

National Conference on Whole-school Evaluation

29-30 September 2000

Caesar's Conference Centre, Gauteng

Directorate: Quality Assurance
Department of Education

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1. Conference Programme

ABBREVIATIONS

CBO	Community-based Education
DAS	Development Appraisal System
DoE	Department of Education
EAZ	Education Action Zone
EFA	Education For All
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
GENFETQA	General and Further Education Training and Quality Assurance Body
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council (United Kingdom)
FET	Further Education and Training
HoD	Head of Department
LRC	Learner Representative Council
MLA	Monitoring Learning Achievement
NAPTOSA	National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NILLD	National Institute for Lifelong Learning Development
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OBE	Outcomes-based Education
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SAOU	Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysunie
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
TIMS	Third International Mathematics and Science Survey
WSE	Whole-school Evaluation

CONFERENCE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Critical to the success of the implementation of the Tirisano Programme is the monitoring and evaluation of the performance of schools. For several years, there has been no national system of monitoring and evaluation. This has resulted in serious dysfunctionalities in some schools. The Whole-school Evaluation Policy has been developed as a mechanism to curb this problem. The Policy was launched by Education Minister, Professor Kader Asmal, MP, at a National Conference held in Gauteng from 29-30 September 2000.

Conference outcomes

- To enable the Minister to launch the National Policy on Whole-school Evaluation officially.
- To map out an appropriate strategy for the phasing in of this Policy.
- To enable the stakeholders to reflect on the findings of the MLA and EFA surveys.

Aim

The aim of the Conference was to engage a wide range of role players in issues of supervision and evaluation, using critical debate on the new policy framework and its criteria and guidelines for evaluation as a springboard.

Proposed subthemes

- International and national approaches to supervision, quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation.
- Challenges, opportunities and successful experiences in improving levels of performance in education systems.
- Using learning achievement as a key measure of performance in education.

OPENING REMARKS

Khetsi Lehoko

Deputy Director-General, Further Education and Training,
Department of Education

You will recall that, as soon as the Minister was appointed 18 months ago, he carried out a listening campaign on how we could take the education system forward. What emerged from that discussion was a perception of the need to improve the quality of provision in our schools. The Minister arrived at what he called the Tirisano Programme. One of the key elements of that Programme was the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education in our schools. At the beginning of this year, the education ministers visited schools to see how they were functioning. The recommendation that followed was that we needed a system-wide approach to visiting schools and assessing them on the basis of nationally agreed criteria. We therefore proposed to the Minister the need for a policy on whole-school evaluation. That process led to a draft policy document which we discussed and negotiated with teacher organisations. They raised a number of concerns which were integrated into the draft programme. We have subsequently gazetted the draft for public discussion: the closing date for submissions is 6 October 2000.

This Conference aims to create another opportunity to discuss the policy framework and its implementation. We have requested our provincial colleagues to appoint officials responsible for the implementation process, and, over the past five days, those officials have been engaged in a workshop on how to carry out this Policy. I look forward to the discussion on some of the pertinent issues in the Policy and how we can proceed collectively in raising the standards in our schools.

REFLECTIONS ON WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION

Terry Dillon

Consultant, United Kingdom

I always think about reflections as reflections on a moonlight night, reflections on a journey through France, reflections in a dark pool. And, somehow, reflections on school evaluation do not seem to have the same ring. But there is no doubt that school evaluation - especially external evaluation - gives opportunities for reflection. Some of those reflections are rather amusing and rather helpful, too, for those involved in this process.

Young children

There is excitement caused for very young children when a stranger is in the school and enters their classroom. It is fatal to ask one of them to show you their work because, within seconds, you have a long queue of children all wanting to show you what they have done and how well they have done it. They make you feel important. I remember walking down a corridor to assembly and suddenly feeling a little hand slip into mine and, looking down, seeing a beaming face looking up at me. And I remember a little girl coming up to me to say she liked my tie. Their openness is disarming.

I remember observing a child engaged in an exercise in which she was trying to estimate which articles would float and which would not. I watched as she put different articles into a water tank, obviously enjoying herself. After a while, I asked her which things floated and which didn't. Confidently she answered, "the big things sink and the little things float." I had to pursue this a little further and so put a large piece of wood in the tank. Low and behold, it floated. I then picked up a ball bearing and it sank straight to the bottom. She looked perplexed. I asked what she made of that. She thought for a minute, looked at me, shrugged and then said, "I'm wearing a new vest today."

I could go on about learners. Once a lad asked me as I was leaving a school, "Are you one of those inspector blokes?" "Well, yes," I replied. "Well, my dad says I must tell you that this school is hopeless." On the other hand, there are those who talk with great pride about their school, their educators and their friends. More senior learners often give you an invaluable evaluation of the school based on their years there.

Anxieties

However, I also reflect on the anxieties to staff caused by the prospect of external evaluation. Many years ago, as a team and I arrived on a Monday to carry out an evaluation, the staff walked out, not to return

until Friday lunchtime. When we asked them what the problem was, they said that they had nothing against the evaluators but they wished to make a political statement. I also remember walking into a class and the educator saying that he would not teach while I was present. He dismissed the class and so it was just the two of us sitting there.

So there are anxieties. I always wonder what goes through the school secretary's mind when you ring to say you wish to speak to the principal about a school evaluation. I have often wondered what their reaction is. Do they say, "Yippee, this will sort out so-and-so," or do they reach for the Valium or cup of tea in order to console the principal?

You have not, however, come to hear me reflect in this way. These stories, though, give some colour to the topic we are dealing with today. If we ignore those things that make the process living, then we forget what we are trying to do. School evaluation is about people, not about paper.

What is evaluation?

For me, it is a structured process through which judgements are reached about the quality of provision offered to learners and the benefits those learners gain, be they academic attainment or personal and social development.

In addition, it is a process in which the good work of a school can be affirmed and recommendations can be made that are designed to help the school improve. So evaluation is more than inspection and more than an audit.

I also see evaluation as being a combination of several elements: the internal process in a school, which is a continuous exercise, complemented by external evaluations at particular times. There are different ways of carrying out external evaluations. I pin my colours to the mast that says that external evaluation has a value.

Arguments against external evaluation

There are those who believe that any form of external evaluation is anathema and that schools should be left to develop their own systems and to use them to improve their practice and provision. They can point to a whole range of innovations that have been taken on board by schools, which are enabling them to evaluate their own practice, identify their strengths and those that need to be improved. Some assert that there are great dangers in an external system.

The obvious thing they point to is the undue anxiety and pressure external evaluations place on schools.

I sympathise with that point of view because I have been evaluated myself and have friends in the profession who still undergo periodic evaluation. Evaluations do cause anxiety. But it is important that we distinguish between anxiety and fear. At the Olympics, people at the peak of their performance show anxiety and, because they show anxiety, they perform better. So I do not think anxiety is the problem - fear is. It is the sort of policy we develop and the way that it is implemented that will make the difference between anxiety and fear. I don't expect principals or staff to jump for joy when they hear their school is to be evaluated. But I would expect that they set their stall out to perform as well as they can during the period of evaluation.

Those who have a case against external evaluation point out that the processes, procedures and criteria associated with national evaluation systems actually control how schools will develop. They believe that the inevitable outcome of a national system of external evaluation will be that schools are put in a strait-jacket. The fact that national criteria are formulated and seemingly imposed on schools through the whole-school evaluation process suggests that there is a hidden agenda to destroy the richness that comes from variety in school development and practice. It restricts schools innovating and developing because they are controlled by the idea of fulfilling the criteria. For example, criteria on the quality of management seem to suggest what the ideal management style is and that other styles of management are not acceptable.

They have a point. There is a danger that schools will assume that to please the external evaluators they have to behave in a certain way. I once observed an educator using an overhead projector in a lesson. He put on his transparencies and continued to teach, oblivious to the fact that the learners could not read the transparency because it was not focused. At the end of the lesson, during the brief feedback, the educator said he was quite pleased because it was the first time he had used the OHP and he thought it had gone quite well. He said he had used it because he knew that evaluators liked to see them being used. So, in my reflections on evaluation, I am under no illusions as to the dangers of an external system.

What we have got are the children as our allies. "Is there anything different this week?" "Well, yes, the principal's been in every day." My argument would be that where schools are working well, they will not see the need for that particular approach.

Other dangers are also evident. An external evaluation does not have to be a process that involves the school or even a visit to the school. The use of external indicators and statistics to evaluate a school so that it can be placed in a ranking order has serious implications. The emergence of examination and attendance league tables in some countries, for example, seem to provide a quick and easy way of judging school quality, and there is no doubt that this can be attractive to certain parts of the community of stakeholders.

Such tables appear to give a very quick and ready indicator of how well a school is doing.

I do not underestimate the value of self-evaluation and recognise that the school improvement movement is gathering pace in many countries, for example in Norway and the United States, and is being well-documented in research papers. Neither do I underestimate the developments that are taking place world-wide in the use of statistical analyses as a means of demonstrating how well schools are doing and stimulating them to try to do better. Universities, in particular, are producing a range of techniques that can be used by schools to analyse the quality of their work. Schools in some countries - the UK, the United States and Australia, for example - have access to techniques that enable them to begin the process of measuring the extent to which they are adding value to learners' standards of attainment, and to their personal and social development, and to benchmark these against other schools. This has led to some schools becoming more conscious of the areas for improvement.

Arguments for external evaluation

There is no doubt, and it is generally recognised, that such tables can be unjust to a school if they are taken too seriously. This is because they rarely take into consideration any special circumstances that may be affecting particular schools. But I also think that those who oppose the idea of the process of external evaluation on principle do not fully understand how evaluators are expected to work. It is not the evaluator's job to use criteria indiscriminately and to take in their own baggage and say that it must be done in a particular way. The school's performance is measured against its outcomes, outcomes that are reflected in the criteria, but the evaluator does not dictate how the school achieves those outcomes.

For example, a criterion in the new South African model to be used when supervisors are evaluating the quality of teaching is that lessons should be planned. Although a description is used to help the evaluator, no specific method of planning is stipulated. The effectiveness of the lessons will lead to a judgement of the effectiveness of the planning. If the lessons help learners to learn in a logical and progressive way and to raise their standards in relation to national expectations, then the way the educator has planned is of no real consequence. The essence is that, whatever the planning, it has been effective. It would be evident from the success of the lesson that the educator had thought through what he was going to do, had clear objectives and prepared appropriate teaching strategies. On exceptional occasions, there may be such spontaneity about a successful lesson that the original planning is ignored. The educator takes advantage of a situation that is rich in opportunities for the learners. It will be the outcome of the lesson - what learners know, understand and can do, and the progress that they make in their learning - that will be key.

There is a tendency to feel that a teacher's classroom is a teacher's kingdom - and for anyone else to step

into the kingdom is against the profession. But it is in the classroom where you see what is happening and how it is affecting what pupils are learning and what standards they are reaching. To those who say we must leave classroom observation out of the equation, I would ask, “If you have the most brilliant management in a school, how do you know if the intention behind the structure is being achieved?” The only way you will see if it is being achieved, is to see what happens to children in the classroom. If we don’t know what’s happening in the classroom, we can’t measure the effectiveness of the management structure, basic functionality of the school, the governance, etc. So I make a plea to see the significance of classroom observation and to see it as evidence to help the school make improvements.

We need to look at the outcomes and then make a judgement about the way that the school is operating. A national policy can provide opportunities for schools and educators to provide examples of successful practice. My experience in South Africa suggests that there is such diversity in provision that it will militate against a model that results in the cloning of schools.

I accept that evaluation does not itself lead to improvement. But effective evaluation suggests that what has been learned will be used to improve the school. It implies that improvement will follow. Words like inspection or audit suggest looking at a situation as it is in order to report on what is happening at the moment. Evaluation carries with it much more user-friendly connotations and the prospect that improvement will follow.

A balance of techniques

My contention is that both self and external evaluations have their parts to play in ensuring that schools improve. That is why the South African Policy on Whole-school Evaluation emphasises the link between the two.

My reflections have led me to believe that external evaluation is one of a package of methods that can help schools to improve. But I go further to say that it is an essential element in that package - it is not an option. A good external system provides the rigour across a whole range of identifiable focus areas that is not often present where self-evaluation stands alone. Good external evaluations demonstrate to schools what rigour is required if self-evaluations are to be successful. The willingness of schools to engage in evaluating classroom practice, in evaluating their performance in examinations through careful analysis of data, and in measuring what they add in value to children’s education have been massively stimulated by external evaluation.

To take this a step further, the introduction of several additional, properly trained and accredited people into the school allows for a speedy and in-depth study of key areas of provision that would be difficult for

a school to replicate. For example, a team of four supervisors in a primary school could collect more evidence on teaching and learning through visiting up to 30 lessons in their three day evaluation than many schools would or could possibly do in a year.

A further benefit of a good national system of external evaluation is that it provides evidence and data that are valuable to policy makers. You will not get that from stand-alone evaluations in schools. It also provides examples of good practice. If something is working well in one school, it can be shared with other schools and be a basis for national improvements. It also gives us an agenda for school improvement because we begin to identify the common strengths and the common problems nationally.

Essentials of a good external evaluation

I think there are certain principles that need to be present if external evaluation is to do the job intended. It is these principles that have been built into the policy for South Africa and are a key part of the training of future supervisors.

In your discussions today on the policy document think about these questions:

- Is the Whole-school Evaluation Policy understandable to professionals and non-professionals? Is it expressed in a language that is clear and unequivocal?
- Is the Policy - and its supporting guidelines and criteria - expressed clearly enough so that all those involved will interpret it in a consistent way so that there are no misunderstandings of purpose and method of implementation?
- Does the evaluation policy recognise and respect the school's own evaluation procedures and does it use them as part of the process? Does it allow for professional co-operation in the search for improvement without descending into familiarisation? Does it allow people to become so familiar with each other that they lose the ability to make hard judgements?
- Does the policy and process set out to make a significant difference to the quality of provision to children and the standards they reach? Do they avoid being involved in trivia? Evaluation should be about saying, "If you do these things it will make a significant difference to the service you are providing."
- Are the policies, procedures and practices flexible enough to take into account the different circumstances of schools in South Africa, so that they can all be evaluated fairly and valid comparisons can be made?
- Do the guidelines and the criteria indicate that we can arrive at precise and accurate judgements about the quality of education? Do they link judgement with evidence?
- Does it sufficiently require judgements about the standards that learners reach in attainment, social and personal development? Is it talking about the whole child?

- Is the Policy likely to lead to judgements that will be clearly reported to the school and to the various stakeholders?
- Is it working constructively to help schools to improve?

Conclusion

I have been privileged to work in South Africa at a time when it is responding to an identified need to improve the quality of educational provision and to raise learners' standards of achievement in many of its schools. It is seeking to introduce and link a range of initiatives. One of these initiatives is whole-school evaluation. I have been working with a group of potential supervisors over the last week, helping them to understand and develop the techniques and skills required for successful school evaluation. I have been extremely impressed with their commitment and desire to succeed. I will certainly add that experience to my positive reflections on whole-school evaluation.

Thank you.

Comments and issues raised

- While the school is put under the microscope in external evaluations, other parts of the education system, such as provincial and national departments, should also be exposed to scrutiny.

Terry Dillon: Supervisors are not policy makers. Instead, they should report on what they see. This may influence policy because reports will go to district officials and then be collated and passed on to the provincial and national departments. Important policy issues reported at school level will therefore be brought to the attention of policy makers.

- How do we make sure that problems reported by supervisors regarding inadequate resources in a school will be dealt with?

Terry Dillon: Once the reports are made public, the Department of Education will have to provide explanations about lack of delivery.

- Clarity is also needed on how the evaluation system links the district level and schools.

- How is an evaluation different from an audit and an inspection?

Terry Dillon: Inspection is once-off, with no procedure for improving the schools. Inspection is judgmental. An audit implies that people go into a school and check that it is as it should be, much like auditing financial statements. With both inspection and audit, there is a danger of schools having things done to them without really being part of a process for improvement. Inspections and audits tell schools

where they are - and most schools know that. Evaluation, on the other hand, tries to pinpoint where a school is on a continuum between a school in crisis and the perfect school. Recommendations can then be made that will take the school a step closer to being a perfect school. While recommendations must make a significant difference to a school, there is also no point in giving it impossible recommendations.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN MODEL FOR WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION

Dr Nomsa Mgijima

Chief Director, Quality Assurance and NILLD

Department of Education

The South African model for whole-school evaluation arose from the Tirisano Programme, and specifically from Programme 2, which focuses on the issue of school effectiveness. Whole-school evaluation is one intervention to move schools that are in a critical situation along the path to becoming effective schools.

I will talk about the broader policy issues and try to make connections between different issues. It is a very difficult task to summarise work that has been done over a long period of time by many different people. This policy document was developed as a joint venture. The National Committee on Quality Assurance began by mapping out how we wanted the Policy to be shaped and the key elements of the Policy. Many people expressed views and opinions, and these were constantly fed back to Terry Dillon whose key responsibility was to collate these comments into a proper document. Although we have drawn on the experience of the UK, we have tried to work out a national policy on whole-school evaluation. However, it is clear that the debate is not about to end.

Background and rationale

There are many whole-school evaluation models which differ in approach and scope. They have their own unique strengths and limitations, but they remain essential instruments for informed decision making in most areas of policy intervention.

I emphasise the whole in whole-school evaluation to highlight the point that the purpose of this Policy is not to look at individual aspects of the school, but to look at the school as a unit.

Quality assurance and evaluation

Quality assurance involves the establishment of processes to improve, monitor, evaluate and report publicly on a school's performance against predetermined goals and agreed outcomes.

The Whole-school Evaluation Framework must be understood as a tool both for the improvement of a school's performance and the more effective accountability of the school system.

Mandate

In the National Education Policy Act (No. 27, 1996), the Minister is mandated to direct:

that standards of education provision, delivery and performance in the system be monitored and evaluated, annually or at specified intervals, with the object of assessing progress in complying with the provisions of the Constitution and with the national education policy.

Aims of whole-school evaluation

- To establish a national system for monitoring and evaluating the quality of education on a continuous and permanent basis. To make sure that the system is sustainable.
- To provide an information base for policy interventions to improve performance standards in terms of national goals.
- To develop methods and indicators for long-term monitoring and evaluation by the school, district and supervisory levels to increase levels of accountability within the system.

Key principles

- Evaluations must be for quality improvement and control of standards.
- All evaluation activities must be characterised by openness and collaboration.
- Evaluations must determine whether schools fulfil their responsibilities to enable our learners to meet/exceed their expectations.
- Evaluations must be standardised and consistent. The use of criteria and the pre-set instruments should help standardise the process until such time that the policies or guidelines are changed.
- A full range of inputs, processes and outcomes must be evaluated to give a holistic picture of the school's performance.
- A well-designed capacity-building programme is key to a successful evaluation process.
- Capacity sharing at all levels is needed to sustain the process.
- Observation of ethics procedures and the prescribed code of conduct must be adhered to.
- The Department must set a clear complaints procedure to deal with unfair treatment.

Areas for evaluation

- School: setting, characteristics, policies, practices, and the general learning environment, including ethos, culture, etc.
- Learners: background, characteristics, attitudes, behaviour, and levels of achievement.
- Educators: background, characteristics, qualifications, experience, practices, attitudes and behaviour.

The areas that must be evaluated include:

1. Basic functionality of the school;
2. leadership, management and communication;
3. governance and relationships;
4. quality of teaching and educator development;
5. curriculum provision and resources;
6. learner achievement;
7. school safety, security and discipline;
8. school infrastructure, and
9. parents and community.

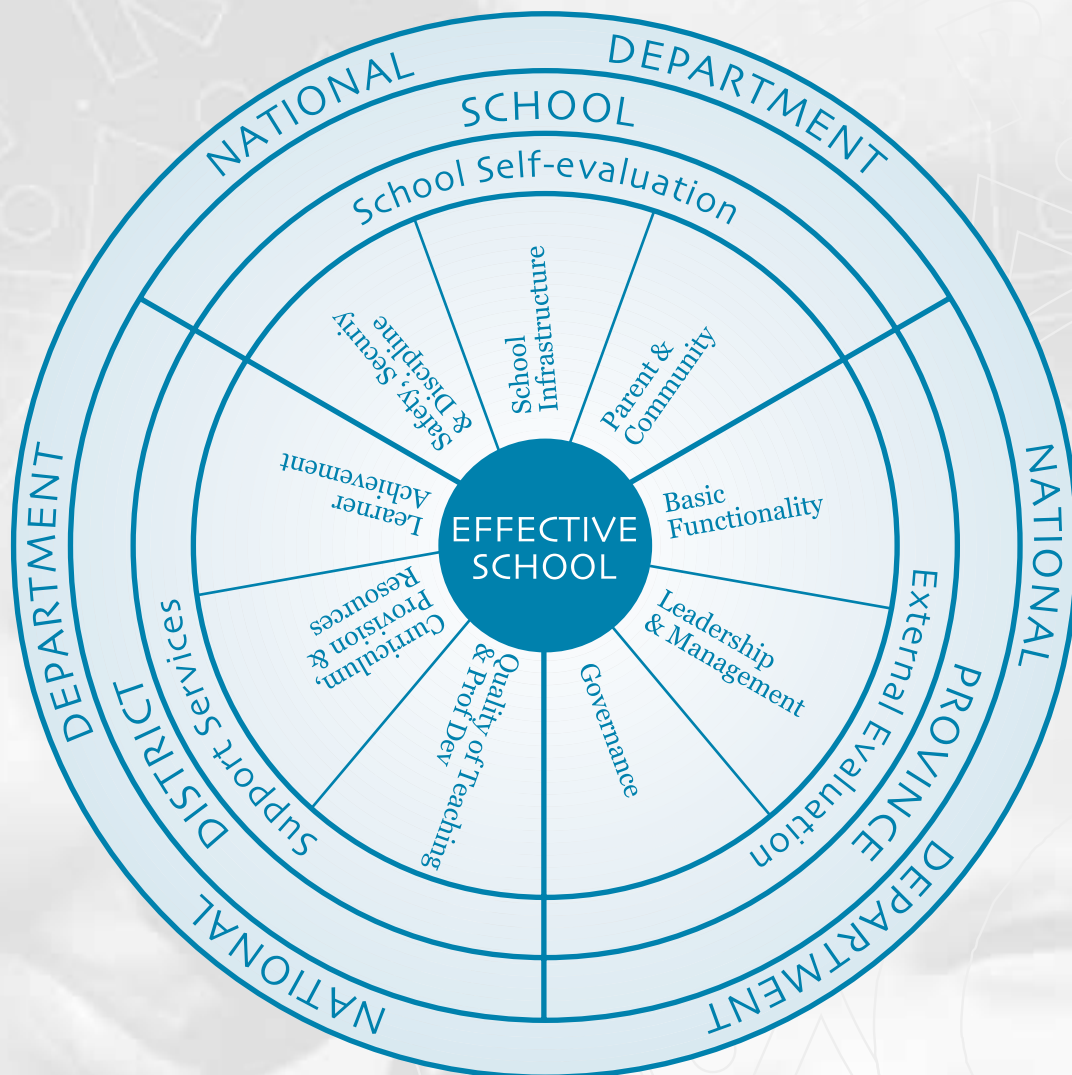
A school's performance in these areas will be rated using a five-point scale. Input, process and output indicators are to be used.

Evaluation process

- The evaluation process will begin with pre-evaluation surveys and visits.
- Schools will be expected to do self-evaluations when the system is fully established. Evaluation criteria should make it consistent.
- Detailed audits and reviews - three to five day periods will be set for school evaluation depending on how effective the school is. Effective schools may not need five-day evaluations.
- Post-evaluation reporting: There will be feedback to schools and SGBs. There may be a need to produce three different versions of the report - for parents, for staff and for the public generally. We had lengthy discussions on whether it was necessary to have unanimous judgements on the performance of a school by the supervisors. The leader of the team will have to make sure that judgements are acceptable to all members of the team.

Evaluation model

Please see overleaf.



WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION MODEL

Implementation

- The Policy is to be implemented on 1 January 2001.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on sustaining the capacity-building programme as a step towards attaining the desired level of implementation.
- Resources need to be provided to improve access of supervisors to the schools. This includes making sure supervisors have a car to get to the schools. We are experimenting with the idea of having supervisors operate from the boots of their cars.
- Disparities in the allocation of professional support services remain the most serious threat to the successful implementation of the Policy. Such disparities need to be redressed.
- More efforts are needed in order to integrate and facilitate efficient delivery of education services within disparate policy initiatives.
- The Ministry will continue to monitor all phases of implementation in all provinces: to give support, to share capacity, to review the Policy, if necessary.

Standards regarding judgement

Judgement should be:

- Secure;
- first-hand;
- reliable;
- valid;
- comprehensive, and
- corporate.

Summary

- Questions about the effectiveness and efficiency of the school system must be answered primarily in relation to the achievement of learning outcomes.
- The school as a whole is responsible for the education of its learners, within the framework of the policies set by government.
- This initiative is a shift from the old paradigm where external evaluations made judgements purely on inputs. The new paradigm is a joint collaboration between schools, districts and supervisory units making judgements about the school looking at both inputs and outcomes.
- The devolution of increased responsibility to schools needs to be accompanied by a mechanism through which schools can account for the decisions they make.
- Accountability: schools must demonstrate that they are performing effectively in terms of the outcomes learners achieve.

- While individual reporting has been a feature of teacher practice, the notion of evaluation and reporting on performance at the school level is largely new.

Conclusion

We cannot and must not tolerate failing schools. We need to stop making excuses and get on with the business of fixing our schools. We have the unique opportunity to do what is best for our children. This should be our great patriotic cause, our national mission: Giving all our children a world-class education by putting standards of excellence into action.


Richard Riley, US Department of Education, 18 February 1997

Comments and issues raised

- Khetsi Lehoko: If the education system does not support the suggested improvements, then the exercise has been a waste of time. We agreed with the Minister of Education that part of the education policy reserve fund should be put aside to support this process.
- SADTU: There are many processes already in place to look at quality in education - the NQF processes, one of the functions of SETAs is to look at quality, and GENFETQA is aimed at enhancing and enforcing quality. We need clarity on how these processes link and on where the focus for capacity building should be. How do we inter-link policies that are in place with this new Policy?
- How will this supervisory function be aligned with the subject advisory service?
- The supervisory unit, which will ideally be located in provincial offices, will be separate from district support services. The district offices need to take forward the recommendations of the supervisory unit, so these two units must act separately. We can't have the same person acting as both player and referee. We must build the capacity of district officials to respond to reports from supervisors.
- Are SGBs in a position to assist in evaluating schools and in implementing the Policy? Has there been, or will there be, sufficient capacity building for SGBs?
- This process seems to forget the enormous disparities that exist in the conditions of schools. How do you apply a uniform instrument to very different conditions?
- Does the Policy only target under-performing schools? It seems schools with a 100% pass rate will not need to be evaluated.
- How will the Department ensure the sustainability of this strategy? Currently it appears to be a once-off arrangement.
- How do we define a dysfunctional school? We often think of poorly performing township schools as dysfunctional. But Model C schools - where many of the students are black and the teaching staff are white - may be dysfunctional for the black students because the schools have not been able to provide a supportive environment for them. These schools must show how they plan to have a more representative teaching staff. For this policy to succeed, it must address schools with differing degrees of functionality

and dysfunctionality.

- There is very little said in the document on redress. Schools that are well resourced and performing well will be heaped with praise, while poor schools may perform poorly. Redress should be built into the Policy.
- Some of the schools that had a 0% pass rate in the Senior Certificate last year have proper infrastructure, while at the same time teachers in more difficult conditions had better results. The process we are introducing should affirm those performing well in a systematic way and assist those that are under-performing. The aim of the Policy is to raise the level of accountability and also to provide support to teachers. The intention is not to target anybody.
- School performance should not be reported purely in terms of matric results.
- The Policy should also include measures for keeping public education officials in the district, provincial and national offices accountable.
- Are early learning schools, ABET centres, etc., covered by this Policy?
- This evaluation excludes technical colleges. The questions you would ask at a technical college are not necessarily asked in a school - e.g. links with industry.
- What is the status of the supervisors in terms of employment and what are the labour relation implications if a supervisor does not perform? What are the implications of de-registering him/her?
- Supervisors who are not able to perform to standard will be de-registered but this does not mean they will be taken out of the system. If their skills are not up to scratch, they may require further training.
- We are recruiting staff for the supervisor positions from people on the payroll of the Department. Initially we wanted separate independent departments, but there are not sufficient funds to employ additional staff.
- When the evaluation reports are shared with parents, the context in which the school functions must be explained. For example, parents should be told what the district was supposed to do for the school. The quality of the school must be reported in relation to the quality of the entire system.
- What is the Department's advocacy strategy for this Policy? Has the ground been prepared for it so that people accept its implementation? Has the Department considered the complexity and language of the instruments?
- Dr Mgijima: On advocacy, we have begun to develop materials to make people aware of the Policy, including a video, photographs, leaflets, posters and a newsletter. The people who will be trained as supervisors will be central in disseminating the Policy. They will trial the instruments in the schools and so the Policy will remain in draft form. The advocacy Process will run simultaneously with the training of supervisors - they will have to demonstrate their ability to win over the schools and the districts, otherwise this process will not happen in partnership.
- A strength of this new Policy is that a large amount of information will be collected and will have to be analysed. How will this new, huge database be operationalised? Where will it be located in relation to



provincial and national levels?

- The evaluation system will be linking with a whole range of other systems. So, the database must be sophisticated enough to deal with information coming in from different strands. WSE is not contrary to other efforts and initiatives happening in other parts of the system. WSE is about making judgements about how those initiatives improve the performance of schools. So it complements other initiatives already happening in schools.
- *Terry Dillon:* We spent some time discussing sampling and which sort of schools would be looked at. There must be a fair and balanced sample of schools evaluated so that we can point out that there are strengths in the system and that these strengths can be shared.
- A key component of WSE is the shift from individual teacher evaluation to school evaluation. So evaluations do not make statements about individual teachers. Instead, the Policy talks about teaching. It is an overview of the quality of teaching across the system.

LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL POLICY ON WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION

Professor Kader Asmal, MP
Minister of Education

International guests, colleagues and friends, ladies and gentlemen.

This Conference is a compendium of all other conferences we have had - it sets the pace for development and growth in education. It is also the result of enormous hard work. This Conference is the result of policy formulation over the past three years and it is important to the implementation of Tirisano implemented in January this year.

So welcome to this Conference.

This Conference was called to discuss the important - and burning - issue of how to raise standards of performance in our schools. Most people know that the policies developed by the Ministry of Education since 1994 have radically shifted the direction and vision of the education system through the commitment of two key priorities, namely achieving equitable access to education and improving the quality of its provision.

Basic policy and legislation, as well as administrative infrastructure, are already in place - in some instances they need to be fine tuned - to open up access to a wide range of education opportunities for our learners. However, improving the quality of learning requires a strategy that focuses on fundamental changes, growth and development in schools. This forces us to address sincerely and honestly the challenge of re-institutionalising school supervision, monitoring and evaluation that is accountability-orientated. The inspections of the last regime failed us. And because they failed us and because they were dishonest, they had no legitimacy. What has happened since then is that we have had to consider different kinds of supervisory measures because we now have to relate to a democratic order. In other words, how do we work the system? We cannot work against the system because the system is ours - it is part of the democratic order. So we have to think differently, we have to think progressively on this matter. As one writer once said, "Thomas Edison did not tinker with candles in order to make them burn better, he invented something new - the light bulb."

So we are in the process of not tinkering with the system. We have to work out a system for ourselves to deal with our concrete needs, which are fundamentally different from any other country. What we needed was an unprecedented era of change. The first intent was to address the discriminatory, unbalanced

and inequitable distribution of individual services. How do we deal and grapple with the horrors of the past?

The second intent was to rise to new challenges domestically, regionally and internationally. I just heard the President say this morning that we have to think about our work in a regional, continental and international sense. So we should be interested in what the World Bank is trying to do in education. We should be interested in the threats of unregulated private sector intervention in the secondary school sector. Unless you have a philosophical basis on which you work, you cannot see the effects to the poorest of the poor that the private sector brings.

We have to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The 1990s have been a time of enormous vibrancy and efforts to transform and reconstruct the education system in order to realise the goal of providing quality basic education for all South Africans - a right that is enshrined in our Constitution.

Since taking up office in June 1999, my Department, building on the work of my predecessor, has pursued a comprehensive effort to improve quality and thereby restore public confidence in our public education system. The parents and public want to see schools that are working hard, that start and end on time, that conduct the business of education in a disciplined manner; and more importantly, that produce good and satisfying results. But you can't change the legacy of the past in one generation. South Africans can be very parochial. We can be very self-critical but I think we go too far, frankly, if you say the systems are not working. It is not true.

Through the Tirisano Programme and its implementation plan, we have set ourselves and our partners the task of raising quality standards, promoting accountability and improving learner achievement levels. An enormous amount of work has been done. Teachers, learners and parents are all accountable for the performance of their schools. They are also accountable to each other and to the public at large. We are promoting increased parental and community involvement, fighting to keep our schools safe and free of abusive substances, enhancing teacher support and development, and rewarding excellence in teaching through our special teachers' awards programme.

We realise that no South African learner deserves to get second class education. In Gauteng the slogan has been, "The African child deserves the best". We are talking about investing in human capital in this age of knowledge. We must dedicate ourselves to ensuring that all schools provide learners with the skills and knowledge they need to compete successfully in the global economy. In the global economy we don't make the ground rules, and so you can say we must abolish globalisation because it is the worst thing since sin, but you can't escape from it. What we have to work out is how to react to globalisation. The econo-

my out there wants new ways and skills and so we must unlock the potential of every young learner in South Africa.

We are mindful of the challenges facing us - problems such as poverty, limited resources, HIV/AIDS, poor teacher training, unsafe learning environments and the like - but we cannot allow these to thwart and frustrate our efforts to improve our schools. We must overcome the spiral of disadvantage in which alienation from, or failure within, the education system is passed from one generation to another. We must remember that there are contending demands on the exchequer - there are ten million people without water in South Africa, people without access to housing, 21 million of our people do not have sanitation, 30% of schools still do not have electricity. The problems we face are enormous and you have to fight with contending claims for limited resources. Education gets 21% of the national budget, which puts us highest in the middle income countries. Higher education gets between 13% and 14 % of the education budget, which puts us with the OECD countries. We can't make claims for more money. We have to work on the basis that we use the resources we have as efficiently as possible with the emphasis on innovation and creativity and on training.

Our primary responsibility is to make every public school a quality environment that enhances teaching and learning. We have made appeals to the Cabinet to say that one out of four schools may not be fit for children, and we've gone to Cabinet and made a very emotional case for infrastructural development in schools. We have to target the areas of greatest need since we cannot meet all the needs in one stroke. Improving the performances of our schools is hard work but it remains the responsibility of each and every one of us - ministers, directors general, heads of departments, high schools and universities. I make a special call on universities because they are not playing a full role in developing educational resources, either through debate or injecting large numbers of teachers into schools. Each one of us must make an effort. If we do not, we would be sending a devastating message to the children of this country about our commitment to their rights and wellbeing and to the nation's future in general. To succeed, we need the commitment, imagination and drive of all those working in our schools. We must set aside the doubts of the cynics and the corrosion of the perpetual sceptics. We must replace the culture of complacency with commitment to success. This is an indication of a movement towards greater change.

Let me now turn to the central purpose of this Conference and begin by stating that the timing of this Conference is extremely opportune. We are very pleased that we could bring together such a formidable grouping of educational leaders and practitioners. Our key purpose is to present to you the Whole-school Evaluation Policy Framework. This is an attempt to initiate a more intensive critical debate on the best means for improving the effectiveness and productivity of our schools. This policy initiative represents an unparalleled effort to establish a mechanism of "taking stock" of the state of education in the whole coun-

try and examining the progress towards achieving our key policy goals.

When whole-school evaluation takes place, we look at schooling. The reports will tell us if schooling is taking place in a school without any roof, where there's no lock-up facility to keep the books, or if there is no floor and every time it rains it creates a mud bath in the classroom. We want those reports, because there is no special pleading allowed in the fight for resources. We want concrete examples so we can spread out the resources to deal with the worst cases of deprivation and denial. It provides a process within a framework of professionally monitored standards, using a model that depends for its integrity on fair, defensible and approved criteria, procedures and instruments that are applied in an impartial, transparent and systematic fashion to all our schools.

To give more emphasis to the importance of the proceedings of this Conference, let me further spell out that this approach reflects a significant trend emerging internationally, that is, the shift from the traditional focus on inputs to a concern for processes and outputs. Our view is that the proper unit on which to focus attention is primarily the school. The school is the place where all elements converge: teaching, learning, curriculum, administration, support, assessment, etc. Thus, the key to successful quality improvement is to ensure that schools function as harmonious and effective organisms. In this regard, the Tirisano Programme has provided for a re-alignment of cross-cutting organisational elements to enable schools to move towards specific targets. We are strengthening our efforts to provide schools with the resources and the operational latitude needed to enable them to work towards those targets.

All the evidence in the literature indicates that standards rise fastest where schools themselves take responsibility for their own improvement. But schools need the right balance of inducement - not pressure - and support from the government to stimulate continuous improvement and to tackle under-performance. I believe in the last year or two that there has been a small change. I do not see children walking around at 11 o'clock in Pretoria, Langa and Kayelitsha as I used to. It is a small change. It is a change in atmosphere and it shows that where there is large public opinion behind movement and development then it will be reflected in what happens. So all schools will be required to set challenging targets for improvement, which must be discussed with, and approved by, the district offices. The supervisors that we are appointing and training must ensure that the target setting process does in fact improve performance standards in the system.

Clearly, no quality improvement strategy can succeed without real accountability for results, as measured by student achievement. The results of the Grade 12 examinations as well as the surveys conducted towards monitoring learning achievements - namely the Third International Maths and Science Survey (TIMS) and the Education for All (EFA) 2000 Assessment - have amply demonstrated persistently poor

academic performance at the various levels of the system. So we have to have this assessment. There's one description of South Africa as having the worst education system in the world. What basis is this? In Angola, they have no education system at all. This kind of description of ourselves disempowers people and it removes their capacity to say we can affect our environment. This clearly calls for serious intervention on our part as government to hold accountable those schools that fail to make progress in educating learners to higher standards. Poor-quality schools and teachers must be forced to aim for excellence, while we must hasten to identify and push modest or poor performance to higher standards.

Of course we look at the services, we look at the geography of the schools, what physical capacity they have. The amount of money we have spent on learner materials has increased from R200 million three years ago to R900 million. There is, in fact, a commitment to turning around low-performing schools and celebrating schools that have lifted themselves up.

Through systematic evaluation, we are establishing sound and consistent national measures of learner achievement in each transitional stage of the national curriculum, in Grades 3, 6, 9 and 12. The results we already have show that learners, whatever their background, can achieve a great deal if they are well taught and well motivated. But the results also show that schools with similar intakes of learners can achieve widely differing results. The differences are a measure of a school's effectiveness in teaching and motivating learners. As we have seen with the publication of matric results, the performance data benefit parents in making choices for their children and planners/decision makers in allocating resources, but more importantly, they must act as a spur to improve performance by informing schools of their strengths and weaknesses.

The real challenge for all of us is to turn around low-performing schools and help them on a very steep upward trend. We can only do this by collecting reliable data through school evaluations and making available information on what works and what does not work. In order to accomplish this, I directed my Department in January, when I launched the Tirisano Programme, to produce a policy framework on whole-school evaluation, and to train a core group of 200 supervisors who will go into our schools in January 2001 and begin evaluating them in a highly professional manner.

Our gathering today is to celebrate the achievements on these two fronts. The first group of forty supervisors was introduced to Module 1 of the four-module training programme from 24-28 September. The training on this module will continue until October 13. The second module will be a two-week block of training in November and the last one will be delivered in February 2001. The Policy itself was gazetted on 6 September with the closing date of 6 October for the public to make their comments. This follows a long process of consultations with all provincial head offices and teacher organisations.

Therefore, as representatives of the South African citizenry, we must commit ourselves to the successful implementation of this policy initiative. Of course, there will have to be changes and amendments, of course we will learn from experience. In some provinces they have already started - in Gauteng they have started with Education Action Zones, in KwaZulu-Natal with the School Improvement Initiative, in the Western Cape with the Whole-school Development. To what extent they mesh with the national programme will have to be looked at. No one wants to deny local initiative, but the basic foundations must be there and it must be a school-based programme - any diversion from that must go through me as custodian. The National Education Policy Act, Norms and Standards, Further Education and Training Act, South African Qualifications Act all monitor achievements so there is a very important legal basis for this intervention. Poor-quality education is an affront to human dignity and a major barrier to eliminating poverty and to sustainable development.

I implore you, as I did in January, to join with my Ministry and government to make the crusade for higher standards in education a reality in every school and in every classroom in our country. This means being accountable for what we do. Accountability must be seen as an ongoing conversation and a plan of action that is constantly evolving and changing, not a statement of finality. It is important to note that accountability depends on, though is not just limited to, good relevant data, on information about learners for the conversations with parents, and on the system for discussions with the public. Accountability forces everyone to look forward with a focus on learning and action, not pointing fingers backwards with a focus on blame or nostalgia for what used to be. We must make a joint drive to raise standards.

This is an exciting time to be involved in education change. It's clear that no one has absolute answers, and we need to work together both nationally and provincially. We cannot afford to reinvent the wheels already fallen off the discarded wagon. There is a lot at stake. Our learners deserve the best of what we can provide so that they can move forward with optimism and hope. Collectively, our challenge is to make accountability through school evaluation work so that standards of achievement improve for both learners and the system as a whole.

Siyabonga.

THE UNITED KINGDOM'S EXPERIENCE OF INSPECTION

Mark Griffiths

Senior Inspector, Further Education Funding Council,
United Kingdom

I would like to share with you some experiences arising from the inspection of further education in England, where we have been developing links between inspection and quality improvement over several years. I intend to focus on some of the characteristics of our arrangements in order to highlight issues you might consider. I am not, however, trying to offer you a particular model of how to do things. I simply want to provide an input into your debate about the most appropriate arrangements for South Africa.

Let me begin by outlining the context of further education in England.

Context

There are about 430 colleges of further education and they range in size from those with less than 1,000 students to some with more than 25,000 students. In total, these colleges cater for about four million students per year: mostly adults, mostly studying part-time. Colleges are located in both urban and rural areas. There are some colleges that specialise in areas such as art and design or agriculture. There are about 100 that mainly focus on provision for 16 to 18 year old students. Overall, there are about 7,000 different qualifications available to those undertaking further education. The great majority are vocational.

The Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) is a national body set up to administer further education. Its duties were set out in law in 1992. The FEFC's three main duties are: funding - dispensing three billion pounds per year; ensuring that there is adequate and sufficient provision for further education and training in colleges, and quality assessment. This last is the inspectorate's main concern.

The inspectorate

The inspectorate is based within the FEFC. It is co-ordinated nationally but works through nine regional teams. The inspectorate comprises about 85 full-time and 320 part-time inspectors. Many part-time inspectors work in senior positions in colleges. Colleges are inspected in a four-year cycle. The work of the inspectorate is overseen by an independent committee that includes principals of colleges, governors, a student representative and people from business.

Inspection

The focus of inspection is on the experience of learners. The inspectorate is not there to report on individual teachers and there is no naming of teachers in inspection reports. Lesson observation is a key feature of inspectors' work but they also interview students, staff, members of the community - where appropriate - and governors. In addition, they scrutinise students' work and refer to a wide range of other documentary evidence. Apart from assessing curriculum delivery, inspectors look at 'whole college' provision: governance; management; general resources; quality assurance, and student support.

Inspectors identify the strengths and weaknesses of provision and their summary judgements are expressed as grades. Typically, between nine and 13 aspects of provision are graded. This will include the five aspects of whole college provision and anywhere between four and eight curriculum areas. All inspection reports are published.

Self-assessment is integral to the process of inspection. Before their inspection, a college will carry out a self-assessment that is used to help plan the inspection and to identify issues which might be followed up during the inspection. More importantly, self-assessment has had a key role in helping colleges understand what is involved in carrying out objective assessment and making judgements. It has also helped them understand that these processes can be used to drive quality improvement.

This mutual understanding between inspectors and college staff is important. It is my view that well-focused quality improvement depends on inspection being carried out and received in a constructive way. It is essential that inspectors develop the right kind of relationship with those who are inspected if a strong culture of quality improvement is to be ensured. In other words, the practice of inspection is much more significant, in relation to raising standards, than the words used to describe the process of inspection (for example, 'assessment' or 'evaluation') or the title of inspectors, themselves (for example, 'evaluators' or 'supervisors').

In this regard, I strongly believe inspection should have two, clear overriding purposes:

1. To underpin public accountability to a wide audience, including parents, students, the general public and government. All these people have a right to know whether education is effective and making good use of public funding.
2. To act as a catalyst for quality improvement for the benefit of learners. Inspection must be a means to an end. Inspectors are there to help make things better, and the people who benefit from the inspection have to be the learners.

Over the past four years, in particular, we have become much clearer within the FEFC about the value of a model of inspection that supports quality improvement. It is true to say that when we commenced inspection, seven years ago, it was mainly concerned with accountability.

Key elements

I want to pick out three key elements which have helped to develop the culture of inspection in English further education, and which, I believe, have been important in making inspection useful to those who are inspected.

Openness

The framework for college inspection was agreed through consultation. We first established an advisory group of college principals to help formulate a draft framework and then asked all colleges to comment on the draft before it was finalised. This ensured that colleges were 'signed up' to the inspection arrangements from the outset.

Colleges are involved in their inspection. There is a member of staff from each inspected college who shadows the inspection team throughout the inspection. This person can attend all meetings of inspectors and contribute to discussions. This aspect of our arrangements is highly valued by colleges. It is also valued by the inspectors because one of the characteristics of inspection is that it is carried out during the period of one week of intensive activity. In this circumstance, it is easy for an inspector to miss or misinterpret evidence. It is therefore useful to have someone from the college always available to clarify issues as they arise.

There is frequent informal feedback to college staff during an inspection. Every day inspectors inform the college of emerging findings. We follow a doctrine of 'no surprises'. The provision of feedback also gives the college a chance to point inspectors to, or assemble, evidence which will help the inspection team reach fair judgements.

An appeals procedure is built into the inspection process. If a college believes an inspectorate judgement is wrong, or the inspection process has not been carried out appropriately, there is a standard appeals procedure that may culminate in an appeal to an independent ombudsman.

Colleges see their report before publication so that they can ensure the facts are correct.

Finally, each college is invited to fill in an evaluation form on the inspection. Every year these evaluations

are collated and independently analysed, and a report on the work of the inspectorate is published.

Rigour

It is important that the process of inspection is seen to be rigorous. Inspectors go through a national training programme and there is a national register of inspectors. A public handbook of inspection is available so that everyone knows how we go about doing inspections.

National benchmarking data on student retention and achievement are available. They take into account the different circumstances of colleges - for example, those that operate in areas of particular economic deprivation. The benchmarks are derived from colleges' own data. They are used to measure performance and set targets.

Inspectors' judgements are moderated. If inspectors conclude that provision is unsatisfactory, they have to go through a moderation process to ensure that their judgements are fair. The same process is used to moderate judgements about provision considered outstanding. The inspectorate as a whole may be put under scrutiny by the FEFC's internal audit service and the National Audit Office that reports to parliament. The greatest scrutiny experienced by the inspectorate is, however, from colleges themselves. All colleges receive all the inspectorate's published reports. They keep a close eye on the consistency of the inspectorate's work.

Overall, the aim of our inspection system is to be objective and consistent.

Support

If people do not feel supported by inspection, if they see it as punitive or aggressive, they will not have a strong motivation to improve. Preparatory visits by inspectors to colleges before inspection are important in reassuring staff and in breaking down any negative perceptions of the inspection which might make the experience negative. Inspectors use these visits to inform teachers, managers and governors about the process of inspection and to provide guidance on self-assessment. Assessment by inspectors of post-inspection action plans is also built into the college support procedures. This ensures that a college addresses any weaknesses in provision which have emerged during their inspection. Finally, regular contact in the four years between inspections also helps keep quality high on the college's agenda.

Raising standards

As indicated earlier, I believe inspection should be a means to an end. In England, raising standards in further education is a clear government priority. We are aiming to increase student retention and achieve-

ment rates, as well as to increase student numbers, widen participation, and establish a culture of lifelong learning. To support colleges in this endeavour, the government has established a national fund, known as the Standards Fund for Further Education. The fund is administered by the FEFC and priorities for its use frequently arise from the work of the inspectorate. The fund creates an important link between quality assessment and the subsequent allocation of resources to make improvements. It ensures that issues identified by the inspectorate can be addressed both at a national level and locally, by colleges.

In practice, the Standards Fund provides support to colleges as they work through post-inspection action plans. Every inspected college is eligible for funding. Often, the weaker the provision, the more financial support a college may receive. But this funding is not just 'given away'. In order to receive funding, action plans have to be costed and the costs agreed by the FEFC. Progress in achieving the objectives set out in the action plan is also regularly monitored.

Funding is also available to help the best colleges disseminate good practice. Any college judged as outstanding is eligible to receive funding. Again, funding is only provided against a costed action plan including clear, measurable objectives.

At a more general level, the Standards Fund also supports national training programmes for teachers, college managers and college governors. It has also been used to underpin other targeted, national initiatives - such as a project to improve the quality of basic skills teaching in colleges.

In addition to the support available through the Standards Fund, the FEFC has introduced accredited status for colleges that demonstrate consistently high standards. This is not easy to achieve and requires the college to demonstrate that all aspects of its performance are well managed. Those that gain accredited status are entitled to one-off, additional funding and can use a logo indicating their status. We have found that the target of achieving accredited status helps colleges focus a wide range of activities associated with improving their performance.

Benefits

This brings me - very briefly - to some of the benefits that have emerged from the arrangements we have put in place to foster quality improvement agenda.

Self-assessment has helped colleges rethink how they develop and manage quality assurance.

Benchmarking data has helped to make colleges more realistic about their standards. Achievement levels

are rising year on year because there is a will within the sector to do better.

About 75% of unsatisfactory provision is found to have improved when it is re-inspected within a year of the original inspection. Colleges are keen to demonstrate that they can make improvements.

Financial support has accelerated fundamental change and improvement in poorly performing colleges, while accreditation has helped colleges develop a culture of continuous improvement.

Support for dissemination has helped to increase collaboration and has helped the sector take a greater interest in its own welfare.

Special initiatives have been launched to pick up on national issues identified during inspections.

Critical issues

To conclude, I offer three summary observations based on my experience of inspection in further education in England.

1. It is crucial that there is a clear understanding of the purpose of inspection, who carries the various responsibilities, what the mutual expectations are and how the culture of quality assurance and improvement is to be developed. The credibility of the inspectorate and inspection is also vital. This requires openness and transparency to be priorities, ensuring that those inspected know about their role and what they might gain from being inspected, and inspectors conduct themselves in a consistent manner.
2. There must be effective links between inspection and other administrative functions. Inspection cannot be seen in isolation. It must work in concert with regional or national strategies for staff development, funding and resource management. Although much can be achieved at no cost by simply improving work practices in colleges, additional resources are often a critical catalyst in making improvements. But, to get resources, colleges should be expected to deliver against declared targets. In other words, the allocation of additional resources should be part of a bargain with colleges; part of a collective effort to ensure that quality improves.
3. The focus of inspection should be learning and the quality of the experience offered to learners. Inspection should also celebrate success as much as it reports on weaknesses in provision. This is one way to ensure that inspection is seen as a constructive and valuable experience, by all concerned.

COMMISSION REPORTS

Commission 1: School Supervision

Rapporteur: Duncan Hindle

1. What was our model of school supervision pre-1994?

This was a valuable part of the discussion, in part because we do not want to repeat mistakes, but also because there is some evidence that there were things that went right. Under apartheid, there was not one system - with 19 departments there were 19 different systems. Most of these seemed to have worked on an understanding of “panels” that tended to be made up of an ad hoc group of inspectors who were not specialists in any particular field.

Another key issue is that while inspection in the pre-1994 era started out as quality control, it quickly slipped into control. The challenge for the current policy is to ensure that the focus now is on quality and not on control.

Supervision pre-1994 was not system-wide, not organised and not professional. It also gave rise to victimisation and nepotism.

2. What is our emerging model of school supervision in South Africa? What are its key elements? How can it be improved?

A significant shift in the new Policy is that supervision will be carried out by well-trained teams that will be accredited and registered. They will be representative and have expertise in particular learning areas. There were questions on the use of outside, part-time people.

The model is also linked to a process of self-evaluation within schools that will ensure that there is a link between internal and external quality assurance. Self-evaluation will be based on nationally accepted criteria. Since supervision teams only see a sample of schools, self-evaluation is important in ensuring that all schools can measure their performance and so help effect system-wide change.

The evaluation is also linked to a developmental strategy. Each school will use evaluation reports to develop its own school development plans. This is important for the successful implementation of the Policy and adds an instrument to something they have been doing for five years.

3. What is the relationship between school supervision and quality assurance, and school supervision and education management development?

The Policy builds in a review process on every level based on appeals, supervisor reports and stakeholder views. The Policy also links supervision and quality assurance in the training programme designed for supervisors.

Concern was raised about producing the same evaluation report for provinces, schools and the public. The question was asked whether sensitive issues should be made available publicly.

The issue of who inspects the inspectors was also raised. It was suggested that we have a national moderation team to do this.

4. What are the key challenges in implementing an effective school supervision system in South Africa? How can we address them?

A key challenge will be reporting on poorly performing schools without discouraging them from taking steps to improve education provision. It is appropriate that no ratings go to schools to avoid competition, but whatever we tell schools, they should welcome poor ratings because of the promise of assistance. This is important for advocacy since evaluation is not about punishing or prejudicing a school, and a poor rating can benefit a school because out of it will flow developmental opportunities.

Another challenge is to ensure that the Policy is implemented openly and consistently. All line functionaries must be informed before supervision visits. No ratings should go to schools but rather a list of comments on their strong and weak points. Supervisors should show humility and understanding when evaluating schools.

Concerns were raised about whether human and material resources were available for follow-up action after an evaluation. If reports are not acted upon, this will serve to de-legitimise the process. A communication and advocacy strategy must work very well between now and implementation to address these concerns.

Concerns were raised about whether the departments would be ready to implement the policy in January 2001 and whether there was sufficient capacity to deliver on a three-year cycle. Key concerns were raised about operationalising the plan in time for implementation in January.

Additional comments

- Terry Dillon: Each stage of the evaluation poses new challenges and raises questions about the next stage. This is important because if we do not see what the next stage is, we will get stuck. We are at a stage here, in which we are looking at whether the policy document describes the best way to evaluate schools in South Africa. Valuable questions have been raised here, but these are for the next stage.

Commission 2: Partnerships for Quality Improvement

Rapporteur: Hemant Waghmarae

1. What partnerships currently exist between national and provincial education departments and others to provide quality improvement? With whom are these partnerships? What kind of work is being undertaken through these partnerships?

There are too many too document here: Imbewu, MSSI (Japanese), Isitole, Ikwesi, MCPT, SAC, SCOPE, DDSP, EQUIP, MSTP, Mahlahle, CIE, Promat, LINK. Some are system-wide interventions, some deal with district development, some are management interventions and others focus on teaching and learning.

There was a debate on what school improvement is. In the schools with a 100% pass rate, are the learners caring and concerned citizens? Values and ethics should underpin reports on good schools and there is no measurement of that.

Partnerships must be driven by mutual gains - mutual respect, mutual trust and a common vision.

There are different stakeholders: departments, teacher unions, parents, communities on the one hand and the donor on the other.

Over the last three or four years, as the Department has become more systematic, it has begun to tell donors what to do and to say what its needs are. Before that, donors determined what the needs were and implementing projects, e.g. the Thousand Schools Project, in which donors made their intervention and went away. Now funders first have to negotiate to go into schools.

There have been a number of initiatives - whole school development, system development, schools development. We are not sure what all these programmes have achieved in the past five years. If we look at

matric pass rates, there has been no improvement in black schools. But most initiatives are in primary schools and learner assessment has not been tracked. The only clear indicator of where learners are at is to track learners over five years.

2. Comment on the strengths and weaknesses of these partnerships. How can they be improved? Provide positive and negative examples of partnership arrangements.

Strengths:

Partnerships add additional resources to the state's resources. Most state resources go to salaries so these additional funds add massively to school improvement projects. Most of the partnership projects are focused on specific problems and in specific areas and they definitely meet the Department's needs. Another strength is that there is a clear commitment by business to school improvement.

Weaknesses:

The projects are not spread effectively, and as a result there is no value added to the whole Department: there are only pockets of improvement everywhere. Partnerships are better co-ordinated than they were before, but the Department's capacity to manage and monitor these partnerships is still lacking.

Projects rarely have monitoring mechanisms and indicators to measure improvements. Evaluations need to be done on projects.

Although millions of rands are pumped into school improvement initiatives, fiscal constraints still hamper the sustainability of many projects. When the money runs out, the projects stall.

Another concern is that the projects are often short term - one or two years - when five-year programmes are needed. Initiatives are often driven by money and deadlines.

There is still a lot of red tape to cut through before initiatives can get going. Procedures to get buy-in from schools and communities are often not built in and there is not enough advocacy done to promote partnership projects.

3. What are the critical areas facing improving quality in schools? How can effective partnerships be put in place to address them?

Partnerships can supplement departmental change programmes and assist teachers with OBE. The three-year and five-year programmes that the Department has money and time for are not sufficient, particularly in key areas like mathematics, science and languages.

Partnerships can help link PRESET and INSET programmes.

There is a need to train departmental officials at provincial and district level to manage partnerships.

Partnerships can help the Department initiate the recommendations made in whole-school evaluations.

Integration of initiatives at district level is key. Unless all programmes are integrated at district level, partnership projects are not going to be effective. District managers need strategic, district plans.

Partnerships can help with funding textbooks that need to be supplied in addition to those of the Department because the Department is only supplying textbooks to grades where they are introducing OBE.

4. What mechanisms need to be put in place to regulate relationships between the national and provincial education departments and service providers?

Provincial departments have an office to which projects come for dissemination to districts. These mechanisms are important and necessary but can slow the process down. Offices involved with partnership projects must not be a place where projects get stuck.

5. What partnerships can be put in place regionally and internationally to improve education quality?

At a national level there are bilateral arrangements whereby funding goes to the national Department to be allocated provincially on the basis of funding formulae.

Additional comments

In the 1980s we compared ourselves with Brazil. In the post-1994 period, our relationship with the South has weakened and we need to strengthen those international partnerships.

We should have a memorandum of understanding with those with whom we have a strategic relationship. Our sense is that, in the last five years, partnerships have been ad hoc, administrative and with no clear idea of what they will deliver. We need to deal with the issue of outputs.

Once these partnership projects are set up, they recruit staff from the provinces and so weaken the structures they are supposed to assist. Projects affect the capacity of the education departments to deliver quality education.

Commission 3: Using Indicators for Evaluation

Rapporteur: Dr Charles Sheppard

1. What do you understand to be the main purpose and value of indicators?

Educator indicators provide us with information on the performance and functioning of the education system. There was debate in the commission about whether the indicators provide us with information on schools or the system in totality, but we concluded that the information regarding quality assurance was fairly inter-linked.

The selection of indicators gives an indication of what we consider important in education. A set of principles or guidelines is needed to be able to select appropriate indicators, for example, co-operative governance. Indicators need to cover all three components of quality assurance:

- Systematic evaluation;
- the purpose of whole-school development is improvement - component of systematic evaluation, and
- ETQAs, etc., more focused on qualifications.

We adopted the view that indicators derived from whole-school evaluation reflect aspects of systematic evaluation.

2. What types of indicators do we require to monitor and evaluate our progress towards a quality education system?

We need indicators that reflect the quality of teaching and the management of schools. Indicators should also check whether democratic principles have been used in implementing a quality education system. Indicators should be both qualitative and quantitative. In other words, they should tell us what makes some schools more effective than others.

Classifications of indicators:

- Equity and redress;
- effectiveness and efficiency;
- international competitiveness;
- access equity - in terms of gender, disability;
- democratic governance - e.g. number of girls taking science;
- quality indicators of teaching and learning;
- qualitative quantity concept; and
- stakeholder satisfaction - attitudes and values - for example, are parents happy?

3. What role do indicators play in a quality assurance system?

Indicators assist us in getting comparable measurements between different schools. They provide information on learner and school performance and they provide benchmarks against which we can measure progress. Indicators also help identify gaps in policy and inform policy development.

4. Do you think we have sufficient capacity to implement indicator systems? Discuss.

We might have enough numbers in human capacity but not necessarily enough skills. Therefore, training is essential. We need a database on available human resources for this policy and a sense of capacity in terms of quality and quantity. The proposed 200 inspectors might not be enough and we need to get an idea of the number of schools involved.

Situations differ in provinces and different indicator systems have different human skills needs. There was a debate in the commission on whether we should stick with sampling.

A concern was raised that we must have a shared understanding of the role and functioning of indicators. Schools must take ownership of the process for it to be successful.

Indicators in the whole-school framework may not be applicable to all schools. We may not be able to use one set of indicators for rural schools and Model-C schools.

Additional comments and questions

- Against what are we going to benchmark? Are we going to use indicators to identify where schools are at or to indicate how to move them forward? Benchmarking should be tied into target setting.
- We confuse the debate about school effectiveness with school improvement. Internationally the school improvement movement is gaining momentum. We need to look at the international experience and learn from it.
- We need to distinguish between performance indicators and quality indicators. We should develop very broad, but flexible, quality indicators at a system level but as we go down to school level, we need finer quality indicators.

Commission 4: Educator Support and Development

Rapporteur: Shermain Mannah, SADTU

1. What are the key problems in developing educator quality? How can these be addressed?

There is no integrated national and provincial teacher development strategy (INSET and PRESET) and therefore we need a co-ordinated strategy that is informed by other processes. There is also a lack of co-ordination and collaboration between the different directorates. There is a structural mismatch with no communication or co-ordination between the curriculum, teacher development and quality assurance directorates. Concerns were raised about the location of teacher development. We need school-based teacher development programmes.

The quality of teacher training is weak and initiatives to sustain teacher development lack support. There should be national criteria to define the quality of educational support and development, so that, if training is outsourced, there is some guidance on the quality of training expected.

The budget needs to give expression to the priority of teacher development.

2. Currently we have a range of training activities (INSET, PRESET), all of which aim to address educator quality. What impact have these activities made on educator quality?

Programmes have been imposed on teachers and we therefore need a process that identifies teacher needs. There are too many activities running at the same time, sometimes duplicating each other. There is also no support after training initiatives are completed. Teacher training is often based on an ideal school, but teachers then have to go back to schools with large classes, language issues, etc. There is a need for follow-up sessions so that teachers can talk about their attempts to implement new methods. We need mechanisms to measure the impact of training.

District offices are ineffective. They rely heavily on administrative personnel and not on professional personnel. There is only one person dealing with professional development.

There is no training on how clusters should support themselves and how they should share resources.

3. What is the relationship between education quality and sound outcomes in education?

Why is the South African record so poor in this regard?

Poor education quality relates to poor learner performance. One way to deal with this would be to look more carefully at PRESET and at the recruitment of teachers. We need to review the curriculum for INSET and PRESET so that there is no disjuncture between what is taught and why you implement a

teaching strategy. Norms and standards need to be considered in all teacher development programmes.

There are not enough teacher support materials and resources.

4. What mechanisms are in place to assure educator quality? Are these being implemented effectively?

There are mechanisms to ensure educator quality, e.g. SAQA and Norms and Standards for Educators, but we must understand that we are in a process of transformation. We need to look at how service providers interpret these policies. The process of implementing these mechanisms needs to be accelerated.

5. What role do educators have in a quality assurance system? Discuss.

Educators should be evaluating themselves. There was concern that such self-evaluation may not be authentic if educators feel they are exposing their weaknesses. In addition to self-evaluation, peer evaluation should be encouraged, as well as evaluating supervisors.

Educators are involved in monitoring and recording learner achievement, which is an important key to monitoring quality assurance. Educators also collaborate with other stakeholders when developing school improvement plans.

Additional comments

- Nothing was mentioned on the teacher DAS. The instrument is available and it must just be implemented. What is the relationship between WSE and DAS?
- We need to build accreditation into teacher development programmes.

Commission 5: Effective School Governance

Rapporteur: John Pampallis

1. What have been the key problems in implementing effective school governance?

First set of problems: poor school management

Non-functional SMTs affect the functioning of SGBs.

Polarisation between SGBs and principals has led to a lack of clarity between the roles of governance and management. There is no confusion in the legislation, but there is a de facto confusion. People do not know where the boundaries are and that leads to conflict.

There is a lack of commitment to SGBs by principals, SMTs and educators.

Second set of problems: capacity of governing bodies

There have been insufficient capacity-building programmes for SGBs, and those that have been provided are not always of the best quality. This is a particular problem since many SGBs are made up of people who lack education, are sometimes illiterate and lack the necessary knowledge and skills for the effective functioning of SGBs. The capacity-building programme over the first three years of the existence of SGBs leaves something to be desired.

Radio programmes cause confusion about the functioning and roles of SGBs.

Third set of problems: Department and system problems

Weak support is provided to SGBs by provincial departments. Provincial departments fail to intervene where they should.

The national Department is pushing schools to take on the Section 21 powers allowed in the South African Schools Act, since this is an indicator of effective governance. The Department should rather concentrate on improving the capacity of SGBs to function with the powers they already have.

Legislation requires SGBs to recruit new teachers - officially they only recommend the employment of teachers but because there are so many schools and so few people in provincial departments, it becomes a rubber stamp process. Often SGBs do not have those skills and SGB members with no education will interview qualified teachers. Both sides feel uncomfortable.

Fourth set of problems: weak student structures

Weak student structures result in poor participation by students in SGBs.

2. What role can effective school governance play in implementing a quality assurance system at the school level?

Associations of SGBs should be involved in policy-making processes such as today's meeting.

We need to clarify the roles of SGBs, principals and teachers, delineate the boundaries more effectively and communicate this to SGBs. SGBs need to create policies for their schools, and in most cases they have not yet drawn up constitutions, codes of conduct, or development plans. SGBs need to see themselves as functioning to assist SMTs. For example, they should open up communication channels with parents and mobilise all the constituencies - parents, teachers and students - to bring them together in meeting the goals of the schools.

3. What are the specific quality assurance responsibilities of SGBs? Are they currently playing this role?

SGBs play an important role in fund-raising. They play a role in the evaluation and self-assessment of schools. SGBs should hold principals accountable for carrying out their decisions.

Generally, SGBs do not really play the role they should play in schools. We need to take capacity building seriously and we need to learn from the first round of capacity-building programmes. All constituencies should be involved in capacity-building programmes because without capacity building the whole system may collapse. Governing bodies should increase their skills by co-opting people with skills from the community.

4. What practical steps can be undertaken to ensure that SGBs begin to play a more important role in the provision of quality education?

Perhaps we are expecting too much from SGBs and perhaps our expectations are unrealistic. This is a fairly new system and we do not have strong traditions on which to build. Improvements in schools have mainly been due to management and teachers, but in some instances SGBs have played a role. We are slowly building a culture of parental and community involvement in schools. The hostility between SGBs and management teams that existed soon after the first elections has tended to decline and there is a culture of greater co-operation developing.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMES: THE CASE OF GAUTENG'S EDUCATION ACTION ZONES

Ronald Swartz

Deputy Director-General

Gauteng Department of Education

This presentation will look at the Gauteng Department of Education's Action Zones as an intervention to improve the performance of schools.

Concept definition

The concept of Education Action Zones (EAZ) was taken from a UK model in which a school, or group of schools, or community, bids, on the basis of a development plan, for funds from government. The school, cluster of schools, or community, is then responsible for making sure that the funds are used correctly. There are other similar models in France, New Zealand and the United States.

The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) adopted EAZ as a programme that is high impact, high visibility and intervenes in the worst-performing high schools. The selection of schools was based on the matric results from last year - schools that got less than a 20% matric pass rate in 1999 were selected for the project. This amounts to 71 schools, scattered throughout the province. There are nine clusters of EAZ with between four and seven schools in each cluster. The focus of EAZ is on a cluster of schools.

The programme is head-office driven. This is for two reasons: firstly, to ensure that the teams that go into schools are highly mobile and move quickly to carry out the intervention and move on, and, secondly, because districts are already so overloaded that we could not expect them to take on this additional project.

Project goals

The ultimate goal of the project is to turn around the worst-performing schools and ensure lasting change. It is a short-term intervention, between one and three years, to stabilise these high schools and to ensure they perform better in the matric exams.

EAZ works in support of the Secondary School Intervention Project, district and other interventions.

While the programme is head-office driven, it must be co-ordinated at the district level.

Description

The focus of EAZ is on whole-school intervention. We provide management support, as well as curriculum support (teachers, learners, content and method).

The EAZ teams encourage community involvement and focus on how to get additional resources from within and from outside the community.

Hard-line disciplinary methods have been a source of tension with teacher unions.

Phases of implementation

The project lasts between one and three years. The first phase ensures that we stabilise poor-performing schools. This means, for example, working on the management of the school and improving attendance of learners and teachers. EAZ teams found that most of these schools had no timetable, and heads were given deadlines to produce timetables.

The second phase is school-based planning. Teams will take schools through a strategic planning process for a year, or three years, with specific indicators and objectives.

The third phase is the implementation of the plan in terms of its objectives.

Monitoring and evaluation are built into the programme, with regular checks and visits by the EAZ team until schools “graduate” into the next phase. EAZ schools graduate through various stages until the top stage where they need only basic support. The final phase is known in the US as “reconstitution”. In the US model, if schools have not improved their performance despite interventions and direct assistance, all the teachers and the principal are fired and a new set of teachers is appointed. An alternative is to keep the teachers and fire or reappoint management. A commission of inquiry is conducted to which the principal must respond.

In the Gauteng model, if a school does not improve in terms of its normal operations or in the examinations despite our interventions, we will consider closing the school down and re-deploying the teachers elsewhere. There is one submission for this in Gauteng.

Teams/resources

There are resources committed to the EAZ programme. In the budget this year, R4-7 million was set aside to provide schools with learner support materials, necessary equipment, etc.

Project teams are made up of a project leader, curriculum, youth, development, monitoring and evaluation specialists. The idea is to work with the entire education “ecosystem” of the school. The school is affected by what happens in the community and teams therefore work closely with the community and with primary schools in the vicinity. Teams harness skills and resources from the community, from business, NGOs and other resources.

Procedures

EAZ has been able to accelerate appointments, terminations, substitutions, procurement and disciplinary procedures. Whereas normal disciplinary procedures can take two years, with EAZ intervention these procedures have been cut down to a month.

The reporting line is to the Superintendent General and the MEC, which gives an indication of how seriously this project is taken. Co-operation with the district is important, because the district remains responsible and accountable for what happens in the school.

Current status

There have been major differences in learner and teacher attendance and meaningful curriculum work in classrooms. The (minority of) teachers who do not work have begun to realise we are serious and that if they do not perform they will be out of the system. There have been some failures and there are individual teachers who are not prepared to knuckle down.

There has been some resistance from unions, especially around the assessment and evaluation and follow-up action against teachers. Action Zone teams check on whether teachers plan their lessons, whether teachers are in classrooms and perform in the classroom. This does go against some of the agreements with teacher unions so there has been some friction and conflict, but people must realise that, in the worst-performing schools, extraordinary measures are needed. We cannot always work with accepted procedures in these cases.

Comments and issues raised

- How strong is the co-ordination between feeder primary schools and under-performing secondary schools?

We need to look at the total situation, at where the high school is situated. Primary schools seem to perform quite well and the problems seem to start in high school.

- *SADTU*: We all agree that dysfunctional schools need to be addressed, but any reform strategy needs buy-in. Was there buy-in from teachers and unions?

Swartz: Clearly, any intervention must have buy-in from teacher unions and parents. The MEC is responsible for the implementation of the programme, and the fact is that the Department is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that schools perform. The Department has to take decisions even when we do not have a satisfactory level of buy-in. There has been little intervention - even from unions - to improve and stabilise poor-performing schools. The intervention from unions has had very little impact on the situation. The Department must provide leadership and guidance whether it is perceived as unpopular or not. The GDE is still committed to ensuring that the organisations affected by EAZ are consulted, and hopefully we will win them over.

- There was discussion on the agreements reached with unions - e.g. number of working hours per day, teachers involved in extra-curriculum activities.

- Is accountability for performance modification linked to a timeline?

Swartz: On the graduation phases, the situation in EAZ schools will be reviewed. We will look at how they perform in the matric exams this year. If there is improvement, then they could be allowed into the next level, but if the management has not improved we could keep them at the same level.

- How would you implement this strategy in a rural setting?

Swartz: We have three farm schools in the EAZ programme.

- Dr Mashinini, Mpumalanga Education Department: Mpumalanga has unique problems because 70% of our schools are rural. We would have to reconsider the idea of action zones because of the financial constraints and the distances that need to be travelled are huge. Seventy per cent of the calls logged on the Premier's anti-corruption line are school-related. People phone in to report principals and teachers. The Mpumalanga Education Department has an evaluation programme that is still in its initial phase.

- The entire model focuses on teacher and manager support. Was thought given to providing support to learners in terms of nutrition or transport to the school, etc?

Swartz: The focus of the EAZ programme was on teacher and management support. The aim was to stabilise schools and it does not pretend to be a sophisticated model of school improvement. It is a rough plan.

- A recurring problem is that generally the links between circuit and district are weak. How does Gauteng enhance the district level to support schools?

Swartz: In some cases districts are weak, and there are districts that also need this kind of intervention. We want to establish an office responsible for standards whose focus of work will be to ensure stricter monitoring and evaluation and to ensure that our offices are also monitored - in other words, an EAZ for districts and provincial offices.

- Is there an analysis of the reasons why schools are under-performing?

Swartz: There has been an analysis of why schools are under-performing but there is a need to categorise them and to use the information to adopt new plans. We have found that there are particular kinds of contradictions in some of the schools. For example, there are schools in the worst areas with a 100% pass rate and there is a school that has a 5% pass rate but in biology has scored a 100% pass rate.

- Is it important to be visible or to be effective? The Gauteng model only speeds up the procedures when the school is not performing very well. Why not speed up procedures for all schools?

Swartz: The Action Zone process provides us with a way of re-engineering procedures and we would want the lessons from the process to be implemented in the whole system.

- Are we coming into schools in a humane way?

Swartz: Our approach is humane and we do not want to have management by fear. Unfortunately, there are people and schools that take advantage of that approach. In the Action Zone schools, we put the principal on the spot. The teacher unions know there are heads that do not perform.

- If you want to be an effective change agent and you don't make visible changes, then there won't be change. Being visible first makes it easier to make effective change.

- There is a serious lack of capacity. For example, there is no strategy in the Department to ensure that people know and interpret policies properly. Generally, most of the officials have an attitude so you have dysfunctional teams going to dysfunctional schools.

- Our interventions are based entirely on the outcomes of the Senior Certificate exams, which skews the interventions in a particular way. What is our understanding of school improvement? What is the nature and progress of interventions? Have they been evaluated?

- The demands from the public and their perception of the state of education is based on the end-of-year results, but an improvement process driven by the pressures of January is not helpful. The interventions

our colleagues put on the table are extraordinary interventions. But the children of the poor continue to get a raw deal.

- *SADTU*: The GDE's Education Action Zone concept is not whole-school evaluation. EAZ teams have been called "the scorpions" by teachers.
- *Swartz*: This process was necessary because of dismal school performance despite three years of training and of pumping resources into schools. In future, we envisage that the district staff will spend 80% of their time in schools providing on-site support.
- *Thabo Kgonyedi, Free State Education Department*: It has become a strategy in all organisations to improve the efficiency of the system by focusing on the weak links in the chain - as in Gauteng where the focus has been on the poorest-performing schools. There is concern in some areas that this strategy leaves out other schools that have problems. In the Free State we have identified 150 schools that performed badly - that is, those that got less than a 40% pass rate in the matric exams. Those schools were targeted and given extra support. We met the management teams of those schools. Principals and HODs travelled to head office and had to account for their school's poor performance. In targeting poorly performing schools, the approach has been whole-school intervention. Targeting this level of the system does not mean other schools are neglected. We may find that the effects are visible at school level but the causes of poor performance are at another level in the system. The project is directly accountable to the MEC. Performance in some schools is so bad that extraordinary measures are necessary. Although head-office driven, this process does not replace existing structures: in fact, it complements other processes.

VIEWS FROM TEACHER UNIONS

SADTU

Muavia Gallie

South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU)

We appreciate this conversation, and I'm using the word conversation, not consultation. We very much support the principles that Prof. Kader Asmal has put forward. We want this instrument to be developmental and supportive and not judgmental and punitive. It is important that the policy and the implementation process deliver the principles that the Minister was espousing. It is clear to us that if you want to go the judgmental route, the judgement of quality is dependent on the quality of judgement. We need to engage in the debate about school improvement and look carefully at what a quality school is. To use a metaphor: if you want to look for diamonds in my backyard, you are not going to find any. We need to see where schools are and what we need to do to improve them. Schools did not just become bad overnight and we need to look at the historical context.

This Conference is premised on the assumption that the system and the structure is okay and all we need to do is find out whether implementation is taking place. But not everything is well with the system and the structure. The first issue that we want to raise is the power, purpose and influence of evaluation. Evaluation does not take place in a vacuum. Who authorises evaluation? There are two possibilities: either the national Department owns this Policy or the provincial departments. We want to caution you, that where reports go to the SG and the MEC, as in the Gauteng programme, those report-backs should be informed by educational and not political principles. Is the report-back important to the schools so that it makes a difference?

The kinds of questions we ask are important so that we can get to the answers that will inform a clear understanding of how to help the schools. The source of the information is crucial. It is not useful to ask the supervisors whether they have given support to the school. You need to find out from the clients of the circuit manager whether people are getting the service they should get. You need to speak to the teachers, learners, managers, governing structures and the community.

Then we need to be clear about what we are going to do with the information. From yesterday's discussion, it is clear that the information you give to the schools will be different from what you give to the community. Although you can say that you are not going to put names to it, people can use that information

in whatever way they like. You need to clarify the methodology that you use in this instrument. You can have the best instrument but it must be implemented in a way that advances the process in South Africa. We need to make sure that we take people on board.

The issues of leadership and strategy are important. You cannot train people in administration, in filling in forms, and believe they know how to manage a school. Things like the micro-politics of organisations are important. People need to understand that when you bring twenty people together in a school, you should expect a clash of interests. How you bring about a common vision is important.

The next issue is about the culture of schools. The racial culture in our schools needs to be sorted out. We must also deal with the territorial culture that prevails, for example the assumption that principals should know more than teachers.

We need to define what quality teaching and learning are. Our focus has always been on teaching as if the natural result of teaching is learning. Unfortunately that is not so. We can also not assume that hostility and conflict in schools are going to disappear. Finally, because 80% of the success of school improvement is in the hands of the teachers, we need to ask what's in it for the teachers. Any change theory says that if you do not reward change, you do not encourage other people to engage in change.

We also need to look at horizontal and vertical coherence in whole school evaluation. Horizontal coherence means that the learning that takes place in one learning area feeds into the learning of another area. But there must also be vertical coherence, so that one grade leads on to the next grade. We must also look at the coherence in the transfer of learning skills and thinking skills. Coherence is what the mission of evaluation is about. If we want to develop good citizens, do we want schools to be democratic, accountable, developing or academically successful? Research says quite clearly that you cannot have them all. We need to set priorities. But at the moment, the debate is all about matric results.

Is the intention of whole-school evaluation to make black schools like white schools? If this is the intention, then we are not engaging in a paradigm shift, but a shifting paradigm. Let me remind you that black schools under the apartheid system were never designed to be successful. No matter how much you tinker with the school, the system is not accommodating quality education. We need a new way of looking at schools.

There are three ways of looking at school improvement:

- Problem-solving approach - You ask schools to develop a SWOT analysis. You identify problems and improve on them.

- Programme-review approach (e.g. the UK) - You have a clear focus on what you want to do, and develop an action plan with clear targets on how to get there.
- Discretionary approach - This says this is where we are at the moment, this is our actual school, this is our ideal school, and this is what we need to put in place to get to that.

Which approach are we following?

We need clarity on what is going to happen to this process. What we have engaged in at this Conference is setting a framework. What we are trying to do is define what a quality, effective and efficient school is. Then we need to select mechanisms on how to identify such a school. This is only setting the framework for the Policy. What we need to do next is gather the information, the hard evidence. We need both qualitative and quantitative indicators. We also need to realise that there is a difference between schools. Schools have their own culture and their own make-up. Once we have gathered the information, we need to look at the contribution of the support mechanisms. What is going to happen once the school has been evaluated? Do we have the human capacity to do what we want to do? We need to clarify whether we have enough money to develop schools after we have evaluated them.

Finally, we need to look into the future. We cannot just develop our schools for now. We need to identify what our priorities are in terms of the Constitution and the vision of the government. We need to establish a clear agenda. The challenge for us is to turn around those schools.

In conclusion, whole-school evaluation is not going to work, and we will not be able to sell it, if we do not couple it with the Development Appraisal Strategy. Whole-school evaluation looks at the organisation, but within that organisation there are individuals who need to be developed. The Development Appraisal Instrument was signed and agreed to and we should take it on board.

Finally, I want to comment on the lateness of this Conference. It is a pity that we are launching this programme just a few days before the last comments are due.

I thank you.

National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA)

Sue Muller

Have we achieved the purposes of this Conference?

We have launched the Policy. There has been clarity on what the document says but we have not reached clarity on what the strategy might be. The problem is not with what the Policy says, but with what it does not say.

We have, to some extent, heard about best practices and so we welcome the idea of a second conference early next year. I think we are promoting partnerships but the most important partnerships will be between supervisors and educators.

Whole-school evaluation

It is important that whole-school evaluation is not about monitoring and control. There should be a before-whole-school-evaluation approach and an after-whole-school-evaluation approach. I think one has to address the amount of uncertainty regarding the motives of the evaluation. We may say the Policy is about development and improvement, but act differently. The Policy will only be accepted if it is implemented in the spirit in which it was intended. We need a common understanding and we will only get buy-in if schools, educators, learners and parents see the benefits of the process for themselves. We also need to reach a common understanding of what we have to do to help schools help themselves. We need to have positive reinforcements and acknowledge small successes.

The attitude of supervisors is important. If supervisors set out to show how much power they have, the consequence will be disempowerment. There must be appeal mechanisms and evaluation of supervisors. Supervisors must be sensitive to people's fears and apprehensions.

Clarify purposes, relationships and responsibilities

We need to answer the following questions:

- What is the purpose of whole-school evaluation?
- How do the supervisors in whole-school evaluation relate to the management of schools?
- How does whole-school evaluation relate to the evaluation of the system and to ETQAs?
- How are we going to encourage self-evaluation?

We need a three-pronged approach:

- We need to look at supervisors: their role, function and attitude. Many will need additional, ongoing training.

- We need to look at the training of regional officials to ensure that they understand the Policy and inform other stakeholders about it.
- We need to look critically at educators: what about the educators who are qualified but find themselves teaching in very poor conditions?

Training is critical to the success of whole-school evaluation. We also need support programmes that are custom-designed to provide the kinds of interventions that are appropriate.

Criteria developed

We need criteria that are measurable to the extent that they give information that is comparable across all schools. We need criteria that provide schools with “clues” about what makes a good school and what succeeds in providing quality education. The criteria need to be open to further development and be flexible.

We need to be very clear about the purpose of evaluation. Evaluation should find out where schools are in terms of quality provision. Schools have to help themselves and develop maps to describe plans on how to get to where they want to be. This means that evaluations must be negotiated and guided by schools - what, how much and when things can be done. Schools must set their own targets, which must be achievable.

Success of whole-school evaluation

Success depends on people, not policy. A huge investment needs to be made in human resources. The bottom line is that, if we are collectively serious about improving education and schools with the right kinds of assistance, if we do not have whole-school evaluation, what do we have? We need to look at the long-term benefits, and make sure whole-school evaluation is sustainable and self-sustaining. We are concerned about how this is going to be done and whether there are sufficient people to do it.

Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysunie (SAOU)

Thys Cronjé

We appreciate this initiative, the need for the judgement of quality, the motives and spirit of this Policy. We also appreciate the support services and the partnerships for improving quality in schools. But political issues should be taken out of education. Schools today are freer to do what they want - and to do nothing at all. We should acknowledge success because success breeds success. Once the responsibilities of officials are clear and the committees trained, then we are moving in the right direction towards quality education.

Eighty per cent of the success in schools is due to the teachers. Let us have a look at the teacher's task. He must implement DAS, Tirisano, OBE and quality assurance. A lot of the schools have not implemented quality assurance yet. Our problem with the workshops is that they must be followed up by visits to the schools. On 10 October we start exams. When will the teachers have time to implement this system before next year? If the Department is stretched to the limits, the teachers are stretched out of limits.

Working together

Why not use schools with infrastructure? If communities get involved, then you can much more easily get to all the schools. The moment we work together there is appreciation for everyone.

Fears

The Department must deal with the fears of teachers. It doesn't matter what we call WSE, the teachers see it as inspection. Teacher unions have the task to say to teachers, "Whole school evaluation is a good thing." We must work together so we can make it a success. Otherwise, 20% will implement the Policy, 60% will think it over and 20% will do nothing.

Incentives

Why can't the Department have incentives for those schools that act correctly or reward educators who help others? We can use money from abroad to compensate such schools. Then you will have a snowball effect on the schools and you will reach your goal much more easily.

The emphasis must stay on learning and teaching. We must be careful not to provide education for 2000 in 2005. We must educate learners to make it possible for them to go into the global market - the world of IT, e-mail and the Internet. A person who is not computer literate is illiterate. Success can only be achieved if our teachers are qualified and trained. Success is not achieved if the teacher has taught but the learner has not learnt. We do not think that the Grade 12 exam determines quality education. Quality

education is provided by a committed teacher who educates with passion and has a vision for the future. Acting without vision will not last, vision without action is a waste of time, but acting with vision can change education in South Africa.

Comments and issues raised

- *Terry Dillon*: I do not think the unions have made it clear where they stand. Do they agree with the principle that we need to look at the whole school and make some evaluation of its performance? Do they agree that there is a place for internal and external evaluation and intervention in order to enable schools to improve? Where do they stand and what will they be saying to their members?
- *SADTU*: What you are looking for we are not going to give you. What is clear is that we are busy with setting the framework. I made it clear that we endorse the principles. The biggest challenge in our country is with the implementation of policy. Whole-school evaluation is what we need. SADTU endorses the principles articulated by the Minister, but whether those principles will be in line with the principles during implementation is what we are not sure about. Whole-school evaluation is not known throughout our country, but the instrument the Department wants to use is classroom observation - and teachers associate that with inspection. You need to develop a clear methodology. We need people in this process who are committed to developing our schools, have a passion and a sense of where we want to take our learners, and will not tell teachers what is right and wrong. We need to first restore the credibility around this instrument and only then will we succeed.
- *NAPTOSA*: On the point of what we will tell our members: NAPTOSA does not tell its members anything - our members tell NAPTOSA. But there are concerns about how the Policy will be implemented. If the policy makers expect the unions to buy into the process, then the Department needs to put its money where its mouth is. We are concerned that there is insufficient capacity.
- A concern was raised about the quality of people trained.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES: CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARTNERSHIPS

Motsumi Makhene
USAID, Abt Associates

Abt Associates' specific focus is to provide further education and training (FET) in the area of youth development. The project we have been implementing in the Northern Cape and the Free State is in its initial stages, so I can only talk about our strategy. It is a two-year project that comes to an end in 2002.

The project works with 23 institutions - 19 schools and four colleges in the townships of Galeshewe in Kimberley and Thabong in Welkom. Our mandate is to provide support to improve learning and teaching within a broad programme. Our challenge is to use FET as an instrument to improve the quality of life in the communities. Our broad goal is to increase access to FET, with the specific mandate from the Department to improve teaching and learning.

Our approach to improving teaching and learning:

1. Ensure that governance and management in the institutions are improved.
2. Increase learner participation.
3. Improve networks and partnerships for resource sharing and linking schools, CBOs and businesses.

Needs analysis

We have not developed a generic plan. Instead, each institution is treated separately, with its own set of problems. Our approach is a differentiated approach. We will work on whole-school development plans with each institution.

The townships are largely dependent on mining. With the decline in mining activities, there has been a growth in unemployment, but new opportunities are starting to emerge - especially in Kimberley - in administration, in social services and in industry. There is a need for skills to fill those gaps, so we are looking at how schools can be used to position a future workforce.

Research

Our research looked at four focus areas:

- Governance;
- management;
- teaching and learning; and
- external environment - the relationship between the school and the community.

Findings

We ranked the performance of schools, using terminology that is developmental:

- Formative level: school performs poorly;
- emerging: a level where schools are able to do things for themselves;
- expanding: a school which is beginning to excel; and
- mature: a school that is performing well.

Number of schools by ranking: Northern Cape

School	Governance		Management		Teaching & Learning		External Relations	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Formative	0	-	0	-	1	10	4	40
Emerging	3	30	4	40	9	90	4	40
Expanding	7	70	6	60	0	-	2	20
Mature	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
TOTAL	10	100	10	100	10	100	10	100

Number of schools by ranking: Free State

School	Governance		Management		Teaching & Learning		External Relations	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Formative	0	-	0	-	0	-	5	62.5
Emerging	5	62.5	4	50	8	100	0	-
Expanding	1	12.5	4	50	0	-	3	37.5
Mature	2	25	0	-	0	-	0	-
TOTAL	8	100	8	100	8	100	8	100

We rated the schools in terms of governance and management, teaching and learning, and external relations. In terms of external relations, schools have not positioned themselves to be active institutions of community development and do not have a close relationship with CBOs and business. Most telling is in the area of teaching. A lot of investment must be put into teaching and learning. Because we had new

governing structures, there was a lot of enthusiasm and commitment and so the rating was quite high. But, as soon as these governing bodies settle in to the business of the institutions, we expect the numbers will change.

The needs analysis was a snapshot survey to give us an idea of the institutional areas of dire need to dictate where to put resources.

Methodology

We split every focus area into specifics. For example, governance: how the governing body is structured, whether people have a clear sense of roles and functions; whether there is strong leadership, whether there is democratic decision making, etc.

We did not just give a broad rating. The focus areas were broken down into elements so that we know where we need to put emphasis.

Strategy

The institutions are situated in townships that face typical problems: single-headed households, child abuse and lack of parental involvement. This social reality impacts negatively on education. As a result, as part of FET policy, an investment must be made in support of community development.

Another area we thought very strategic is that we provide the best development support at a level where there is the greatest need. The general strategic approach is to invest resources and capacity in learners to learn better and in educators to educate better by developing an environment conducive to teaching and learning. It is a necessary evil to create a system to oversee the institutions to ensure quality education. For us, the challenge is to work with individuals within the system and the substructure in the form of SGBs and LRCs.

Resources will be targeted mainly at the institutions themselves and not at district level. So, in the needs analysis, we did not factor in the provincial and district levels. But in a broader programme there should be some support for districts.

The programme has the following projects:

- Providing support for provincial departments;
- support for the governing structures;
- improving the responsiveness of schools;

- providing development services using the current support services within the department; and
- the last area looks at this entire project as a case study.

In the area of governance, our first step is to develop a shared vision of the future. We recognise that governance includes all the role players. We will help the institutions to develop medium-term plans, develop a constitution, human resources management, and asset and financial management programmes.

In the area of curriculum, we would like to focus on supporting educators. We want to set up forums for teacher development, subject resource centres in learning areas (literacy, communication, life skills) equipped with IT. We also want to create resources around schools so that if a school has a good mathematics teacher, others can draw on that person. The most challenging aspect is to look at the learner and so we have been involved in youth development and have put together a youth development policy.

Comments and issues raised

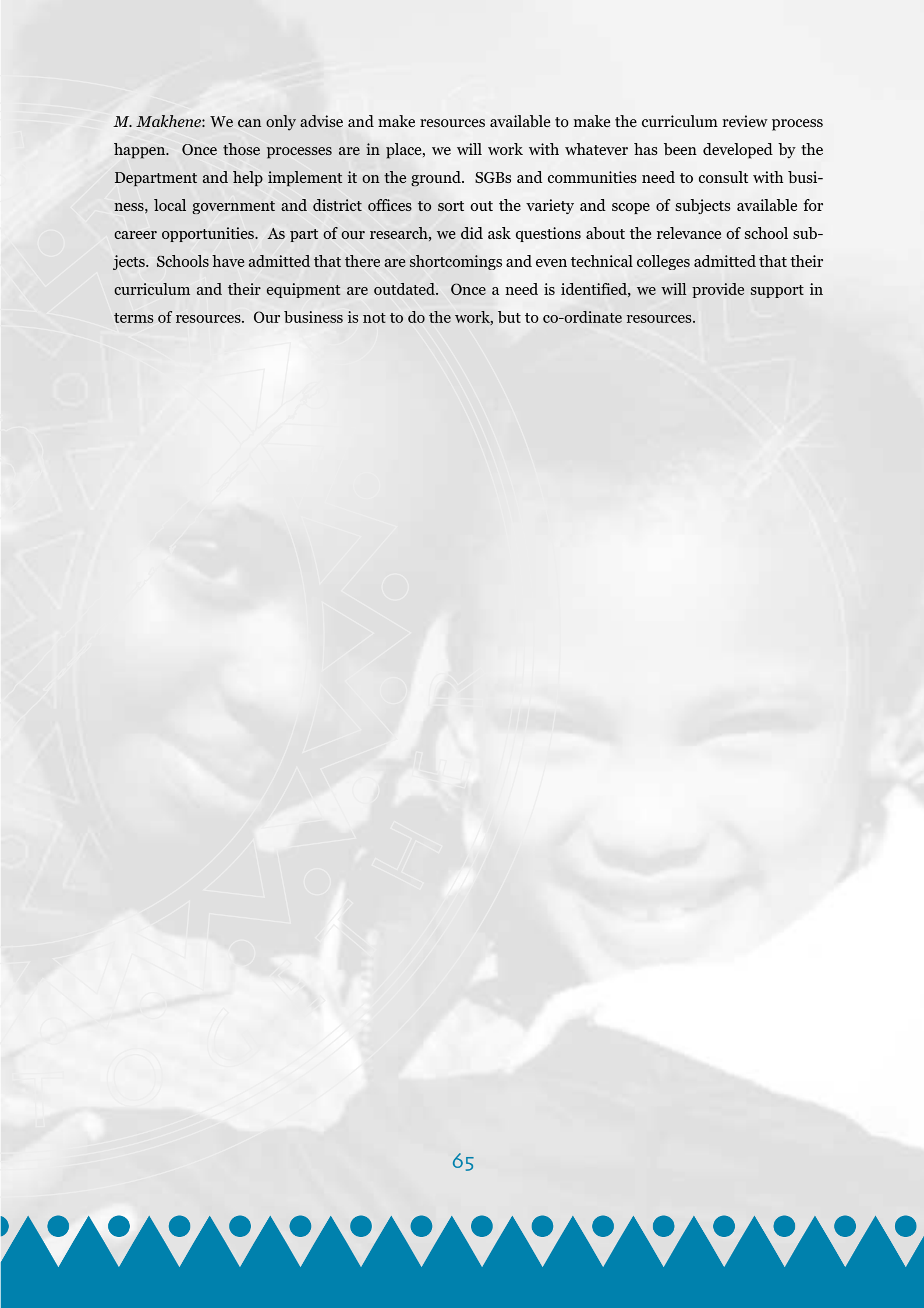
- Which stakeholders did you consult with?

M. Makhene: As soon as a decision was made to go ahead with the process, the two provincial departments, Northern Cape and Free State, were consulted on the project and how to approach it. The provincial departments helped select the schools we would work with. Our role is not to make decisions on how to tackle school restructuring. Our role is mainly a developmental support role. In other words, we take instruction from the national and provincial departments on restructuring and transformation.

Following the meeting we had with the national and provincial departments, we met with the district offices. We then introduced the project to each institution and met with all the stakeholders from LRCs to SGBs. Because this is not just a school improvement initiative - it is also about how schools interact with the community - we had meetings with various stakeholders including business, NGOs and CBOs. We regard consultation as important because we do not see our intervention as long-term and so it is important that those stakeholders on the ground own the process and help develop the process.

Our area of intervention is in the curriculum. Our approach is to help develop the skills of educators, improve the quality of materials and improve the quality of participation. In addition, we will lend support to key structures such as SMTs and SGBs, so that they can provide sufficient support to school improvement.

- In terms of curriculum support, will you recommend changes or introduce new subjects?

The background of the page features a faded, high-contrast image of two young children, a girl on the left and a boy on the right, both smiling. Overlaid on this image are various light-colored geometric shapes, including circles, triangles, and lines, creating a patterned effect. The text is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the page.

M. Makhene: We can only advise and make resources available to make the curriculum review process happen. Once those processes are in place, we will work with whatever has been developed by the Department and help implement it on the ground. SGBs and communities need to consult with business, local government and district offices to sort out the variety and scope of subjects available for career opportunities. As part of our research, we did ask questions about the relevance of school subjects. Schools have admitted that there are shortcomings and even technical colleges admitted that their curriculum and their equipment are outdated. Once a need is identified, we will provide support in terms of resources. Our business is not to do the work, but to co-ordinate resources.

THE WAY FORWARD

- The Conference expressed support and commitment towards raising standards in all our schools.
- The focus of our interventions should be aimed at learner performance.
- The Conference supported whole-school evaluation as an important element of a quality improvement system in education.
- The framework has three critical components: self-evaluation, external evaluation and post-evaluation support and intervention measures.
- In conducting the evaluation, the focus must be on learning and teaching practices and outcomes.
- The Conference further noted the importance of creating an appropriate culture characterised by openness, consistency, rigour, and professionalism.
- The Conference expressed the need for high-quality training and ongoing professional support for supervisors leading to accreditation and registration.
- The Conference proposed the establishment of a National Moderation Team to evaluate the work of the supervisory services.
- The application of indicators should take into account the context of each school.
- WSE would assist in identifying specific needs for staff development in each school.
- School-based professional development should form an integral part of our ongoing professional development strategy.
- The Department of Education should urgently activate the Development Appraisal System in order to support ongoing educator professional development.
- The Conference noted the need to clarify roles and responsibilities at school level between SGBs and school management.
- The Conference noted that districts were the closest structures to schools and therefore the support from districts was crucial to ensure school improvement. There was a need to strengthen those structures in terms of human and physical resources.
- Partnerships are critical for supporting quality improvement - need for better co-ordination, focus and clear outcomes.
- Consistency of message: a clear advocacy and implementation strategy is necessary.
- The Conference proposed the establishment of an inter-provincial and teacher union task team to address the above.
- Schools (all constituencies) must appreciate the value-adding aspect of the exercise.
- Convene a national conference in 2001 to develop a South African school improvement framework.

APPENDIX

1. CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

FRIDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER

08.30 - 09.45: Arrival and registration

OPENING SESSION

09.45 - 10.00: Opening remarks

Khetsi Lehoko,
Deputy Director-General, Further Education and Training,
Department of Education

WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION MODELS

Chair: Khetsi Lehoko

10.00 - 11.00: Reflections on whole-school evaluation

Terry Dillon, Consultant, UK

11.00 - 11.15: Tea

11.15 - 12.30: The South African model for Whole-school evaluation

Dr. Nomsa Mgijima,
Chief Director, Quality Assurance and NILLD,
Department of Education

12.30 - 13.30: Launch of the National Policy on Whole-school evaluation

Prof. Kader Asmal, MP,
Minister of Education

13.30 - 14.30: Lunch

ENHANCING SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

Chair: Khetsi Lehoko

14.30 - 15.30: United Kingdom's experience of inspection

Mark Griffiths, British Inspectorate, United Kingdom

COMMISSIONS: SHARING EXPERIENCES ON QUALITY ISSUES

15.30 - 16.30: Discussion in commissions

Commission 1:	School Supervision
Commission 2:	Partnerships for Quality Improvement
Commission 3:	Using Indicators for Evaluation
Commission 4:	Educator Support and Development
Commission 5:	Effective School Governance

16.30 - 16.45: Tea

COMMISSION REPORTS

16.45 - 17.00: Commission 1

Rapporteur: Duncan Hindle

Chief Director, Human Resources Planning, Department of Education

17.00 - 17.15: Commission 2

Rapporteur: Hemant Waghmarae

Divisional Manager: Research and Evaluation, Joint Education Trust

17.15 - 17.30: Commission 3

Rapporteur: Dr Charles Sheppard

Director, Physical Planning, Department of Education

17.30 - 17.45: Commission 4

Rapporteur: Teacher Union Representative

17.45 - 18.00: Commission 5

Rapporteur: John Pampallis,

Director, Centre for Education Policy Development

18.00 - 18.10: Summary

Khetsi Lehoko

19.00 Dinner

SATURDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PRACTICES

Chair: Prof. Harry Nengwekhulu,
Superintendent-General, Northern Province

09.00 - 10.00: School improvement programmes: the case of Gauteng's Education Action

Zones

Ronald Swartz

Deputy Director-General, Gauteng Department of Education

10.00 - 10.30: Questions of clarification on Education Action Zones

10.30 - 11.00 : Tea

11.00 - 12.30 Views from Teacher Unions (30 minutes each)

SADTU

NAPTOSA

SAOU

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES: CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARTNERSHIPS

Chair: Shireen Motala,

Director, Wits Education Policy Unit

12.30 - 13.00: Galeshewe and Thabong

Mtsumi Makhele, Abt Associates

13.00 - 14.00: Lunch

14.00 - 14.30: Questions of clarification on Galeshewe and Thabong case study

14.30 - 15.00 Way forward

Summary and closing remarks

15.30: Tea and departure



