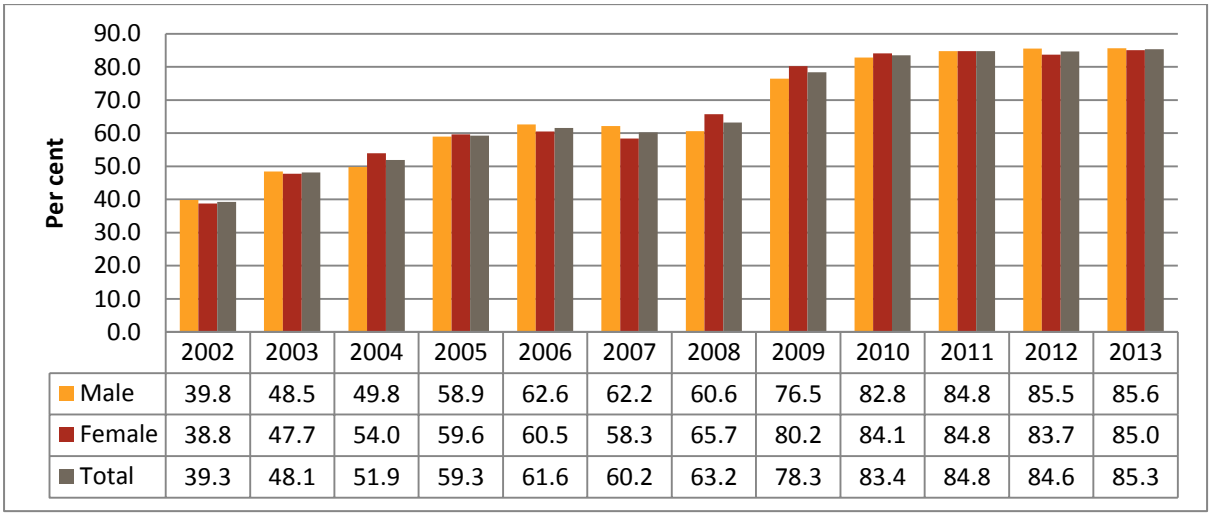
Indicators of access to education

Access to Grade R: The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has made great strides in creating an enabling environment for Grade R participation, and together with the Department of Social Development has encouraged expansion in the Early Childhood Development (ECD) sector. This first indicator reflects on participation of five-year-old children in public and privately funded ECD centres, because most of this age group will enter Grade R the following year. The greater the proportions of five-year-olds in ECD centres the better prepared the cohort will be for Grade R and for their future schooling careers.

Enrolment of five-year-old children attending public and private educational institutions increased substantially from 39% to 59% between 2002 and 2005, thereafter entering a plateau stage until 2008 (Figure 1). Then, enrolment surged 20 percentage points between 2008 and 2010 from 63% to 83%. In the latter period between 2010 and 2013 the enrolment rate lost momentum somewhat.

Nevertheless, enrolment of five-year-old children in public and privately funded educational institutions increased from 39% to 85% in 11 years, **with an annual average increase of 4.18%.**

Figure 1: **Five-year-old children attending public and private educational institutions by gender (%), 2002 to 2012**

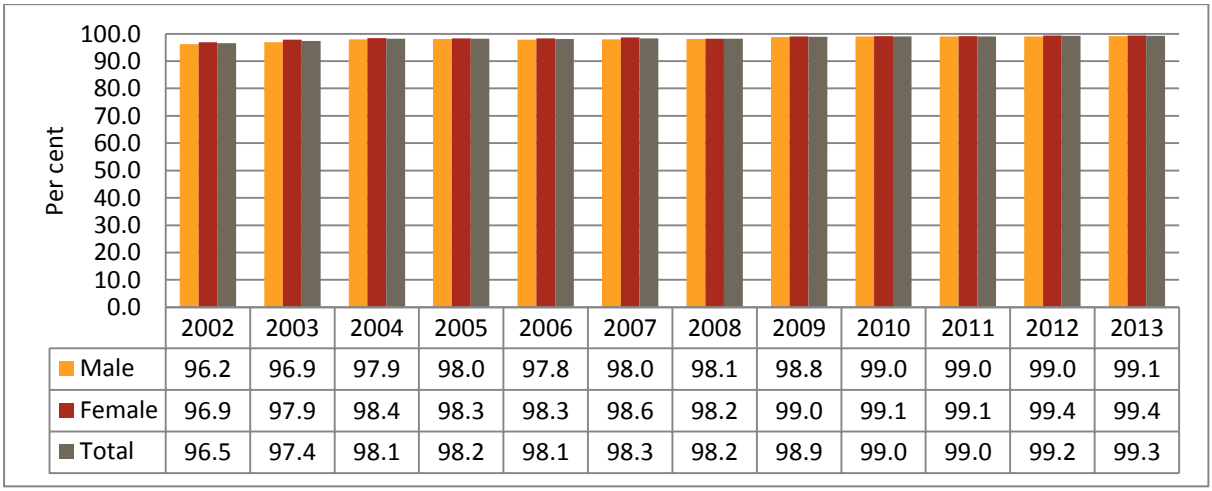


	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	39.8	48.5	49.8	58.9	62.6	62.2	60.6	76.5	82.8	84.8	85.5	85.6
Female	38.8	47.7	54.0	59.6	60.5	58.3	65.7	80.2	84.1	84.8	83.7	85.0
Total	39.3	48.1	51.9	59.3	61.6	60.2	63.2	78.3	83.4	84.8	84.6	85.3

Source: General Household Survey 2002–2013, Statistics South Africa; Focus on Schooling Report, figures calculated by the Department of Basic Education.

Access to primary school education: The adjusted net enrolment rate indicates what proportion of age-appropriate children is enrolled in schools. South Africa's primary school ANER percentage has for some time been located high in the ninety per cent range. Between 2002 and 2009, the ANER improved from 97% to 99% (Figure 2). The target of achieving 99% by 2014 was reached in 2009 and has been sustained over the four years to 2013. Thus in 2013, 99.3% of children aged 7–13 years were enrolled in primary schools. Thus, South Africa has achieved success in generating access to primary education for all children irrespective of poverty status or location. No-fee schools, scholar transport and school nutrition, amongst other pro-poor policies and programmes, have contributed to improved access patterns.

Figure 2: **Adjusted national net enrolment rate in primary education (%), 2002 to 2013**

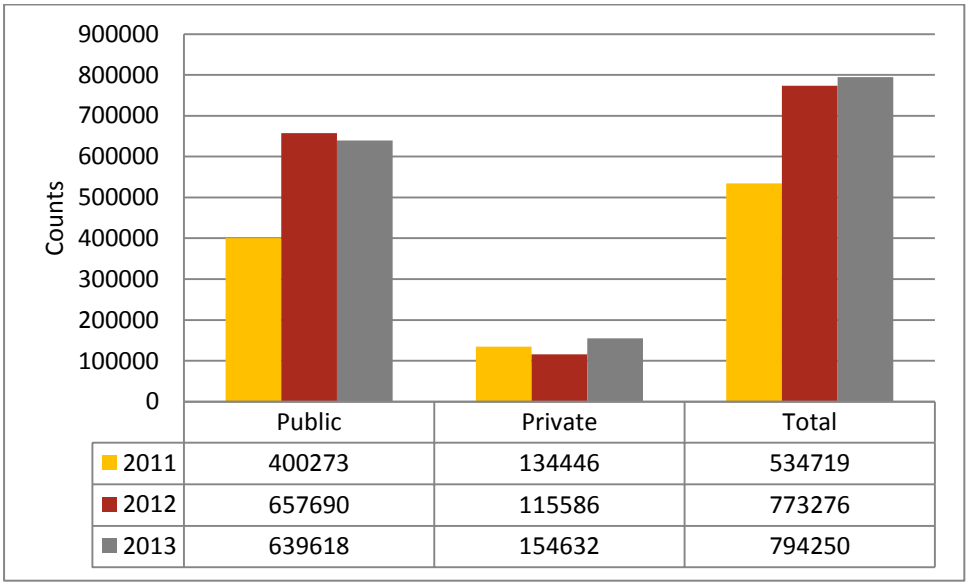


	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	96.2	96.9	97.9	98.0	97.8	98.0	98.1	98.8	99.0	99.0	99.0	99.1
Female	96.9	97.9	98.4	98.3	98.3	98.6	98.2	99.0	99.1	99.1	99.4	99.4
Total	96.5	97.4	98.1	98.2	98.1	98.3	98.2	98.9	99.0	99.0	99.2	99.3

Source: General Household Survey, Statistics South Africa (2002–2013).

Technical and Vocational Education and Training: The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector has emerged as a critical institutional contributor to plans of the Department of Higher Education and Training for addressing the skills and employment needs of immediate school leavers, and of unemployed work-seekers for vocational and especially vocationally-oriented training to maximise their chances of finding employment. Figure 3 shows that total headcounts for public TVET institutions had exceeded 400 000 by 2011. This is an increase of more than 50 000 over the 2010 number of 350 000. This in turn was followed by a very substantial increase to 657 690 in 2012. Despite a slight decline between 2012 and 2013, public TVET enrolment rose by 59.8% across the three-year period. In the meantime, private sector TVET grew by a modest 15 percentage points to 154 632 in 2013. Given that enrolment in public TVET appears uneven, and private sector enrolment is small, on balance it seems unlikely that enrolment will reach DHET's one million enrolment target by 2015, though the target of 2.5 million by 2030 seems feasible based on the current growth rate.

Figure 3: **Number of students enrolled in public and private TVET/FET Colleges, from 2011 to 2013**



	Public	Private	Total
2011	400273	134446	534719
2012	657690	115586	773276
2013	639618	154632	794250

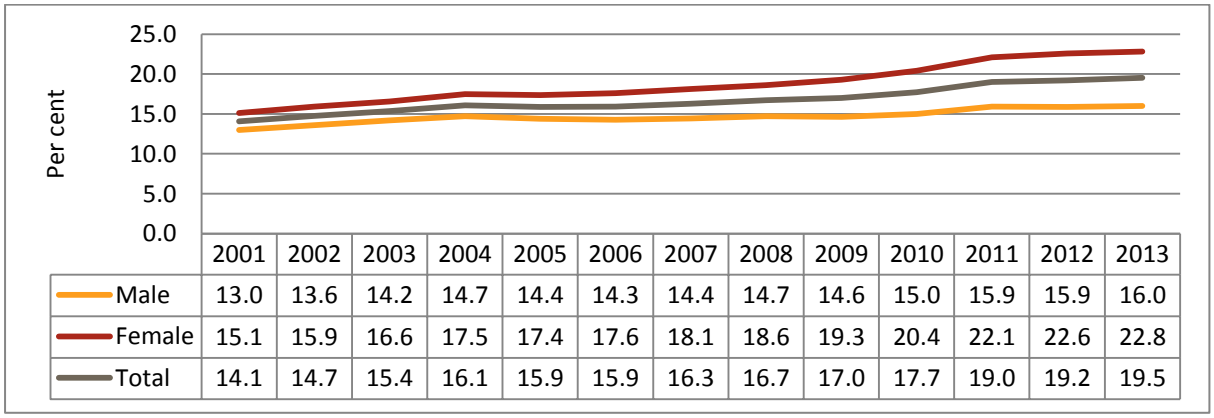
Sources: 2013 Annual Survey of Public FET/TVET Colleges 07 August 2014; 2013 Annual Survey of Private FET Colleges 26 July 2014. Department of Higher Education and Training.
Note 1: Number of students refers to headcount enrolment.

Vocational and occupational programmes are offered to students seeking job entry and occupational upgrading, while general vocational programmes provide a base on which further study or work-based experience is built. The 2013 year data provides a perspective on the proportions of students enrolled in TVET colleges by qualification category, which reveals the relative emphasis of current enrolment between occupational/vocational and general preparatory vocational programmes. Notably, a majority of 69.1% of all enrolments are for Report 191 programmes. These three-year programmes consist half of theoretical studies at colleges and the other half involves relevant practical application in work places. Engineering studies range from N1–N6, while Business and

Utility Studies range from N4–N6. This is the traditional apprentice career path to becoming an artisan. Nearly one quarter (24.2%) of enrolments is for the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) programme. However, this is a general vocational programme providing a platform for further work experience and/or further learning. These two programmes contribute the overwhelming majority of enrolments. Currently, enrolment on short courses or for modules within the N-programmes is relatively small, which suggests that study opportunities at TVET colleges are less popular among the presently employed.

Higher education: Gross higher education (HE) enrolment is a measure of participation and is defined as total enrolment in tertiary education regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the total population of 20–24-year-olds. South Africa is set to meet the national target for gross HE enrolment rate (GER) of 20% by 2015. Between 2001 and 2013, the GER rose steadily from 14.1% to 19.5%, an increase of 5.4 percentage points over the period, or an annual increment of 0.45% (Figure 4).

Figure 4: **Gross enrolment rate in higher education by gender (%), 2001 to 2013**



	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	13.0	13.6	14.2	14.7	14.4	14.3	14.4	14.7	14.6	15.0	15.9	15.9	16.0
Female	15.1	15.9	16.6	17.5	17.4	17.6	18.1	18.6	19.3	20.4	22.1	22.6	22.8
Total	14.1	14.7	15.4	16.1	15.9	15.9	16.3	16.7	17.0	17.7	19.0	19.2	19.5

Source: Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS), Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).
Note: Data in this figure is from HEMIS, so calculation of the gross enrolment rate excludes enrolment in private higher education institutions.

Since the participation rate in higher education as measured in gross enrolment amounts to about 20% of the corresponding population eligible for enrolment in a post-school institution, there is a large population of potential students without access. Furthermore, South Africa's gross enrolment rate in higher education is lower than might be desired in comparison with international trends for similar middle income countries. One factor that influences the ability of the HE system to absorb more students is high tuition and institutional fees which present a barrier to entry (DHET 2010). The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) has expanded substantially through input of funds from the National Skills Fund, but coverage of NSFAS may not yet be wide enough.

For these reasons, it is important to consider the rate at which new entrants into higher education are being absorbed. Enrolment of first-time entrants into the higher education system rose from 112 782 in 2000 to 158 385 in 2013, which constituted a 40.4% increase over the period at an average of 3.1% per year. However, the rate of increase over the period fluctuated with a pronounced downturn between 2011 and 2013 of over 20 000 entrants, or 12%. Nevertheless, the

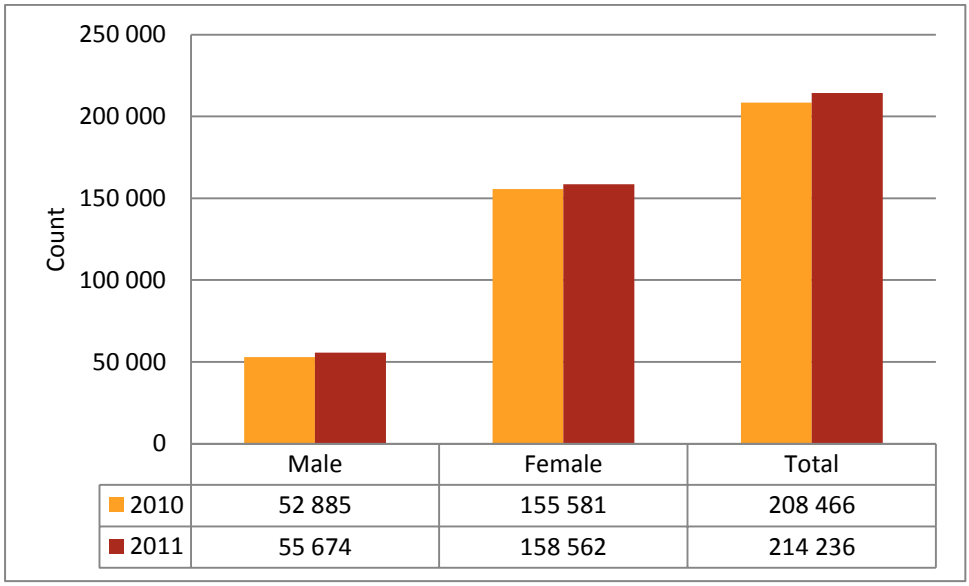
average annual increase in first-time enrolments is much higher than the average annual increase in the gross enrolment rate.

Adult Education and Training: Adult Education and Training (AET) is offered in public and private adult learning centres for adults (people aged 18 years and above) and out-of-school youth who seek to complete their schooling and who wish to acquire new skills (DHET 2014).

The 2012 DHET Annual Performance Plan stipulated that a target of 300 000 individuals must be enrolled in an AET institution by 2014/15 (DHET, 2012). By 2012, enrolment at AET centres in AET levels 1–4, Grades 10–12 and other skills development programmes reached 306 378, and if 8 690 private AET enrolments are included, enrolment in that year becomes 315 068. Of this number, 228 212 or 74.4% of total enrolment was for AET levels 1–4 – that is excluding mainly enrolments to study for school grades leading to matriculation (DHET 2014: 35).

Through increasing the numbers of students enrolled in AET levels 1–4, the AET system is meeting the needs of relatively large numbers of educationally disadvantaged adults who have access to AET centres in their locality. Between 2010 and 2011, a 2.8% increase in numbers was recorded (Figure 5). A prominent feature of enrolment in the centres is majority attendance of women who made up 74% of registered learners in both 2010 and 2011.

Figure 5: **Headcount of enrolment in Adult Education and Training (AET) Level 1 to Level 4 by gender, 2010 and 2011**



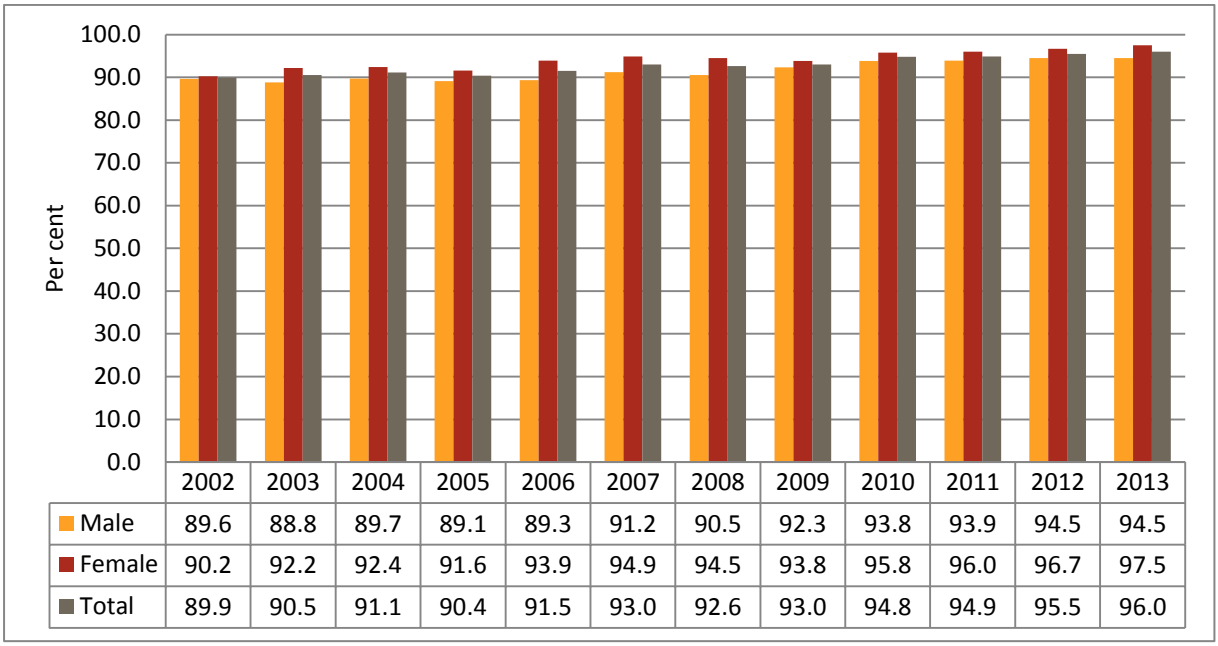
	Male	Female	Total
2010	52 885	155 581	208 466
2011	55 674	158 562	214 236

Source: AET Annual Survey, Department of Higher Education and Training (2010, 2011).

Efficiency indicators

Primary school completion rate: The completion rate for South African primary schooling – as a proxy indicator for education system efficiency – steadily improved, culminating in a 96% completion rate by 2013, up 6 percentage points from the 90% level in 2002 (Figure 6).

Figure 6*: Primary school completion rate by gender (%), 2002 to 2013*

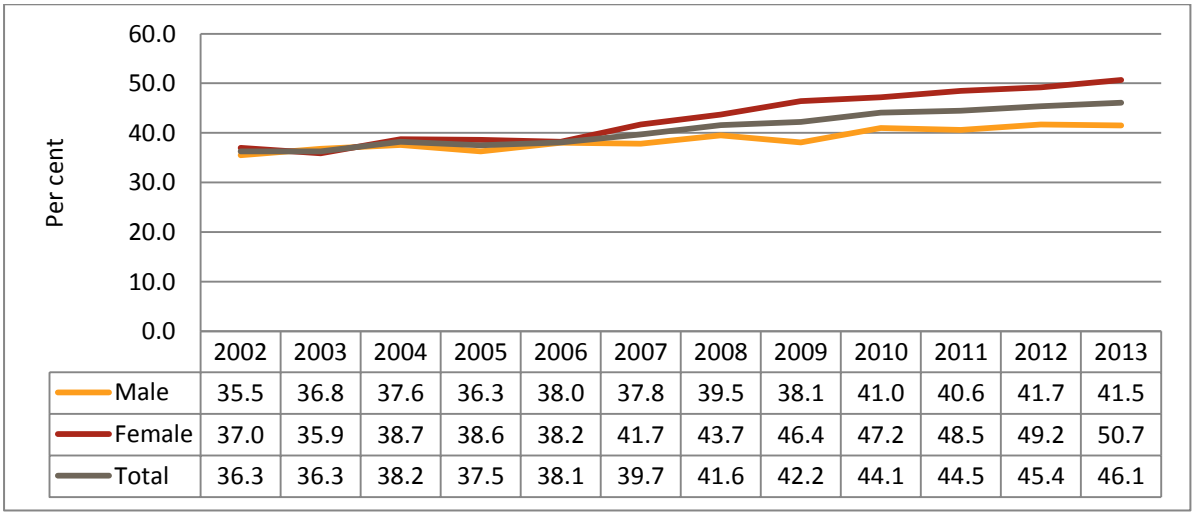


	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	89.6	88.8	89.7	89.1	89.3	91.2	90.5	92.3	93.8	93.9	94.5	94.5
Female	90.2	92.2	92.4	91.6	93.9	94.9	94.5	93.8	95.8	96.0	96.7	97.5
Total	89.9	90.5	91.1	90.4	91.5	93.0	92.6	93.0	94.8	94.9	95.5	96.0

Source: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2002–2013.

Secondary school completion rate: The secondary schooling completion rate remains problematic even though it improved by 10 percentage points from 36.3% to 46.1% between 2002 and 2013. Notwithstanding the increase, the secondary school completion rate was still less than half that of the primary school sector by the end of the period (Figure 7). Further improvement in completion rates requires reduction of current sources of inefficiencies in secondary schools, particularly the high numbers of repeaters, migration of learners out of schools into the TVET and AET sectors of the post-school system, and drop-outs. Major differences in completion rates between social groups within countries raise concerns about the unequal impact of low completion rates on existing socio-economic inequality in South Africa (World Bank and IMF 2014).

Figure 7: **Secondary school completion rate by gender (%), 2002 to 2013**

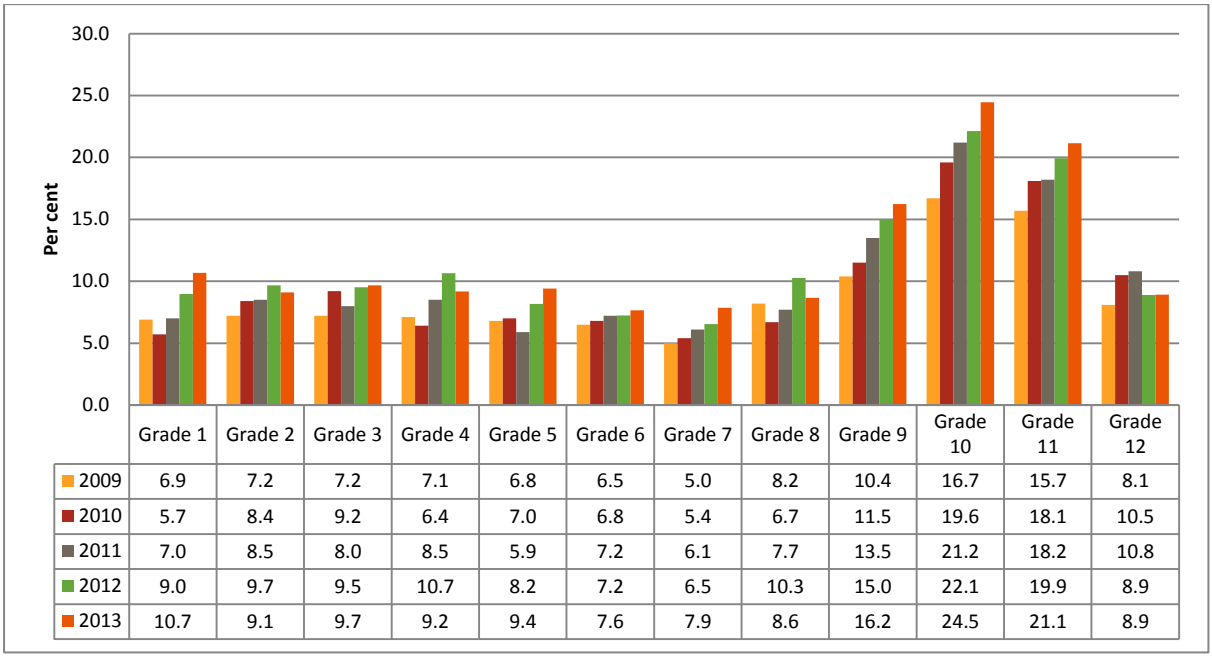


	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	35.5	36.8	37.6	36.3	38.0	37.8	39.5	38.1	41.0	40.6	41.7	41.5
Female	37.0	35.9	38.7	38.6	38.2	41.7	43.7	46.4	47.2	48.5	49.2	50.7
Total	36.3	36.3	38.2	37.5	38.1	39.7	41.6	42.2	44.1	44.5	45.4	46.1

Source: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2002–2013.

Repetition rate in primary and secondary education: Between 2009 and 2013, fluctuations are observed in Grade 1–8 but in all cases the average repetition rate remained below 10%. The situation changes drastically in the Senior and FET phases (Grades 9–12) where repetition rates increase between 2009 and 2013 by 5.8 percentage points in Grade 9, 7.8 percentage points in Grade 10 and 5.4 percentage points in Grade 11. Repetition in Grade 12 fluctuates between 2009 and 2013 with increases observed in 2010 and 2011, but decreases to 8.9% in both 2012 and 2013. Of concern and what would require deeper investigation is the fact that repetition rates are extremely high in Grade 10 across all years (Figure 8).

Figure 8: **Average percentage of learners per grade repeating Grade 1 to Grade 12, 2009 to 2013**[1]



	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
2009	6.9	7.2	7.2	7.1	6.8	6.5	5.0	8.2	10.4	16.7	15.7	8.1
2010	5.7	8.4	9.2	6.4	7.0	6.8	5.4	6.7	11.5	19.6	18.1	10.5
2011	7.0	8.5	8.0	8.5	5.9	7.2	6.1	7.7	13.5	21.2	18.2	10.8
2012	9.0	9.7	9.5	10.7	8.2	7.2	6.5	10.3	15.0	22.1	19.9	8.9
2013	10.7	9.1	9.7	9.2	9.4	7.6	7.9	8.6	16.2	24.5	21.1	8.9

Source: Department of Basic Education, 2009–2013.

What appears as a slight reduction in the repetition rate in Grade 11 is the consequence of large numbers of Grade 11 learners who drop out (Branson, Hofmeyr & Lam 2013) or leave their schools because being forced to repeat is to have their path to the NSC blocked. These learners seek alternative registration in other institutions such as TVET colleges and AET centres from which they have the chance of sitting the NSC.

The main reason for such a low repeater rate in Grade 12 is that for each cohort of students, so many are kept back that those who arrive in Grade 12 without having repeated or already dropped out is a select sample of the original group that enrolled in Grade 10. Effectively this means that 'the chances of passing matric improve dramatically once an individual reaches Grade 12' (Branson, Hofmeyr & Lam 2013). It is suggested that teachers of higher grade classes struggle to support learners who, when they were in primary school, did not master the required basic skills, but were

[1] Author's calculations.

nevertheless allowed to progress from grade to grade (DBE 2011). By the time these low-achieving learners approach the secondary school grades of 10 and 11, they will no longer be condoned but instead will be compelled to repeat grades that will hopefully improve their preparedness before they are allowed to proceed, because schools want to avoid high Grade 12 failure rates (Brophy, 2006).

Indicators of quality

Teacher qualifications: Reviews of research using qualifications as a proxy for teacher characteristics such as teacher knowledge and classroom practices suggest there is a significant positive relationship between qualifications and learner achievements (Darling-Hammond, 2000). The Minimum Requirements of Teacher Education Qualifications Policy (MRTEQP) of 2007 are taken as a proxy for teacher quality. There was a gradual 4 percentage points improvement in the percentage of qualified educators between 2008 and 2013 up to 98%. This assumes that they have met the criteria as stipulated in the MRTEQP. Accordingly it must be acknowledged that the country has no shortage of qualified teachers and the remaining few who are under-qualified are upgrading to meet the required criteria.

Notwithstanding this healthy situation from an accreditation perspective, the issue of teacher quality cannot be set aside. More attention needs to be given to the adequacy of teachers' content knowledge and the appropriateness and relevance of their classroom practice. The National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) of the DBE conducted research in 2012 into teaching practices in foundation phase grades in nine provinces and mostly in urban schools. Evidence suggests that teachers are not succeeding in instilling problem-solving and analysis skills in learners. Teachers who do not understand how to evaluate, analyse or solve problems when reading could not teach children these skills (National Education Evaluation and Development Unit [NEEDU] 2013). This was followed by research in 2012 into rural schools which has yet to be released.

Learner-to-educator ratio: In 1995, the Education Labour Relations Council agreed on a learner–educator ratio guideline of 40:1 and 35:1 for government primary and secondary schools respectively, subject to annual review between participants. Though the LER does contribute to education quality, it should be noted that the LER is not linearly related to learner performance, though it is assumed that as a rule the lower the learner to educator ratio, the better the learning and teaching opportunities.

The average learner-to-educator ratio has changed over the post-1994 period but has not been subject to wide fluctuations. The ratio was at 32.1 between 1996 and 2000. South Africa saw the average LER in public schools decline from 33:1 in 2005, which was the highest level in the period, to 31:1 in 2014 (DBE, Annual School Survey, 2004 to 2014) . This ratio tends to be slightly higher for primary schools than secondary schools.

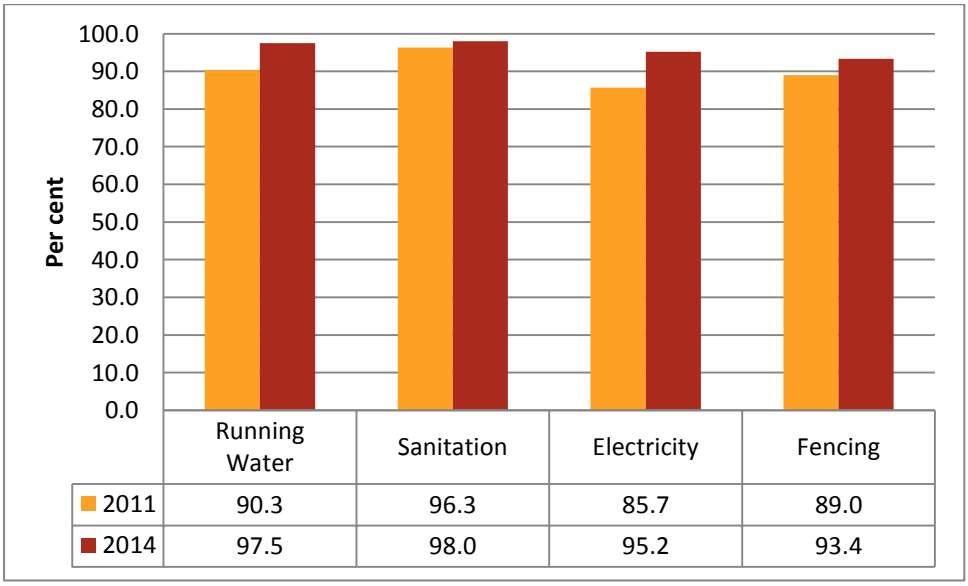
As might be expected, there can be quite wide variation in the ratio depending on location of the school (urban–rural) or the socio-economic class of the locality. Schools that are attended by

children from high-income households can use higher school fees to pay for more teachers. [2] Thus, it must be acknowledged that aggregate data masks great variations at lower levels. Policy and strategy formulation should then be based on data with greater granularity.

Basic school infrastructure and services: After apartheid, South Africa faced significant challenges in building school infrastructure since many schools of formerly disadvantaged communities lacked not only school buildings but also basic services. Very good progress has been achieved in each of the dimensions selected for this indicator: school's access to electricity (95%), running water (97%), fencing (93%) and sanitation (98%) increased by 9.5 percentage points, 7.2 percentage points, 4.4 percentage points and 1.7 percentage points respectively between 2011 and 2014 (Figure 9). This is a far cry from the time of the second School Register of Needs Report which established in 2000 that only 71.2% of schools had water available, 54.9% had access to electricity, and 90.8% had toilets (Department of Education, 2001).

Note, however, that this data does not take into account variation in the quality of service, as in the following examples: reliability of the service, quality of the service, accessibility to different groups within the school, and cost barriers. Work on infrastructure delivery continues under the Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative (ASIDI), which is part of the National Infrastructure Plan (Zuma, 2015).

Figure 9: **Access to running water, sanitation, electricity and fencing in schools (%), 2011 and 2014**



	Running Water	Sanitation	Electricity	Fencing
2011	90.3	96.3	85.7	89.0
2014	97.5	98.0	95.2	93.4

Source: Department of Basic Education, National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS) database, 2011 and 2014.

Outcome indicators

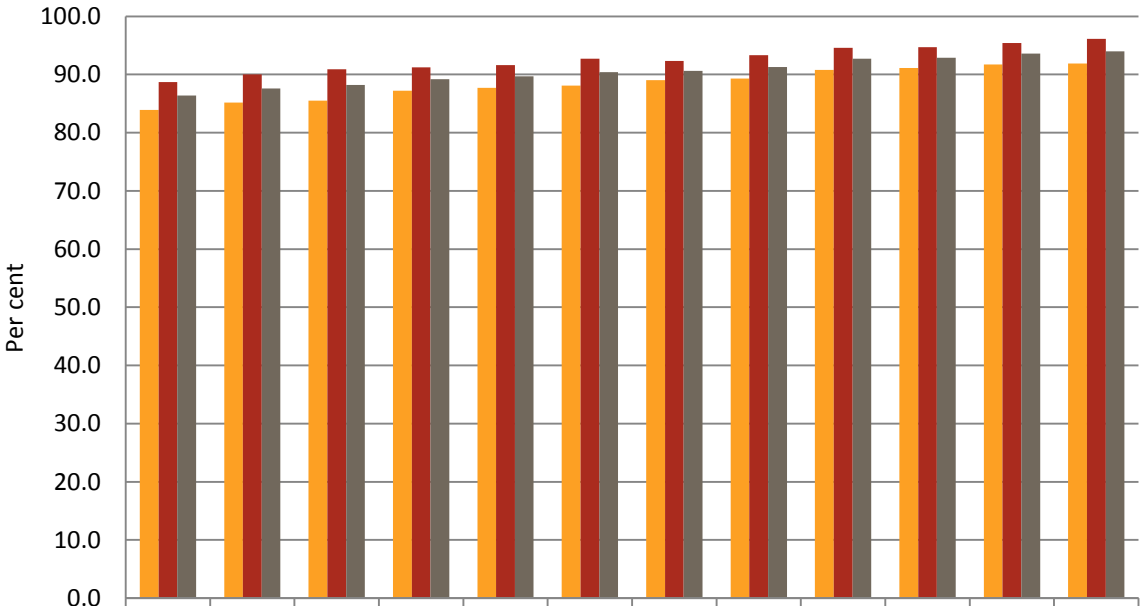
[2] How to reflect the implementation of multigrade classrooms for multilingual schools where a single language group will be combined in a single class for lack of teachers with the language skills requiring multigrade teaching-learning. (DoE, 2006)

In the report, a few measures have been used as proxies of outcome indicators. The following section covers changes in the functional literacy of youth between the ages of 15 and 24 years as well as adult literacy rates for individuals aged 18 years and older. Within the basic education system the Department has, since 2011, administered the Annual National Assessment to serve as an outcome indicator that measures the quality of the basic education system. The country has also taken part in internationally benchmarked studies and the results of studies like the Trends in International Mathematics and Sciences Study (TIMSS) will be discussed as part of the outcome indicators.

Youth functional literacy rate: Literacy – and numeracy – is a capability with critical implications for a person's current and future life opportunities, and his/her capacity to contribute socially and economically as an individual, family member, worker and citizen. Literacy is a difficult indicator to measure. In this discussion, the proxy for functional literacy is taken as 'the percentage of the population 15–24 years and over who have completed a Grade 7 education'.

Aggregate levels of youth functional literacy increased steadily from 86% to 94% between 2002 and 2013 (Figure 10). Disaggregation by gender revealed a similar stable progression of steadily rising literacy rates among females and males. Female rates increased from 89% to 96%, or by 7 percentage points overall, while male rates increased from 84% to 92%, or by 8 percentage points overall. Throughout the period, female literacy rates remained higher than male rates by between 3 percentage points and 5 percentage points.

Figure 10*: Youth functional literacy rate ages 15 to 24 by gender (%), 2002 to 2013*

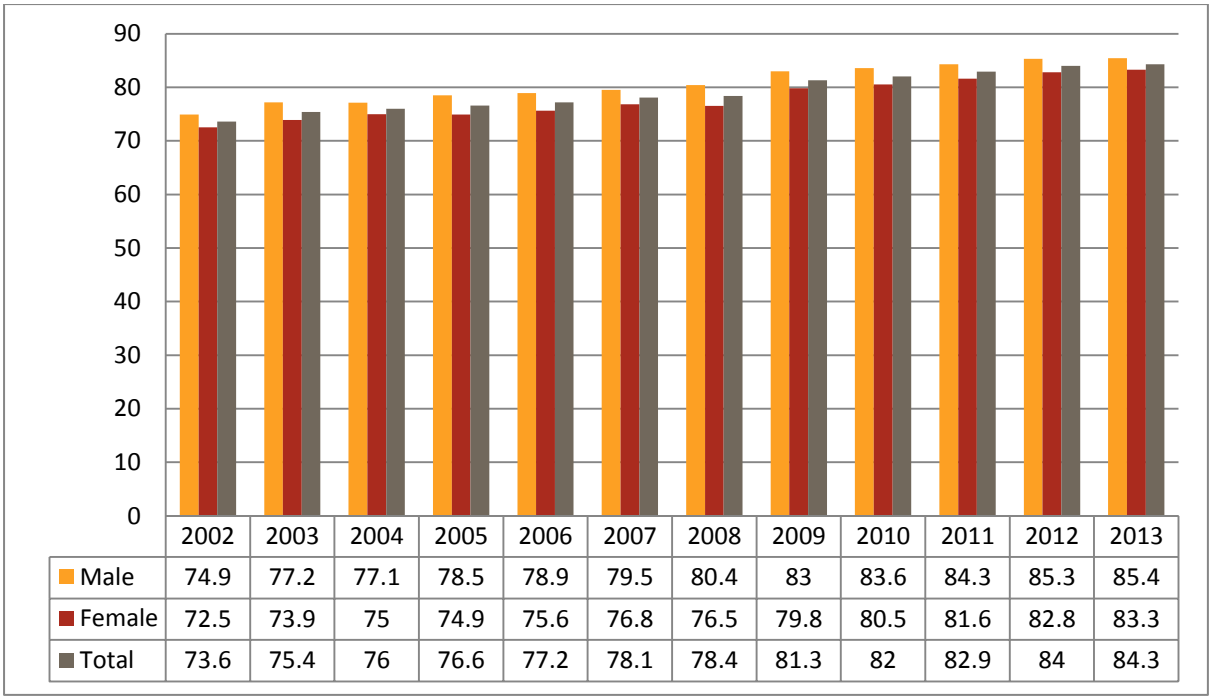


	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	83.9	85.2	85.5	87.2	87.7	88.1	89.0	89.3	90.8	91.1	91.7	91.9
Female	88.7	90.0	90.9	91.2	91.6	92.7	92.3	93.3	94.6	94.7	95.4	96.1
Total	86.4	87.6	88.2	89.2	89.7	90.4	90.6	91.3	92.7	92.9	93.6	94.0

Source: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2002–2013.

Adult functional literacy rate: Aggregate levels of adult functional literacy increased steadily by ten percentage points from 74% to 84% between 2002 and 2013 (Figure 11). Disaggregation by gender reveals a similar stable progression of literacy rates among females and males, both of which increased by ten percentage points in the period. Female rates increased from 73% to 83%, while male rates increased from 75% to 85%. Throughout the period, male literacy rates remained higher than female rates by between 2 percentage points and 4 percentage points.

Figure 11: **Adult functional literacy rate ages 18 and older by gender (%), 2002 to 2013**



	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	74.9	77.2	77.1	78.5	78.9	79.5	80.4	83	83.6	84.3	85.3	85.4
Female	72.5	73.9	75	74.9	75.6	76.8	76.5	79.8	80.5	81.6	82.8	83.3
Total	73.6	75.4	76	76.6	77.2	78.1	78.4	81.3	82	82.9	84	84.3

Source: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2002–2013.

Annual National Assessments (ANA): The Department of Basic Education endeavours to bring about improved learner performance. Hence it has introduced the ANA to measure improvements in the quality and levels of educational outcomes in the schooling system by tracking learner performance in literacy/Languages and numeracy/Mathematics (Department of Basic Education 2014C).

Improved achievement levels reflected in the ANAs results between 2012 and 2014 are based on raw year-to-year scores that have not been adjusted for relative difficulty of the test instruments across years. Nevertheless, from the ANA results some broad observations can be made. Foundation Phase Grade 3 level learner achievement results seem to reveal adequate quality by the level of achievement for language and mathematics, though the latter is less consistent. Learner achievement among Grade 6 learners reflecting progress over the Intermediate Phase is less convincing, particularly with reference to Mathematics where learners attained much lower scores in comparison to their Language scores.

Grade 9 is the final grade in the compulsory General Education Certificate Phase of basic schooling, before transition into the Further Education and Training Phase of schooling that culminates in the national matriculation and school leaving examination. Achievement in the latter phase impacts

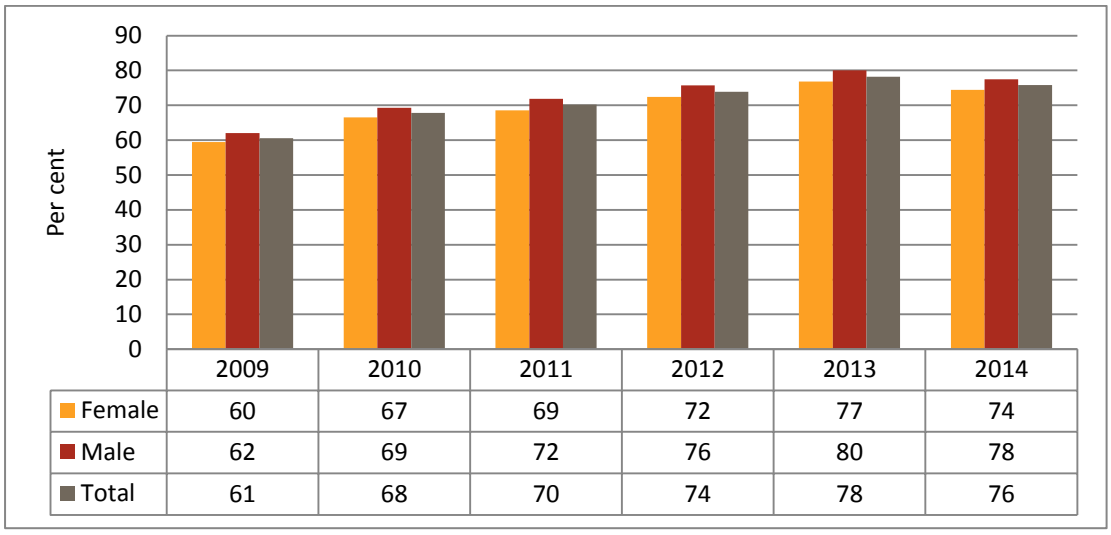
significantly on employment chances. It is, therefore, a matter of some concern that across the ANA at Grades 3, 6 and 9, the poorest achievement levels are starkly reflected at Grade 9 level. The percentage of Grade 9 learners who achieved a Mathematics pass mark of 50% and above in all three years of ANA data collection from 2012 to 2014 was consistently low. This result suggests that these learners have acquired inadequate basic competencies, and further, that their knowledge foundations in the discipline are insufficient.

It is to be welcomed that certain deficiencies in basic knowledge and competencies have been identified through the ANA assessments. This information enables curriculum designers, teachers and teacher trainers to create appropriate interventions to address the gaps.

National Senior Certificate: The National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination is a high stakes school leaving exam at the apex of 12 years of schooling. Employers who might perceive the NSC with some unease nevertheless use it as a yardstick for employability, especially when candidates lack work experience.

Between 2009 and 2013, NSC passes increased substantially from 61% to 78%, followed by a slight decline in 2014 to 76% (Figure 12). This difference in results between 2013 and 2014 may partially be explained by the introduction in 2014 of the new curriculum framework, *National Curriculum Statement for Grades R–12* which aimed to provide clearer specification of what is to be taught and learnt on a term-by-term basis in all grades through the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). This innovation required some adaptation by teachers and students, which could have impacted on results.

Figure 12*: National Senior Certificate passes by gender (%), 2009 to 2014*



	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Female	60	67	69	72	77	74
Male	62	69	72	76	80	78
Total	61	68	70	74	78	76

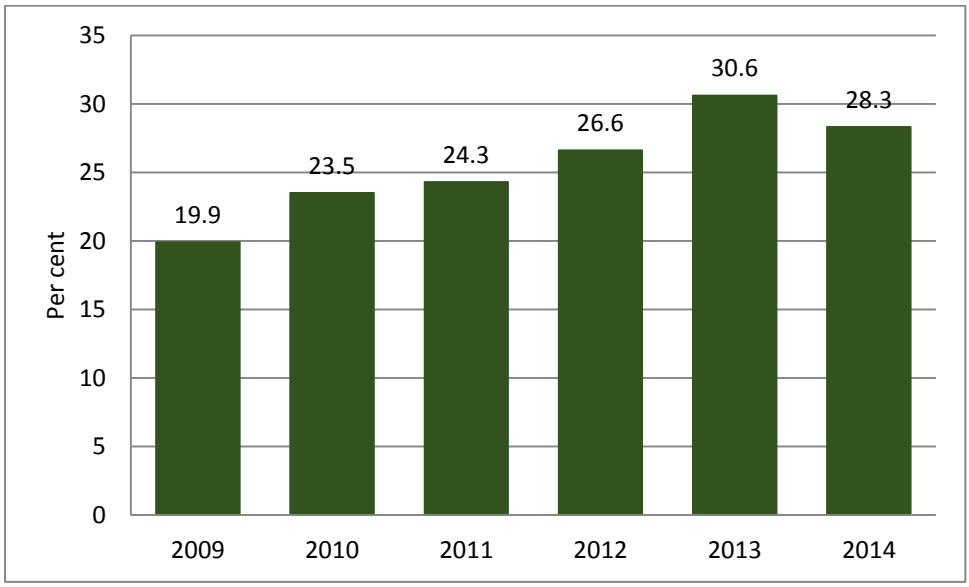
Source: Department of Basic Education, National Senior Certificate database, 2009–2014.

Bachelor's passes: The 'Bachelor's pass' category is created to obtain a rough indication of the numbers of students who have completed the NSC examination and who also qualify to enter an undergraduate degree programme at a university. Universities will want to select the best possible quality of candidates for their programmes. Yet university administrators, who need to ensure that

they admit the best possible quality of school leavers amid uncertainty over school quality, are also under pressure to increase student intake in line with government's commitment to increase the size of the higher education system. In these conditions, the quality and number of Bachelor's pass school leavers is of particular importance as it gives an indication of changes in the size of the pool of candidates who are eligible to study in higher education, relative to overall NSC passes.

The proportion of school leavers with a Bachelor's pass increased from 20% in 2009 to 31% in 2013, an increase of 11 percentage points, before falling back slightly to 28% in 2014 (Figure 13). In real numbers this means that the number of candidates qualifying for Bachelor studies increased, from 120 767 in 2011 to 150 752 in 2014.

Figure 13: **National Senior Certificate Bachelors passes (%), 2009 to 2014**



Source: Department of Basic Education, National Senior Certificate database, 2009–2014.

1.4 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With regard to access or participation in education, the South African post-apartheid government has managed to expand access to include all children of primary school-going age, having achieved the 2015 target for the adjusted net enrolment ratio beforehand (2013). Moreover, the proportion of learners starting Grade 1 who reach the last grade of the primary phase had risen to 95% or higher in 2013, suggesting that the target of 100 per cent is likely to be achieved by 2015. These foundational MDG indicators strongly support the observation that South Africa has achieved much in the primary education sector since democracy. Further evidence of advances in the sector comes from the strong increases in gross enrolment rates for Grade R in ordinary schools, and equally solid improvements in the proportion of five-year-old children attending public and private institutions. Government departments are also increasing funding to the 0–4-year-old ECD groups, which should improve access for children from rural areas and low-income households.

In secondary schools, there is much to be done. The secondary school completion rate broke through the 50% level by 2013. Yet repetition rates in secondary schools worsened by 6 percentage points

from 10.6% in 2009 to 16.6% in 2013. These two metrics reflect severe challenges to efficiency of the secondary schooling sector, which has socially undesirable knock-on effects: firstly, the sector is contributing to growing numbers of unemployed young people with an incomplete secondary education and secondly, the sector is generating insufficient graduates of quality for enrolment in higher education. A major concern is that efficiency and quality objectives are not likely to be decisively achieved in the near future.

The lower grades of the schooling system are not producing learners well equipped to perform when they get to the senior levels, such as TVET and university. The problem of underperformance starts in the foundation phase and it gets worse by the time learners get to Grade 9. Instead of implementing programmes that aim to improve performance in Grades 10 and 11, schools tend to enforce grade repetition on poor performers in these two grades. Learners in previously disadvantaged and rural communities bear the brunt of this log-jam, being more vulnerable to impacts of repetition and dropping out.

A critical factor in schools is the quality of teaching and learning. The data shows that 98% of teachers are qualified; the learner–teacher ratio has since 2008 been located in the 1:30 and 1:31 range; and in 2014, high proportions of schools had access to running water (97%), sanitation (98%), electricity (95%) and fencing (93%). All of these factors seem to suggest that the ingredients for quality education in South Africa are sufficiently available.

Repetition is high in the senior grades, especially Grade 10. Not all learners who pass Grade 9 and enrol in Grade 10 reach Grade 12, making completion of secondary schooling a problem. The national completion ratio at this level is 46%. By international standards this is low. Analysis of enrolment patterns, the drop-out rate and repetition rate show that the country has some way to go before meeting performance levels achieved by upper-middle income countries. This problem is carried through into the rates of Bachelor passes, which should be larger to expand the cohort of young people eligible for higher education enrolment.

Higher education has similarly embarked on enrolment expansion, and it is set to achieve a gross enrolment rate of 20% in 2015, which is the national target. Furthermore, the numbers of first-time entrants to higher education have been increasing at a rate of just over 4% per year between 2000 and 2013. However, this is counterbalanced by substantial proportions of university students who do not complete their qualifications in the prescribed period, or change course of study, or drop out either permanently or temporarily. Tuition and institutional fees represent a barrier to entry into higher education institutions, and financial aid needs to be expanded as enrolments continue to grow in line with policy.

The TVET colleges are increasing their enrolment mainly in the Report 191 curriculum for apprenticeships and also in the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) which provides a balanced curriculum to introduce and prepare candidates for occupational career paths after graduation. The key question lurking behind the planned expansion of enrolment and ‘turnaround’ strategies is whether the outcome will generate graduates of good quality and employability in the labour market.

The system is doing well in respect of the literacy rate of 15–24-year-olds, which reached 94% in 2013. The South African Department of Higher Education and Training, with a focus on the post-school domain, has announced a new phase for 'second chance' and adult education opportunities. The Adult Education and Training (AET) centres which will be accommodated in larger and more comprehensive – in curriculum terms – community colleges that will create a stronger institutional base for education, and training adult and out-of-school youth. This facet must be tracked using indicators in the community colleges.

Perhaps the most important message emerging from the analysis is the importance of monitoring achievements and making decisions based on benchmarked and reliable results. The Department of Basic Education is encouraged to improve the quality of the ANA learner assessment programme. It is vital to build on this important initiative to augment the Senior Certificate Examination with an assessment programme for benchmarking the quality and learner achievements of cohorts of primary and secondary school learners as they progress through their school careers. In addition, ongoing participation in international learning achievement measures and assessments is essential in developing understanding and learning from international best practices in educational provision.

MAIN REPORT

STATUS AT A GLANCE

Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education							
Indicators	**Sex**	**1994 baseline (or nearest year)**	**2010 status (or nearest year)**	**Current status (2014 or nearest year)**	**2015 target**	**Target achievability**	**Indicator type**
Adjusted net enrolment ratio in primary education	M	96.5 (2002)	99.0	99.1 (2013)	100	**Achieved**	**MDG Domesticated**
	F	96.8 (2002)	99.0	99.4 (2013)	100		
Proportion of leaners staring Grade 1 who reach last grade of primary *Proxy for: Primary school completion rate by gender (%)*	M	89.2 (2002)	93.4	94.5 (2013)	100	Not achieved	**MDG Domesticated**
	F	90.1 (2002)	95.8	97.5 (2013)	100		
Literacy rate of 15–24-year-olds	M	83.3 (2002)	90.4	91.9 (2013)	100	Not achieved	**MDG**
	F	88.4 (2002)	94.6	96.1 (2013)	100		
Adjusted net enrolment ratio in tertiary education	M	13 (2009)	15	16 (2013)	20%	Not achieved	**Domesticated**
	F	15 (2009)	20	22.8 (2013)	20%	**Achieved**	
Learner-to-ducator ratio		33:1 (2005)	30:1	31:1 (2014)	30:1	**Achieved**	**Domesticated**
Electricity infrastructure (% of schools)		Not available	86 (2011)	95 (2014)	100	Not achieved	**Domesticated**
Water infrastructure (% of schools)		Not available	90 (2011)	97 (2014)	100	Not achieved	**Domesticated**
Sanitation infrastructure (% of schools)		Not available	96 (2011)	98 (2014)	100	Not achieved	**Domesticated**
Perimeter fencing infrastructure (% of schools)		Not available	89 (2011)	93 (2014)	100	Not achieved	**Domesticated**

Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education							
Indicators	**Sex**	**1994 baseline (or nearest year)**	**2010 status (or nearest year)**	**Current status (2014 or nearest year)**	**2015 target**	**Target achievability**	**Indicator type**
National Senior Certificate (NSC) pass rate (% of learners)	M	62.0 (2009)	69.3	78 (2014)	75	**Achieved**	**Domesticated**
	F	59.5 (2009)	66.5	74 (2014)	75	**Achieved**	
Bachelor pass (% of learners)		19.9 (2009)	24.3	28 (2014)	35.6	Not achieved	**Domesticated**

2. INTRODUCTION

A series of five Millennium Development Goal (MDG) reports covering South Africa appeared between 2005 and 2013. This sixth and latest 2015 report completes just more than a decade in measurement of progress towards Goal 2: To achieve universal primary education. Coverage of a decade makes it possible for us to not only consider advancement towards the stated MDG goals, but also to draw attention to the timing of key policy interventions in relation to the status of progress, of which the impact will be felt over time. The most important policy move undertaken in South Africa with relevance to education and skills development took place in 2009, halfway through the decade of MDG monitoring.

An accumulation of economic, access, equity and skills factors contributed to the decision to renovate the South African institutional structures responsible for education, training and workplace skills development. The workforce and economy before 1994 was mired in low-skills equilibrium and characterised by highly unequal access to education and workplace skills development. Despite achievement of universal access to primary education up to Grade 7, and phases of curriculum innovation, improving quality for all at senior secondary level is an on-going challenge. Low-skill job numbers have declined in the labour market, worsening unemployment, while demand in intermediate to high skills occupations has accelerated as a result of skills-biased technology change and investment in capital intensive production. In the labour market, high levels of unemployment – particularly amongst cohorts of youth – co-exist with intermediate and high skill job vacancies that block growth. Higher exposure of the national economy to economic globalisation in the form of price volatility, intensified competition, and poor growth prospects post the world financial crisis, have contributed further pressure.

According to the National Development Plan, the imperative is to create a 'diversified dynamic economy' (National Planning Commission 2011) and to target key sectors: some in order to unlock employment absorbing activities, and others to generate global market share and growth. Skills are central to both of these aims. Indeed, the accumulation of conditions referred to above demand a

more sophisticated approach to skills planning. Moreover, fiscal stringency in the wake of the world financial crisis has created greater pressure on government to target its investments more effectively and to maximise returns on investments, not least of all expenditure on education and training.

In this context, the South African government reshaped its education and labour functions to support improved planning of the links between education and the economy. Before 2009, the education system was based on a hierarchical structure with three bands: a primary education base, above that general and vocational secondary education, with higher education at the apex of the structure. All of these layers were under the mandate of the former Department of Education (DoE). Meanwhile, workplace education and training was the domain of the Department of Labour (DoL). Underlying this structure was an implicit distinction between formal education (including adult education) as the domain of the DoE, and workplace-based forms of learning, whether formal or on-the-job, as the responsibility of the DoL.

The rationale behind the new configuration after 2009 is based on a different division. That is to juxtapose the schooling system on the one hand with the post-school system – including workplaces – on the other. There are two important shifts embedded in this reconfiguration. First, all forms of education that directly interface with the labour market are brought under the same authority, a new Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). Second, workplace training and formal education are brought together, closing the gap between the skills system and the system of formal education and training. The most important benefit deriving from this reshaping is to unblock the potential for integrated planning across all education, training and skills systems and the labour market.

Leading up to 2009, planning undertaken by directorates and relevant units in the then departments of education and labour entailed what was implicitly skills planning, but without explicit overarching coordination. From May 2009, all post-school education and skills development functions were consolidated within a single new department named the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). The new Department of Basic Education took responsibility for all school education.

The DHET presented policy makers with the opportunity to begin planning for a unitary post-school education space. This provides the basis for coherence and coordination in planning of the entire post-school sector. In adopting this configuration, government strongly signalled its shift in emphasis away from a simple supply-oriented approach to delivering skills into the labour market. Its policy is oriented towards an explicitly coordinated approach that recognises not only the importance of directing flows between the different post-school institutions, but also the articulation of different elements of the post-school system with each other in terms of size and shape and programme qualification mix. This shift places greater emphasis on the functions of skills planning and requires more explicit coordination not only between the supply institutions and the labour market, but also more direct interaction between supply institutions and enterprises as the primary sources of sectoral demand. This is appropriate since coordination of these elements fits the human resource development aims proposed by the NDP: to provide access to lifelong learning that will enhance employability, and to expand quality and throughput of further and higher education (National Planning Commission 2011: 134).

In turn, this unlocks the opportunity to coordinate, establish and institutionalise an overarching approach that importantly links skills planning to economic planning. Skills planning in this context concerns interaction of expertise, data and tools to forge plans that can place institutions of learning in a responsive mode so that economic opportunities can be capitalised upon, and social needs for skilling can be realised.

The latter two South African MDG Goal 2 reports encouraged the government to maximise the gains made and translate the achievement into educational transformation and improving the quality and functionality of education. In this report the focus is mainly to continue assessing whether the system provides quality education. However, it recognises that quality of an education system is not just about measuring outputs of each discrete element of the schooling system in isolation. There is a conviction that as important is to understand how the various institutional elements of the education and training system articulate with each other. This supports the view of education as an interconnected process where the prior or earlier steps in education are vitally important to the following steps – and vice-versa. Measures of success for each phase or element in an education system each on its own cannot adequately meet the need to understand how the performance of one sector or grade level can affect the performance of the next grade – therefore the perspective of understanding interconnected measures of success. Education quality cannot be sacrificed in any one of these phases: 'Building national capabilities requires quality early childhood development, basic education, further and higher education' (National Planning Commission 2011: 295). With this background in mind, this chapter will attempt, where relevant, to draw attention to the interactive implications of successes or failures on the part of sub-systems to meet the goals of access, quality, and relevance.

3. DATA SOURCES AND LIMITATIONS

The education system is assessed based on a combination of MDG and domesticated indicators, which take into account mainly government but also private sector interventions towards raising the relevance and quality of education to serve the need for social transformation, as well as for economic growth with concomitant employment expansion. Indices are designed to assess how elements of the broader education system respond to national demands and imperatives.

Some of the limitations with respect to the data were the following:

- The data could only be reported on at the national level and hence deeper analysis was not possible. Analysis at the provincial level provided an overall picture which more often than not seemed like South Africa was doing well. These types of national results mask what could be happening at deeper levels.
- Data with school level (primary and secondary schools) was not provided. There is a perception that conditions in primary and secondary schools and analysing these separately would yield interesting results.
- The most recent data for some of the indicators was not available and in some cases the latest year for reporting was 2013.

- Nationally representative data for disabilities was not available and hence such analysis was not possible.
- All analyses in the current report were based on data provided by Stats SA, the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Higher Education and Training.

4. MDG 2: TARGETS AND PROGRESS

4.1 INDICATORS OF ACCESS TO EDUCATION

The discussion of this section will include the interpretation of data that deals with access to education within the basic education as well as the post-school sector. It will cover learner access to ECD centres, Grade R, primary schools and enrolment in post-school education institutions.

Access to Grade R

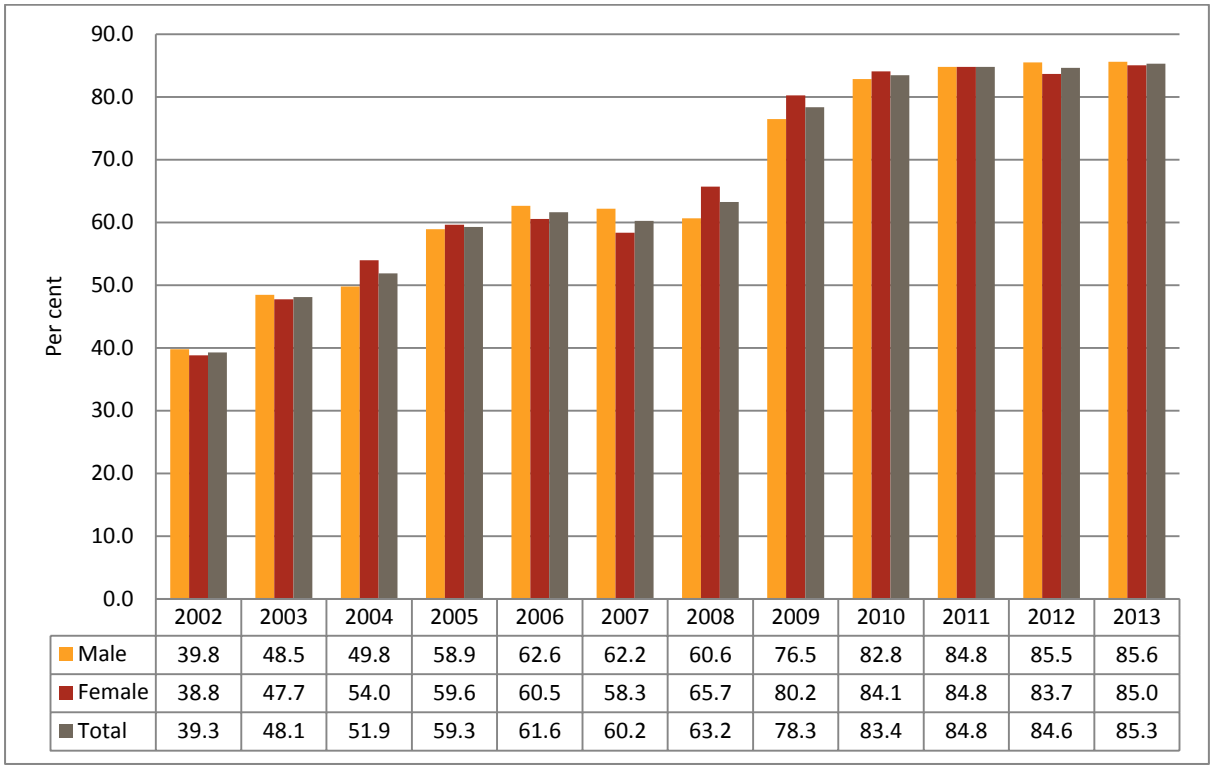
In 1996, the South African Schools Act (SASA) specified that education for children is compulsory between the ages of 7 and 15 years (Republic of South Africa, 1996). In the same period, growing resolve emerged within government to formally introduce Early Childhood Development (ECD) into its programmes. An accumulation of evidence from international studies points to the importance of ECD in preparing and predisposing children to get the most value out of their schooling experience.

Consequently the then Department of Education (DoE) prioritised ECD through implementing the 2000 'White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Development' (DoE 2001). The policy concentrates on improving the quality of programmes from birth to four-year-olds and six–nine-year-olds, with the emphasis on the provision of education in Grade R – the 'reception year'. The major thrust of this policy is to realise phasing in of Grade R as part of the schooling system (Department of Education, 2010). In 2009, in its Programme of Action for the Medium Term Strategic Plan for the electoral period 2009–2014, government committed to enrolling all 5-year-olds in Grade R, and doubling the number of 0–4-year-olds in ECD by 2014 (Government Communication and Information Services [GCIS], 2009) .

As will be reported hereafter, the MDG target of universal access for children of primary school age has been achieved, and post-2005 greater emphasis has been placed on expansion of access to ECD and, especially, Grade R. Therefore, it is worth noting that the Department of Basic Education has made great strides in creating an enabling environment for Grade R participation by ensuring that most public primary schools offer Grade R to children before entry into Grade 1. Furthermore, the DBE together with the Department of Social Development have encouraged expansion in the ECD sector, as will be discussed below.

First, the analysis will reflect on participation of five-year-old children in public and privately funded ECD centres, because most of this age group will enter Grade R the following year. The greater the proportions of five-year-olds in ECD centres, the better prepared the cohort will be for Grade R. Enrolment of five-year-old children attending public and private educational institutions increased substantially from 39% to 59% between 2002 and 2005, thereafter entering a plateau stage until 2008 (Figure 14). Then, enrolment surged 20% between 2008 and 2010 from 63% to 83%. In the latter period between 2010 and 2013 the enrolment rate lost momentum somewhat. Nevertheless, enrolment of five-year-old children in public and privately funded educational institutions increased from 39% to 85% in 11 years, with an annual average increase of 4.18%.

Figure 14: Five-year-old children attending public and private educational institutions by gender (%), 2002 to 2013

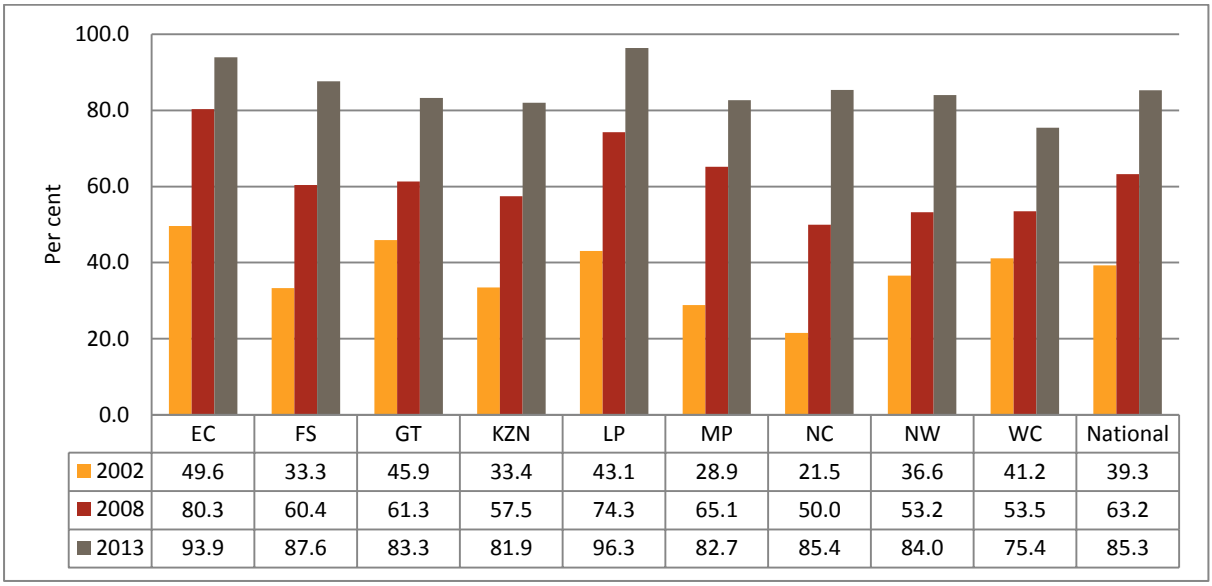


	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	39.8	48.5	49.8	58.9	62.6	62.2	60.6	76.5	82.8	84.8	85.5	85.6
Female	38.8	47.7	54.0	59.6	60.5	58.3	65.7	80.2	84.1	84.8	83.7	85.0
Total	39.3	48.1	51.9	59.3	61.6	60.2	63.2	78.3	83.4	84.8	84.6	85.3

Source: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2002–2013; Focus on Schooling Report, figures calculated by the Department of Basic Education.

This highly encouraging enrolment pattern is disaggregated by province (Figure 15) to provide an impression of how enrolment varies spatially. Using data points for three years across the period (2002, 2008 and 2013) reveals substantial variation between provinces in the average attendance of five-year-olds. For example, in 2002 there was a 28.1 percentage points gap between the Eastern Cape with highest attendance of 49.6%, and Northern Cape with 21.5% attendance. By 2013, this gap between provinces with the highest and lowest attendance had narrowed to 20.9 percentage points between Limpopo with 96.3% and Western Cape with 75.4%. This shows that inter-provincial inequality had been reduced in the period. Nevertheless, what the data does not reveal is intra-provincial variation in access.

Figure 15: **Five-year-old children attending public and private educational institutions by province (%), 2002, 2008 and 2013**

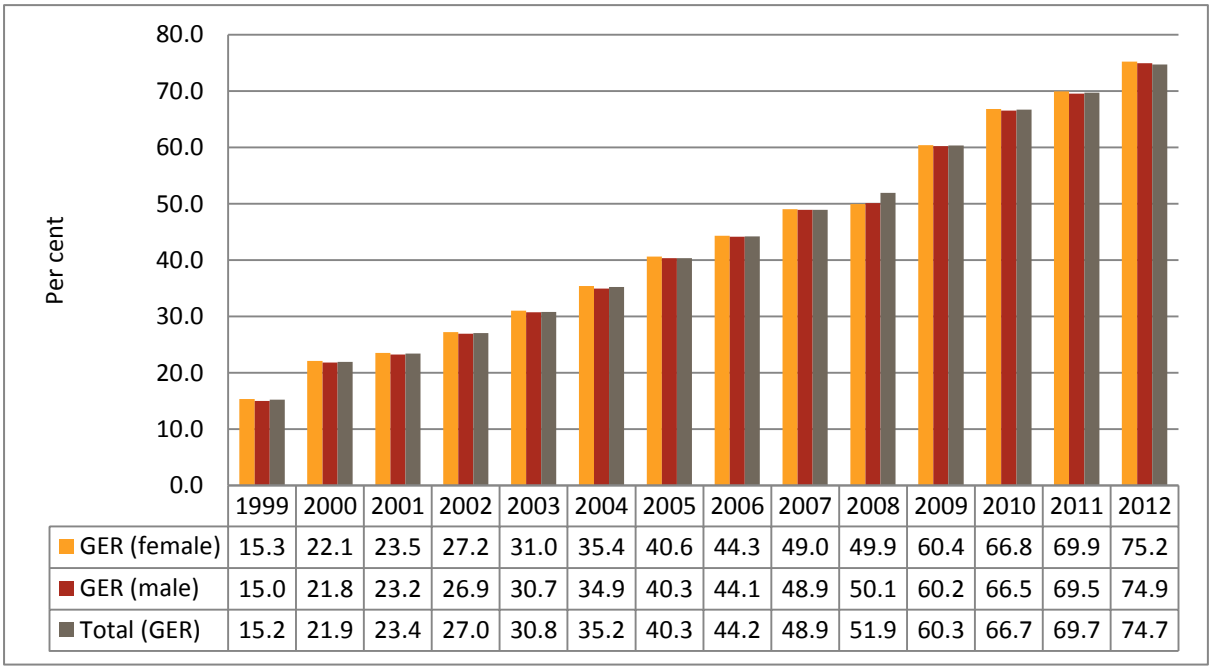


	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NC	NW	WC	National
2002	49.6	33.3	45.9	33.4	43.1	28.9	21.5	36.6	41.2	39.3
2008	80.3	60.4	61.3	57.5	74.3	65.1	50.0	53.2	53.5	63.2
2013	93.9	87.6	83.3	81.9	96.3	82.7	85.4	84.0	75.4	85.3

Source: General Household Survey, Statistics South Africa: Focus on Schooling Report, Department of Basic Education.

Figure 16 reveals how gross enrolment rates for Grade R in ordinary schools increased (1999–2012) from 27% to75% between 2002 and 2012, realising a 48 percentage points increase over the same period. Notice how the trajectory of both have a similar gradient suggesting that rising proportions of all five-year-olds is providing upward pressure for more five-year olds to progress on to Grade R.

Figure 16*: Gross enrolment rates for Grade R in ordinary schools by gender (%), 1999 to 2012*



	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
GER (female)	15.3	22.1	23.5	27.2	31.0	35.4	40.6	44.3	49.0	49.9	60.4	66.8	69.9	75.2
GER (male)	15.0	21.8	23.2	26.9	30.7	34.9	40.3	44.1	48.9	50.1	60.2	66.5	69.5	74.9
Total (GER)	15.2	21.9	23.4	27.0	30.8	35.2	40.3	44.2	48.9	51.9	60.3	66.7	69.7	74.7

Source: Department of Basic Education, Education Statistics in South Africa, 1999–2012; Mid-year Population Estimates, Statistics South Africa.

The Policy Framework to Universal Access to Quality Grade R Education (Department of Basic Education, 2013) emphasises the quality of education required in Grade R. Some of the major challenges to delivering quality education include poorly developed curriculum, poorly trained and paid teachers, and misdirected and inadequate funding. Many children are in unregistered ECD centres and no recent survey of ECD provision has been done (Atmore, van Niekerk, and Ashley-Cooper 2012). Not all schools are able to offer Grade R because of the late implementation date, a lack of resources, and no teacher allocation. In many areas Grade R is treated as a separate part of schools with its own budget, and the cost of Grade R admission is more than that of Grade 1.

The percentage of 0–4-year-olds attending an educational institution in South Africa has increased substantially over the past decade, from 7.5% in 2002 to 36.5% in 2012 (DBE, 2013A). Given the good progress made in Grade R and with 5-year-olds, more intense effort may be given to the 0–4-year-old group. Across these levels, improvement would take place more speedily with enhanced coordination. The involvement of several government departments and many private institutions providing ECD for children between the age of 0 and 6 years makes it difficult for the DBE to keep a consolidated and complete database of all enrolments. For example, there are some children who attend Grade R in private ECD centres but who are not necessarily captured by DBE as having attended Grade R. In addition, the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Social Development have contributed substantially through funding ECD facilities in the birth to four-year-old age group over the last decade. Better communication through awareness campaigns about subsidies for eligible learners, especially in rural areas, can improve availability of the networks of ECD centres.

It is imperative that a centralised system be kept where all ECD centres are registered and better controls are in place with regard to the curriculum that children are exposed to. It should, however, also be noted that change takes time and since its inception in 1994, great strides have been made with regard to Grade R being a compulsory feature in all primary schools. In a similar vein, it will also take some time for the ECD (children aged between zero and four years) sector to evolve and grow. It is also, however, clear that policies within and between government departments have to be better aligned and that, above all, communication between departments should be considered as vital to the success and continued growth of the ECD sector.

Access to primary school education

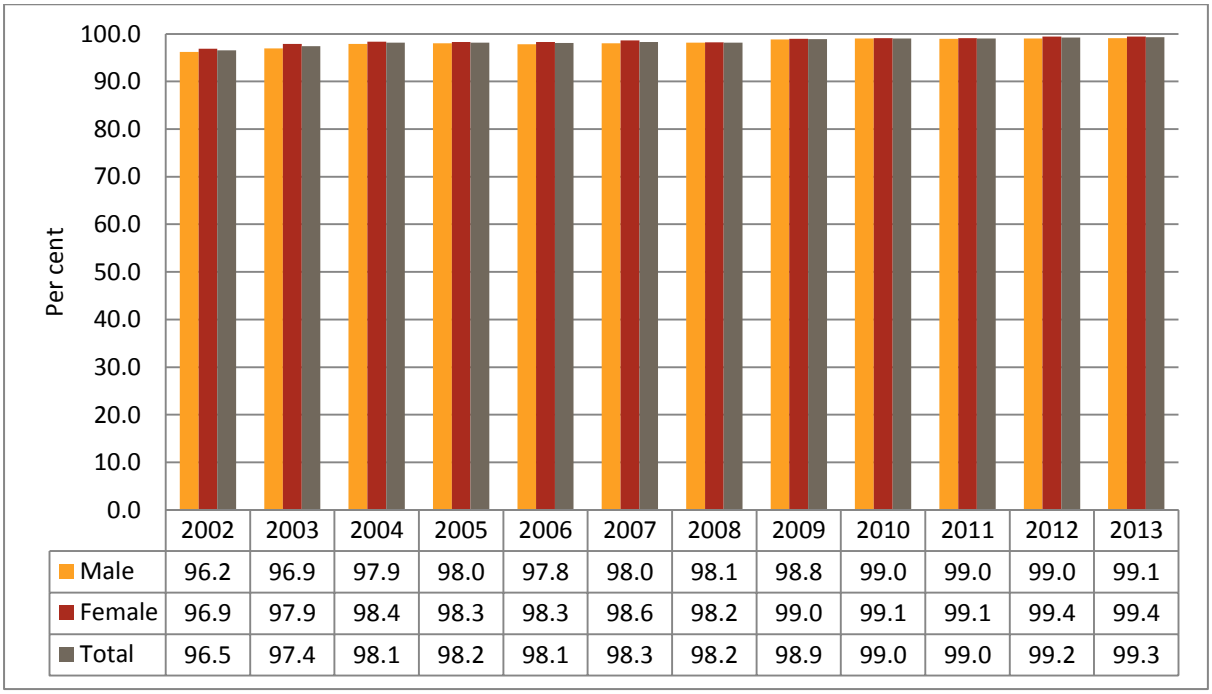
Access to primary school education is measured through the adjusted net enrolment rate (ANER) which is defined as the total enrolment of the official primary school age group who are enrolled at a given level of education (primary education), expressed as a percentage of the population in the same age group. The introduction of regulations, which stipulated age-grade norms for all South Africa, has applied a dual age-grade norm since 2004, with primary schools focusing on learners from 6 or 7 to 12 or 13 years of age (DoE, 2009). For the purposes of this assessment, the relevant ages are taken as 7 and 13.

The ANER answers the question: What proportion of age-appropriate children is enrolled in schools? South Africa's ANER percentage has for some time been located high in the ninety per cent range.

Between 2002 and 2009, the ANER improved from 97% to 99% (Figure 17). The target of achieving 99% by 2014 was reached in 2009 and has been sustained over the four years to 2013. Thus in 2013, 99.3% of children aged 7–13 years were enrolled in primary schools. South Africa has achieved success in generating access to primary education for all children irrespective of poverty status or location. No-fee schools, scholar transport and school nutrition amongst other pro-poor policies and programmes have contributed to improved access. This achievement brings into the spotlight the challenge of improving enrolment rate for Grade R which, in turn, can raise quality and outcomes throughout primary school education.

By 2010, the ANER for females and males had converged to negligible proportions but the gap had widened slightly by 2013, with females at 99.4% and males at 99.1%. Nevertheless, the current difference is still less than 0.5 percentage points. That is, there are more females than males enrolled in primary school, but the difference has been practically within 1% in the period under review.

Figure 17: **Adjusted national net enrolment rate in primary education (%), 2002 to 2013**



	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	96.2	96.9	97.9	98.0	97.8	98.0	98.1	98.8	99.0	99.0	99.0	99.1
Female	96.9	97.9	98.4	98.3	98.3	98.6	98.2	99.0	99.1	99.1	99.4	99.4
Total	96.5	97.4	98.1	98.2	98.1	98.3	98.2	98.9	99.0	99.0	99.2	99.3

Source: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2002–2013.

Government has placed a great deal of effort and finances into ensuring that all learners have access to compulsory education to Grade 9, and this effort has been very successful as is evident from the primary enrolment figures just discussed. However, the Schools Act of 1996 also clearly states that all children have the right to a good quality education. This is an area that is severely lacking in South Africa, as is evident from the Annual National Assessment results and international assessment like TIMSS and PIRLS. These findings will be discussed later in the report. As important as it is that all learners are at school, it is probably more important that what they are learning at these schools is of good quality.

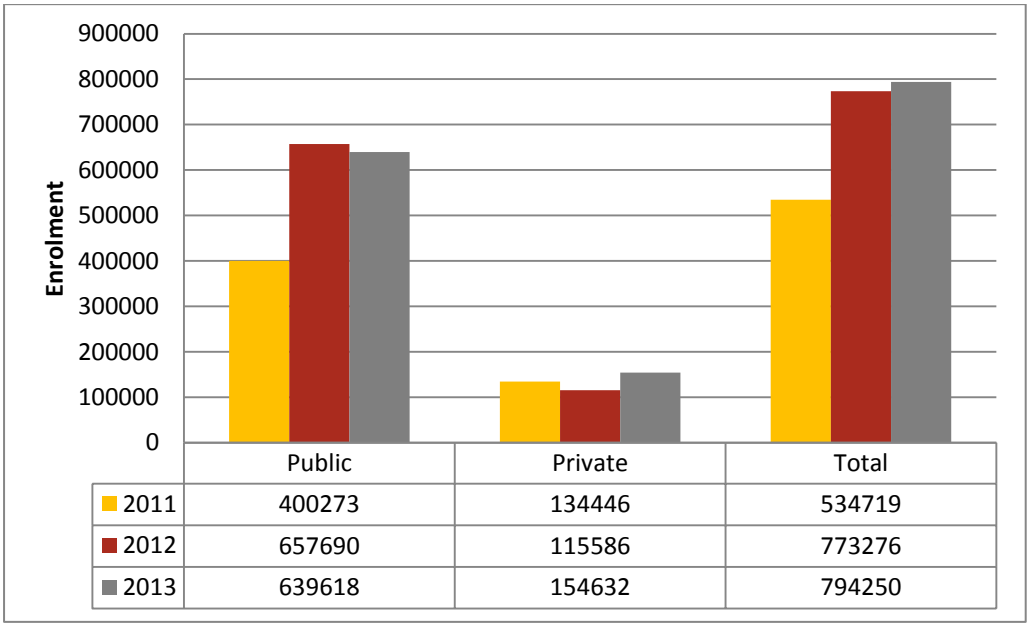
Technical and Vocational Education and Training

The challenge facing South Africa's 50 Technical Vocational Education and Training colleges (TVET) is daunting, given the determination of the DHET to expand the sector to meet urgent needs for a differentiated set of programme offerings across business, engineering and general studies, but which can include artisanal and other intermediate skills, occupational qualifications as well as shorter skills programmes that offer the opportunity for 'second chance' learners who left school before completing their studies to acquire a skill to raise their employability. In particular, there is a large and growing population of young people who are desperately in need of skills that can open the door to employment. The 2011 Population Census revealed that 523 000 people between the ages of 15 and 24 who were not in employment, education or training (NEET) had only a primary school education; and nearly 1.5 million of the same group had less than a Grade 10 – that is, they had at best a Grade 9 equivalent General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) (DHET, 2013). In addition, the TVET colleges must admit currently employed workers who want to study part time and acquire a particular skill or set of knowledge that is relevant and applicable to their work function.

Since the participation rate in higher education as measured in gross enrolment amounts to about 25% of the corresponding population eligible for enrolment in a post-school institution, there is a large population of potential users. In terms of education system expansion in the post-school sector, the TVET colleges are high on the priority list. The college system is seen as a central contributor to supporting the graduation of young people with the capabilities and employability characteristics that will find them employment and contribute to reducing the NEET problem. However, this is not plain sailing. In the public perception, TVET colleges are not highly valued. Recently a turnaround programme – not the first such campaign – was launched according to which DHET's highest priority was to strengthen and expand the TVET colleges and transform them into institutions of choice for school leavers through 'improving their management and governance, developing the quality of teaching and learning, increasing their responsiveness to local labour markets, improving student support services, and developing their infrastructure' (DHET, 2013).

Figure 18 shows that total headcounts for public TVET institutions had just exceeded 400 000 by 2011, which was an increase of more than 50 000 over the 2010 number of 350 000, and this in turn was followed by a very substantial increase to 657 690 in 2012. Despite a slight decline between 2012 and 2013, public sector enrolment rose by 58% across the three-year period. In the meantime, private sector TVET grew by a modest 15% to 154 632 in 2013. Given that enrolment in public sector TVET seems erratic, and private sector enrolment is small, on balance it is unlikely that enrolment would reach DHET's one million enrolment target by 2015, though the target of 2.5 million by 2030 seems feasible from the current state of growth.

Figure 18: **Number of students enrolled in public and private FET/TVET colleges, 2011 to 2013**



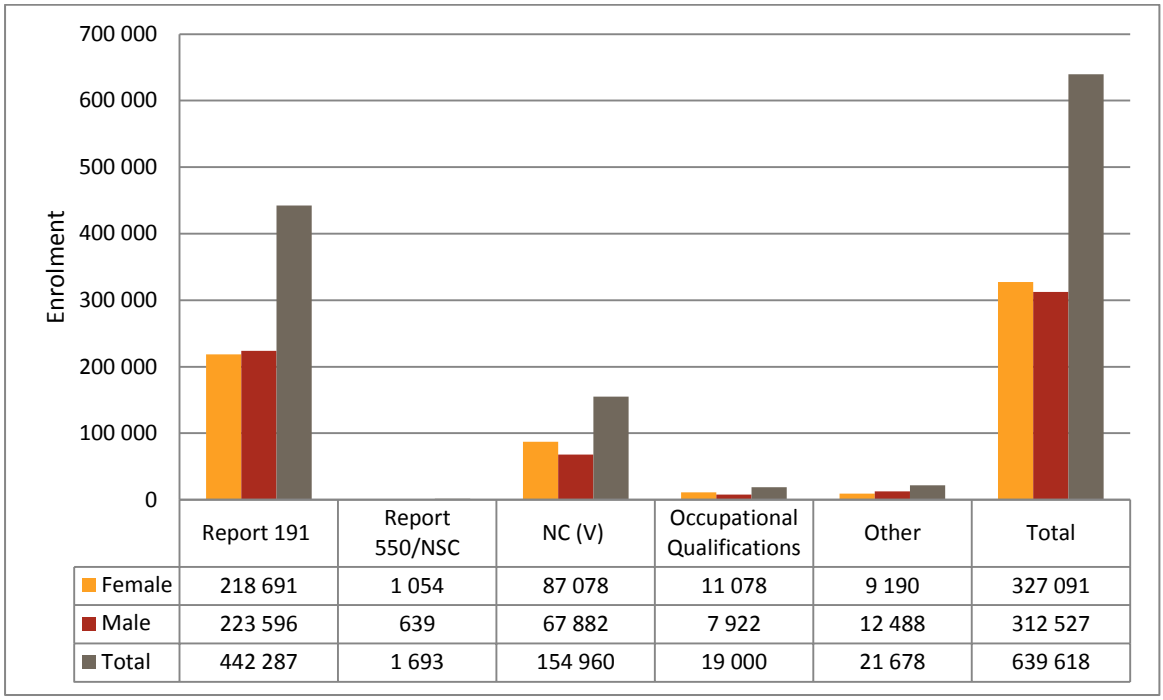
	Public	Private	Total
2011	400273	134446	534719
2012	657690	115586	773276
2013	639618	154632	794250

Sources: 2013 Annual Survey of Public FET/TVET Colleges 07 August 2014; 2013 Annual Survey of Private FET/TVET Colleges 26 July 2014; Department of Higher Education and Training.
Note 1: Number of students refers to headcount enrolment.

Based on the 2013 year for which most recent data is available, it is possible to obtain a perspective of the proportions of students enrolled in public FET/TVET colleges, by qualification category and gender (Figure 19 below). Vocational and occupational programmes are offered to students seeking job entry or occupational upgrading. There is a renewed focus on more occupational qualifications in artisanal and professional skills, instead of short courses.

Starting with the distribution of enrolment between qualifications, the most notable feature is that 69.1% of all enrolments are for Report 191 programmes. These programmes consist of 18 months theoretical studies at colleges and 18 months relevant practical application in work places. Engineering studies range from N1–N6 while Business and Utility Studies range from N4–N6. This is the traditional apprentice career path to becoming an artisan. After completion of the programme, the graduate who has obtained an N6 can take up a position as an apprentice or learner technician to gain necessary industrial experience to then take a trade test in his/her chosen trade.

Figure 19: **Number of students enrolled in public FET/TVET colleges, by qualification category and gender, in 2013**



	Report 191	Report 550/NSC	NC (V)	Occupational Qualifications	Other	Total
Female	218 691	1 054	87 078	11 078	9 190	327 091
Male	223 596	639	67 882	7 922	12 488	312 527
Total	442 287	1 693	154 960	19 000	21 678	639 618

Source: 2013 Annual Survey of Public FET/TVET Colleges, 07 August 2014; Department of Higher Education and Training.[3]

Nearly one quarter (24.2%) of enrolments is for the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) programme. For this qualification the student must study seven subjects including three fundamental subjects (Mathematics, English and Life Orientation) and four vocational subjects (of which one is optional). For example, NCV vocational subjects include: Finance; Administration; Marketing; Management; Tourism; Hospitality; Engineering Information Technology and Computer Science. There is a theory and practical component in each vocational field of study; the latter is intended to offer students the opportunity to experience the work environment. The entry level is designed to take school-leavers who have completed the final year of compulsory schooling with a report for Grade 9, but have not obtained a National Senior Certificate after Grade 12. However, the NCV is a general vocational programme providing a platform for further work experience and/or further learning.

Lastly, a smaller set of 'occupational programmes' constituted 3% of enrolment in 2013. Occupational qualifications are aimed to qualify a person to practise an occupation. The curriculum includes theory and knowledge, acquisition of practical skills and work experience. The qualification

[3] Note 1: Report 191 refers to the NATED programmes, N1 to N6. It is a part-qualification. Note 2: NSC refers to the old National Senior Certificate (which is equivalent to Grade 12). Note 3: NC(V) refers to the National Certificate (Vocational) Levels 2–4. Note 4: 'Occupational Qualifications' refer to qualifications associated with a trade, occupation or profession resulting from work-based learning, and consisting of knowledge unit standards, practical unit standards and work experience unit standards. Note 5: 'Other' in FET/TVET Colleges refers to all other skills development and short courses.

must be fit-for-purpose and if so will: (a) reflect industry requirements; (b) recognise occupational competence; and (c) increase employability and/or better career advancement. Examples include hoist or lift operator, cabinet maker, baker, or cable jointer. Occupational qualifications may stand alone or complement other qualifications.

Of the 639 618 students enrolled across all curriculum options offered in the TVET colleges, female enrolment (51.1%) shades male enrolment by just over 1%, which suggests that access to TVET colleges on the basis of gender is relatively even.

In terms of gender, there appears to be a difference between males and females in their preference for enrolling in certain programmes rather than others. For Report 191 courses, 67% of females register, while larger proportions of males register at 72%. More females (32%) register for the NCV than do males (27%), perhaps because males elect to take up programmes which generate immediate employability.

Higher education

The majority of youth who qualify for post-school education would prefer to pursue university education rather than other options such as TVET. Consequently, this caused the total higher education enrolment in public and private universities to grow to 983 698 in 2013. The HE sector is taking much more enrolments strain than it should and this leaves the FET/TVET sector with much fewer students than there should be.

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has stressed the strategic importance of a long-term vision for expanding tertiary education to complement the government's social and economic development agenda. In 2013, in its Post-school White Paper, DHET set out its ambition for 2030: to attain total enrolment of 1.6 million students and, as importantly, to improve participation measured by the gross higher education enrolment rate from the rate current in 2012/13 of 17.3% to 25% by 2030 (DHET, 2013). The rate of progress achieved recently can shed some light on the achievability of the latter aim. In the immediate term, DHET had set itself the aim of accommodating at least 20% of learners who successfully completed Grade 12 by 2014. The number of students enrolled in public and private higher education rose from 868 178 to 1 050 851 between 2008 and 2012, increasing annually at 4.2%, which was large enough to drive up the gross enrolment rate (DHET, 2014).

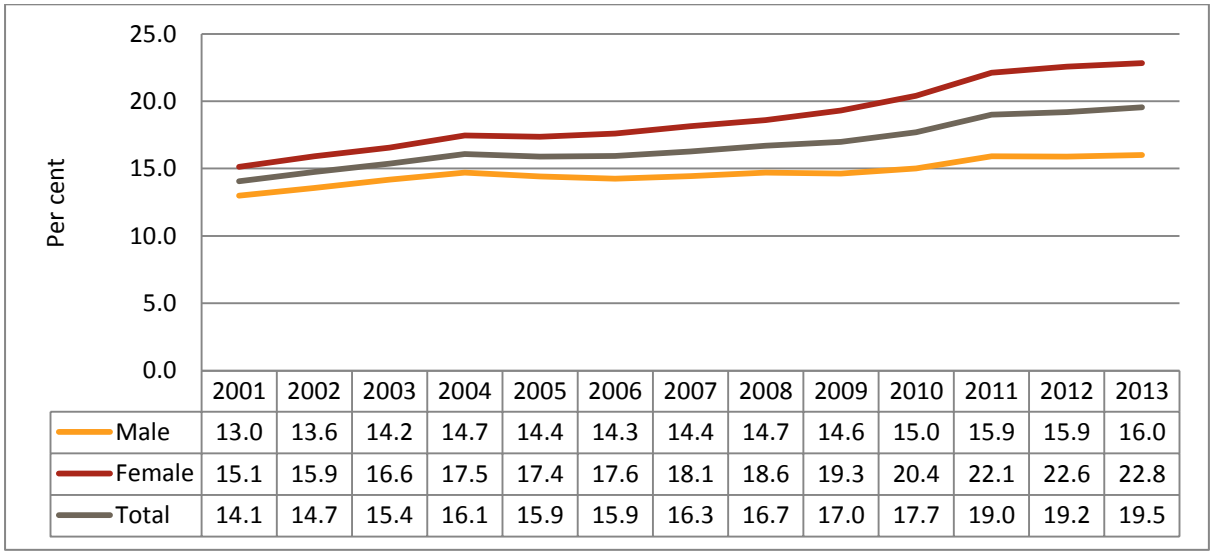
Recent data reveals that South Africa is set to meet the national target for gross HE enrolment rate (GER) of 20% by 2015. The national average shows a consistent increase of approximately 5.4 percentage points from 2001 to 2013 (Figure 20).

When comparing males and females, a slightly different scenario is observed. Over the ten-year period 2001 to 2011, females made more gains than males as they improved their participation rate by nearly eight percentage points from 15.1% to 22.8% when compared to the three percentage points gain observed by males.

Between 2001 and 2013, the GER rose from 14.1% to 19.5%, an increase of 5.4 percentage points over the period, or an annual increment of 0.46%. Assuming this unchanged rate of increase, the

objective of 25% will be reached in about 10.9 years or in 2024, much earlier than the target year, 2030.

Figure 20: **Gross enrolment rate in higher education by gender (%), 2001 to 2013**

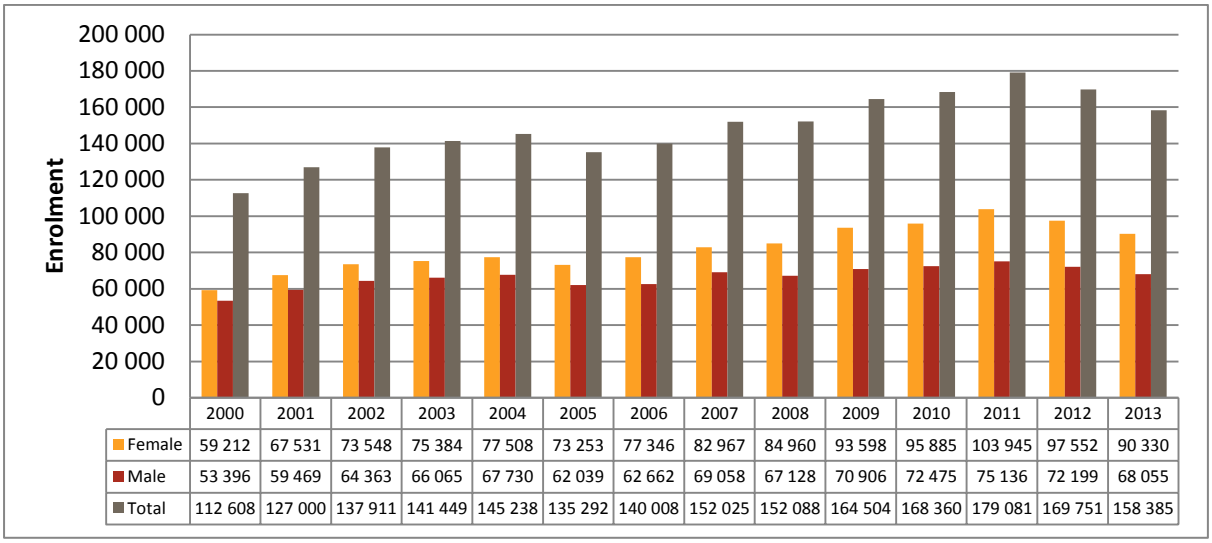


	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	13.0	13.6	14.2	14.7	14.4	14.3	14.4	14.7	14.6	15.0	15.9	15.9	16.0
Female	15.1	15.9	16.6	17.5	17.4	17.6	18.1	18.6	19.3	20.4	22.1	22.6	22.8
Total	14.1	14.7	15.4	16.1	15.9	15.9	16.3	16.7	17.0	17.7	19.0	19.2	19.5

Source: General Household Survey, Statistics South Africa (2012); Department of Higher Education, Higher Education Management Information System.

Nevertheless, South Africa's gross enrolment rate in higher education is lower than might be desired in comparison with international trends for similar middle income countries. For this reason, it is important to consider the rate at which new entrants into higher education is increasing. Looking at the numbers of first-time entrants into the higher education system, enrolment rose from 112 782 in 2000 to 158 385 in 2013, which constituted a 40.4% increase overall at 3.1% per year. However, the rate of increase over the period fluctuated with a pronounced downturn from 2011 to 2013 of over 20 000 entrants or 12% off the 2011 high.

Figure 21: **Enrolment of first time entrants into higher education, 2000 to 2013**



	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Female	59 212	67 531	73 548	75 384	77 508	73 253	77 346	82 967	84 960	93 598	95 885	103 945	97 552	90 330
Male	53 396	59 469	64 363	66 065	67 730	62 039	62 662	69 058	67 128	70 906	72 475	75 136	72 199	68 055
Total	112 608	127 000	137 911	141 449	145 238	135 292	140 008	152 025	152 088	164 504	168 360	179 081	169 751	158 385

Source: Higher Education and Management Information System, Department of Higher Education and Training.

In terms of gender, females consistently enjoyed an advantage in enrolment over males across the period (Figure 21). Moreover, the proportion of females enrolling increased from 53% in 2000 to 58% in 2011 and dropped off slightly to 57% in 2013.

While the increase in enrolments is very positive, two mitigating factors must be taken into account. Firstly, that enrolment is heavily dependent on student access to finances, so to sustain increases in enrolments, especially of young people from low-income households, financial aid through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme will also have to increase. Secondly, not all candidates complete their degrees, and voluntarily or involuntarily leave the university. As a consequence, only a proportion of all persons who enrol will complete their degree programmes, thereby undermining potential growth in degree completions. Could the fact that students drop out prematurely be related to the quality of the Grade 12 results they obtained? Does school provide learners with sufficient knowledge to endure the rigor and standard expected by higher education institutions?

Adult Education and Training

The post-1994 education and training dispensation advocated lifelong learning, according to which learning takes place throughout a person's life. Access to Adult Education and Training (AET) was promoted by the Department of Education through AET centres accommodated in public school buildings or community centres throughout the country. The system of AET centres, which was transferred to DHET after the latter was formed in 2009, represents the core of state-funded institutions offering general adult education, presently augmented by the Department of Basic Education's *Kha Ri Gude* mass adult literacy initiative.

The Post-school White Paper of 2013 announced government's intention to expand vocational and skills development programmes and non-formal programmes by creating community colleges which will be multi-campus institutions formed by clustering existing PALCs (DHET, 2013). Programmes will include the current General Education and Training Certificate (GETC), Senior Certificate

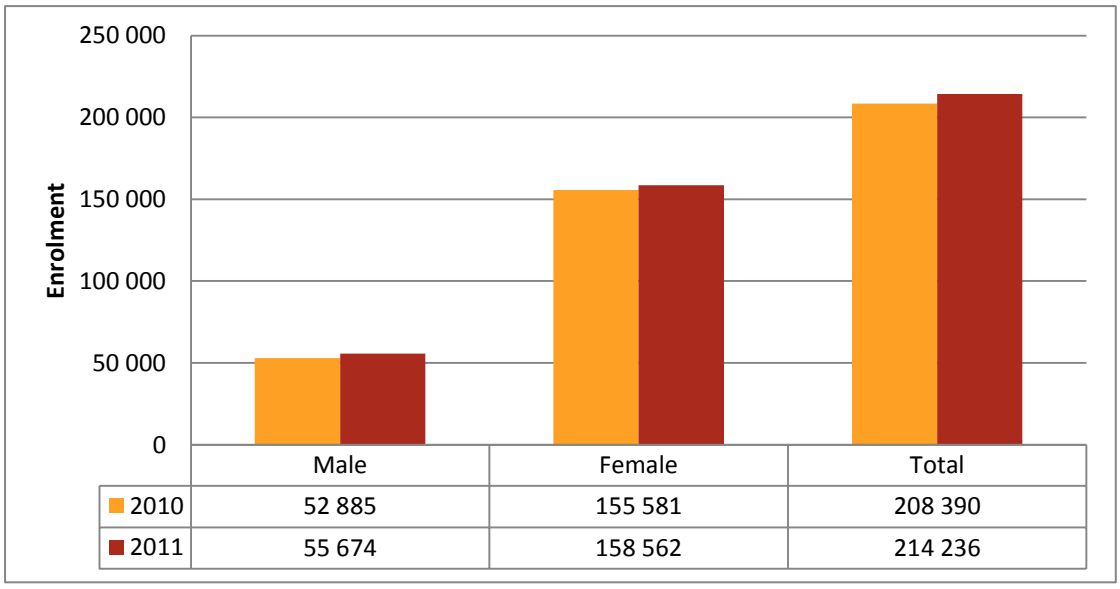
programmes, the proposed new National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA) and occupational programmes. They will primarily target youth and adults who, for various reasons, did not complete their schooling or who never attended school.

In the face of huge numbers of potential students – the NEETs – referred to earlier in this report, DHET aims to quadruple enrolments in adult education, from the 265 000 PALC enrolment in 2012/13 to an approximate one million student headcount by 2030 (DHET, 2013: 21, 23).

The 2012 DHET Annual Performance Plan stipulated that a target of 300 000 individuals must be enrolled in an AET institution by 2014/15 (DHET, 2012). By 2012, enrolment at PALCs in AET levels 1–4, Grades 10–12 and other skills development programmes reached 306 378, which increases to 315 068 if the 8 690 private AET enrolments are included. Of this number, 228 212 or 74.4% of total enrolment represented the AET levels 1–4 in 2012 (DHET, 2014).

Through increasing the numbers of students involved in AET levels 1–4, the PALC system is making inroads in meeting the needs of educationally disadvantaged adults. Between 2010 and 2011, a 2.8% increase in numbers was recorded (Figure 22). A prominent feature of enrolment in the centres is majority attendance of women who made up 74% of registered learners in both 2010 and 2011. Advocacy campaigns should be focussed towards males to encourage them to register in AET institutions.

Figure 22: **Headcount of enrolment in Adult Education and Training (AET) Level 1 to Level 4 by gender, 2010 and 2011**



	Male	Female	Total
2010	52 885	155 581	208 390
2011	55 674	158 562	214 236

Source: Adult Education (RSA 1995) and Training Annual Survey. Final, 2011. Department of Higher Education and Training.

4.2 EFFICIENCY INDICATORS

The internal efficiency of the education system refers to the way in which learners enter and then progress through the system. Inefficiencies are therefore caused by sub-optimal school entry patterns, grade repetition practices or drop-out patterns. An education system is considered to be

efficient if maximum output is obtained from a given input, or if a given output is obtained with minimum possible input.

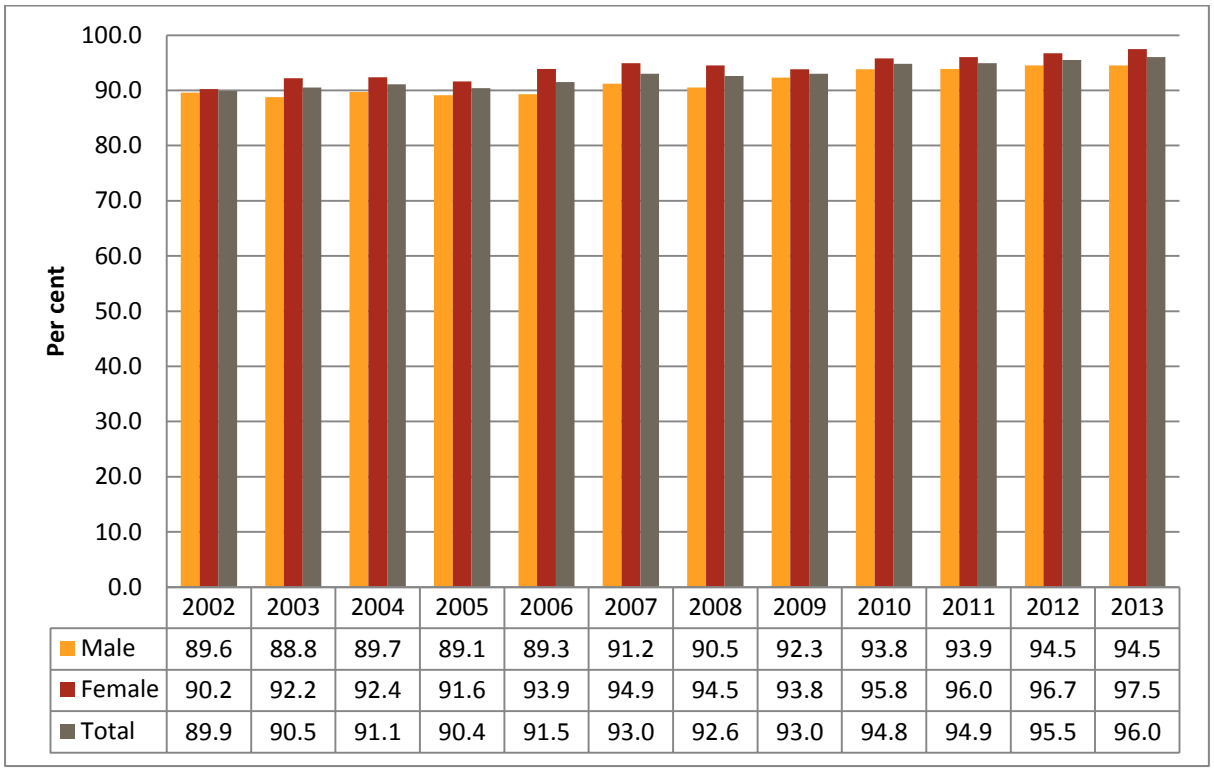
Primary school completion rate

The primary school completion rate refers to the proportion of individuals 18 years of age who have completed the final grade of primary education.

The completion rate for South African primary schooling, as a proxy indicator for efficiency in the education system, reveals steady improvement culminating in a 96% completion rate by 2013, having improved by 6 percentage points from the 90% level in 2002 (Figure 23). Over the 12 years represented in Figure 23, females consistently performed better than males. Females reached the 95% completion rate in 2007, whereas males are expected to reach this level only by 2014.

While both male and female primary completion rates have shown a gradual increase over the period under review, the primary completion rate of females has been consistently higher than the male completion rate year-on-year.

Figure 23: **Primary school completion rate by gender (%), 2002 to 2013**



	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	89.6	88.8	89.7	89.1	89.3	91.2	90.5	92.3	93.8	93.9	94.5	94.5
Female	90.2	92.2	92.4	91.6	93.9	94.9	94.5	93.8	95.8	96.0	96.7	97.5
Total	89.9	90.5	91.1	90.4	91.5	93.0	92.6	93.0	94.8	94.9	95.5	96.0

Source: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2002–2013.

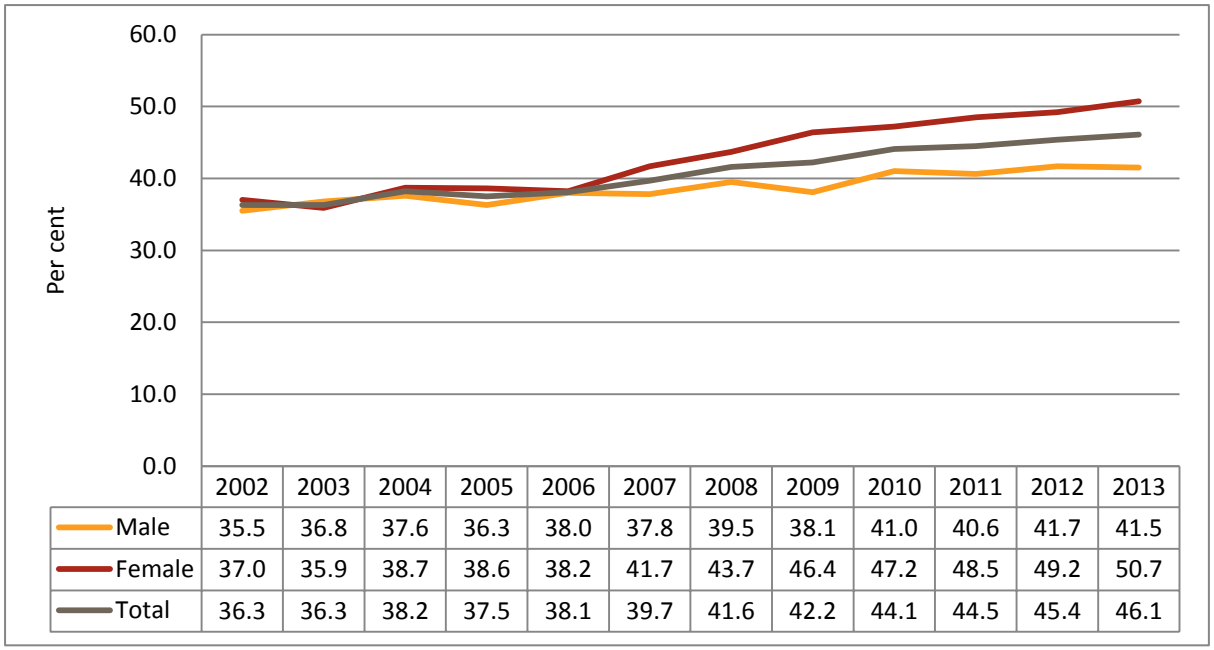
Secondary school completion rate

The secondary school completion rate refers to the proportion of individuals aged 18 years of age who have competed Grade 12.

In spite of the good progress made in the primary education sector, secondary schooling completion rates remain problematic. By 2013, the secondary school completion rate was 46% – less than half of that of the primary school sector (Figure 24). The aggregate completion rate improved by 10 percentage points during the period from 36.3% in 2002 to 46.1% in 2013. Further improvement of completion rates requires concomitant amelioration of current sources of inefficiencies in secondary schools; particularly the high numbers of repeaters, migration of learners out of schools into the TVET and AET sectors of the post-school system, and drop-outs.

Examining the completion rate by gender reveals that the difference between female and male groups was small at the beginning of the period from 2002 to 2004. After 2007, the gap widened considerably to the point where the completion rate of females was higher than that of males by 7 percentage points in 2012 and 9 percentage points in 2013.

Figure 24: **Secondary school completion rate by gender (%), 2002– 2013**



	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	35.5	36.8	37.6	36.3	38.0	37.8	39.5	38.1	41.0	40.6	41.7	41.5
Female	37.0	35.9	38.7	38.6	38.2	41.7	43.7	46.4	47.2	48.5	49.2	50.7
Total	36.3	36.3	38.2	37.5	38.1	39.7	41.6	42.2	44.1	44.5	45.4	46.1

Source: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2002–2013.

Recent comparative analysis suggests that there are major differences in completion rates between social groups within countries. This raises concerns about the unequal impact of low completion rates on South Africa's existing socio-economic divisions (World Bank and International Monetary Fund, 2014). In South Africa, the secondary completion rate for coloureds and black Africans were below 50% and for Indians/Asians and whites above 80% (Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2002–2013).

Findings from the analysis of data from the Cape Area Panel Study (CAPS) reveal that, on average, coloured and black African learners do not finish high school nor advance to college degrees, while whites progress to university. In this regard, South African youth mirrors the old racial hierarchy of the apartheid era.

In terms of legislation regulating school education, the SASA stipulates the state's minimum requirements for the compulsory school phases, i.e. it is compulsory for learners to attend school from the age of 7 until the age of 15 or the ninth grade, whichever comes first. The highest repeater and dropout rates are within the post-compulsory school phase. Due to economic and other reasons, learners voluntarily or reluctantly delay their education in the school system. The DBE does not have the power to compel post-compulsory age learners to continue schooling full time.

The General Household Survey data (2009–2013) show that 'no money for fees' was the main reason for children aged 7–18 not attending educational institutions. A relatively high proportion of 7–18-year-olds indicated that they are not attending an educational institution because they find education 'useless or not interesting', which suggests the need to explore more deeply what needs to be done to make education more relevant and more inspiring. This needs further investigation to explore ways and means to address these negative views. This could include finding ways to create alternative streams of education.

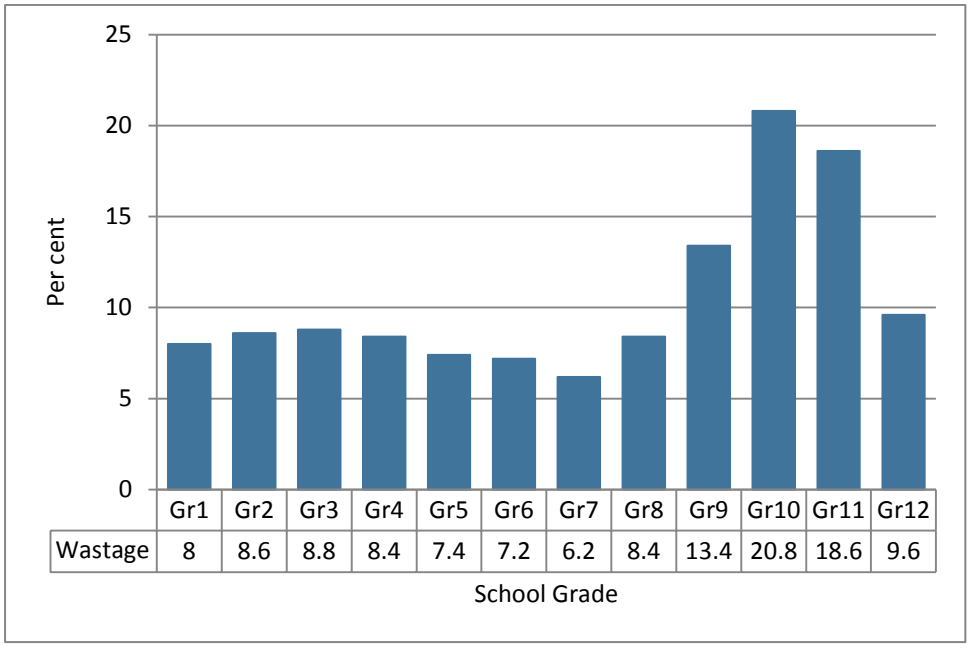
Repetition rates

Percentage of repeaters in primary education

School systems are vulnerable to attack from multiple sources over wastage that includes inefficiencies in the achievement of objectives (e.g. use of teacher time, materials and education facilities) but which also include failure to retain learners in the system and failure to frame appropriate objectives (Brimer & Pauli, 1971). One conspicuous form of education wastage is grade repetition in primary and secondary schools. Repetition rates are considered a good indicator of the effectiveness of an educational system. When rates are high, a large number of learners have not reached the expected levels of learning achievement. In turn, there is strong international and local research evidence which shows that grade repetition damages student's self-esteem, increases behavioural problems, aggravates negative attitudes towards school, and is associated with higher risk of learner drop-out when they become old enough to do so (Brophy, 2006). These conditions prevail if there is no effective and planned education intervention.

A visual scan of Figure 25 suggests that over the period 2009 to 2013, repetition was worse in the junior rather than the senior grades. The average repetition rate per grade between 2009 and 2013 confirms that repetition diminishes with progress up the primary school grades from Grade 3 onwards.

Figure 25*:* Average % of learners repeating per grade from Grade 1 to Grade 12, 2009 to 2013[4]

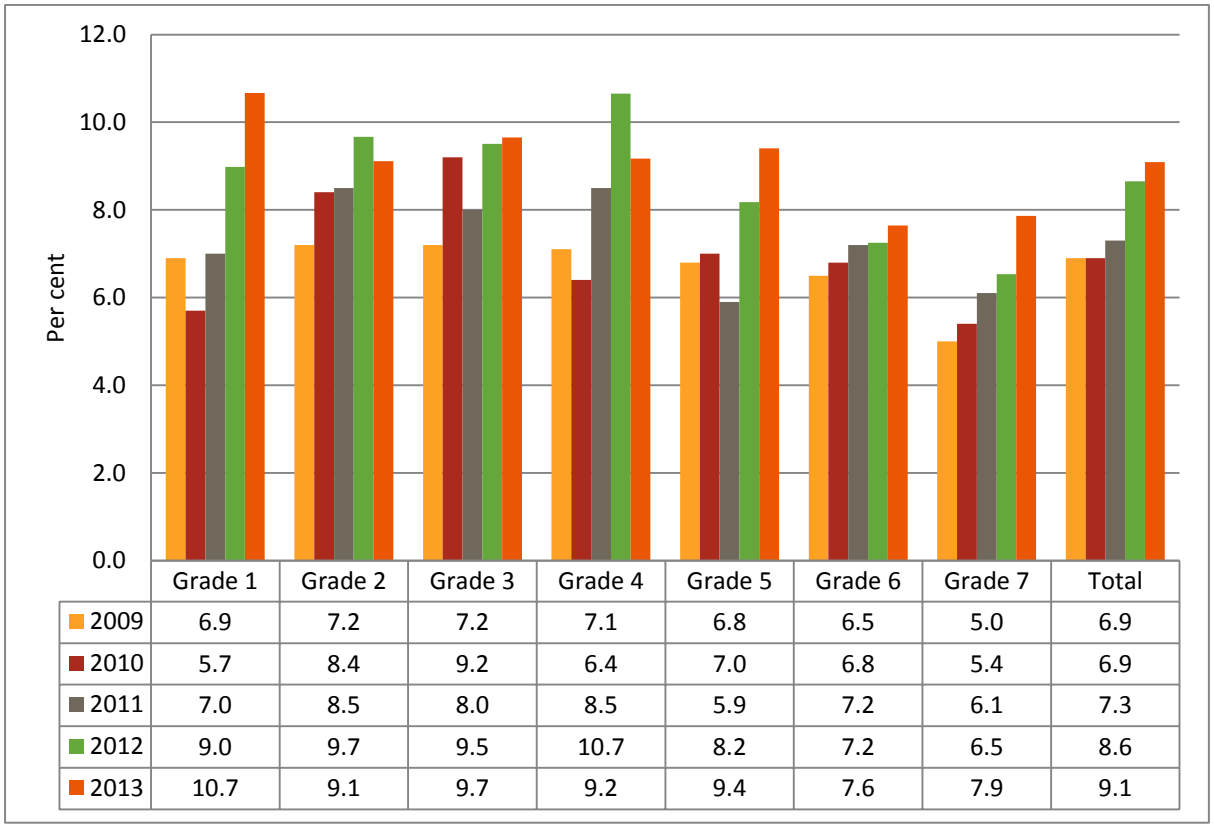


Source: Department of Basic Education, Annual School Survey, 2009–2013. Author's own calculations.

Between 2009 and 2013, repetition increased across Grades 1 to 7, which is a disappointing decline in performance (Figure 26). Further, we can observe that annual changes in the repetition rate in the lower grades up to Grade 5 are much more uneven than the steady change apparent in Grade 6 and Grade 7. This step-like pattern of even annual change is also quite marked in Grades 9, 10 and 11 in secondary education (Figure 27).

[4] Author's calculations. Average repetition rate per grade was calculated as follows: Sum of repetition recorded for each year from 2009 to 2013 (expressed in percentage per year) divided by the number of years (5).

Figure 26: Repeaters in primary education (%), 2009 to 2013



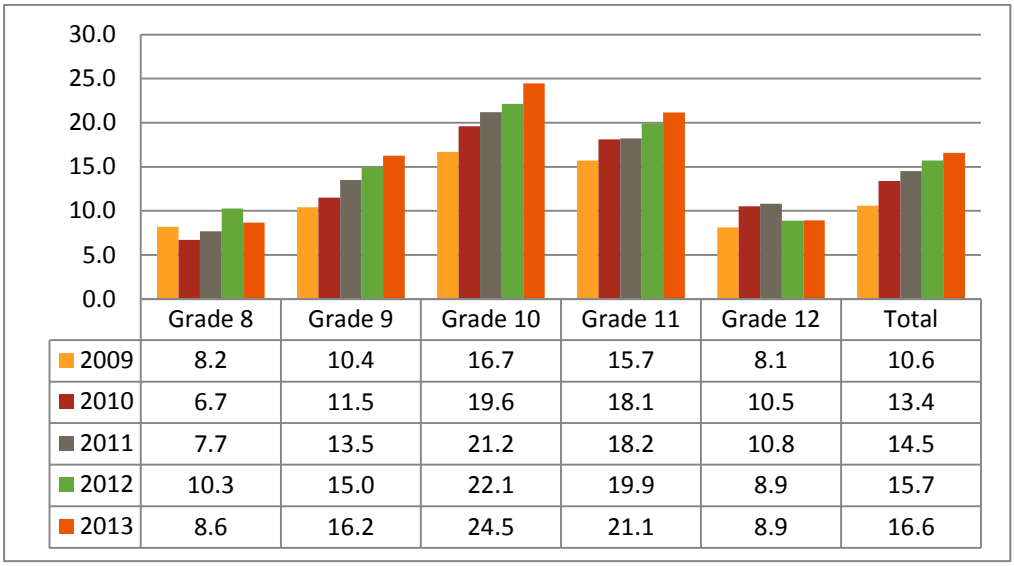
	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
2009	6.9	7.2	7.2	7.1	6.8	6.5	5.0	6.9
2010	5.7	8.4	9.2	6.4	7.0	6.8	5.4	6.9
2011	7.0	8.5	8.0	8.5	5.9	7.2	6.1	7.3
2012	9.0	9.7	9.5	10.7	8.2	7.2	6.5	8.6
2013	10.7	9.1	9.7	9.2	9.4	7.6	7.9	9.1

Source: Department of Basic Education, Annual School Survey, 2009–2013.

Percentage of repeaters in secondary education

The average repetition rate in secondary schools increased from 10.6% in 2009 to 16.6% in 2013, or by six percentage points – which was three times faster than the primary school rate (Figure 27). In the secondary phase, grade repetition increased sharply from Grade 8 up to a peak in Grade 10 and then declined slightly in Grade 11. Repetition in Grade 12 was lower than in Grade 9.

Figure 27: **Repeaters in secondary education (%), 2009 to 2013**



	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total
2009	8.2	10.4	16.7	15.7	8.1	10.6
2010	6.7	11.5	19.6	18.1	10.5	13.4
2011	7.7	13.5	21.2	18.2	10.8	14.5
2012	10.3	15.0	22.1	19.9	8.9	15.7
2013	8.6	16.2	24.5	21.1	8.9	16.6

Source: Department of Basic Education, Annual School Survey, 2009–2013.

The Grade 11 context will be discussed and then attention will be given to Grade 12.

For both males and females who were in Grade 11 in 2008, close to 40% had dropped out of the schooling system without completing Matric by 2010. What appears as a slight reduction in the repetition rate in Grade 11 is the consequence of large numbers of Grade 11 learners who drop out (Branson, Hofmeyr & Lam 2013: 5) or leave their schools because being forced to repeat is to have their path to the NSC blocked. These learners seek alternative registration in other institutions such as TVET colleges and Public Adult Learning centres from which they have the chance of taking the NSC. Students who have lost confidence in themselves or the system, or no longer have access to resources that can keep them at school, drop out at this stage. This group is disproportionally from disadvantaged, poor and rural contexts (OECD, 2015).

The main reason for such a low repeater rate in Grade 12 is that for each cohort of students, so many are kept back that those who arrive in Grade 12 without having repeated or already dropped out is a select sample of the original group that enrolled in Grade 10. Effectively this means that 'the chances of passing matric improve dramatically once an individual reaches Grade 12' (Branson, Hofmeyr & Lam 2013: 8).

The repetition in Grade 12 is also low because unsuccessful learners write supplementary examinations or leave the public secondary school system and enrol in finishing schools, TVET or AET institutions to continue their pursuit of an NSC pass. This strategy adopted in Grade 12 is basically the same as for dropouts from Grade 11.

The factors possibly contributing to this scenario are put forward in a DBE report on dropout and learner strategy. Firstly, it is suggested that teachers of higher grade classes struggle to support secondary learners who did not master the required basic skills at primary school. These learners are nevertheless allowed to progress from grade to grade (Spaull, 2012). Secondly, by the time these

low-achieving learners approach the secondary school Grades 10 and 11, they will no longer be condoned but instead will be compelled to repeat grades because schools want to avoid high Grade 12 failure rates.

The NSC is a public national examination and results are reported publicly, whereas examinations in earlier grades are internally managed and moderated with the school determining which learners are promoted. Consequently, schools are not placed under the same level of public scrutiny and can manipulate internal results without fear that inflated repetition rates will be exposed.

Crouch (2005) argues that the practice of keeping students longer in Grade 11 has over time shifted back onto lower grades, as increasing repetition has put pressure on Grade 11 facilities and class sizes. Figure 27 provides clear evidence how more students are being 'kept back' in earlier Grades 9 and 10. As yet, it does not seem that effective control measures have been instituted to curb gate-keeping by school principals.

At the core of the strategic discussion around repetition is the rationale for either permitting repetition in the rules or for limiting the number of times that a student may repeat. According to national policy 'Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements' it is stated that a pupil may 'only be retained once in the [Grade 10, 11 and 12] phase in order to prevent the learner being retained in this phase for longer than four years' (Western Cape Education Department, 2012). Decisions about repetition must take into account the financial or cost implications for the education system of the strategy adopted, the impact on the learner's ability to achieve higher learning goals, the impact on conditions in the affected schools, and the opportunity costs that apply to each learner's time through staying in school. However, it is argued that the problem of students who reach higher grades without possessing the expected levels of knowledge will in the end not be addressed through allowing more repetition, but instead by improving the quality of teaching from the early Grade R and primary school years.

4.3 INDICATORS OF QUALITY

Teacher qualifications

In its 2005 publication on meeting teacher shortages for achieving education for all, the Department of Education observes that: 'The way that learners experience curriculum in classrooms defines their education, and hence the quality and achievements of the system' (DoE, 2005). It is assumed that the teacher plays a vital role in stimulating learner achievement: through using accumulated subject and professional *knowledge resources* and through *communicating* that knowledge in a way that is relevant and meaningful to learners. Reviews of research using qualifications as a proxy for teacher characteristics such as teacher knowledge and classroom practices suggest there is a significant positive relationship between qualifications and learner achievements (Darling-Hammond, 2000). The historical development of teacher training in South Africa is characterised by multiple types of qualifications. Nevertheless, qualifications are broadly taken as a proxy for teacher quality.

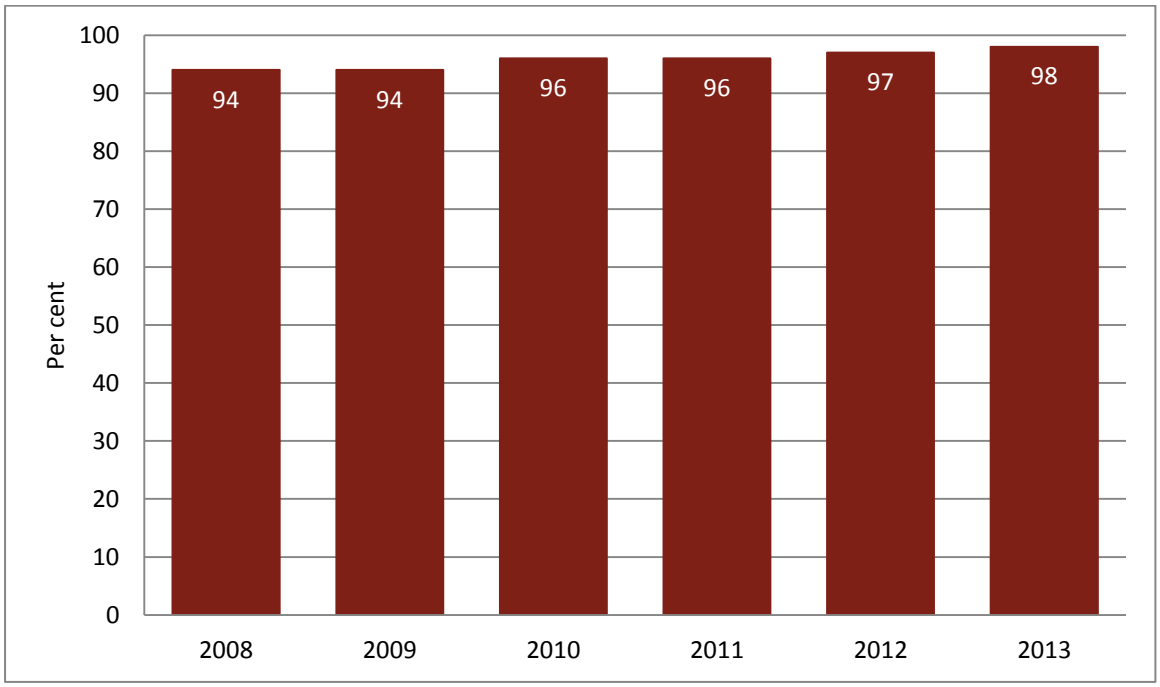
According to the Minimum Requirements of Teacher Education Qualifications Policy (MRTEQP) of 2007, becoming a teacher is achieved by: completing a four-year Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree; or completing an appropriate first degree, followed by a one-year Advanced Diploma in Education;

and registering with the South African Council for Educators. Before 2009, the Postgraduate Certificate in Education was the standard for qualifying as a teacher and this may become a requirement in the near future.

Figure 28 shows that by 2013, 98% of teachers employed nationally were qualified to teach. This assumes that they have met the criteria as stipulated in the MRTEQP. However, this does not refer to teaching quality or a teacher's content knowledge or classroom practice or whether teachers teach appropriate subjects (teaches what s/he is qualified to teach) or teaches out-of-field (teaches another subject outside her/his qualification). Nevertheless, the debate regarding the quantitative shortage of qualified and competent teachers has been discussed extensively (DBE, 2005A); but equally acknowledged is the fact that the country has no shortage of qualified teachers and the remaining few who are under-qualified are upgrading to meet the required criteria.

There has been a gradual four percentage point increase in the percentage of teachers who improved their qualifications from 2008 and 2013. By 2013, only 2% of educators were unqualified or under-qualified.

Figure 28: **Qualified teachers employed in South Africa (%), 2008 to 2013**



Source: Department of Basic Education, Personnel and Salary Information System, 2008–2012.

Having high proportions of qualified teachers at the disposal of the system is important. Notwithstanding this healthy situation, the issue of teacher quality cannot be ignored as ongoing training and development is an essential element of retaining teacher interest in their occupational role and thereby sustaining the quality of their work. There are warning signs that the quality of some South African teacher performance leaves much to be desired.

The National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) conducted research into teaching practices in Grades 1, 2 and 3 classes and found evidence of poor quality teaching to the effect that many teachers do not know how to inculcate problem-solving and analytical skills. Teachers who do not know and understand how to evaluate, analyse or solve problems when reading could not teach children these skills (NEEDU, 2011).

Learner-to-educator ratio

In 1995, the Education Labour Relations Council agreed on a learner–educator ratio guideline of 40:1 and 35:1 for government primary and secondary schools, respectively. Later, post-provisioning norms were implemented in 2000 to apply an equitable policy to the distribution of government-funded educator posts in public schools and technical colleges. Regulations provided for provincial MECs and Heads of Department to distribute posts among schools in accordance with the post-provisioning norm (PPN) to determine the school's relative need for posts, in relation to that of other schools, and within the funds made available.
The current norms overrode the 1995 collective agreement. Furthermore, the post-provisioning norms as a policy currently implemented do not specify timeframes to achieve a 30:1 learner–educator ratio. Nevertheless, the DBE's commitment toward reducing class size has contributed towards achieving a national average of 30:1.[5]

The learner-to-educator ratio (LER) provides a proxy measure of the likely intensity of interaction between learners and educators. The basic unit of analysis of the LER is per class, although the LER can be averaged per grade level, per school, per unit of education administration or per country. The LER is presented as an average number of learners per educator at a given point in time and is commonly used in planning the level of teacher human resource input.

Since the primary medium of educational interaction is communication and contact between teachers and learners, it is held that low teacher–learner ratios hold out higher potential for learning benefits. Though the LER does contribute to education quality, it should be noted that the LER is not linearly related to learner performance. It is assumed that as a rule the lower the learner-to-educator ratio, the better the learning and teaching opportunities.

In this South African calculation, the ratio does not necessarily express the average number of learners per teacher. This is because principals and other teaching support staff in schools are included in the ratio. The DBE defines educators as 'any person who teaches, educates or trains

[5] Parliament of South Africa FOR WRITTEN REPLY; QUESTION 1813; DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 27/07/2012; (INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 19/2012) The Leader of the Opposition (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: (1) Whether her department has undertaken a campaign to achieve a 30:1 learner–educator ratio in schools; if not, why not; if so, (a) how many schools have achieved this target and (b) how many schools in each province must still achieve this target; (2) what is the projected time frame for achieving a 30:1 learner–educator ratio in schools? NW2205E Accessed at: http://politicsweb.co.za/politicsweb/view/politicsweb/en/page71654?oid=325969&sn=Detail&pid=71654 Date accessed: 21 March 2015

other persons at an education institution or assists in rendering education services, or who renders education auxiliary or support services provided by or in an education department' (RSA, 1996).

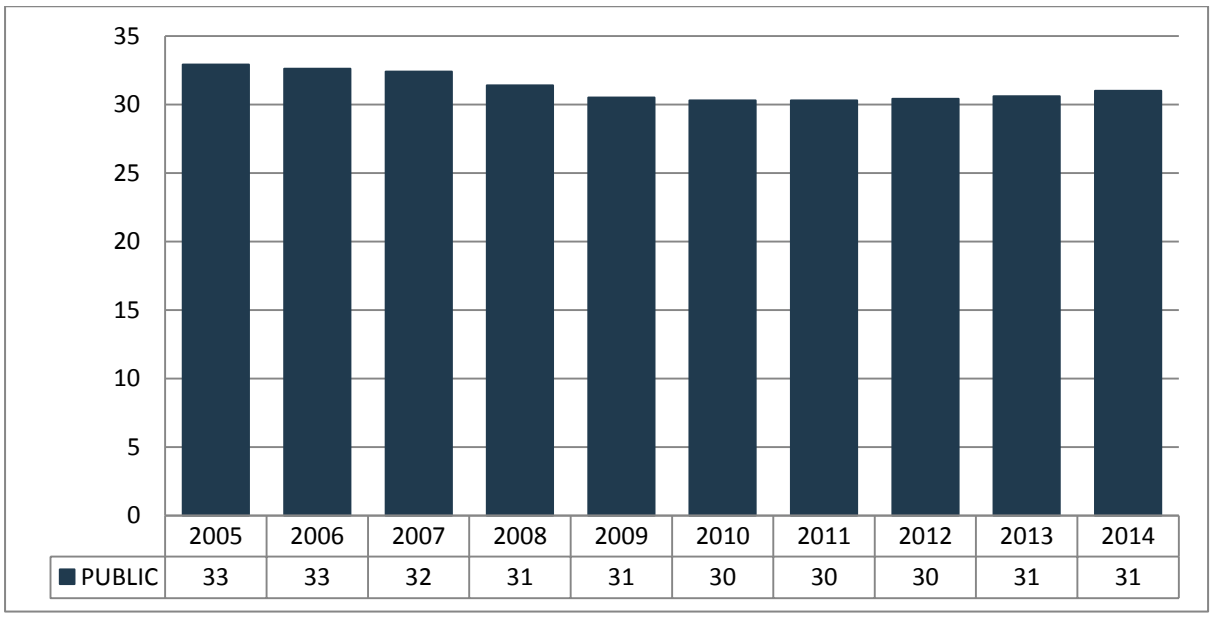
The average learner–educator ratio has changed over the post-1994 period but has not been subject to wide fluctuations. The ratio was at 32:1 between 1996 and 2000. Confining learner-to-educator ratios within a particular range has been an objective of the DBE. In 2009, funding was secured to guarantee additional posts for over-subscribed schools through each of the provincial education departments.

South Africa saw the average LER in public schools decline from 33:1 in 2005 to 31:1 in 2014 (Figure 29). This ratio tends to be slightly higher for primary schools than secondary schools. As might be expected, there can be quite wide variation in the ratio depending on location of the school (urban–rural) or the socio-economic class of the locality. Schools that are attended by children from high-income households can use higher school fees to pay for more teachers. In areas of high population density, many schools still have large classes, while in small rural schools, such as farm schools, the classes are combined for multi-grade teaching.

The average Mathematics class size according to the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 1999, 2002 and 2011 reports was 50 in 1999, 45 in 2002 and 47 in 2011. In 2002 and 2011 more than 50% of Mathematics and Science learners were in classes with learner numbers greater than 41. The TIMSS reports also show that classes with the lowest percentage of students had the highest Mathematics and Science achievement scores.

Aggregate data mask great variations at lower levels, and policy and strategy formulation should be based on data with greater granularity. Figure 29 reflects the change in the LER in public ordinary schools between 2005 and 2014.

Figure 29: **National learner-to-educator ratio, 2005 to 2014**



Source: Department of Basic Education, Annual School Survey & SNAP Survey, 2005–2014.

Provincial learner-to-educator ratio

Table 2 below provides a description of the provincial distribution of learner–educator ratios. It is likely that relatively wide differences between districts in provinces will be found. Nevertheless, at the provincial level we see a gradual improvement in the overall national ratio. The Gauteng and Western Cape provinces, which have high proportions of their population urbanised and where economic activity is concentrated – especially the former – managed to maintain their ratios between 2005 and 2014. In comparison, rural provinces like the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and Mpumalanga experienced declining educator–learner ratios. These changes may have been due to several possible factors including improved supply of teachers in the rural provinces and a possibility that the metropolitan areas – including Durban in KwaZulu-Natal – receive greater in-migration of people from other areas.

Table 2: **Learner-to-educator ratio by province, 2005 to 2014**

Province	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Eastern Cape	33	33	33	32	30	30	29	29	30	31
Free State	30	30	29	29	28	28	28	27	27	28
Gauteng	32	34	33	32	32	31	31	31	32	32
KwaZulu-Natal	34	33	33	33	32	31	31	31	31	31
Limpopo	34	33	34	31	29	30	30	30	30	30
Mpumalanga	34	35	33	32	30	31	31	31	31	31
North West	32	30	31	30	30	31	31	32	32	32
Northern Cape	31	30	30	30	30	30	30	31	31	31
Western Cape	32	32	31	30	30	30	30	31	31	32
South Africa	33	33	32	31	31	30	30	30	31	31

Source: Department of Basic Education, Annual School Survey & SNAP Survey, 2005–2014.

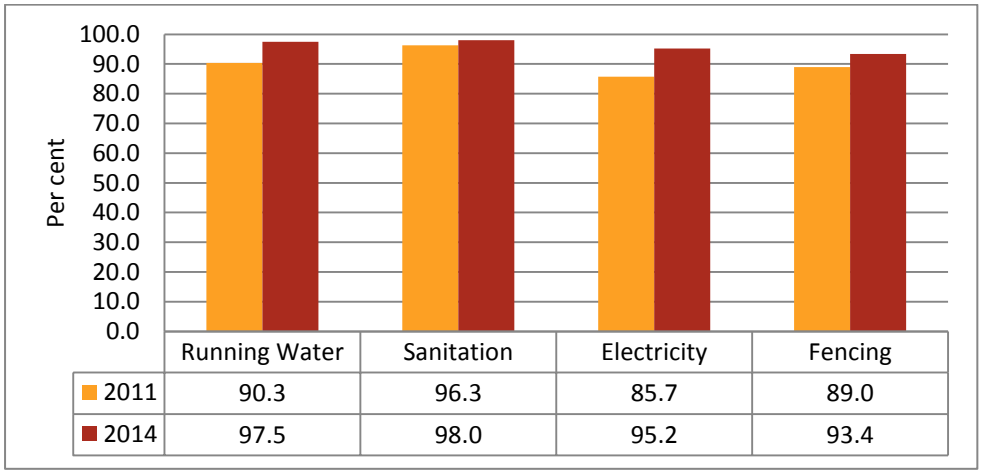
Basic school infrastructure and services

After apartheid, South Africa faced significant challenges for building school infrastructure since many schools of formerly disadvantaged communities lacked not only school buildings but also basic services such as running water, sanitation, electricity and fencing which are essential to meet learners and teacher needs for a clean and healthy environment.

Efforts to improve infrastructure were initiated through a series of surveys, such as the 'School Register of Needs' surveys of 1996 and 2000. During 2006, another assessment was conducted, expanding on the two previous surveys as part of developing the National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS). The first NEIMS report was published in September 2007.

Very good progress has been achieved in all of the dimensions, especially electricity, which increased by 9.5 percentage points between 2011 and 2014 (Figure 30). This is a far cry from the time of the second SRN Report which established in 2000 that only 71.2% of schools had water available, 54.9% had access to electricity, and 90.8% had toilets (DoE, 2011).

Figure 30*: Access to running water, sanitation, electricity and fencing in schools, 2011 and 2014*



Source: Department of Basic Education, National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS) database, 2011 and 2014.

Note, however, that this data does not take into account variation in the quality of service, as in the following examples: access to running water depends on the reliability of the service (e.g. borehole, communal water supply, motorised tanker, municipal supply) and the number of outlets to users; sanitation quality varies from pit-latrines to fully reticulated flush toilets; electricity access depends on whether the school is fully wired or limited to administration block; and fencing may vary by dimensions and type of materials. Furthermore, the service may not be accessible to all who daily attend the school. For example, flush toilets or access to electricity may be accessed by staff members but not by all learners. Also, payment for services presents difficulties for schools serving low-income communities which cannot afford to pay for the amount of electricity needed.

There are a number of schools which must continue to struggle with sub-standard amenities. For instance, in 2015 learners at a primary school near Cape Town had to be sent home because of a shortage of toilets for students and teachers, as well as a broken sewage system that had left an overpowering stench in the classrooms, and unfinished construction that started in 2011 (Swana, 2015). In an overview of school infrastructure limitations in the Eastern Cape, attention was drawn to the 'vulnerability of unfenced schools to surrounding criminal elements', as well as to the persistence of a 'great divide' between the facilities in rich and poor schools (Veriava, 2012).

Thus, inequities in the availability of infrastructure and services in schools continue to exist, and are concentrated in rural schools in disadvantaged communities. Programmes and funding mechanisms have been implemented by the DBE to reduce the infrastructure back-log. One such programme is the Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative (ASIDI, 2013). The mandate of this programme is to improve the state of infrastructure in schools across the country (DBE, 2014B).

The central aim was to eradicate backlogs in school infrastructure not only in the 2010 to 2014 planning period, but to take the campaign beyond that time period in recognition of the difficulty of the task. Thus the department was looking to achieve short and medium-term gains. ASIDI has the following core aims:

• Eliminate the backlogs in school infrastructure.

• Upgrade the standard of schools to meet the optimum functionality levels prescribed by the Norms and Standards for Schools Infrastructure.

• Eradicate inadequate, unsafe and poor physical infrastructure by using allocated funds properly.

ASIDI, which is part of the National Infrastructure Plan, is still under way. It was reported in February 2015 that 92 new schools had been constructed while 108 were under construction. In addition, approximately 342 schools had received water for the first time in their existence. Also, 351 schools had been equipped with decent sanitation, while a further 288 were linked to the national electricity grid or alternative means of power (Zuma, 2015).

4.4 OUTCOME INDICATORS

Outcome indicators are used to evaluate the end results of all the educational inputs and processes. These indicators measure how effectively education policies and strategies were implemented by measuring actual progress against the goals and targets that were set in education plans. At the end of the school year, the percentages of students who successfully completed their studies, and of those who have acquired defined knowledge and competencies, indicate the main output of education. Examples of outcome indicators in this section include national and international assessment studies, such as the NSC examinations and the ANAs. The report also explores the literacy rate as yet another indicator that could be used to measure the extent to which knowledge and competencies have been acquired. The following two categories of literacy are covered in this report: the Youth Literacy Rate (persons aged 15–24), and Adult Literacy (persons aged 20 and above).

LITERACY

On account of the accumulated historical legacy of apartheid restrictions on access to education for black African people, after 1994 education policy makers faced the challenge of addressing the need for adult education and literacy learning opportunities among large proportions of the adult population. However, the allocation of finance to adult education by provincial departments of education has remained comparatively low after democracy, as the lion's share of budgets has been allocated to formal schooling. Further, the strong tradition of adult education in the trade-union movement and in the NGO sector began to feel the effects of reduced financial resources; especially in the latter case, this was a consequence of funders preferring to transfer funds directly to legitimate government after 1994. The outcome has been relative neglect of adult education needs, notwithstanding a number of adult education and adult literacy campaigns and other steps undertaken by government that are discussed in the section on enrolment in Public Adult Learning centres or AET centres.

Looking ahead and developing appropriate strategies to improve literacy levels must take current levels of literacy into account (Aitchison & Harley, 2006). In this respect, there are two levels of concern: firstly, the general levels of literacy among the adult population as a whole and secondly, the levels of literacy in the vulnerable population of youth in the country, given the problematic rates of drop-out from schools. This must be understood in the context of large numbers of youth not in employment, education or training. Therefore both adult and youth literacy levels are considered here.

Literacy – and numeracy – is a capability with critical implications for a person's current and future life opportunities and capacity to contribute socially and economically as an individual, family member, worker and citizen. UNESCO (1978) adopted a definition of 'functional literacy':

> 'A person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community's development.'

In this report, therefore, 'literacy' refers to a context-bound continuum of reading, writing and numeracy skills, acquired and developed through processes of learning and application, in schools and in other settings appropriate to youth and adults (Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006).

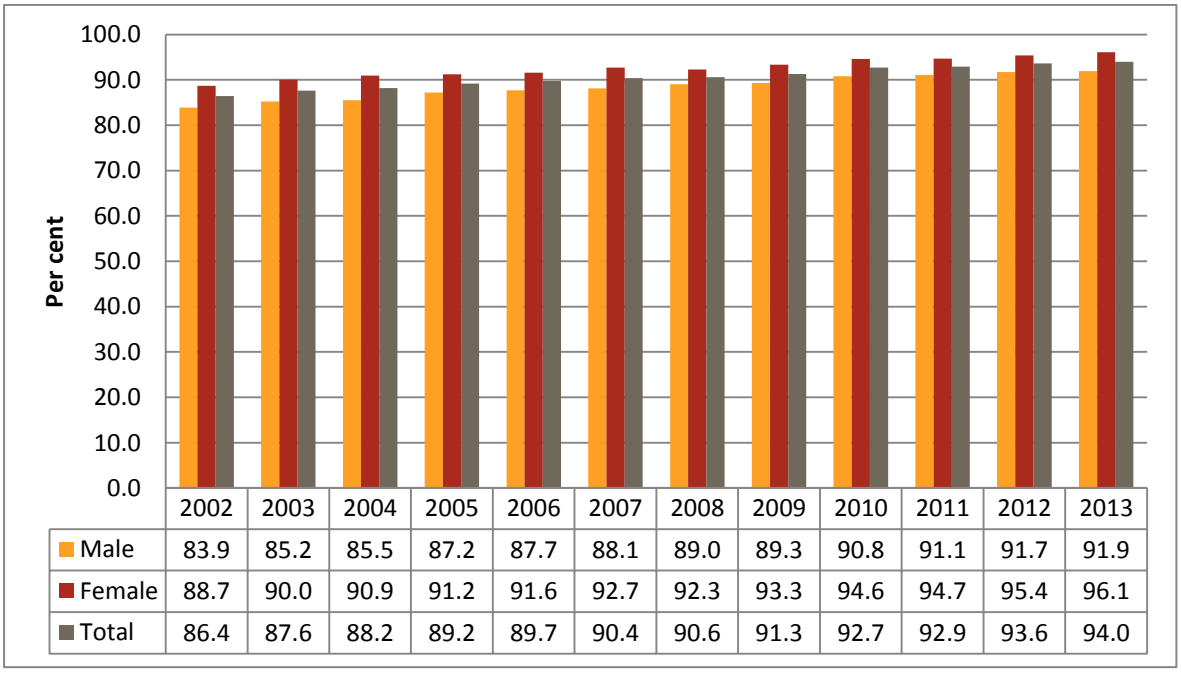
According to this concept, the following definition of the adult literacy rate is adopted in gathering the statistics: 'Adult literacy rate is the percentage of people ages 18 years and over who can, with understanding, read and write a short, simple statement on their everyday life' (our emphasis) (Stats SA). However, this definition is difficult to operationalise in terms of survey methodology (e.g. data obtained by self-report). A commonly applied alternative is to use a proxy measure usually related to a level of formal education achieved which is assumed to correspond with basic levels of literacy and numeracy. Accordingly, the proxy for literacy is taken as 'the percentage of the population 18 years and over who have completed a Grade 7 education' (our emphasis)' (Stats SA). Using both methods provides for the opportunity to cross-check rates.

Youth functional literacy rate

The youth literacy rate refers to the number of proportion of the 15–24-year-old population who have completed Grade 7.

Aggregate levels of youth functional literacy increased steadily from 86% to 94% between 2002 and 2013 (Figure 31). Disaggregation by gender revealed a similar stable progression of steadily rising literacy rates among females and males. Female rates increased from 89% to 96%, or by 7 percentage points overall, while male rates increased from 84% to 92%, or by 8 percentage points overall. Throughout the period, female literacy rates remained higher than male rates by between 3 percentage points and 5 percentage points.

Figure 31: **Youth functional literacy rate ages 15 to 24 by gender (%), 2002 to 2013**



	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	83.9	85.2	85.5	87.2	87.7	88.1	89.0	89.3	90.8	91.1	91.7	91.9
Female	88.7	90.0	90.9	91.2	91.6	92.7	92.3	93.3	94.6	94.7	95.4	96.1
Total	86.4	87.6	88.2	89.2	89.7	90.4	90.6	91.3	92.7	92.9	93.6	94.0

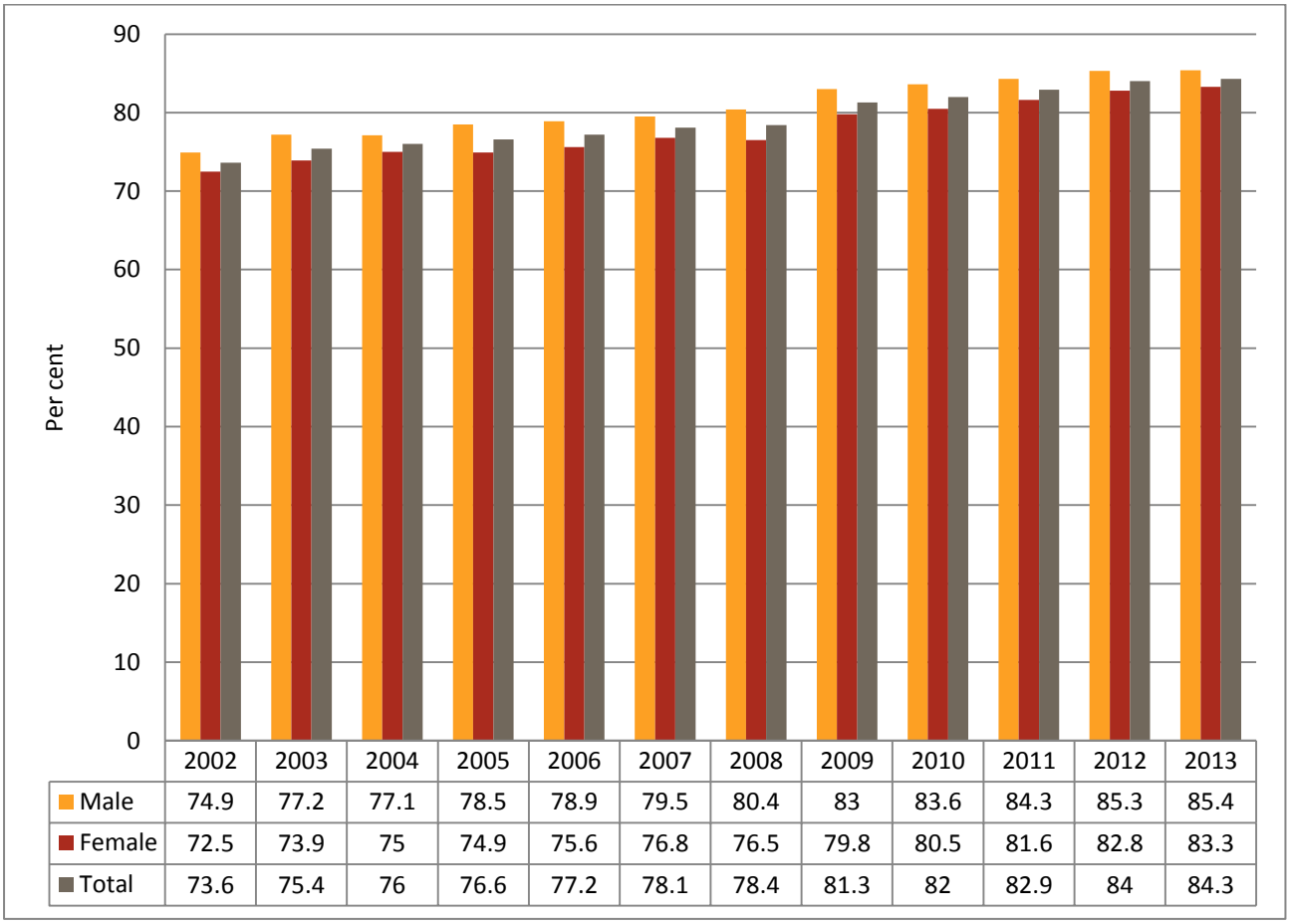
Source: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2002–2013.

Adult functional literacy rate

Adult literacy refers to the percentage of the population aged 18 and older who have completed Grade 7 at school or a higher level.

Aggregate levels of adult functional literacy increased steadily by 10 percentage points from 74% to 84% between 2002 and 2013 (Figure 32). Disaggregation by gender reveals a highly similar stable progression of literacy rates among females and males, both of which increased by 10 percentage points in the period. Female rates increased from 73% to 83%, while male rates increased from 75% to 85%. Throughout the period, male literacy rates remained higher than female rates by between 2 percentage points and 4 percentage points.

Figure 32: Adult functional literacy rate ages 18 and older by gender (%), 2002 to 2013



	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	74.9	77.2	77.1	78.5	78.9	79.5	80.4	83	83.6	84.3	85.3	85.4
Female	72.5	73.9	75	74.9	75.6	76.8	76.5	79.8	80.5	81.6	82.8	83.3
Total	73.6	75.4	76	76.6	77.2	78.1	78.4	81.3	82	82.9	84	84.3

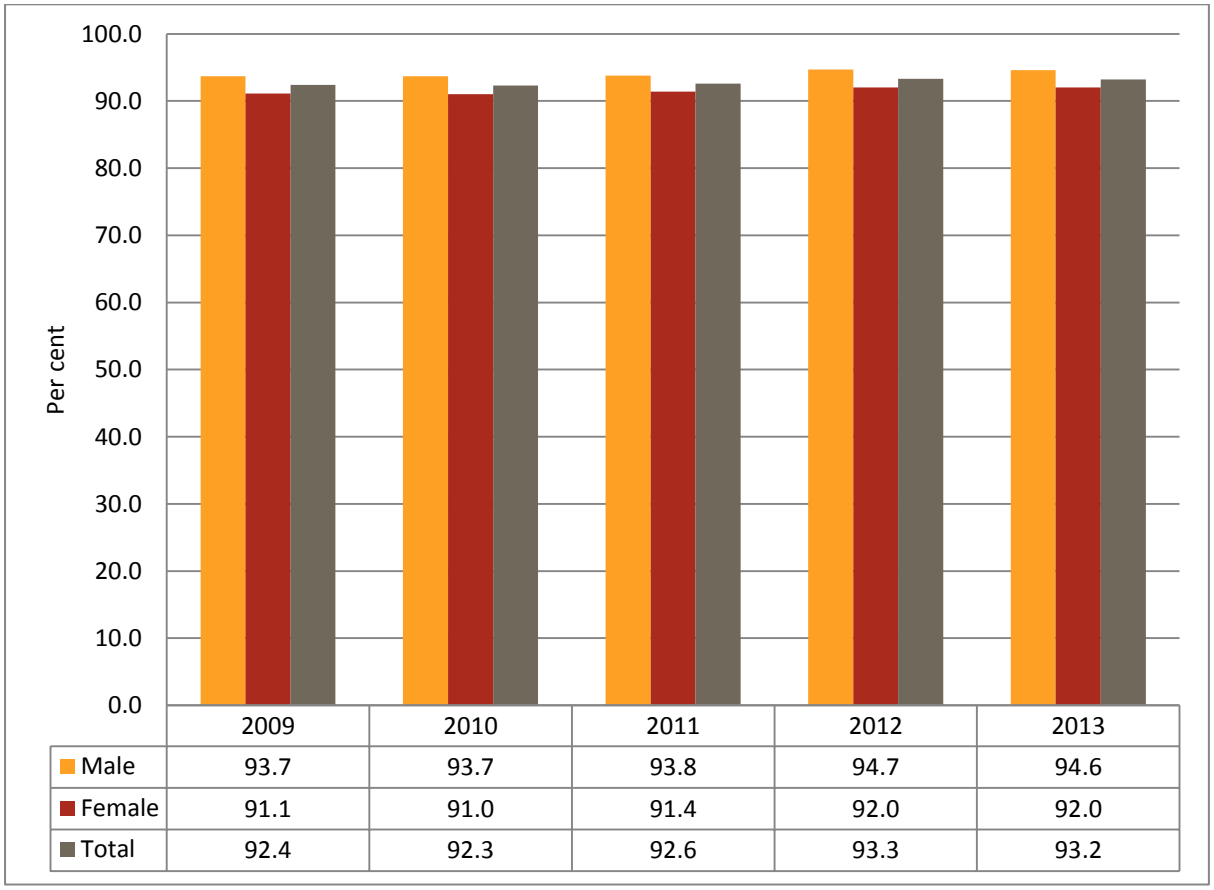
Source: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2002–2013.

Literacy rate for adults

This literacy rate refers to the percentage of the population aged 18 and above who can, with understanding, read and write a short, simple statement on their everyday life. The literacy rate for adults increased marginally from 92.4% to 93.2% in the five years from 2009 to 2013 (Figure 33). For

the same period, the literacy rate among males and females slowly increased by 0.9 percentage points in the five years.

Figure 33: **Adult literacy rate by gender (%), 2009 to 2013**



	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	93.7	93.7	93.8	94.7	94.6
Female	91.1	91.0	91.4	92.0	92.0
Total	92.4	92.3	92.6	93.3	93.2

Source: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2009–2013.

The data shows that progress has been made with regard to the adult literacy rate, with more than 90% of males and females being able to understand, read and write simple statements. Functional literacy on the other hand needs to be improved still with more of the adult population having a minimum Grade 7 qualification.

4.5 NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS AND EXIT EXAMINATIONS

National assessments are administered to learners in schools and allows the Department of Basic Education to measure the health of the education system, to assess learning and teaching that occurs in schools as well as to check if the intended curriculum is implemented.

In order to test whether learners are adequately skilled at the end of their Grade 12, the exit year of schooling, all Grade 12 learners have to write an examination that is prepared and quality assured by an external body. This exam is referred to as the National Senior Certificate (NSC).

This section will provide results on the ANAs for Grades 3, 6 and 9 as well as results from the NSC. In addition the analysis will discuss the percentage of NSC learners who are eligible for entrance into universities.

Annual National Assessments

Outcome indicators are used to appraise end results of the application of a specified programme of educational inputs and processes by measuring actual progress against set goals and targets. Outcome indicators themselves require careful design and often incremental improvement in methods and analysis before users can declare themselves confident of the indicator findings. Developing and applying indicators to investigate the outcomes of schooling systems is inevitably a high-stakes process for all participants – from learners, to teachers, to school management, to district officials, to parents, to curriculum designers, to education system leaders and to the researchers who design, administer and analyse the results.

The DBE introduced the ANA to measure improvement of the quality and levels of educational outcomes in the schooling system. The purpose of the Annual National Assessments is to track learner performance in literacy/Languages and numeracy/Mathematics as the Department of Basic Education endeavours to bring about improved learner performance that matches commitments made by government. The ANA measures progress against targets set by the president of South Africa (as per the 2009 State of the Nation Address), i.e. by 2014, 60% of learners in Grades 3, 6 and 9 should perform at an acceptable level in languages and mathematics (Department of Basic Education, 2011).

The ANA is a national test administered to every child in every school to assess learners' language and mathematical skills. With the exception of Grade 7, ANAs is administered to all primary school grades and Grade 9 learners. The ANAs have now been conducted four times: in 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 involving between 6 and 7 million learners. In 2012, ANAs was administered in public and state-funded independent schools. The ANAs results have been published consecutively in 2012, 2013 and 2014.

The ANA results are intended to be used to monitor progress and guide planning and the distribution of resources to help improve literacy/Language and numeracy/Mathematics knowledge and skills of learners in the grades concerned (DBE 2012A). The ANA is, therefore, supposed to function as a diagnostic tool for investigating how and why the system is working so that the conditions creating successes can be replicated where feasible, and for examining where the system has not worked to expectations so that adaptations can be designed to improve performance where deemed necessary.

However, the following should be taken into account when viewing the ANAs results over three consecutive years. When the 2011 results were first released, they painted a gloomy scenario where the national average mark in literacy among Grade 3's was 35% and the Mathematics mark for Grade 6 was 30%. When the Department of Basic Education released the report for 2012 the picture was still perturbing. Nevertheless, it was argued in the report that there were some 'noticeable' improvements in learning outcomes. For instance, Grade 3 literacy scores increased from 35% to 52% and numeracy scores from 28% to 41%.

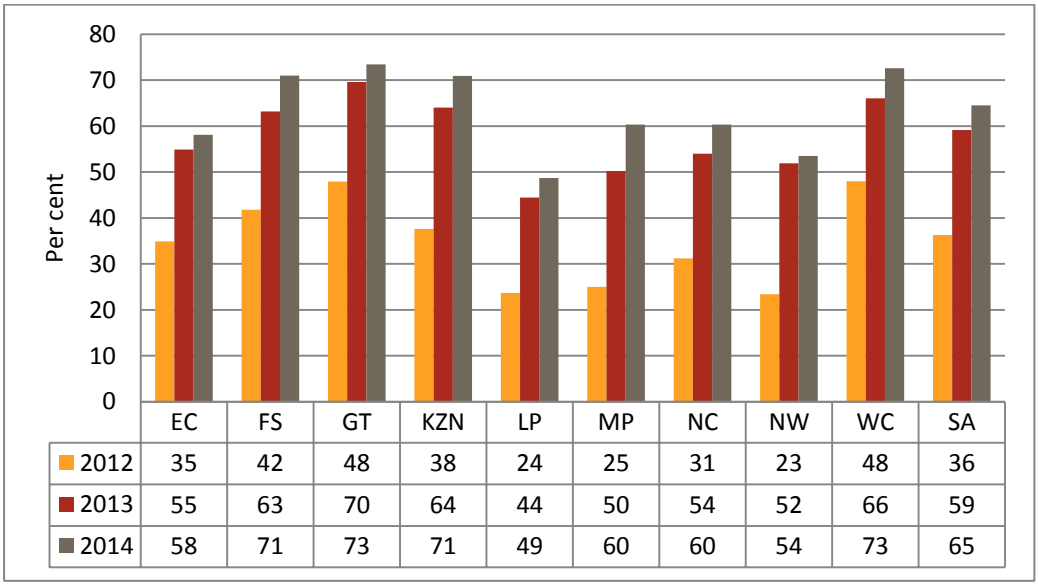
We wish to caution that these improved achievement levels are based on raw year-to-year scores that have not been adjusted for relative difficulty of the test instruments across years.

Grade 3 ANA Numeracy

In 2012 the national average for Grade 3 Mathematics was 36%, with four provinces (Western Cape, Gauteng, Free State and KwaZulu-Natal) obtaining average percentages more than the national average.

The results in 2013 and 2014 show similar trends with yet again the Western Cape, Gauteng, Free State and KwaZulu-Natal obtaining average percentages higher than that of the national averages.

Figure 34: **Percentage of Grade 3 learners who achieved the Mathematics pass mark of 50% and above in 2012, 2013 and 2014**



	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NC	NW	WC	SA
2012	35	42	48	38	24	25	31	23	48	36
2013	55	63	70	64	44	50	54	52	66	59
2014	58	71	73	71	49	60	60	54	73	65

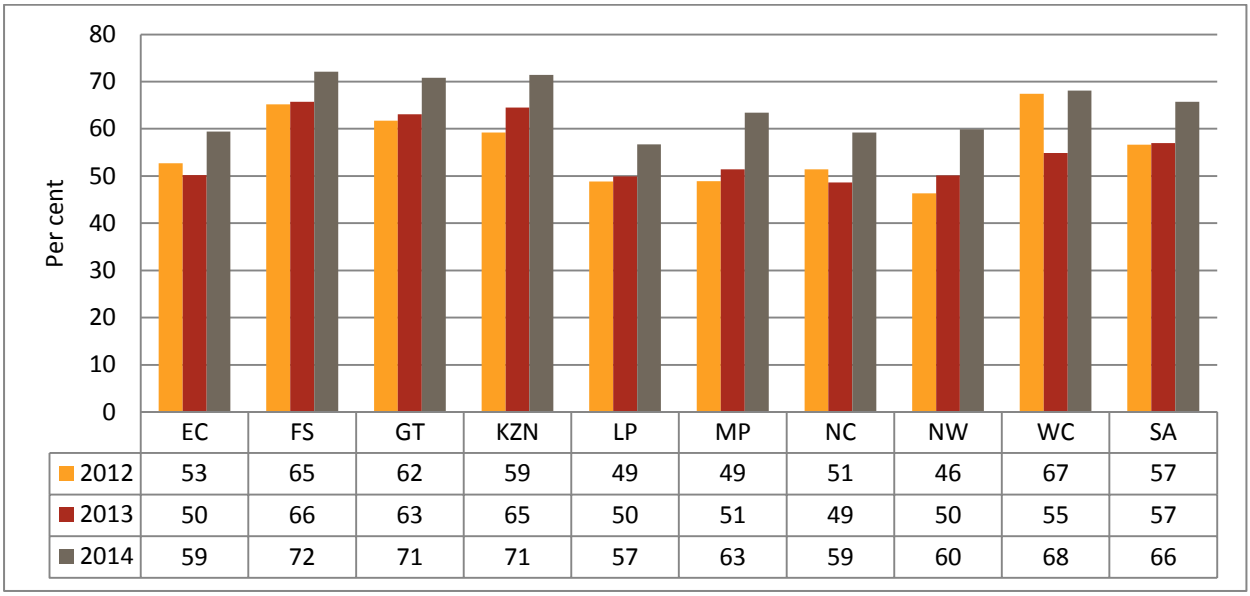
Source: Report on Annual National Assessments, Department of Basic Education (2012, 2013, 2014).

Grade 3 ANA Literacy/Language scores

Average percentages of the Grade 3 literacy learners who scored more than 50% was slightly better than the numeracy results but provincially follows the same pattern, with four of the provinces having more than 57% (2012 average) of their learners obtaining scores of 50% or more.

In 2013 and 2014 only three of the nine provinces obtained averages higher than the national averages of 57% and 66% respectively.

Figure 35: Percentage of Grade 3 learners who achieved the literacy pass mark of 50% and above in 2012, 2013 and 2014



	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NC	NW	WC	SA
2012	53	65	62	59	49	49	51	46	67	57
2013	50	66	63	65	50	51	49	50	55	57
2014	59	72	71	71	57	63	59	60	68	66

Source: Report on Annual National Assessments, Department of Basic Education (2012, 2013, 2014).

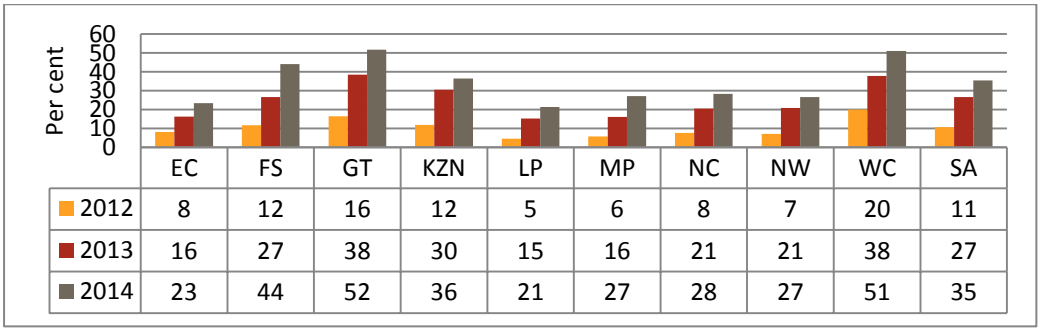
Improved achievement levels reflected in the ANAs results between 2012 and 2014 are based on raw year-to-year scores that have not been adjusted for relative difficulty of the test instruments across years. Nevertheless, from the ANA results some broad observations can be made. Foundation phase Grade 3 level learner achievement results seem to reveal adequate quality and level of achievement for Language and Mathematics, though the latter is less consistent.

Grade 6 ANA Mathematics scores

In 2012, provincially the Grade 6 results show a similar pattern to that observed in Grade 3 with Western Cape, Gauteng, Free State and KwaZulu-Natal being the top performers with more of their learners scoring higher than the national average of 11%. Of concern, however, and possibly needing a closer look are provinces like Limpopo, North West and the Eastern Cape.

The same pattern is observed in both 2013 and 2014.

Figure 36: Percentage of Grade 6 learners who achieved the Mathematics pass mark of 50% and above in 2012, 2013 and 2014



	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NC	NW	WC	SA
2012	8	12	16	12	5	6	8	7	20	11
2013	16	27	38	30	15	16	21	21	38	27
2014	23	44	52	36	21	27	28	27	51	35

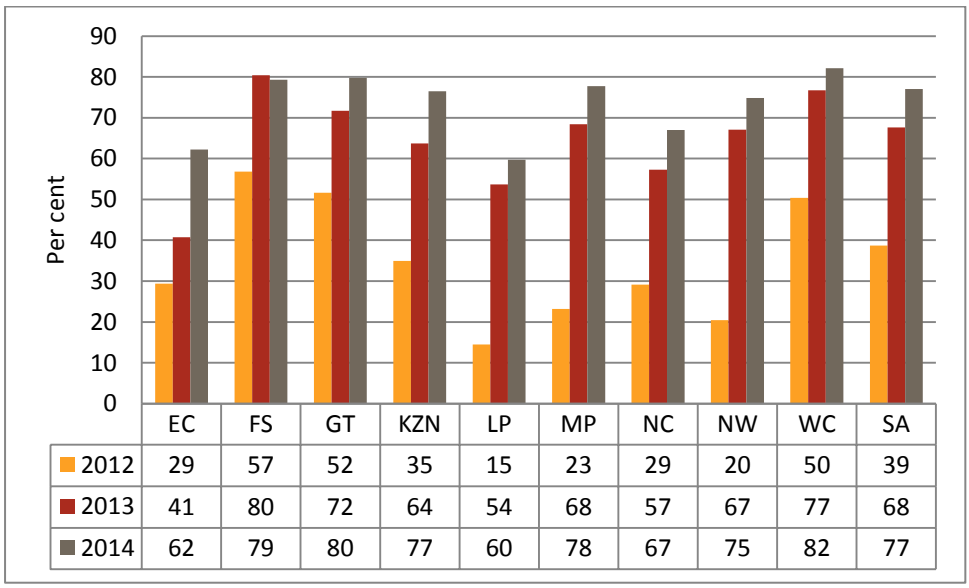
Source: Report on Annual National Assessments, Department of Basic Education (2012, 2013, 2014).

The Grade 6 result for Language is higher than that for Mathematics, with the national average showing that 39% of learners in 2012 scored on average more than 50%. This is more than double that of the Mathematics assessment. As with Mathematics, the same four provinces had results similar or more than that of the 2012 national average.

In 2013 and 2014, however, the picture is slightly different – with Mpumalanga as opposed to KwaZulu-Natal having more learners than the national average obtaining more than 50%.

Grade 6 ANA Language scores

Figure 37: **Percentage of Grade 6 learners who achieved the Language pass mark of 50% and above in 2012, 2013 and 2014**



	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NC	NW	WC	SA
2012	29	57	52	35	15	23	29	20	50	39
2013	41	80	72	64	54	68	57	67	77	68
2014	62	79	80	77	60	78	67	75	82	77

Source: Report on Annual National Assessments, Department of Basic Education (2012, 2013, 2014).

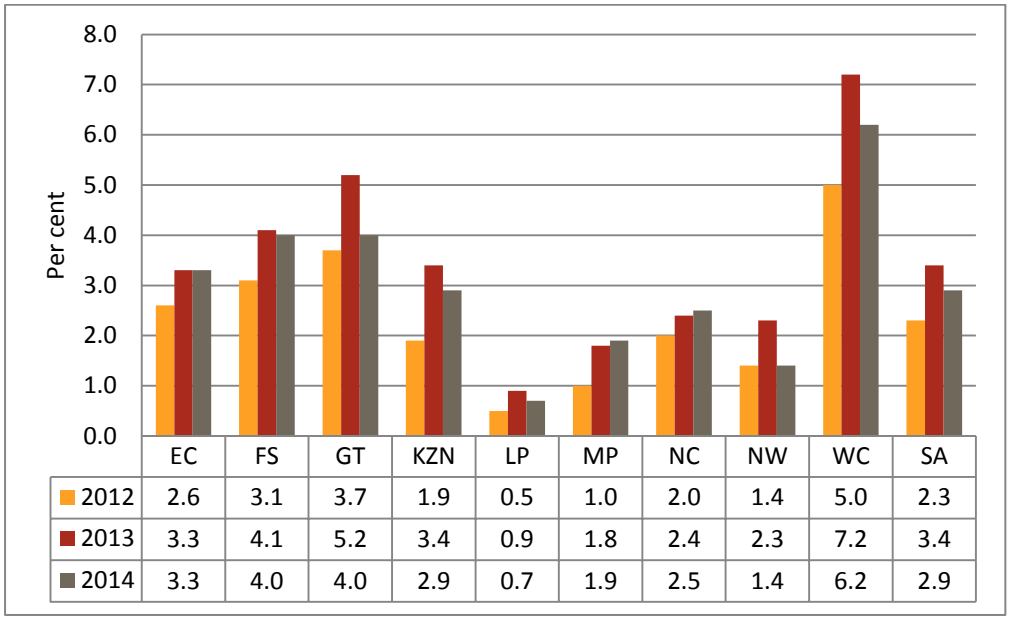
Learner achievement among Grade 6 learners reflecting progress over the Intermediate Phase is less convincing, particularly with reference to Mathematics where learners attained much lower scores in comparison to their Language scores.

Grade 9 ANA Mathematics scores

Results of the Grade 9 Mathematics assessments (Figure 38) shows that severe problems exist in this grade, with only 2.3% of learners on average scoring more than 50% in 2012. In the Western Cape, five per cent of learners scored more than 50% and provinces like the Eastern Cape, Free State and Gauteng have more than two per cent of learners scoring more than 50% on average.

In 2013 and 2014 the national average was 3.4% and 2.9% respectively, and consistently percentages in the Western Cape were higher than the national average. Disconcerting, however, is that Limpopo had less than one per cent of the learners scoring more than 50%.

Figure 38: **Percentage of Grade 9 learners who achieved the Mathematics pass mark of 50% and above in 2012, 2013 and 2014**

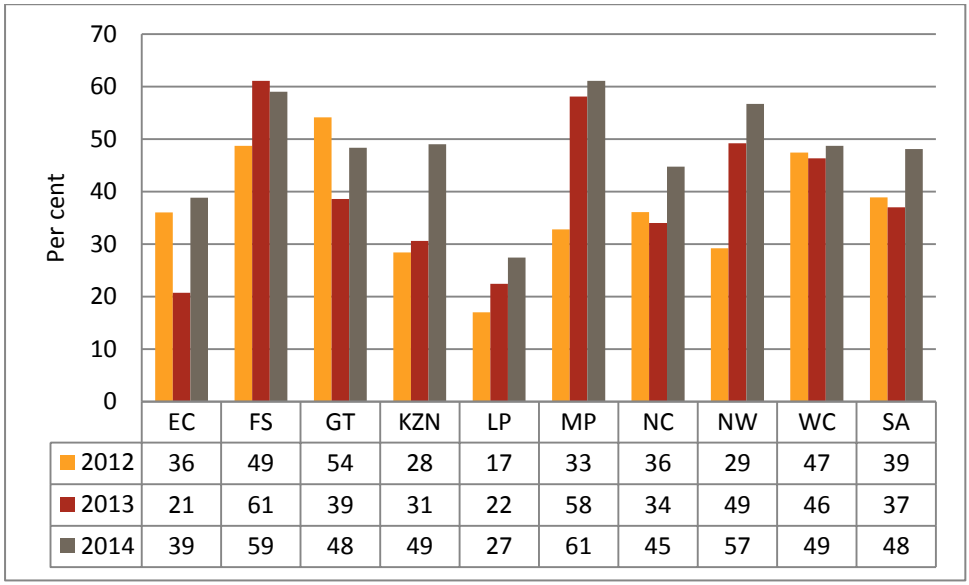


	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NC	NW	WC	SA
2012	2.6	3.1	3.7	1.9	0.5	1.0	2.0	1.4	5.0	2.3
2013	3.3	4.1	5.2	3.4	0.9	1.8	2.4	2.3	7.2	3.4
2014	3.3	4.0	4.0	2.9	0.7	1.9	2.5	1.4	6.2	2.9

Source: Report on Annual National Assessments, Department of Basic Education (2012, 2013, 2014).

Grade 9 ANA Language scores

Figure 39: **Percentage of Grade 9 learners who achieved the Language pass mark of 50% and above in 2012, 2013 and 2014**



	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NC	NW	WC	SA
2012	36	49	54	28	17	33	36	29	47	39
2013	21	61	39	31	22	58	34	49	46	37
2014	39	59	48	49	27	61	45	57	49	48

Source: Report on Annual National Assessments, Department of Basic Education (2012, 2013, 2014).

Grade 9 is the final grade in the compulsory General Education Certificate Phase of basic schooling before transition into the Further Education and Training Phase of schooling that culminates in national matriculation and school leaving examination. Achievement in the latter phase impacts

significantly on employment chances. It is, therefore, a matter of some concern that across the ANA at Grades 3, 6 and 9, the poorest achievement levels are starkly reflected at Grade 9 level. The percentage of Grade 9 learners who achieved a Mathematics pass mark of 50% and above in all three years of ANA data collection from 2012 to 2014 was consistently low. This result suggests that these learners have acquired inadequate basic competencies and, further, that their knowledge foundations in the discipline are insufficient.

It is to be welcomed that certain deficiencies in basic knowledge and in competencies have been identified through the ANA assessments. This empirical information enables curriculum designers, teachers and teacher trainers to create appropriate interventions to address the gaps, especially in the Senior Phase.

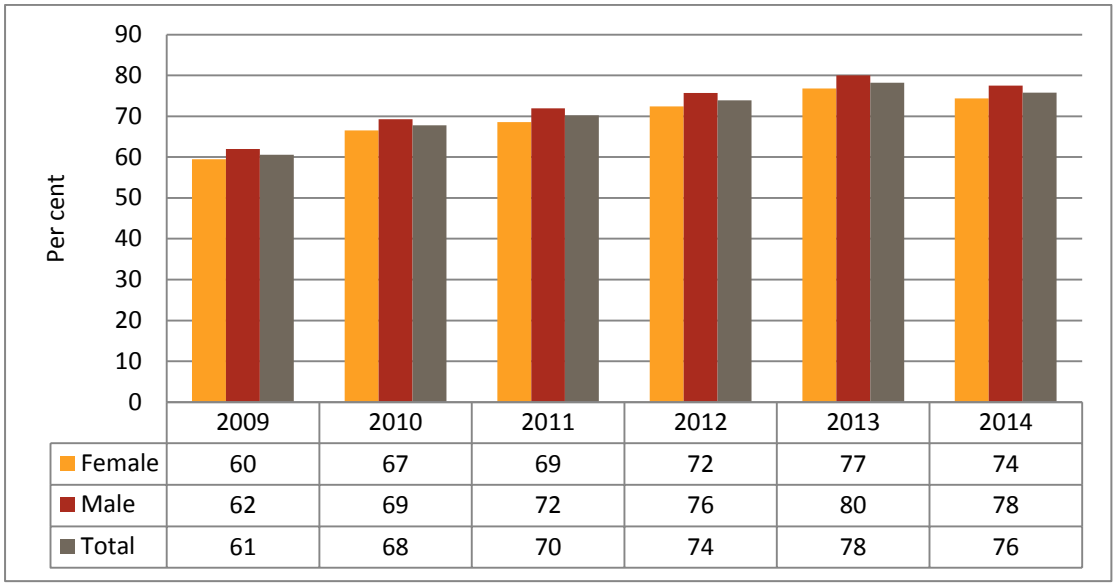
National Senior Certificate

The National Senior Certificate examination is a high stakes school leaving exam at the apex of 12 years of schooling. It is no longer regarded as a definitive measure of the quality of South African schooling, given the substantial drop-out rate and gate-keeping taking place in the immediately preceding grades: 11 and 10. Among the problems with using NSC pass rates as a sole indicator of performance is that many candidates do not get as far as Grade 12; and secondly, the pass rate does not indicate how many years the relatively successful candidates took in getting to Grade 12 (Seekings, 2002). Nevertheless, obtaining an NSC is commonly perceived by young people in the final three years of their schooling career as a pre-requisite to obtaining a job in a tight labour market. Employers who might perceive the NSC with some unease nevertheless use it as a yardstick for employability, especially when candidates lack work experience.

Between 2009 and 2013, National Senior Certificate passes increased substantially from 61% to 78%, followed by a slight decline in 2014 to 76% (Figure 40). This difference in results between 2013 and 2014 may partially be explained by the introduction in 2014 of the new curriculum framework, the '*National Curriculum Statement Grades R–12*' which has aimed to provide clearer specification of what is to be taught and learnt on a term-by-term basis in all grades. Nevertheless, the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) associated with this innovation would have required adaptation by teachers and students, which produced some impact on results.

Over the five years, male candidates have achieved slightly better rates of success than their female counterparts, ranging between 2 percentage points to 4 percentage points higher between 2009 and 2014.

Figure 40: **National Senior Certificate passes by gender (%), 2009 to 2014**

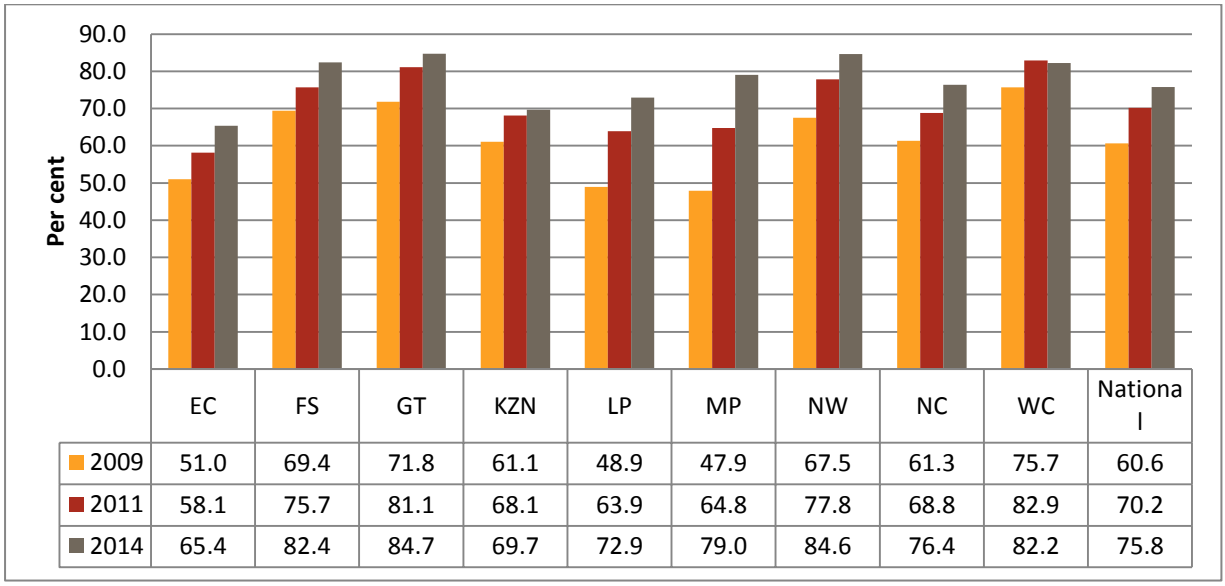


	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Female	60	67	69	72	77	74
Male	62	69	72	76	80	78
Total	61	68	70	74	78	76

Source: National Senior Certificate database, Department Of Basic Education.

The National Senior Certificate pass rate improved from 61% to 76% between 2009 and 2014, or by 15 percentage points. The largest gains in aggregate percentage pass rates over the period were made by the provinces of Mpumalanga (31 percentage points) and Limpopo (24 percentage points) (Figure 41). Five provinces with moderate gains between 2009 and 2014 were clustered between 13 percentage points and 17 percentage points. Two provinces, KwaZulu-Natal (9 percentage points) and Western Cape (7 percentage points), showed comparatively limited gains, which was unexpected given that the latter achieved the highest pass rate in 2009, while the former was above the average in the same year.

Figure 41: **National Senior Certificate passes by province (%), 2009 to 2014**



	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	National
2009	51.0	69.4	71.8	61.1	48.9	47.9	67.5	61.3	75.7	60.6
2011	58.1	75.7	81.1	68.1	63.9	64.8	77.8	68.8	82.9	70.2
2014	65.4	82.4	84.7	69.7	72.9	79.0	84.6	76.4	82.2	75.8

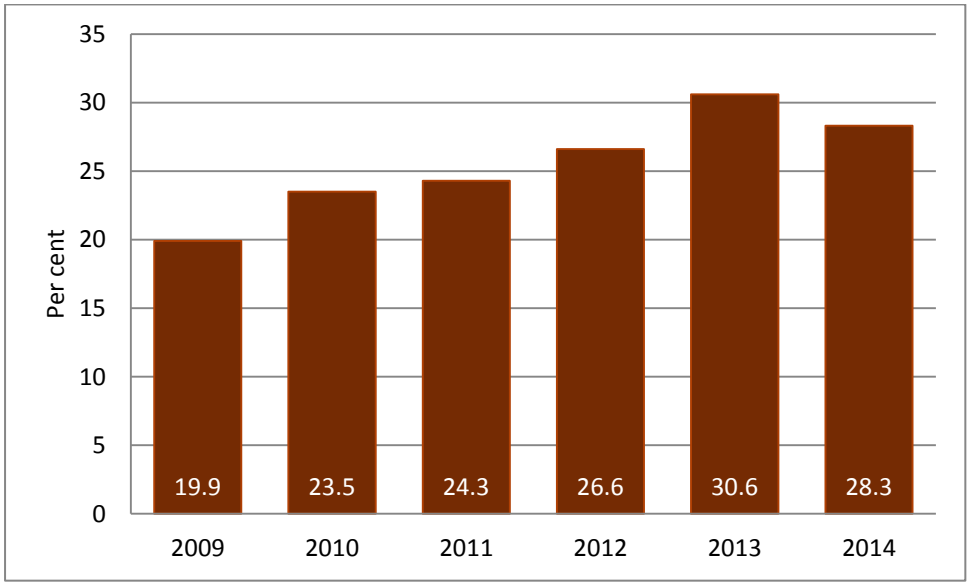
Source: National Senior Certificate database, Department Of Basic Education.

Bachelor's passes

The 'Bachelor's pass' category is created to obtain a rough indication of the numbers of students who have completed the National Senior Certificate examination and qualify to enter an undergraduate degree programme at a university. A school leaver with a 'Bachelor's pass' is not guaranteed to find a place in a university, because admission standards or minimum entry requirements differ between programmes and across universities. Practically, a Bachelor's pass may gain a candidate access to a Bachelor of Education programme but not to a Bachelor of Engineering programme. By the same token, a Bachelor's pass may secure enrolment in some universities' Bachelor of Engineering programmes but not others. Universities will want to select the best possible quality of candidates for their programmes. Yet university administrators, who need to ensure that they admit the best possible quality of school leavers amid uncertainty over school quality, are also under pressure to increase student intake in line with government's commitment to increase the size of the higher education system. In these conditions, the quality and number of Bachelor's pass school leavers may be less than desired.

The proportion of school leavers with a Bachelor's pass rose from 20% in 2009 to 31% in 2013, giving an increase of 11 percentage points, before falling back slightly to 28% in 2014 (Figure 42). In real numbers this means that the number of candidates qualifying for Bachelor studies increased, from 120 767 in 2011 to 136 047 in 2012.

Figure 42: **National Senior Certificate Bachelors passes (%), 2009 to 2014**



Source: National Senior Certificate database, Department Of Basic Education.

5 TOWARDS THE SDGS – FRAMING THE IMPERATIVES

COMPARISON OF MDG AND SDG INDICATORS

At the Rio +20 Conference it was decided by member states to initiate a procedure to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which would build upon the Millennium Development Goals and converge together with the post-2015 development agenda supported by the Economic and Social Council (United Nations Economic and Social Council [ECOSOC], 2015):

Millennium Development Goals (2015) Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education
Sustainable Development Goals (2015) Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all

To support this process, current and emerging goals and targets for the SDGs, as outlined in the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) 2014 framework document, can be compared with the eight goals and indicators per goal to bring about a synergy between the two frameworks (Leadership Council of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network 2015).

Table 3 below illustrates how the MDG Goal 2 indicators correspond with the SDG Goal 4 indicators. Further, the table sets out how a number of domesticated indicators applied in this South African MDG Goal 2 report intersect with specific Complementary National Indicators put forward in the SDG goals.

Shading reflects where there are synergies or overlaps between the MDG Goal 2 indicators applied in South Africa with the SDG Goal 4 targets in development. So far, there are overlaps between seven MDG indicators and SDG targets, including the Complementary National Indicators in construction.

Sustainable Development Goals (2015) Goal 4 seem to have omitted adult education indicators. SDG indicators emphasis is on youth.

Table 3: Comparison of emerging targets for Goal 4 of the SDGs with current targets for Goal 2 of the MDGs

Millennium Development Goals	Indicator number		Sustainable Development Goals (so far)	Comments
Achieve universal primary education	Goal 2	Goal 4	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all	
• Percentage of five-year-old children attending public and private educational institutions by gender (%) 2002 to 2012 • Gross Enrolment Rates for Grade R in ordinary	1	34	Percentage of children receiving at least one year of a quality pre-primary education programme.	South African domesticated indicators address the intent of the SDG indicator though from different perspective

Millennium Development Goals	Indicator number		Sustainable Development Goals (so far)	Comments
schools by gender (%) (1999- 2012)				
Early Childhood Development (ECD) Grade R enrolment by gender (2002-2013)	2	35	[Early Child Development Index (ECDI)] – to be developed	There is one South African indicator. Composition of indicator will be important
Primary school completion rate figure: Primary school completion rate by gender (2002-2013)	3a	36	Primary completion rates for girls and boys	Equivalent MDG and SDG indicators
Adjusted net enrolment rate in primary education by gender (2002-2013) area/race/gender	3b			In South Africa the ANER has recently been achieved so will need to be sustained
Annual National Assessment (ANA) Grade 6 (instead of Grade 7 because it is not tested in SA)	4	37	[Percentage of girls and boys who master a broad range of foundational skills, including in literacy and Mathematics, by the end of the primary school cycle (based on credibly established national benchmarks)] – to be developed	Equivalent MDG and SDG indicators
Secondary school completion rate figure: Secondary school completion rate by gender (2002-2013)	5	38	Secondary completion rates for girls and boys	Equivalent MDG and SDG indicators
Annual National Assessment (ANAs) Grade 9	6	39	[Percentage of girls and boys who achieve proficiency across a broad range of learning outcomes, including in reading and in Mathematics by end of the lower secondary schooling cycle (based on credibly established national benchmarks)] – to be developed	The South African ANA is specifically designed for this purpose, but focuses specifically on language and Mathematics
Gross enrolment rate in higher education by gender (2001-2013)	7	40	Tertiary enrolment rates for women and men	Equivalent MDG and SDG indicators
SDG Complementary National indicators that countries may consider				
Currently no South African equivalent			**4.1. [Percentage of girls and boys who acquire skills and values needed for global citizenship and sustainable development (national benchmarks to be developed) by the end of lower secondary] – to be developed.**	This indicator affirms that 'there are values and skills that enable children to grow up to become socially responsible, emotionally mature, and productive members of society.' This intent is expressed in the South African curriculum. Will need to be developed.
Currently no South African			**4.2. Percentage of children**	The MICS indicator measures the

Millennium Development Goals	Indicator number		Sustainable Development Goals (so far)	Comments
equivalent			**under 5 experiencing responsive, stimulating parenting in safe environments**.	percentage of children below 5 years with whom an adult has engaged in four or more activities to promote learning and school readiness in the past 3 days.
Currently no South African equivalent			**4.3. [Percentage of adolescents (15-19 years) with access to school-to-work programmes]**	These programmes are considered vital for industry and work-seekers/graduates. They are emphasised in the South African White Paper on post-school education.
Youth functional literacy rate (aged 15–24) by gender			**4.4. Literacy rate of 15-24-year-olds, women and men (MDG indicator).**	Equivalent MDG and SDG indicators
Currently no South African equivalent			**4.5. Percentage of young adults (18-24 years) with access to a learning programme.**	South Africa faces a severe unemployment crisis among youth. It will be important to launch this indicator. Equivalent may be identified or developed. Will be very relevant for the TVET or AET and community college sectors.
Currently data is available on school infrastructure at a provincial level: Water, Sanitation, Electricity, Fencing are relevant			**4.6. [Indicator on share of education facilities that provide an effective learning environment]** – to be developed	Equivalent may be identified or developed depending on definition of 'effective learning environment'.
Currently no South African equivalent			**4.7. [Indicator on scholarships for students from developing countries]** – to be developed	South Africa offers Southern African Development Community (SADC) students access to local universities at same rates charged to local students. This is a substantial subsidy. Scholarships would have to be investigated.
• Distribution of teacher qualifications by province (2008-2013)			**4.8. [Indicator on supply of qualified teachers]** – to be developed	Currently, the South African MDG indicator focuses on qualifications of employed teachers. However, there is a policy emphasis on securing efficient supply of good quality graduates. This indicator is relevant to the South African environment.

Note: Shading reflects where there are synergies or overlaps between the MDG Goal 2 indicators applied in South Africa with the SDG Goal 4 targets in development.

6 CHALLENGES

Looking ahead, the challenges facing South Africa in the education and skills development domains are to meet the dual imperatives to provide citizens with the skills and capacities to fulfil their lives as individuals, as citizens and as productive employees, whilst at the same time ensuring that the skills and capabilities with which workers are equipped will support shared economic growth for the whole country. The programmes implemented especially in the post-school domain will need to be designed to effectively counteract the impacts of severe unemployment levels, though concomitant economic development strategies must be implemented to create work opportunities. This applies both to intense youth unemployment as well as generally high levels of unemployment in the labour market.

More specifically, in education and skills development the following challenges are strongly evident:

- Quality of teaching and learning in primary education: As has been observed, the primary education indicators used in this report reveal that in terms of generating access and completion of the primary phase, South Africa has achieved much over the last decade. The successes in access oblige education planners to pay greater attention to education quality which is the next 'frontier' for primary education. As has been noted, further attention must be given to encouraging improvements to the quality of interaction between teachers and learners in the classroom, in particular through improving the quality of the teaching corps of whom 98% possess teaching qualifications.
- Access to and quality of secondary education: Though the past decade or more has seen improvements in the completion rates in secondary education, this phase suffers from very high repetition and dropout rates which drastically reduce completions. As with primary education, the evidence points to an urgent need to improve the quality of teaching and learning in secondary schools. This has to be addressed in the light of high differentials in performance between schools serving the needs of different socio-economic communities and rural or urban location. The contribution of secondary school must be to raise the chances of previously disadvantaged individuals to compete equally with their peers in the NSC school leaving examination.
- Post-school opportunities for acquiring vocational and occupational skills relevant to the labour market: The unemployment situation in South Africa impacts more than 1 in 4 working-age adults and is especially deeply rooted in the ranks of younger people after the financial market collapse of 2009. Therefore, high priority must be given to the TVET colleges' ability to provide relevant vocational and occupational learning opportunities that can improve young people's chances of finding gainful employment. However, it is not only younger generations who are not in education, employment or training but also adults who have no job and need a second chance to find employment. In this context, the role of a community college system as envisioned by the DHET will be very important in providing adults opportunities to learn skills desirable in the labour market.
- Further expansion of higher education: As this report has indicated, there has been incremental improvement in terms of access to higher education. Nevertheless, to remain competitive the South African economy constantly requires injection of up-to-date skills and technological

capabilities. Accordingly, expansion of this sector of the system will need to be supported, especially through financial support of previously disadvantaged students.

7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With regards to access or participation in education, the post-apartheid government has managed to expand access to include all children of primary school-going age, having achieved the 2015 target for the adjusted net enrolment ratio beforehand (2013). Moreover, the primary completion rate reached 96% in 2013, suggesting that the target of 100% is likely to be achieved by 2015. These foundational MDG indicators strongly support the observation that South Africa has achieved much in the primary education sector since democracy. Further evidence of advances in the sector comes from the strong increases in gross enrolment rates for Grade R in ordinary schools and equally solid improvements in the proportion of five-year-old children attending public and private institutions. Government departments are also increasing funding to the ECD 0–4-year-old groups, though access probably does not favour children from rural areas and low-income households.

In secondary schools, there is much to be done especially in the light of a secondary school completion rate that had taken six years to breach the 50% mark by 2013. Equally concerning are the repetition rates in secondary schools which have worsened by six percentage points from 10.6% in 2009 to 16.6% in 2013. These two metrics reflect severe challenges to efficiency of the secondary schooling sector, which has socially undesirable knock-on effects: firstly, the sector is contributing to growing numbers of young people who belong to the NEETs category and secondly, the sector is generating insufficient graduates of quality for enrolment in higher education. A major concern is that efficiency and quality objectives are not likely to be decisively achieved.

The lower grades of the schooling system are not producing learners well equipped to perform when they get to NSC, or post-school levels such as TVET and university. The problem of underperformance starts in the foundation phase and it gets worse by the time the learners get to Grade 9. Instead of implementing programmes that aim to improve performance in Grades 10 and 11, schools tend to weed out the poor performers in these two grades. Learners in previously disadvantaged and rural communities bear the brunt of this log-jam – being more vulnerable to ‘failure’ and dropping out.

A critical factor in schools is the quality of teaching and learning. The data shows that: 98% of teachers are qualified; the learner–teacher ratio has since 2008 been located in the 1:30 and 1:31 range; and in 2014, high proportions of schools had access to running water (97%), sanitation (98%), electricity (95%) and fencing (93%). All of these factors seem to suggest that the quality of education in South Africa is well entrenched. However, national and international learning achievement measures and assessments present a story of underperformance.

Repetition is high especially in the senior grades, implying that schools hold learners back, especially in Grade 10. Not all learners who pass Grade 9 and enrol for Grade 10 reach Grade 12, thus making completion of secondary schooling a problem. The national completion ratio at this level is 39%. By international standards this is low. Analysis of enrolment patterns, the drop-out rate and repetition rate show that the country has some way to go before meeting the international standards.

This problem is carried through into the rates of Bachelor passes which should be larger in order to expand the cohort of young people eligible for higher education enrolment. Higher education is similarly embarking on enrolment expansion, and is set to achieve a gross enrolment rate of 20% in 2015 which is the national target. Furthermore, the numbers of first-time entrants to higher education have been increasing at a rate of just over 4% per year between 2000 and 2013. However, this is counterbalanced by the substantial proportions of university students who do not complete their qualifications in the prescribed period, or who change course of study, or who drop out either permanently or temporarily.

On a positive note, the TVET colleges are increasing their enrolment mainly in the Report 191 curriculum for apprenticeships and also in the NCV, which provides a balanced curriculum to introduce and prepare candidates for occupational career paths after graduation. The key question lurking behind the planned expansion of enrolment and 'turnaround' strategies is whether the outcome will generate graduates of good quality and employability in the labour market.

The system is doing well in respect of the literacy rate of 15–24-year-olds, which reached 94% in 2013. The creation of the DHET with a focus on the post-school domain has set out a new phase for adult education and, in particular, the AET centres or PALC which will be consolidated in larger and more comprehensive – in terms of curriculum – community college institutions that will create a stronger institutional base for adult and youth education and training broadly. This facet must be tracked using indicators in the community colleges.

Perhaps the most important message emerging from the analysis is the importance of monitoring achievements and making decisions based on benchmarked and reliable results. The Department of Basic Education is encouraged to improve the quality of the ANA learner assessment programme. It is vital to build on this important initiative to augment the Senior Certificate Examination with an assessment programme with which to benchmark the quality and learner achievements of cohorts of primary and secondary school learners as they progress through their school careers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The emphasis on quality education necessitates improvement in the quality of teaching and learning from Grade R. The opportunities for in-service training of ECD teachers should be increased, with focus on providing teachers with practical strategies for supporting early learning and opportunities to see and practise best teaching, including observations, simulations, role-plays and working in contextually appropriate model environments. Importantly, this needs to be supported with on-going, on-site mentoring.

The focus on teaching and learning at the Foundation Phase should be on reading and numeracy. An urgent need to improve the quality of teaching and learning in primary and secondary schools should focus on the evaluation and improvement on teacher subject matter knowledge on pedagogy. The continuous monitoring of Time on Task, i.e. the amount of time actually spent learning, is important to ensure that students and schools are exposed to the same curriculum content and spend the same amount of time on the various content requirements.

Learning and teaching should take place in safe school environments that can nurture better learning but equally, that better learners might be drawn to safer schools. Emphasis should be placed on safety, order and academic success.

Gender differences were observed in terms of access and participation in the various phases of the education system. Given the under-representation of women in Mathematics and Science careers, and higher repetition and dropout rates among boys, we need to probe the opportunities and blockages in learning for boys and girls more closely; investigate gender differences in learning at different phases of schooling/education and introduce gender-targeted interventions where necessary. Appropriate support should be provided to grade repeaters either during school time or during school holidays.

The DHET's priorities for strengthening and expanding public TVET colleges and turning them into attractive institutions of choice for school leavers include improving their management and governance, developing the quality of teaching and learning, increasing their responsiveness to local labour markets, improving student support services, and developing their infrastructure. These initiatives will assist in decreasing the current demand placed on higher education institutions to accommodate the growing number of potential students.

A major criticism of the schooling system is its limited ability to provide quality students for the post-schooling sector. Universities have increased access and participation but must concurrently focus their attention on improving student performance. Challenges in the access, success and throughput rates are not only as a result of the challenges faced within the schooling sector but also internal. Factors that impact on students' success are diverse and include inadequate funding, poor living conditions, and insufficient support for both academic and social adjustment to university life (DHET, 2013). Universities are experiencing a shortage of academic staff and a lack of highly qualified staff. The key challenges facing this sector are to increase academic staff by attracting postgraduate students to academic careers, and improving the qualifications of existing staff.

This report recognises that quality of an education system is not just about measuring outputs of each discrete element of the schooling system in isolation. There is a conviction that it is important to understand how the various institutional elements of the education and training system articulate with each other. Measures of success for each phase or element in an education system each on its own cannot adequately meet the need to understand how the performance of one sector or grade level can affect the performance of the next grade – therefore the perspective of understanding interconnected measures of success. Education quality cannot be sacrificed in any one of these phases: 'Building national capabilities requires quality early childhood development, basic education, further and higher education' (NPC, 2011).

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