SCHOOL MONITORING SURVEY 2017/2018

QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY REPORT
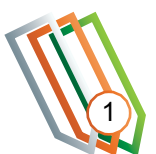
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SCHOOL MONITORING SURVEY 2017/2018

QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY REPORT

Produced for the Department of Basic Education by Nexia SAB&T

Contents

School Monitoring Survey 2017/2018: Qualitative Case Study Report

List of Acronyms

ANA	Annual National Assessments
AR	Annual Report
ADP	Academic Development Plan
CPTD	Continued Professional Teacher Development
DBE	Department of Basic Education
EMIS	Education Information Management System
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
LURITS	Learner Unit Record Information and Tracking System
PLC	Professional Learning Community
SAOU	Suid Afrikaanse Onderwyser Unie
SA-SAMS	South African School Administration and Management System
SDP	School Development Plan
SGB	School Governing Body
SMS	School Monitoring Survey

Executive Summary

The School Monitoring Survey (SMS) 2017/2018 aims to gather information on 13 of the 15 Action Plan indicators of the SMS 2011/2012. In addition to the 13 indicators, information in areas of priority in the system is needed, which includes educator and principal participation, perceptions, experiences, proposals and levels of professional development, particularly on provincial, national and international assessments including the Annual National Assessments (ANAs) and school level assessment practices. In the Terms of Reference for the SMS 2017/2018 study, topics covered should include African languages, and the role of school management data collection mechanisms including the South African School Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS), the Learner Unit Record Information and Tracking System (LURITS) and other information and communication technology systems (ICTs).

The main component of the SMS 2017/2018 was in the form of a quantitative study on a nationally representative sample of schools with the aim of collecting data on 13 indicators.

In order to respond to emerging priority areas and to enhance the understanding of the information collected through the survey on the 13 *Action Plan* 2019 indicators as detailed above, a qualitative component of the SMS 2017/2018 study was undertaken on a sub-sample of schools that participated in the quantitative study. The aim of the qualitative study was not to merely confirm compliance across indicators, but to provide an in-depth analysis of correlations for specific educational outcomes where possible. For purposes of the qualitative study, five (5) indicators from the original 13 indicators that were included in the quantitative study were selected for further investigation. These were:

Indicator 2:   The percentage of time educators spent on professional development activities

Indicator 6:   The percentage of schools that present the minimum required management documents at the required standard

Indicator 7:   The percentage of schools where the SGB meets criteria of effectiveness

Indicator 12:   The percentage of schools visited at least twice a year by district officials for monitoring and support *combined with*

Indicator 13:   The percentage of schools with principals that rate the support services from the district as satisfactory

Additional information, now referred to as indicator 14: Assessment Perceptions, Knowledge and Practice

The qualitative design adopted for the qualitative component of the SMS 2017/2018 study was a case study approach which included 18 schools across a sub-sample of schools that participated in the main, quantitative survey. The sample of schools for the qualitative study was drawn from the main quantitative survey. A purposive sampling technique was employed for the SMS 2017/22018 qualitative study and was limited to data collection from 18 schools in three (3) provinces namely the Free State, Limpopo and the Western Cape. Six (6) schools were selected in each province.

Data collection methods included interview schedules, document review sheets and classroom observation schedules (only for the additional information on Assessment perceptions, knowledge and practices). A set of interview guidelines to fieldworkers provided the primary questions that each fieldworker had to put to every relevant participant. The questions were followed, for each indicator, by additional prompts and background information elaborating on specific contextual matters to provide further focus to the kind of dynamics that plays out. Interviews were conducted with principals, deputy principals and heads of department at each school, Language and Mathematics teachers, and the SGB chair and selected members of the SGB. Interviews were tailored to elicit specific information from specific participants across the indicators. Classroom observations were conducted in selected Language and Mathematics classrooms, the purpose of which was to observe educators' use of assessment during lessons.

For purposes of collecting data, 12 fieldworkers were recruited with the requirement of having obtained a postgraduate qualification in Education. Fieldworkers received training on issues of the background to the SMS project, taking fieldworkers through day one and day two at the school, what was expected to be done for the document review and so too for the classroom observations. Day two of training was dedicated to a detailed discussion of the interviews per indicator and the kinds of information that fieldworkers were expected to elicit. Logistical arrangements were also discussed in terms of travel, accommodation, handling recording equipment and submitting data and fieldwork reports at the end of data collection.

Data analysis was done by recording all reviews of requirement documents. This process was followed by identifying main themes that emerged across the interview transcriptions.

Central themes that emerged from the evidence that was collected are presented in this report. A summary of these results is presented below:

Indicator 2 elicited information about professional development and issues of educator satisfaction and needs related to different types or sources of training (self-initiated, internally and externally initiated). The role of and achievements through teacher union participation, as well as the need for and functioning of the CPTD system, were also explored. Training in the practical use of learning and teaching resources and materials, and training in digital competencies were probed to determine further needs.

Results from indicator 2 indicates that educators' needs for training in digital competencies are closely related to the physical context of the school and community in which they are situated. Digital competencies did not help much if these digital technologies were not available to them in the school where they work. Differentiation in training is needed, since currently, well-seasoned and experienced educators receive the same training as less experienced, struggling educators. A high priority needs to be placed on mentoring opportunities and monitoring of classroom practices through principal and head of department classroom visits. Unions were identified as potentially beneficial role players, especially in cases where district support is lacking means that schools are left without guidance or opportunities for professional development. The increasing beneficial role of Professional Learning Communities (PLC) emerged as a strong theme, with educators providing evidence of where such PLCs provided them with support and opportunities for development.

Indicator 6 focuses on management documents and processes and elements identified for further interrogation in SMS 2017, now taken further in the qualitative study component. The questions asked include training needs and modes (as also covered in Indicator 2 above) for principals, also as ways to prepare them better for competency assessments. The aim of gathering evidence for indicator 6 was on obtaining evidence for the efficiency of use and value of specific 'building blocks' from among the various school management documents.

Results for indicator 6 clearly indicate that the presence of management documents could not be linked to district functionality. One would expect that more documents were available in better functioning schools and districts, with fewer documents being available in less functioning schools and districts. Evidence to support this expectation could not be found, and within functioning districts, evidence was found of well-functioning schools that could not present documents at all. However, in such cases, schools would acknowledge that the required documents are used informally, in different formats and are tailored to their specific needs. Buy-in on the importance of management documents (such as School Development Plans, Academic Development Plans, attendance registers and Annual Reports) exist, but educators reported feeling alienated from decisions that are being taking based on these documents that affect their day-to-day involvement in the school and management of their classrooms.

Indicator 7 aims to elicit further information on School Governing Body (SGB) effectiveness on issues of how the mere presence of documents, procedures and compliance with requirements is turned into operational value and effective functioning. The *Action Plan* 2019 calls for not reducing a matter as complex as SGB effectiveness to a mere indicator number, but to understand critical dynamics through qualitative research about the dynamic role of SGBs at schools. Themes that emerged from specific interview data with principals, SGB Chairs and selected members of school SGBs indicate that good relations exist in general, and that they are characterised by co-operation and a committed sense

of putting the learners' needs first. SGBs could potentially play increasingly more important roles, but only if more training on their roles and responsibilities is provided, specifically in areas of finance. Support for these arguments were presented against the frustration for some schools, where delays in appointing full-time principals meant that responsibilities could be delegated to the SGB while awaiting formal leadership to take over the management of the school. Therefore, more responsibilities could have been delegated but were not. Rurality seems to be an explanatory factor. SGB members from such areas live far from schools and regular visits to the schools are not always possible. An interesting dynamic emerged where a principal also related the issue of rurality to a lack of education and misuse of power. In this instance, it seems that if an SGB member comes from a deep rural background, with the assumption then that such an individual has little formal education, problems arise because of power relations with the principal in the presence of a lack of informed, educated decision- making skills on the part of the SGB member.

Indicators 12 and 13 are presented simultaneously, since these indicators both deal with issues of district monitoring, support and satisfaction thereof. It is acknowledged in *Action Plan* 2019 (p.47) that school weaknesses reflect district weaknesses. Critical dynamics to interrogate qualitatively are therefore the number of district visits, especially with a diffuse sense of the purpose(s) behind these visits by district officials. The emphasis of the inquiry is to acknowledge that visits do not automatically translate into satisfactory district support.

From evidence collected for these indicators, it appears that district visits occur in a haphazard fashion without long term planning or confirmation of visits to schools. Visits are erratic, varying in frequency and purpose. While no distinct patterns emerge from participants, it is quite clear that more classroom support is needed during these visits where subject advisors have the freedom to venture into the classroom and advise the educator on areas of improvement, areas of satisfactory progress or areas where educators are excelling and perhaps need confirmation of this from the subject advisor who has been to the classroom.

The additional information on **Assessment Perceptions, Knowledge and Practice** is critical for knowing which learners struggle with which part(s) of their work, in order for the educator to know how to adjust and improve his/her teaching from as early as during the same lesson in which the assessment was conducted, to the lesson the following day or next lesson. All assessment lies at the heart of improved learner achievement, therefore the critical dynamics to interrogate here are what educators' perceptions and understanding are of the assessment modalities on offer, and their role and value in improving the teaching and learning engagement in the classroom in order to benefit learner achievement. Evidence from teacher interviews on issues of assessment shows that the role of large-scale assessment and external testing is front of mind for most teachers, closely linked to the role that this type of assessment can play in setting standards and benchmarks. Discussions about what constitutes best practice in assessment features as a prominent theme. Assessment as an integrated part of learning and teaching with a holistic approach features is perceived with mixed feelings, while using assessments to identify gaps in learning and teaching as well as devising interventions for at-risk learners does feature as part of the narrative teachers share on issues of assessment. Least likely across interviews is the issue of a lack of resources resulting in assessment overload and the role stakeholders such as parents and principals have in assessment and assessment related training.

1.   Background and Overview

In 2015, the *Action Plan to 2019: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2030* (Action Plan 2019) was approved by the Minister of Basic Education. The Action Plan reiterates many of the plans that were envisioned in Action Plan 2014, and priorities have remained similar in recent years. Despite similar priorities, the system has seen shifts of emphasis in the wake of lessons that were learnt and priorities that were put forward in the National Development Plan: Vision 2030 that was released in 2012. Since the release of the National Development Plan, the medium-term horizon for meeting goals and monitoring success was set for 2019 to fall within the end of the 2014 to 2019 electoral cycle.

For this reason, a national survey was deemed important in public ordinary schools as a mechanism to monitor progress towards the key plans and goals set forth by Action Plan 2019 and the Medium-Term Strategic Framework 2014-2019. (MTSF 2014-2019).

1.1   Introduction

The Action Plan 2019 is aimed at a broad range of stakeholders ranging from parents, to educators, school principals, district officials, officials at provincial and national levels, members of parliament, educator unions, private sector partners, researchers and international partner agencies, all of whom are tasked with transforming South African schools across the system. The Action Plan 2019 is consistent with previous plans in at least as far as its basic structure and focus on 27 goals that cover a broad range of issues and interventions. Of the 27 goals, 13 deal with the performance and participation outcomes that the Department of Basic Education strives towards. The 14 remaining goals relate to the 'how' of realising these improvements. The system's focus remains, however, on five of the goals as a matter of priority, namely Grade R, educator development, learning materials, school management and support by district offices.

1.2   Objectives of the study

Education as a dynamic, ever-changing system requires monitoring of progress on key indicators to help inform planning and to highlight areas that require improvement through the School Monitoring Survey 2017/2018. This survey follows on the initial survey that was conducted in 2011/2012, based on the goals of the *Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025* (Action Plan 2014) and the Delivery Agreement for Outcome 1: Improved quality of basic education. The SMS 2011/2012 used a range of indicators aligned with the sector plan to measure system performance nationally by specifically focusing on gathering information which is not available in other systems, such as the Education Management Information System (EMIS).

For this reason, the SMS 2017/2018 aims to gather information on 13 of the 15 Action Plan indicators of the SMS 2011/2012. In addition to the 13 indicators, information in areas of priority in the system is needed, which includes educator and principal participation, perceptions, experiences, proposals and levels of professional development, particularly on provincial, national and international assessments including the Annual National Assessments (ANAs) and school-level assessment practices. In the Terms of Reference for the SMS 2017/2018 study, topics covered should include African languages, and the role of school management data collection mechanisms including the South African School Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS), the Learner Unit Record Information and Tracking System (LURITS) and other information and communication technology systems (ICTs).

The main component of the SMS 2017/2018 was in the form of a quantitative study on a nationally representative sample of schools with the aim of collecting data on the following 13 indicators:

Indicator 1:   The percentage of schools where teaching posts are filled

Indicator 2:   The percentage of time educators spent on professional development activities

Indicator 3:   The percentage of educators absent from school on an average day

Indicator 4:   The percentage of learners who have access to workbooks and textbooks

Indicator 5:   The percentage of learners in schools with a library or media centre that adheres to minimum standards

Indicator 6:   The percentage of schools that present the minimum required management documents at the required standard

Indicator 7:   The percentage of schools where the SGB meets the criteria of effectiveness

Indicator 8:   The percentage of learners in schools that are funded at minimum levels

Indicator 9:   The percentage of schools with a full set of financial responsibilities

Indicator 10:   The percentage of schools that comply with minimum physical infrastructure standards

Indicator 11:   The percentage of schools with at least 1 educator who has received training in and support of learners with special needs

Indicator 12:   The percentage of schools visited at least twice a year by district officials for monitoring and support

Indicator 13:   The percentage of schools with principals who rate the support services from the district as satisfactory

The quantitative study mainly relied on oral, face-to-face administration of questionnaires by fieldworkers to educators, school managers, and SGBs.

In order to respond to emerging priority areas and to enhance the understanding of the information collected through the survey on the 13 Action Plan 2019 indicators as detailed above, a qualitative component of the SMS 2017/2018 study was undertaken on a sub-sample of schools that participated in the quantitative study. The aim of the qualitative study was not to merely confirm compliance across indicators, but to provide an in-depth analysis of correlations for specific educational outcomes where possible. For purposes of the qualitative study, five indicators from the original 13 indicators that were included in the quantitative study were selected for further investigation. These were:

Indicator 2:   The percentage of time educators spent on professional development activities

Indicator 6:   The percentage of schools that present the minimum required management documents at the required standard

Indicator 7:   The percentage of schools where the SGB meets criteria of effectiveness

Indicator 12:   The percentage of schools visited at least twice a year by district officials for monitoring and support *combined with*

Indicator 13:   The percentage of schools with principals that rate the support services from the district as satisfactory

Additional information, now referred to as indicator 14: Assessment Perceptions, Knowledge and Practice

Table 1 provides a detailed explanation of how the selected indicators for the qualitative component of the study aligns with the goals set by Action Plan 2019:

Table 1: Alignment of selected indicators to Action Plan 2019 goals

Indicator selected for SMS 2017 qualitative component	Goal in Action Plan 2019
Indicator 2: Time spent by educators on professional development	Goal 16: Improve the professionalism, teaching skills, subject knowledge and computer literacy of educators throughout their entire career
Indicator 6: Management documents at the required standards produced by schools	Goal 21: Ensure that the basic annual management processes take place across all schools in the country in a way that contributes towards a functional school environment
Indicator 7: School Governing Bodies meeting minimum effectiveness criteria	Goal 22: Improve parent and community participation in the governance of schools, partly by improving access to important information via the e-Education strategy
Indicator 12 (13): School monitoring and support received by schools (and their satisfaction with it)	Goal 27: Improve the frequency and quality of the monitoring and support services provided to schools by district offices, partly through the better use of e-Education
Indicator 14: Assessment – perceptions, knowledge, practice	In a way cross-cutting to Set 1 of Action Plan 2019 goals on learner achievement

A short summary per indicator below provides the arguments motivating the importance of the five (5) indicators that have been selected for the qualitative component of the SMS 2017/2018. A short summary is also provided on the critical dynamics for each of the indicators that had to be interrogated during the data collection process. Section 2.3 provides detailed information on the data collection process.

Indicator 2: Professional development and training of educators

Importance of the indicator

Action Plan 2019 argues for an increase in the offering available to educators, both in terms of effort (quantity), and quality. This is supported by observations in the SMS 2011 that as many as half of our educators do not even spend 12 hours per year on capacity development and training. The average was 39 hours, only halfway to the target of 80 hours per year. In addition, results from the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) implementation and other sources, such as SACMEQ, indicate that educator proficiency has to be increased. As stated on p.34 of Action Plan 2019 the process through which learner assessment occurs comprises an important school dynamic, also open for improvement. This will only happen if one knows "which educators have the strongest need for further professional development within a school, (which) is a prerequisite for effective educator development programmes". The use of assessment results by educators is also acknowledged as one of the educator proficiencies to attend to, and as such strengthens the argument for selecting to study Indicator 14 below in more depth.

Critical dynamics to interrogate qualitatively (How? Why?)

Elements identified for further interrogation in the SMS 2017, and now taken further in the qualitative study component and its questions, include:

- Educator satisfaction and needs related to different types/sources of training (self-initiated, internally and externally initiated);

- The role of and achievements through teacher union participation;

- The need for and functioning of the CPTD system;

- Training in the practical use of learning and teaching resources and materials; and

- Training in digital competencies.

Indicator 6: School management documents / processes

Importance of the indicator

From p.41 and onwards in the Action Plan 2019, the matters of autonomy and leadership are clearly considered strong components of good school management. Although statistics reported on, as collected during 2009 and again through the SMS 2011, show that 88% (up from 79%) of schools had school-improvement plans in place, concerns are raised that the mere existence of such plans does still not sufficiently translate into effective use and good management. The same would apply to the existence and use of ANA results, for instance, which at least gave principals a useful handle on discussions with educators about curriculum implementation and other aspects of school quality. The picture becomes starker when considering the findings that only 52% of schools had all 11 key documents in place in 2011. This is followed by a strong appeal to investigate the value of these documents for the quality of school management, especially how management problems existing in schools can be addressed through improved policy and capacity building. Two key actions or strategies that education authorities envisage in this regard for the future are the increased use of competency assessments for principals, and a national training programme for school managers.

Critical dynamics to interrogate qualitatively (How? Why?)

Elements identified for further interrogation in the SMS 2017, and now taken further in the qualitative study component and its questions, include:

- Training needs and modes (as also covered in Indicator 2 above) for principals, also to prepare them better for competency assessments; and

- The more specific interrogation of the efficiency of the use and value of specific 'building blocks' among the school management documents (i.e., the various documents of which their presence is surveyed in the SMS 2017).

Indicator 7: School Governing Body effectiveness

Importance of the indicator

The phrasing in the Action Plan 2019 (p.42) of this indicator as essentially being about "parent and community participation in the governance of schools, partly by improving access to important information via the e-Education strategy" gives an indication of key policy thrusts in this regard. Calling it one of the cornerstones of democracy and accountability does the same. Some reference is also made in this regard to how ANA results were brokered further to parents. Although many successes are acknowledged, transcending mere compliance with requirements such as meetings with parents being properly constituted, the number of meetings held per year, keeping minutes, etc., into achieving meaningful governance and participation is key. The involvement of increasing numbers of parents and community members should be strived at. A further matter highlighted is the need for SGBs to uphold the constitutional rights of children.

Critical dynamics to interrogate qualitatively (How? Why?)

- How to turn the mere presence of documents, procedures and compliance with requirements into operational value and effective functioning;

- The Action Plan 2019 calls for not reducing a matter as complex as SGB effectiveness to a mere indicator number, but to understand critical dynamics through qualitative research about the dynamic role of SGBs at schools; and

- The induction and training of SGBs and their members has to be investigated further.

Indicator 12 (13): District monitoring and support (and satisfaction with it)

Importance of the indicator

It is acknowledged in the Action Plan 2019 (p.47) that school weaknesses reflect district weaknesses. The official district offices policy finalised in 2013 is perhaps the best example of what the DBE has been doing in remedying ailments in the situation. A marginal increase has been noted over time (2009 to 2011) in the percentage of schools reporting at least two face-to-face interactions with district officials (up from 78% to 87%). A recent report stressed districts' use of assessment information, strengthening the capacity of districts, and generating a greater variety of standard monitoring and management reports.

Critical dynamics to interrogate qualitatively (How? Why?)

- The number of visits, especially with a diffuse sense of the purpose(s) behind these visits by district officials, does not automatically translate into great district support, and these dynamics have to be interrogated further.

Indicator 14: Assessment – perceptions, knowledge and practice

Importance of the indicator

As stated before, this element of curriculum implementation during classroom interaction by teachers is critical for knowing which of their learners struggle with which part/s of their work, during and after every lesson. New work is presented in order for the educator to know how to adjust and improve his/her teaching from as early as during the same lesson to at the latest the next day/lesson. All assessment lies at the heart of improved learner achievement.

Critical dynamics to interrogate qualitatively (How? Why?)

- What are educators' perceptions and understanding of the assessment modalities on offer, and their role and value in improving the teaching and learning engagement in the classroom in order to benefit learner achievement. This has to be interrogated in a qualitative way through the survey, as per the proposed questions further below.

2. Design and Methodology

The design adopted for the qualitative component of the SMS 2017/2018 study was a case study approach which included 18 schools across a sub-sample of schools that participated in the main, quantitative survey. The next sections provide detailed information about the sampling strategy that was adopted for data collection, the data collection instruments and how these were developed.

2.1 Sampling strategy

The sample of schools for the qualitative study was drawn from the main quantitative survey. A purposive sampling technique was employed for the SMS 2017/2018 qualitative study and was limited to data collection from 18 schools in three provinces, namely the Free State, Limpopo and the Western Cape. Six (6) schools were selected in each province. A purposive process of school selection was done as follows:

Step 1: Well, moderately and poorly functioning districts in each province were identified, relative to the other districts in the same province. District functionality was arrived at by looking at the main indicators and some of the salient individual questionnaire item scores from the quantitative study for each indicator. Information was available in the form of school ratings of district functioning and satisfaction, information on school management functioning for indicator 6, and SGB functioning information for indicator 7. Levels of district functionality ratings were looked at both relative to other districts in the same province, but also in relation to the score outcomes nationally. This could mean that lowest functioning ratings in the Western Cape, for instance, could still be relatively high in national terms.

The initial district identification according to classifications of well, moderately and poorly functioning districts resulted in the following:

Table 2: Initial District Identification by District Functionality per Province

Province	District	District location	Functionality
Free State	District A	Semi-rural/urban	Well-functioning
	District B	Urban	Moderate functioning
	District C	Rural	Poor functioning
Limpopo	District D	Urban	Well-functioning
	District E	Rural	Moderate functioning
	District F	Semi-rural/urban	Poor functioning
Western Cape	District G	Rural	Well-functioning
	District H	Semi-rural/urban	Moderate functioning
	District I	Urban	Poor functioning

Step 2: It was ensured that school sizes were all in an acceptable range, thereby avoiding very small schools with too few educators who could be interviewed or observed.

Step 3: The locations and distances pertaining to all the initially identified schools were established for logistical purposes.

Step 4: Initially identified schools were grouped and described to enable final primary-secondary school pairings. This step means that the pairing of one (1) primary and one (1) secondary school, in close proximity to each other, as far as possible, per district, should be maintained. A requirement was also that the principal who was to be interviewed for the qualitative component of the study was the same person who completed the 2017 quantitative questionnaire. As far as possible the correct ratio of male and female principals was to be achieved (i.e. about 50:50 at primary schools, and 70:30 at secondary schools in terms of male: female ratios). It was also attempted to ensure appropriate coverage across urban, rural and semi-urban or semi-rural locations within and across the three provinces.

Finally, an alternative (or replacement) school was identified for each of the sampled schools in a given district. Since each sample pool within the identified districts contains five schools (both for primary and secondary schools), further replacement schools can be identified if the need arises.

By applying the methodology discussed above, the following 36 schools (18 initial and 18 replacements) were identified for the administration of the qualitative survey. Table 3 provides key details of the sampled schools, separately for primary and secondary schools. This would enable linkage to the complete datasets, where any other available demographic information can be checked.

Table 3: Intended sample with replacement schools

Province	District Functionality	District	Initial Sample School	Replacement Sample School
Free State	Average	District B	School 3	School 21
			School 4	School 22
	Poor	District C	School 5	School 23
			School 6	School 24
	Good	District A	School 1	School 19
			School 2	School 20
Limpopo	Average	District E	School 9	School 27
			School 10	School 28
	Poor	District F	School 11	School 29
			School 12	School 30
	Good	District D	School 7	School 25
			School 8	School 26
Western Cape	Average	District H	School 15	School 33
			School 16	School 34
	Poor	District I	School 17	School 35
			School 18	School 36
	Good	District G	School 13	School 31
			School 14	School 32

Table 4 presents the realised sample of schools from where data was collected:

Table 4: Realised sample for the qualitative study

Province	District Functionality	District	Realised Sample
Free State	Average	B	School 3
			School 4
	Poor	C	School 23
			School 6
	Good	A	School 1
			School 2
Limpopo	Average	E	School 9
			School 10
	Poor	F	School 11
			School 12
	Good	D	School 7
			School 8
Western Cape	Good	G	School 13
			School 14
	Poor	I	School 17
			School 18
	Average	H	School 15
			School 16

It has to be noted that School 5 in the poorly functioning District C in the Free State was initially selected in the sample. Due to teacher union interference and refusal to allow data collectors access to the school premises, the school was replaced with School 23 as indicated in Table 4.

2.2   Data collection instruments

In summary, the purpose of the qualitative study could centre around three aspects. These are to:

1.   Verify information obtained from the questionnaires;

2.   Provide an explanation or better understanding of the information in the questionnaires; and

3.   Provide additional information that may be of relevance, but which was NOT addressed in the questionnaires.

The qualitative study's specific focus, in discussions with the Department of Basic Education, is to provide information on three themes. These themes are:

a)   accountability (monitoring) dynamics between district and school officials (from principals to educators);

b)   support (capacity development) dynamics between district and school officials (from principals to educators) and

c)   sensitivity to gross cases of maladministration, misconduct or corruption.

Table 5 provides a summary of the sources of information and the nature of the data required per indicator from each relevant participant.

Table 5: Sources of information from each participant in the qualitative study

Indicator/Topic	Principal	Educator	SGB Chair	2nd SGB member
Indicator 2: Capacity development	Interview Document review of School and Academic Development Plans	Interview (for the two relevant phases each time)		
Indicator 6: School management	Interview Document review of School and Academic Development Plans, and Training Register			
Indicator 7: School governance	Interview Document review of SGB Minutes		Interview	Interview
Indicator 12(13): District monitoring and support (and satisfaction)	Interview Document review of any relevant evidence found at the school	Interview (for the two relevant phases each time)		
Indicator 14+: Assessment	Interview	Interview (for the two relevant phases each time) Classroom observation, including some interrogation of practices, and learner book review (assessment feedback)		

The following section outlines each data collection instrument that was used. These included interview schedules, document review sheets and classroom observation schedules.

2.2.1 Interview schedules

A set of interview guidelines to fieldworkers provided the primary questions that each fieldworker had to put to every relevant participant. The questions were followed by additional prompts and background information elaborating on specific contextual matters to provide further focus to the kind of dynamics that should be noted and recorded. Appendix A provides details of the interview schedules. There were separate interview guides for:

- Each principal who was interviewed at each school;

- Each educator who was interviewed; and

- Each SGB chair and member of the SGB who was interviewed.

Fieldworkers were issued with tablets to make audio recordings of each interview. Audio files were downloaded after an interview and stored on the laptop that was provided. To ensure that as much as possible information was captured during interviews, recording sheets were used to record interviews at schools as a basis for daily fieldwork reports. As such, these recording sheets aimed to reflect fieldworkers' understanding of how and why usage and value patterns exist or prevail. There were separate interview recording sheets for:

- Each Principal who was interviewed at each school;

- Each educator who was interviewed. In the interview recording sheet for educators; and

- The interview recording sheet for the SGB chair and member of the SGB were included.

2.2.2 Document review

Fieldworkers used this form to record their document review work at schools. Photographs were taken with the tablet, but to a limited extent and only of anything the fieldworker found interesting or that added to the explanation of how and why documents are used in the school. Appendix B provides examples of the document review schedules that were used by fieldworkers during data collection.

2.2.3 Classroom observation schedules

The purpose of the observation is to record educators' use of assessment during lessons. Appendix C provides the classroom observation schedule that was used in the observation of educator assessment practices.

2.2.4 Summary of obtained data per school

Table 6 provides a summary of all the data that was collected at each of the sampled schools.

As indicated by table 6, 103 interviews were conducted across the 18 sampled schools with different role players. Of these interviews, 70 were audio recorded. Soft copies of interviews are available where participants refused to be recorded. Fieldworkers would then write responses down and make as detailed as possible notes of the interview. Classroom observations could be conducted at 17 of the 18 sampled schools. Reviews of the documents of school academic plans, school development plans, minutes of SGB meetings and training registers were conducted at all 18 schools if these documents were available.

Table 6: Summary of all the data collected at each of the sampled schools

Province	School	Interviews done	Document Review	Comments	Class Observations	Grade 3 Maths	Grade 3 Lang	Grade 6 Maths	Grade 6 Lang	Grade 9 Maths	Grade 9 Lang	Grade 12 Maths	Grade 12 Lang	SGB Chair person	SGB Member	HOD/Deputy Principal	Principal
FREESTATE	School 1	ALL	Done	The audio recordings for the teachers are corrupted. The files cannot be opened.	Yes	1			1					1R	1R	1R	1R
FREESTATE	School 2	ALL	Done	The SGB chairperson refused to be recorded on the audio. Interview was recorded on the supplied interview recording sheet.	Yes							1R	1R	1	1R	1R	1R
FREESTATE	School 3	ALL	Done	Both teachers refused to be recorded on the audio. Interviews were recorded on the supplied interview recording sheets.	Yes	1	1							1R	1R	1R	1R
FREESTATE	School 4	ALL	Done	Complete	Yes						1R	1R		1R	1R	1R	1R
FREESTATE	School 6	ALL	Done	The HoD and SGB member refused to be recorded on the audio. Interviews were recorded on the supplied interview recording sheets.	Yes					1R			1R	1R	1	1	1R
FREESTATE	School 23	ALL	Done	The principal, HOD, maths teacher and SGB chairperson refused to be recorded on the audio. Interviews were recorded on the supplied interview recording sheets.	Yes	1			1R					1	1R	1	1
LIMPOPO	School 7	ALL	Done	Complete	Yes	1R	1R							1	1R	1R	1R
LIMPOPO	School 8	ALL	Done	The Language teacher refused to be recorded on the audio. Interview was recorded on the supplied interview recording sheet.	Yes					1R			1	1R	1R	1R	1R
LIMPOPO	School 9	ALL	Done	No audio recordings were allowed. Interviews were recorded on the supplied interview recording sheets.	Yes	1	1							1	1	1	1
LIMPOPO	School 10	ALL	Done	Complete	Yes					1R			1R	1R	1R	1R	1R
LIMPOPO	School 11	Deputy Principal/ HOD was not interviewed	Done	>No audio recordings were allowed. Interviews were recorded on the supplied interview recording sheets. >School does not have HoD or Deputy Principal. >SGB Member was not available for interview.	Yes	1	1							1	X	X	1
LIMPOPO	School 12	ALL	Done	No audio recordings were allowed. Interviews were recorded on the supplied interview recording sheets.	Yes					1			1	1	1	1	1
WESTERN CAPE	School 13	ALL	Done	Interviews are available on audio format.	Yes	1R			1R					R	R	R	R
WESTERN CAPE	School 14	ALL	Done	Interviews are available on audio format.	Yes					R			R	R	R	R	R
WESTERN CAPE	School 15	ALL	Done	Complete	Yes	1R			1R					1R	1R	1R	X
WESTERN CAPE	School 16	ALL	Done	Complete	Yes					1R			1R	1R	1R	1R	1R
WESTERN CAPE	School 17	Principal was not interviewed	Done	Interviews are available on audio format. Principal and SGB Member were not available for Interview	Yes	R	R							R	X	R	1R
WESTERN CAPE	School 18	ALL	Done	The maths teacher refused to be recorded on the audio. Interview was recorded on the supplied interview recording sheet. No classroom observations because the school was busy with examinations	NO					1			1R	1R	1R	1R	1R

1 = Soft Copy
R = Audio recording
X = Not Interviewed

2.3   Fieldwork training and data collection

Fieldworkers were needed with the skill to produce a coherent, interpretive fieldwork report for each site, reflecting key observations, dynamics, implications, interpretations, and the like. For purposes of collecting data, 12 fieldworkers were recruited with the requirement of having obtained a postgraduate qualification in Education.

Fieldworkers were divided into two (2) teams per province. Fieldwork training took place on 7 and 8 March 2018. Among others, time on day one of training was dedicated to the background to the SMS project, taking fieldworkers through day 1 and day 2 at the school, what was expected to be done for the document review, as well as for the classroom observations. Day two of the training was dedicated to a detailed discussion of the interviews per indicator and the kinds of information that fieldworkers were expected to elicit. Logistical arrangements were also discussed in terms of travel, accommodation, handling recording equipment and submitting data and fieldwork reports at the end of data collection.

2.4   Data Analysis

Data analysis was done by recording all the reviews of the required documents. This process was followed by identifying main themes that emerged from the interview transcriptions. Central themes that emerged from the evidence that was collected are presented in this report. Per indicator, central themes include:

Table 7: Central themes that emerged from interview data

Indicator	Source	Central Themes
Indicator 2: Professional Development	Primary School Educator interviews	Theme 1: The Importance of Professional Development
		Theme 2: Establishing Training Needs
		Theme 3: Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD)
		Theme 4: Personal Studies
		Theme 5: HOD and Principal Classroom Support
		Theme 6: Peer support and Mentoring
	Secondary School Educator interviews	Theme 1: Types of Professional Development
		Theme 2: The Importance of Professional Development
		Theme 3: Establishing Training Needs
		Theme 4: HOD and Principal Classroom Support
		Theme 5: Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD)
		Theme 6: Personal Studies
		Theme 7: Best Practices
	Principal interviews	Theme 1: Professional Development
		Theme 2: Sources of Professional Development
		Theme 3: The Role of Professional Learning Communities (PLC)
Indicator 6: School management	Principal and deputy principal interviews	Theme 1: The Existence and Use of School Management Plans
		Theme 2: The Existence and Use of Curriculum or Academic Management Plans
		Theme 3: The Existence and Use of Annual Reports
		Theme 4: Learner Pass Rates
		Theme 5: Learner Register
		Theme 6: Staff Register
		Theme 7: Asset Register

Indicator	Source	Central Themes
Indicator 7: School Governance	Principal and SGB interviews	Theme 1: Collaboration between the school and SGB
		Theme 2: Training Provided to the SGB
		Theme 3: The Role the SGB has Played in the Selection of School Staff
		Theme 4: SGB's Powers
Indicator 12 and 13: District monitoring and support	Principal interviews	Theme 1: Relationship with the District
		Theme 2: Staff Provisioning and Other Resources
	Primary educator interviews	Theme 1: Visit Frequency
		Theme 2: Visit Content
		Theme 3: Suggestions for the District
	Secondary educator interviews	Theme 1: Visit Frequency
		Theme 2: Visit Content
		Theme 3: Benefits of Visit
		Theme 4: Suggestions to the District
		Theme 5: Best Practices

Indicator	Source	Central Themes
Assessment – Perceptions, Knowledge and Practice	Principal and primary educator interviews	Theme 1: Large-Scale Assessment and Standard Setting Theme 2: Best Practice in Assessment Theme 3: Assessment as Integrated Part of Learning and Holistic Practice Theme 4: Identifying At-Risk Learners and Gaps in Teaching and Learning Theme 5: Lack of Resources and Assessment Overload Theme 6: Stakeholder Involvement Theme 7: Assessment Training or Studies
	Secondary Educator Interviews	Theme 1: Best Practice in Assessment Theme 2: Large-Scale Assessment and Standard Setting Theme 3: Identifying At-Risk Learners and Gaps in Teaching and Learning Theme 4: Assessment as Integrated Part of Learning and Holistic Practice Theme 5: Lack of Resources and Assessment Overload Theme 6: Assessment Training and Studies

3. Results of Central Themes per Indicator

3.1 Indicator 2: Professional Development

The Action Plan 2019 argues for an increase in the offering available to educators, both in terms of effort (quantity), and quality. This argument is supported by observations in the SMS 2011 that indicated that as many as half of our educators do not even spend 12 hours per year on capacity development and training. The average was 39 hours, only halfway to the target of 80 hours per year. In addition, results from the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) implementation and other sources, such as SACMEQ, indicate that educator proficiency has to be increased. Opportunities for professional development will only happen if one knows "which educators have the strongest need for further professional development within a school, (which) is a prerequisite for effective educator development programmes".

Elements identified for further interrogation in SMS 2017, and now taken further in the qualitative study component and its questions, include:

- Educator satisfaction and needs related to different types/sources of training (self-initiated, internally and externally initiated);

- The role of and achievements through teacher union participation;

- The need for and functioning of the CPTD system;

- Training in the practical use of learning and teaching resources and materials; and

- Training in digital competencies.

The data for the Indicator on Professional Development was collected from document reviews, educator interviews and principals' interviews. The findings and data analysis are discussed under the three topics and then the lessons and recommendations follow.

3.1.1 Document Review

In most cases staff development is not reflected in the vision and mission of the school. Only in one school, 'professionalism' and 'work ethics' were part of the points under the mission statement of the school.

The School Development Plan (SDP) indicated the departmental workshops that educators would be attending. One school had an Educator Improvement Plan (EIP) with areas and strategies for staff development. Some schools had not submitted the Academic Development Plan (ADP) and in others there was no evidence of the ADP for the last two years. For those who had the ADP, some plans only addressed issues of subject improvement and not staff development directly. There are cases where staff development was addressed generally with no specific details given. In one school, a detailed Personal Growth Plan was completed for 2017 and the summary was in the Educator Improvement Plan; there was also evidence that all staff members in this school were involved in some form of development.

A majority of the schools did not have a training register, but in one school there was a control book for when educators leave the school early. For a given period of 2017 in this school, out of a staff of 17, only seven (7) educators attended a workshop or a series of workshops and ten (10) educators did not attend any workshop whatsoever. Of those who attended, four (4) attended one (1) workshop each and three (3) attended three (3) workshops each. In another school there was only one (1) workshop entry in the stipulated period of 2017 where seven (7) staff members participated.

In most cases schools did not have the Annual Report and in those that had the report, there was generally no reporting on staff development. Those that reported only had summaries and no specific details given. In one school there was annual reporting on staff development as well as details of the utilised funds for it. In another school the report stated that three (3) educators were involved in self-initiated personal professional development and have since graduated, but this information did not appear in the ADP or SDP.

In one of the provinces it was also stated that the Professional Development sessions took place after school, over weekends and during school holidays. In this province, one school had evidence of the time and hours spent on professional development sessions.

3.1.2 Educator Interviews – Primary Schools

Theme 1: The Importance of Professional Development

Generally primary school educators are aware of the need for professional development and its importance in their daily work. One educator stated how one needed to keep up with new research and new teaching strategies. An educator in the same school also mentioned:

> "*Technology evolves everyday*".

Another educator said that educators always pick up something new to implement in their class during training. This particular educator describes her/his classroom as full of learning materials and posters which s/he got from courses attended. The educator is very keen on professional development as s/he went for a whole month to a Mathematics training because s/he needed to upscale her skills and knowledge. On her return s/he presented lessons to academic experts as well as about 600 educator peers. The reason for attending all these professional development activities, this educator said:

> "*…that is the passion I have to teaching….so I can be a better educator in front of my   learners.*"

Sometimes this educator would stand in for the HOD in training opportunities that the HOD could not attend. As a result of the professional development and enthusiasm, the educator was identified as a CAPS Lead Educator where the Curriculum Advisor would ask her/him to present Mathematics lessons to peers in another school or in another town.

Theme 2: Establishing Training Needs

In one school, training needs were established in a big two-hour meeting as they conduct their own training to cover their specific needs. The educators determine their own professional development needs and choose to go for training from SACE-Accredited service providers. The school has a lot of resources to meet their training needs. However, the educator has not received any training from the district but had attended an 'Educator's rights and responsibility' workshop from the Suid Afrikaanse Onderwyser Unie (SAOU). An educator from the same school attended a very useful HOD course. In this workshop educators were shown strategies for school improvement, working with educators and learners as well as improving learner participation. The educator also attended a computerised Geometry workshop which was not applicable to his/her context, but because "technology evolves everyday" s/he said, it was beneficial. Another educator mentioned how they could not implement the course content (Mathletics) because of technical problems in the form of wi-fi availability at school level. The issue of sometimes not being able to implement the training content came up in different ways, but the reason is primarily that the contextual situation of the school is not considered, that is why certain training is not effective.

Table 8: Identified Training Needs by Primary School Educators

Assessment
Mathematics (in Setswana)
Modern Technology
Assessment (Afrikaans)
Multi-graded classes
Monitoring and controlling learner informal work
Learners with learning barriers
Setting a question paper (assessment)
Modern technology in teaching
Foundation Phase training

Theme 3: Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD)

One educator stated that the CPTD points are a big motivation for training. Another educator from the same school explained how one has to get 150 points in a cycle of three (3) years and how these points would translate to a percentage in the salary increase. This school clearly records and follows-up on the CPTD points, motivates educators to collect them and also to anticipate rewards for doing so.

An educator from another school stated how they are not following up on these points, and yet another said they don't do SACE points.

In response to the SACE training they have received, an educator said:

> "*Yes, but it was after school and was like a crash course in ….and most people were actually asleep, me included, because it was extremely hot that day and we were tired. That's not a good excuse I suppose, but ja.*"

The above statement implies that educators in this instance did not place much value on CPTD points nor did they know how this SACE process works. If there is any benefit of collecting CPTD points as the other educator stated, then some educators have not captured that information as the educator above who has undergone training, but still mentions that the SACE has no record of his/her PD points.

Theme 4: Personal Studies

An educator who has had no district training since s/he arrived at the school in 2016, wants to study further to specialise in Languages. There is another educator who completed an Honours Degree the previous year and wants to pursue a Masters study in the field of Psychology. To some extent, this change of field might imply the educator's intention to pursue a different career. A different educator is awaiting the results of one subject to get an Honours Degree and s/he intends to pursue a Masters the following year.

From the data there seems to be educators who are motivated to do their own self-initiated study, but the question is for how long the system can retain these educators before they decide to pursue other careers.

Theme 5: HOD and Principal Classroom Visits

In one school, the educator mentioned that there are cameras in each classroom and thus monitoring and surveillance happens at any time. Unprepared classroom visits occur, as stated by one educator, where the principal and HOD come to observe the learning atmosphere by sitting in the lesson and thereafter checking the books. In another school, the principal and HOD conduct class visits once every quarter. It was also reiterated that not only does the School Management Team conducts the class visits, but peers as well participate in class visits when they are busy with the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS). Several educators mentioned how they used the IQMS to identify professional development needs and shortcomings in the process of doing observations. An educator also added that being observed makes her/him nervous, but it is necessary, and it helps.

Theme 6: Peer Support and Mentoring

Educators are expected to give feedback when they come back from training. In addition, they sometimes have to train other educators on their return. So, for example, is the Lead Educator Programme [as discussed under Indicator 12 (13),] an initiative in (a) above] where an educator shows or explains to peers in other schools or districts how to present certain aspects of the curriculum. In a particular school, there was also mention of the principal appointing a mentor for each new educator.

There is also a case of an educator who feels that s/he is overqualified to teach in a primary school, so s/he sends her/his lesson plan to a peer from another school to check and evaluate its appropriateness. Still another educator who has not had adequate training in the Foundation Phase, has a peer mentor. All these data indicate the importance of peer mentoring and peer counselling over and above the SMT oversight role. A different educator states the need for one to be able to ask a senior and more experienced educator for their teaching approach regarding a specific content module or unit. It is then implied that the Department or district needs to differentiate between experienced and new educators when training them as this issue has been voiced in various ways by educators. In summary, the educator voiced that they (the district officials) do not differentiate between 'beginner onderwyser' (beginner educator) and 'gesoute onderwyser' (seasoned educator).

3.1.3 Secondary School Interviews – Indicator 2

The following themes emerged from the data during analysis. In most cases the specific words used by the participants are utilised to convey a more accurate reflection of the exact meaning from the data.

Theme 1: Types of Professional Development

In Limpopo, the training mentioned by the secondary school educators was firstly for English short stories which was conducted by the Subject Advisor. There was a Mathematics workshop at the Circuit Office, but the educator could not attend because of lack of finances and unclear communication by the principal. Another educator mentioned attending a Grade 12 Mathematics workshop where results were analysed, and work schedules and timetables for tests were issued. Question papers and difficult questions for learners were also discussed.

In the Free State, educators stated their attendance at the kinds of training that follow. Two educators said they attended the CAPS one-week long training in Bloemfontein, concerning which an educator said:

> "*it enhanced my teaching in the classroom, it helped me to become a better (Maths) teacher.*"

Another educator mentioned attending the Literature, New Horizon and cluster workshops where they discussed examination preparation and how to avoid lenient marking. The assessment schedule provided was deemed to be very useful. Another educator attended a four -day workshop on setting question papers and drawing computer- assisted pictures in Algebra. The principal initiated school-based training on learners with trauma and a motivation organised by the principal.

There was an incident that displayed broken trust between an educator and a district official or the district office in one of the workshops. The educator claims that the meeting did not end well as the official could not give them the requested information and materials.

> *"It was about literature and they couldn't give us clear answers about what texts we should use and how many of what. If we asked a question, she just said colleagues I cannot answer this question. So, it wasn't very successful and things that they said like, they will send us rubrics to mark in rubrics, I still haven't received any rubrics…"*

The same educator also talked about another incident in a district meeting where the meeting was conducted in a language they did not understand. In this particular case, the school - district relationship is compromised and also affects the normal functioning of a district and of the school within a district. However, there was no evidence of other similar cases in the sample of schools where data was collected for the qualitative study.

In the Western Cape, educators stated attendance at the kinds of training that follow. There was training organised by the Department and the British Council on strategies for making English more interesting for learners, and also using technology. There was a Short Story Course also mentioned by an educator who could not attend because s/he applied too late.

Another educator surprisingly found value in the course content which s/he assumed s/h knew. S/He attended a Grade 7 and 8 Natural Science and Physics course while s/he taught the higher grades. He/His interesting discovery was how the Grade 7 and 8 curriculum greatly impacted on her/his work and this proved the relevance of the course.

'How to do group work in a big class' was another workshop attended by an educator. E-content training was also offered to Grades 10 – 12 but not yet to Grade 9s. The Western Cape Education Department was paying for a two-year course at the University of Stellenbosch which one educator said s/he was attending. A lot of short courses were given by a certain Subject Advisor, who is said to be fantastic. This Subject Advisor trained educators on how to set papers with a taxonomy and when they set the June external papers, she moderates them.

> *"She is very strict and we are scared of her, which is good."*

The above-mentioned Subject Advisor is said to be totally hands-on because she developed a whole lesson plan on the problem areas regarding set workbooks and she also had '*a very good poetry presentation*'.

Theme 2: The Importance of Professional Development

The Action Plan 2019 (p.9) states that "Teachers understand the importance of their profession for the development of the nation and do their utmost to give their learners a good educational start in life." Based on the latter it is hoped that educators understand the importance of professional development in this task of developing a nation by developing the learners for the future. What follows is the secondary educators' perception of the value and importance of training in their work.

In Limpopo, an educator talked about the importance of training as it covers the content knowledge which is not understood and would otherwise be skipped if not for training. Professional development contributes to the growth of the educator who in turn imparts the knowledge to learners, says another educator.

When attending courses or workshops, peers are present to discuss problems and facilitators are there to assist with understanding. Educators gain strategies and different methods of teaching, reiterated another teacher. She would encourage teachers to attend training. As Grade 12 teachers they also get to compare their final results with others and have beneficial conversations with educators whose learners performed well.

An educator in the Free State mentioned that professional development is a priority for them because they attend workshops. At a specific workshop, s/he learned another way of teaching Financial Mathematics and Analytical Geometry.

"As educators, so you need always to get training".

"Last year I couldn't do for example geometry, now I went for a course, I understand it better. So now my subject, I can present it better or teach it better."

For secondary school educators it seems like more of content training is what they require and mostly discuss. They mention how useful the workshops are and that an individual cannot know everything because there is always something to learn. English Literature was mentioned a number of times as being problematic if the educator does not understand the context. By attending workshops an educator has evidenced improvement in their Grade 12 learner results in the past five years.

"They have improved a lot."

In the Western Cape, the workshop helped an educator to understand simplification of content. This educator has previously been teaching Grades 10 to 12, and from the current year s/he also had to teach Grade 9. At the workshop, s/he learnt extensively from educators who had been teaching Grade 9 for a longer period.

Theme 3: Establishing Training Needs

In Limpopo, training needs were identified through self-evaluation and on receipt of district circulars identifying future training.

In the Western Cape, an educator stated how they take control of their professional development needs. The quantitative report for the School Monitoring Survey 2017 also states that 'most hours of professional development were self-initiated' as compared to school initiated, district-initiated etc. In support of this finding, during the interview an educator said:

"I am very harsh on myself in that I feel I must always be one step ahead, and the feeling that I am in charge and I know what I'm doing. And this is my goal, makes me get up every morning".

Motivated educators who feel they have some level of control of their career, initiate professional development for themselves. While this is true for some educators, the opposite is also an occurrence with de-motivated educators.

Again, in the Western Cape, the Department sends e-mails for courses even though at times educators have to pay for themselves. This means that sometimes educators just wait for the Department to inform them regarding courses or workshops to attend.

A Free State educator said that they do an error analysis to identify training gaps. They send the information to the HOD who in turn notifies the Learning Facilitator who will arrange a workshop even for two people. If they require further assistance, they will engage help from outside the school. Another Free State educator states how they plan for training at the beginning of the year based on the previous year's teaching and learning challenges. For example, an educator will find a person who excels in 'how to teach probability', makes an appointment and meets the person to discuss the content.

On current training needs, a Free State educator mentioned how they would appreciate CAPS training because they are in their fourth year of teaching and they have not had any CAPS training. The educator says that this will greatly help with English literature and poetry.

Theme 4: HOD and Principal Classroom Support

An educator in the Free State mentions how the IQMS helps especially when the principal observes teaching and gives constructive feedback. Another educator appreciated the support of the HOD and principal who offer classroom-based support. They co-operate very well with the educator when it is time to implement the IQMS.

A Limpopo educator talked about the classroom support s/he got from the HOD and principal, even though the learners would mostly behave better in the presence of school management.

In the Western Cape, an educator said they do IQMS once per year in August. S/He thus feels that he does not have adequate classroom support as this is not a continuous process throughout the year. Another educator acknowledged the support from the principal, but s/he stated lack of support from the HOD and the Subject Advisor which s/he would like to have. Another educator only had peer evaluation but none from the principal and HOD.

Theme 5: Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD)

In the Action Plan 2019, resolution number 7 of the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) requires teachers to undergo 80 hours per year of professional development. Educators participating in professional development acquire a number of professional development points which they need to upload on the South African Council of Educators (SACE) website.

In light of the above, an educator in the Free State mentioned that the principal explained the CPTD system to them but there was no follow-up thereafter. Another educator stated that the SACE had training on the CPTD point system, but they never used it. On the other hand, an educator reiterated how the point system forces them to get involved in professional development which they otherwise would not do.

In the Western Cape, an educator said that they do not follow the point system as they have just heard the previous day at a course they attended that it has 15 points. The same educator had not registered on the system and they do not even know where to register. The educator was not aware that they have to upload the points on the system, as the assumption was that the points will automatically be recorded the SACE number they put on the attendance register.

In Limpopo, when asked about the CPTD points, an educator said:

> "*I don't know it*".

Theme 6: Personal Studies

Two educators gave information concerning this theme in their interviews. A Western Cape educator has applied at the University of Stellenbosch and has been accepted. The educator did not disclose the studies s/he was planning to undertake at the institution. A Limpopo educator said, s/he had a STD, BA and an Honours degree as well as ACE in Mathematics. Presently s/he is not studying because her/his salary is not adequate to cover further studies.

Theme 7: Best Practices

The best practices that emerged from the secondary school educator interviews are the following:

- An educator in the Free State told the interviewer about their habit of reading a lot on different information posted on the RSA Teachers Group;

- Another Free State educator is responsible for the Professional Learning Community for Mathematics educators in the cluster where they meet once per term. The educator assists about ten schools to prepare for final examinations by creating a platform to share knowledge and expertise from which they all gain;

- In the Western Cape, an assistant of the Subject Advisor created a computer drive where the educators share information and get materials to use in class; and

- The need for older educators to mentor younger ones who have just come into the education system. An escalation process at school level was also useful, said another educator because they escalate their problems to peers, then to the HOD and eventually to the principal.

> *"How can I do things better? And then you go to your peer or to your mentor and then ask him, how would you do this."*

- In Limpopo, at least two schools said that they outsourced help from teachers from other schools if confronted with knowledge gaps they could not address. This would be in the form of new concepts that they have not learned about at college.

3.1.4 Principal Interviews

Theme 1: Professional Development

Most principals have received professional development that prepares them for their role as the head of the school. For example, they would have orientation or induction into their roles and responsibilities during management meetings and forums with the district. These sessions will also address personal and professional conduct of the principal, staff motivation, and curriculum management, among others. The principals valued the sharing of ideas and burdens with other principals in forums such as these. The latter is evidenced below:

> *"I sometimes meet with the principal, talk about his success and what is it that he does, and try to adapt some of the things to our school…"*

In one province there were three principals who underwent a leadership course with certification. The district also provided training on finance, governance and management and School Improvement Plans.

Theme 2: Sources of Professional Development

To address specific needs, principal will enlist the services of service providers or experts specialising in those particular needs. For example, a few schools will enlist the services of nearby universities for motivation or content expertise such as in the field of Mathematics and Science. The issue of motivation of staff comes more often as a school initiative when dealing with the problem of teacher low-morale. The aim of these workshops is to assist educators to be positive and get them in the right attitude for the year, says one principal. Team building is another aspect of training mentioned by a principal, and in another school, they also included 'playing drum' to bring an element of relaxation and enjoyment to their work. In one province, two schools mentioned training on 'Abuse no more' which all educators were expected to go, as it might have been a contextual problem in their schools.

The Suid Afrikaanse Onderwyser Unie (SAOU) plays a vital part especially in previously Model-C Afrikaans Schools. This teacher union provides a lot of training opportunities for their members such as courses in classroom management, handling difficult learners, and report writing, among others. The SAOU also holds annual conferences as well as a national symposium for about 800 principals annually, stated two principals respectively. Member principals and schools of this union immensely rely on their union for their professional support. For example, one school getting support from the union is the one with no district curriculum support whatsoever. Therefore, the union serves to close the curriculum and administrative gaps left by the district. At the same school, the principal and two of his staff members attend corporate governance training offered by a private institution. It has to be noted that the school has ample financial resources to support such an initiative.

In another school, the principal and staff participate in international conferences to boost morale and empower self and others. The school partners with other principals and they also have the support of the circuit manager in the development of principals and their deputies. The principal of one other such school which has circuit manager support, mentioned that they have 60 smart boards which allows for effective teaching and for which they underwent training. Concerning his circuit manager, he said:

> *"Mr. X, his vision with e-learning, makes it that all children will one day be sitting with a tablet instead of a book in front of them".*

The statement above puts emphasis on the importance and influence of district support in the professional development of a school. More on the district support is discussed under Indicator 12 (13).

One principal stated that the main focus of professional development is to improve the results or learner outcomes. Table 9 indicates the professional development needs identified by principals.

Table 9: Identified Training Needs by Principals

For Educators	*For Principals*
CPTD	Induction workshop for Principals
Computer Literacy	SA SAMS
E-learning Systems	Data Analysis
Digital Technology	Staff Management
Discipline	Financial Management
Curriculum Management	Fundraising
Assessment	

Theme 3: The Role of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

The role of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) is becoming increasingly significant and educators and principals are seeing the benefit of PLCs. Educators who participate in these structures raise the issue of how PLCs can improve on teaching and learning. In these communities, educators discuss how to improve learner performance at different schools. These structures provide the most stable peer and curriculum support especially vital in situations lacking district support.

One educator was thinking of initiating a PLC support group in the Intermediate Phase because they saw how effective it is operating in the Foundation Phase of their school. The establishment and efficient running of PLCs might become one of the most far-reaching and effective initiatives at district level.

3.2   Indicator 6: School Management

From p.41 and onwards in the Action Plan 2019, the matters of autonomy and leadership are clearly considered strong components of good school management. Although statistics reported on, as collected during 2009 and again through SMS 2011, show that 88% (up from 79%) of schools had school-improvement plans in place, concerns are raised that the mere existence of such does still not sufficiently translate into efficient use and good management. The same would apply to the existence and use of ANA results, for instance, which at least gave principals a useful handle on discussions with educators about curriculum implementation and other aspects of school quality. The picture becomes starker when considering the findings that only 52% of schools had all 11 key documents in place in 2011. This finding is followed by a strong appeal to investigate the value of these documents for the quality of school management, and especially how management problems existing in schools can be addressed through improved policy and capacity building. Two key actions or strategies that education authorities envisage in this regard for the future are the increased use of competency assessments for principals, and a national training programme for school managers.

Elements identified for further interrogation in the SMS 2017, and now taken further in the qualitative study component and its questions, include:

- Training needs and modes (as also covered in Indicator 2 above) for principals, also to prepare them better for competency assessments; and

- The more specific interrogation of the efficiency of use and value of specific 'building blocks' from among the school management documents (i.e. the various documents of which its presence is surveyed in SMS 2017).

The data for the indicator on School Management was collected from document reviews, principals' interviews and deputy-principal or HOD interviews. The findings and data analysis are discussed below.

3.2.1 Document Reviews

Table 10 provides an outline of the existence of documents when asked to present them at the six (6) schools visited in each province.

Table 10: Evidence of school management documents, curriculum documents and annual reports

Performance of District	School Names	School Management Plan	Curriculum/Academic Management Plan	Annual Report
Average Functionality	School 3		Yes	Yes
	School 4			Yes
	School 9			
	School 10	Yes	Yes	
	School 15			
	School 16			
	Total	1	2	2
Poor functionality	School 6	Yes	Yes	
	School 11			
	School 12	Yes	Yes	Yes
	School 17		Yes	
	School 18			
	School 23			Yes
	Total	2	3	2
Good functionality	School 1	Yes	Yes	Yes
	School 2			Yes
	School 7	Yes (2017 – not revised)	Yes	Yes
	School 8	Yes (IQMS plan)		
	School 13		Yes	
	School 14		Yes	
	Total	3	4	2
	Grand total	6	9	6

It is clear from the table above that only one third of the schools were able to produce School Management Plans and Annual Reports. Only half of the schools had Curriculum or Academic Management Plans. It is also clear that the levels of district functionality cannot be consistently associated with the existence of documents. The only consistent pattern

is that schools from well-functioning districts were able to produce a higher number of all three documents compared to schools with lower levels of district functioning.

3.2.2 Principal and Deputy-Principal Interviews

The principal of a school indicated that he had limited computer skills – a factor which may have repercussions in terms of not being able to produce any of the documents as requested:

> *"I don't know how to operate the computer and my colleague used to do the work for me."*

Nonetheless, this principal agreed that the documents were very important since he felt it was important to work according to a plan. According to this principal, the document he used the most was the Curriculum Management Plan (however, notably, this document was not available in a revised format for 2018). The principal placed strong emphasis on the use of the Academic Performance Improvement Plan (APIP) which he felt would prevent them from repeating mistakes.

The principal of another school in this category of district functionality emphasised the importance of professional development (as discussed in the section for indicator 2). The principal stated that he was enrolled for a course (at Monstrant) along with the deputy principal and a CSI educator which was based on the King III Report:

> *"You do not study, they supply you with concept documentation, so you start, you are busy reviewing all your documentation in the school and by the end of the year, you should have that in place, so it's practical…"*

In this way, the training in which the principal was engaged directly improved the utilisation of documentation of the school. The principal also made it clear that FEDSAS and SAOU as teacher unions were instrumental in brokering his attendance at training presented in the form of a three-day workshop and ten one-day lectures aimed at improving their management skills.

Furthermore, this principal relied a lot on the IQMS system (and the CPTD).

> *"…they (educators) upload… their marks…and that culminates into what you saw – the school improvement plan, the school development plan, the development plan for educators."*

The principal of this school referred to the SAOU's manual for school management which he found useful in a number of situations (and which he also used in electronic format.)

Educators were exposed to the CAPS document and the workbooks from the Department, the academic policy of the school and guidelines on assessment. Educators on post level 2 (such as the HOD) were trained in curriculum management and used the relevant documentation and the 'top management team' did not yet have access to the key documents on the system but were to gain this access shortly.

Theme 1: The Existence and Use of School Management Plans

The six (6) schools that had School Management Plans could not be linked consistently to the functionality status of their districts. More schools in poorly functioning districts compared to average functioning districts could produce the documents. However, there was no evidence that the observed schools were in the process of reviewing them.

Although a document reflecting the one school's management plan was produced, it was a facsimile of the previous year's planning with no evidence of how this plan was reviewed and revised in the current academic year.

In one school, the School Management Plan outlined the date, activity, responsibility and time frame for school planning. In this instance each department completed a report in order to give feedback on the development plan which was being reviewed fortnightly.

One school indicated that in terms of the School Management Plan, the focus was on the IQMS. The responsibilities of the principal, the SDT, the DSG and individual educators are shown with time frames set on a term basis.

One of the sampled schools produced a document indicating the roles and responsibilities of different participants in the management process under activities such as development, monitoring, support and mentoring. The other school from a well-functioning district did not produce such a document, but referred to the IQMS School Management Plan in which roles and responsibilities for each incumbent are clearly stipulated with time frames set a month apart or per school cycle.

The principal of the school, categorised as in one of the better performing districts, stated that he relied regularly on the School Development Plan (and substantiated in Table 10 indicating the evidence of documents at the school), the annual budget and the registers in order to run the school effectively. He noted that the school has two registers – one for a normal arrival time and one for keeping track of late comers, including educators.

In one school the principal mentioned during the interview that his School Management Team meets weekly to go through the School Management Plan. At that meeting they checked progress on all due items and also prepared and planned for upcoming tasks. The principal stated:

> "*Like this one of the school development plan we always come together as a SMT every week; go through the school development plan to see the areas that that we've gone through and mark them and see what are the next items in the school government plan*"

The principal also remarked on his use of the annual budget:

> "*The annual budget, yes. Yes, that one is very important. We always check in the morning how the budget fit…Mainly the budget is our tool that we use every day…You must always link the school development plan with the budget.*"

Clearly this principal feels it is very important to work from the key documents and takes pride s/in the consistent use and updating of the documents. This same principal also indicated that s/he prioritised professional development both for his staff and for her/himself (refer to indicator 2 for further explanation) and used a year planner as a relevant document to provide professional development opportunities to his staff with specific training areas being clearly identified. He also linked the training to the formulation of a document used in classroom practice:

> "*We also formulate the individual support plan for educators whereby the learner will be helped on how to go about it when they see a learning barrier for these learners*"

This principal acknowledged the valuable role that district support played in helping the school to link their budget process to the School Development Plan.

In another school the principal reported during the interview that s/he met with the Deputy Principal and HoDs every morning to discuss the printout s/he produced for them at the end of the previous day using SA-SAMS and 'Principal Primary' software helping them to plan every day.

> "*Ja. As you have said when my Principal is not here I am second in charge and then took over all duties he's supposed to do. My duty starts from trying to assist my HODs so that they can assist the educators, right. And then from there our environment here at school nowadays, I have my hands very, very full of the discipline of children. It's – from Monday till Friday – it is discipline problems. I am also there to assist the educators, how to manage the most of all that, how can I say, how they can they manage their own classes according to the discipline.*"

This Deputy Principal expresses the difficulty in trying to understand how they can improve learner results.

A principal who works basically from the School Development Plan stated:

> "They said I must have it. That's the easiest way to answer hey. No, it's not because of the Act. There is certain ways a school must grow. And those are some of the documents to let any school grow if they follow that rules and if they have got those documents and especially if you look at the SIP [school improvement plan], and you look at everything the SIP is asking you, then you can go forward from that and better your school as far as you go along."

However, another Deputy Principal said that he worked irregularly from the School Development Plan, although they did use the document to some extent.

One Principal said that he had discussions with regard to problematic areas in the systemic tests and fed this into the Development Plan. However, s/he found monitoring of the plan difficult because of having a temporary HOD. Nonetheless a School Development Team decides in terms of the scores of the educators how to further develop the educators. Scores are derived from their peers, the supervisor and the educators themselves.

Finances are viewed as critical and many principals regard the financial responsibility as their main role.

> "I don't know how but I presume yes, it will better our results but the biggest problem is still for us parents…that is the one main thing that stays problematic because discipline wise, homework wise, the kid's readiness for school wise, etc., etc."

The Deputy Principal is the designated co-ordinator of the IQMS. The School Improvement Plan consists of a table with the name of each educator and the developmental need and the steps to be taken – the educators themselves complete the forms indicating what training needs they have. The School Management revisits the School Improvement Plan (SIP) of the school two or three times a term in order to ascertain whether they are still on track. In order to progress or to reach their goal of a 100% pass rate, they meet to discuss the SIP after every result. The staff revisits the plan so as to identify the reason for not attaining the desired percentage in each subject.

The finances of one of the schools was governed by the accounting programme Pastel. The Principal stated that s/he and the financial clerk discussed the finances and then liaised with the finance person in the SGB in order to set the budget.

The school also keeps records of the training that the educators have attended so that they can provide evidence that the educator has been given the opportunity to develop in an area. Both the School Improvement Plan and the School Development Plan were being used regularly and the levels of buy-in for each document is good:

> "In most cases we would get the full co-operation because it's not a document that is compiled by the SMT of the school only."

There is buy-in at the level of the educators first where it is agreed that this will be the working document of the school.

> "We have to sit down with them (educators) as an issue of the Department…sometimes we take some of the issues, that need to be referred to a staff meeting which we will discuss there for finalisation of the document."

This discussion is done at the school departmental level where the HOD discusses it with the educators.

> "You will only get resistance if maybe it comes from the top getting to educators".

The document is followed and if they realise that the strategy that was agreed to is not working it is revisited.

> "The SA SAMS will always inform you what is it that it needs. Immediately we will take what is in our SIP, feed

into SA SAMS with the results. Sometimes it's the results, sometimes it's the strategies. It depends on what the SA SAMS will require from us by that time then we will be feeding it the way it requires us to do."

There is a lot of buy-in on the document requirements, because the management team speaks to the HODs and the educators and gets their co-operation first. In this way they avoid resistance to the usage of the documents.

The School Development Plan is checked regularly by the Deputy Principal:

"You find I know exactly what the SIP says because I normally check it".

The Development Plan is using SIP (which is part of an online process where the management must complete most of the information and indicate what needs to be developed in order to take the school forward). One of the areas of focus mentioned is that of infrastructure due to the school accommodating more learners than what it was built for. In this regard, much of the finance obtained from government was going into maintenance and plumbing of the building.

Many schools in the Cape Town area use the School Information Management System (SIMS) which was highly recommended:

"We can do browse lists and do and get anything from it. So, it's actually a very good system."

Some schools indicated that the teaching staff were not aware that the recommended changes were coming from a document and therefore it could not be said that there was much buy-in from staff other than the Management Team. However, there was buy-in for the Annual Budget because each class educator must submit a budget. If they did not submit a budget they would not be able to get the resources they needed for the following year. Having this consequence forces buy-in and interaction with the system.

A document that is often referred to by one Principal is the South African Schools Act. The Principal also noted that it was important to have the finance management systems in place. The Principal further stated that s/he referred to policy on issues such as admission and assessment, and the learners' code of conduct etc.

As part of the Development Plan, many educators request to be trained in eLearning and computers. Many Principals indicated that they were busy with the School Development Plan the whole year since constant reflection was required in terms of one's planning. This planning was done in conjunction with the Academic Development Plan and the Management Plan. Principals mentioned the value of the nine (9) focus areas in the SIP which fed into the Strategic Plan of the school.

In terms of buy-in, evidence points to the teaching staff who often feel that they are not being consulted on different processes and especially so because they are constantly dealing with the day-to-day priorities.

One Principal stated that the IQMS will pick up where educators are performing and where they are not. The 'Educator Improvement Plan' shows where there are gaps and how they can close those gaps with training. S/He pointed out that usually at the beginning of the year the school develops a year plan which outlines all the activities that they are supposed to do. The School Development Plan was seen by one Principal as consisting of a micro plan and a macro plan. The micro plan spanned three (3) years and was made up of projects that the School Governing Body had identified as priority projects.

The key documents are viewed as very valuable by most Principals for getting and keeping the school on track:

"You have to use them to get your school on the right track otherwise you are not going to give any attention to the things that is not right."

In terms of buy-in, most management staff recognised the need to first get the educators to co-operate and understand the importance of a document or policy before working up the levels of authority.

Theme 2: The Existence and Use of Curriculum or Academic Management Plans

The nine (9) schools that had Curriculum or Academic Management Plans could not be linked consistently to the functionality status of their districts. More schools in poorly functioning districts compared to average functioning districts could produce the required documents. Also, Curriculum Management Plans could be produced by most schools (nine schools each) compared to School Management Plans and Annual Reports (six (6) schools each).

Courses and workshops were planned throughout the year. Yet, there was no evidence that observed schools were in the process of reviewing the Curriculum or Academic Management Plans.

A Curriculum (or Academic) Management Plan was in place with control of curriculum coverage through monthly monitoring, checking of lesson plans and a monthly review of written work and output audits, as well as SMT and staff curriculum meetings.

One school also had a checklist to monitor progress by requiring educators to sign off each lesson. A classroom management checklist and curriculum coverage tool were also in place. An observation tool was used to monitor formal and informal assessments for each term. Each school department had a curriculum management plan that included a monitoring tool.

One school showed evidence of a plan that reflects the number of educators who are responsible for various activities. Every educator in this school used the plan to be informed about both the academic and extra-curricular activities. This plan was revised quarterly and needed to accommodate the Provincial Department of Education's Educator Development Programme. Furthermore, a Curriculum (or Academic) Management Plan guides the educators, learners and parents on what needed to be done (on an hourly basis). Each stakeholder's role was explained, and targets were set. For example, learners each had a diary with the programme of testing for the year outlined. The Development Plan was prepared in the previous year but revised quarterly.

In one school, regarding the Curriculum (or Academic) Management Plan, a Social Sciences Subject Improvement Plan set out what the HoD should do. In addition, the pacesetter for Grade 6 Language and Mathematics weekly planners were provided as evidence of curriculum planning.

One school produced a document called an 'Academic Performance Improvement Plan' in place of a general Curriculum Management Plan. This document indicated the specific problem areas in which learners were unable to perform and an intervention plan with time frames.

In terms of a Curriculum (or Academic) Management Plan, activities were clearly stipulated in a document with roles and responsibilities aligned to activities. Staff members, the DSG/ SMT and SDT peers and supervisors were required to submit progress reports on a weekly basis.

In one school, the only documentation made available was in relation to the Curriculum (or Academic) Management Plan. One of the schools provided an integrated classroom observation roster that was used by HoDs and other management staff. Another school provided documentation indicating that the School Management used a roster for classroom visits. There were no indications of its implementation in 2018, but the 2017 documents showed that the School Management conducted classroom monitoring and evaluation visits.

Furthermore, Grade 12 learners at risk were identified and an intervention programme was in place for the individual learners. This kind of intervention plan was in place for all the grades, with a more comprehensive plan in place for Grade 9. There was no indication of the extent to which the school responded to systemic results. Educators only reported on problems they have with learners and their mastery of their work, which according to the Principal during the interview is factored into a Curriculum Improvement Plan that is then afterwards monitored by an SMT member with the relevant educators.

During an interview with a Principal, it was mentioned there was no Personal Growth Plan for every educator which is a large gap still in their curriculum and academic plans. The Deputy Principal reported using the CAPS document and had had success in identifying the gaps that educators had in their teaching of the Grade 1s. Problems were addressed with an intervention which had, reportedly, improved their systemic results. The Deputy Principal said that when the Principal is away, s/he takes over the duties of the Principal, but for the most part he has her/his hands full with the problems of the discipline of the school.

> *"It's from Monday till Friday – it is discipline problems."*

Several schools confirmed that they checked the CAPS documents regularly, especially in terms of the assessment outline, although it was difficult for the Deputy Principal to say exactly where their progress in the different subjects was in the document.

The Curriculum Development Plan is not checked every day but very regularly throughout the year because it is necessary to run the school and to know what is happening. The Deputy Principal will take those documents to see what is planned and check that educators are still covering the content that they had planned to cover. However, curriculum planning is a challenge since at the end of the term, educators require extra classes to cover the curriculum. Educators are required to complete the curriculum but rushing through the work means that the learners do not understand the concepts.

Some of the staff are extremely problematic in terms of their own personal challenges which affect their teaching. Furthermore, Principals with no experience (one said s/he had only been an HOD and not a Deputy Principal) had to try to find their feet in an unsupportive environment where people challenged their competence as the Principal of the school.

Theme 3: The Existence and Use of Annual Reports

The six (6) schools that had Annual Reports could not be linked consistently to the functionality status of their districts. Equal numbers of schools in poorly, average and well-functioning districts could produce the documents.

In place of an Annual Report, achievement was evaluated in a 'numerical format'. In this way the school could observe their level of achievement. There was no evidence for each of the three (3) required documents that these schools were in the process of reviewing the Annual Reports. In place of an Annual Report, one school had evidence of a summary for each grade and each subject, while another school produced a brief financial statement. In terms of an Annual Report, the school referred to the Annual General Meeting and quarterly reports made available to parents. It also indicated that meetings were held with parents as often as was necessary to keep parents informed of current matters.

One school produced an Annual Report indicating excellent learner performance. The report also highlighted the challenges of ill-discipline, gangsterism and bullying. By way of an Annual Report, a document was produced by one school stipulating that the school uses monitoring criteria for all learners retained or progressed according to SAIS 16 and the remedial action taken. The Deputy Principal stated that they use the Annual Report now and then when they compile the quarterly reports as a grade group.

It was reported by one school that there was no Annual Report, but that the school did produce "phase reports" which were part of the minutes and kept in the 'Minute Book'.

> *"Like for instance, we have analysed now the system(ic) results. The Foundation Phase had its meeting as well as the Senior Phase. And then on SMT meeting, we talk together including the Principal. We sit together and talk about where we were weak and where we were strong and how are we going to improve."*

Many of the Principals and Deputy Principals noted that they referred to the Annual Plan in order to check the school's progress. However, a point of frustration with the Annual Report is that the same information needs to be sent to different people. It is also required on SAMS which means that anyone should be able to go into SAMS and retrieve the information that is required themselves. A positive point was raised that there was a lot of assistance given in the

completion of the Annual Report by the Circuit Manager.

Theme 4: Learner Pass Rates

A Deputy Principal stated that they are satisfied in terms of the Grade 12 results, but not yet completely satisfied in terms of the direction they are taking. In previous years they obtained a 100% pass rate, but this year the school obtained a 96% pass rate. Horizon College, a neighbouring school, obtained a 100% pass rate, and therefore the school would like to match such a high pass rate as well. At the beginning of every year, the Grade 12 learners are taken to a 'Preparatory Camp' on a farm for the weekend, in order to prepare them for the rest of the year. After the examinations, when many of them are demoralised because they did not pass, the school brings somebody in to motivate the learners.

The Deputy Principal stated that they are always speaking to the Management of other schools in order to ascertain what methods they used to improve their pass rate.

> *"…sal hy vir my inroep om te se meneer ons is op pad na daai skool toe of na daai meneer toe dat ons gaan 'n meeting hou om te gaan kyk om te gaan uit luister wat het hulle gedoen, jy weet."*

> (..will call me in to say 'Sir, we are on our way to that school or to that educator, to hold a meeting, and to see and hear what they had done, you know.)

The Management Team also takes note of the learners who have been progressed to other grades and ascertains how these learners can be integrated. Improving the learner pass rate was discussed in general terms and it was generally difficult to grasp a specific plan to address the challenges they were facing. The policy of progressing learners was highlighted as one which the staff feel still needs to be discussed and contested since *"people are making this kids pass easy"*, but it is felt that *"…it is no use complaining at this late stage"*.

Most of the schools in this sample appear to have dropped their pass rates the year before, as well as the percentage of Bachelor passes. The Principals indicated that they met together with other Principals after every term to present their results and to share ideas in terms of possible interventions.

Theme 5: Learner Register

The Deputy Principal was responsible for the Attendance Register of the learners at the school. It was necessary for this Deputy to provide a report on the attendance of the learners. At this specific school, s/he looked at ways to keep the children in the school and to keep them motivated to attend classes. In other schools, the Deputy checks the Attendance Register once a week since s/he will only know about the learners that are absent where the parents have submitted a letter. The Attendance Register was also referred to when a learner was not performing well.

Theme 6: Staff Register

An Attendance Register for the staff enables the Deputy Principal to manage the classes that do not have educators for the different subjects.

> *"I check it (the attendance register) every day because if I pass a class and there is noise, I must know who was supposed to be in that class at that time and if he is not there or she is not there, normally I call a free educator to go and sit there."*

If a group of learners is not performing well, the attendance of the educator is checked in the Register. The challenge facing the principals was that staff that were chronically sick needed to be marked absent regularly, which provoked conflict at times.

Only one school could produce an Aasset register.

3.3   Indicator 7: School Governance

The emphasis of Indicator 7 in the Plan 2019 (p.42) is on "parent and community participation in the governance of schools, partly by improving access to important information via the e-Education strategy". This gives an indication of key policy thrusts in this regard emphasising that parental and community participation is one of the cornerstones of democracy and accountability Some reference is also made in this regard as to how ANA results were brokered further to parents. Although many successes are acknowledged, transcending mere compliance with requirements such as being meetings being properly constituted, the number of meetings held per year, keeping minutes, etc., into achieving meaningful governance and participation is key. The involvement of increasing numbers of parents and community members should be strived for. . The nature of the calls and complaints received by the DBE's Call Centre from parents and communities about the rights and obligations given to schools and parents further testifies to the need for improving governance. A further matter highlighted is the need for SGBs to uphold the constitutional rights of children.

Critical dynamics to interrogate qualitatively for Indicator 7 includes:

• How to turn the mere presence of documents, procedures and compliance with requirements into operational value and effective functioning of the school;

• The Action Plan 2019 calls for not reducing a matter as complex as SGB effectiveness to a mere indicator number, but to understand critical dynamics through qualitative research about the dynamic role of SGBs at schools; and

• The nature of the induction and training of SGBs and their members has to be investigated further.

The data for the Indicator on School Governance was collected from document reviews, Principals' interviews and SGB interviews. The findings and data analysis are discussed under the themes below.

3.3.1   Principal and SGB Interviews

Theme 1: Collaboration between the School and the SGB

Collaboration is reportedly good between the school and the SGB for many schools. The School Management Team appears to rely on the SGB in these schools. However, some School Principals expressed the view that the powers of the SGB should be reduced and that it was a burden for them to have to try to work with the SGB.

"They have influence on the school budgets, they are the ones who give us money, they sign and agree on any purchase that we make at school and I think they have their own purchase that we make at school and I think they have their own purchase that is being done at school so more or less they are the custodian of the school."

However, the Management appreciated the insight that parents were able to bring to problems – for example, they would not have realised that a Maths educator was talking about her/himself in class instead of teaching the content. The parents agreed that the working arrangement was very good and there was "an open line of communication". The parents said that there are always clashes, but that they work on a quorum basis:

"We managed it out. We go on a quorum. If there need to be, we decide we then go on a democratic decision of where we vote and say listen, okay. I give this, I suggest this, you suggest, and then we get to a decision, but sometimes you leave here late but we sort things out."

The SGB member stated that they usually tried to meet once quarterly, but because of the distance and the traveling they had only met twice. Collaboration is usually seen as being between the SGB and the Management Team, and not necessarily about involvement with the educators.

It was felt at some schools that the success of the school was due to the effectiveness of the SGB. The SGBs were clearly proud of the achievements that they work towards over a long period of time – for example buying a minibus or repairing a fence.

> "Only one thing that I've learned with the SGB is how parents can work together and it brings to mind how you love your child. It brings to mind to whether we're coming from different background. When we're coming to a meeting and especially the big decisions like appointments or financials, how we can set aside ourselves for the progress of the school and the children. That's the most important point that I've picked up during my experience at the school as being part of the SGB."

The SGB member who said there was no collaboration was a woman and she felt that the Management Team did not think she had enough knowledge and saw her as "just a mother". Furthermore, the parents that lived far away and were on the SGB were resentful since they did not represent the local community and were considered to be of a lower social standing:

> "Many of them are fishermen"

A Principal expressed the view the when the SGB members were from the same area, it was easier to work with them.

Theme 2: Training Provided to the SGB

The parents noted that they were trained in all the positions in the SGB and if there was any new training they would try to attend that. In general, they were satisfied with the training.

Another SGB member, however, noted that she did not feel she had capacity and the skill to run a school.

> "I don't really know why the parents in the community are scared to stand. Maybe they feel that they don't have the adequate knowledge or the level of understanding, to come and sit in the meeting and argue with me…"

Another SGB member said they needed more training in finances.

The SGB member felt that three years was enough and then one should hand over to someone else after a three-year cycle because of the intensity of dealing with problems that other parents do not even know about as a community service and a free service to the school. Another SGB member was hoping to have a day of team building to get the SGB and Management Team onto the same page going forward. The most important aspect for this member is getting everyone to stick to the budget:

> "Remember we run like a business, I run it like my business."

It was noted that there is a big difference in the focus of the training from the FEDSAS (Federation of Schools Governing Bodies) and the Department of Basic Education.

Theme 3: The Role the SGB has Played in the Selection of School Staff

A Principal expressed the view that the SGB should not be appointing staff since they have received very little training in the matter. However, a parent felt that the SGB was also supposed to manage the school and make sure it ran properly. He stated:

> "I think the Governing Body has power."

The SGB members stated that they were very active in the recruitment of educators. They felt that it would be impossible for the Department of Basic Education to recruit staff because they would not be able to select someone that could blend in with the community or understand the needs of children in a specific area.

There is a lot of frustration amongst Principals because of the delay with the Department of Basic Education in appointing people in key positions. Therefore, the SGB is seen as valuable in stepping in to take some of the responsibility. However, another SGB member stated that even though they had 70 children in a class and spare classrooms, they could not afford to pay an educator the way the 'white' schools did which only had about 40 children to a class. Where the Principal does not have much faith in the SGB, it is given limited powers in the selection of educators. It was found that sometimes educators are overlooked for positions where the SGB members have personal issues with those educators. For this reason, the Principal felt that the SGB should not be able to appoint educators or be part of that process.

Theme 4: SGB's Powers

It was felt by many of the SGB members and the Management Teams that SGBs should be more hands on and given more power. However, since they were not being paid they would eventually want to leave because of how frustrating the positions were.

> "Not taking away the responsibility of the Principal and the Department and their duties, but there are certain things that we have the power over. There are people that we employ that we need to look after. So, it is important that we manage that in a sufficient way that we don't neglect educators, the duties of that we took on as members of the Governing Body."

The SGB did not feel the Unions had much say in the running of the school. They felt that that the SGB had more power:

> "Unions, I do not know about that…I usually like to think of them as Departmental Representatives."

One SGB member stated that he planned to grow the Arts and Culture in the school.

The SGB felt that there was a good balance of power between the school and the SGB.

> "…at the moment the balance is perfect…I wouldn't disturb the balance of that because it is a fifty-fifty and that's a good balance."

The SGB member felt that parents should get involved and feel part of the 'school community'.

> "Parents should be stationed closer and should, from their side, want to give more, do more, be part of more stuff."

A few SGB members complained that parents did not get involved as they did.

> "I'm scared of having more power. With more power come more responsibilities and so."

The SGB member explained that in a case where the children are bringing knives to school, giving the SGB more power might mean they could bar such children from coming into the school through legal means. However, the SGB member clarified that she felt ignorant on such issues and was not able to control the finances. Another SGB member saw the role of the SGB as being the link between the Department of Basic Education and the school.

A SGB member highlighted the fact that there is a big difference between the problems found in a primary school and that found in a secondary school. Furthermore, the parents are more involved in the primary school.

> "I think some of the big part of the strength of a good, well-functioning school, is the involvement of the parents and the SGB. So, I don't think it will enhance the learning environment at all. I think it's more important to rather go and educate the SGBs to be functional rather than to take away powers because they are not functional."

The SGB member felt that different situations required different approaches and therefore a different understanding of the role of the SGB. One SGB member stated that the SGB had managed to raise the results from approximately 80% to 95% by instituting extra classes over the weekends.

A SGB member felt the powers of the SGB were in fact too little since instances of problems with a specific educator meant that the Principal would protect the educator and not allow the SGB to intervene. They felt that the SGB was not permitted to be part of the financial decisions which they had to contribute towards financially – for example, the choice in the type of uniforms. A SGB member particularly appreciated that the Principal worked closely with the SGB and kept them informed.

The Principal felt that the SGB should have more powers and should be trained more. The Management Team met with the SGB every second Friday, but only with the Executive Committee (the Chair, Deputy Chair, Chair for Finances, the Principal and two Deputies). The minutes from these meetings are sent to the whole SGB, who then meets once a term. The Principal appreciated the fact that he had "professional people" on the SGB such as a Chartered Accountant and an attorney. The principal felt it was important that the disciplining of educators remained his responsibility.

In terms of giving the SGB more powers, the principal has a problem if the SGB member is from a rural area, for example, and is not sufficiently educated to make policy decisions. One principal felt that "*certain individuals are misusing their powers*". In this instance, it seems that if an SGB member comes from a deep rural background, with the assumption then that such an individual has little formal education, problems arise because of power relations with the Principal in the presence of SGB members who lack informed, educated decision- making skills.

3.4   Indicator 12 (13): District Monitoring and Support

It is acknowledged in the Action Plan 2019 (p.47) that school weaknesses reflect District weaknesses. The official District Offices Policy finalised in 2013 is perhaps the best example of what the DBE has been doing in order to remedy weaknesses in the situation. A marginal increase has been noted over time (2009 to 2011) in the percentage of schools reporting at least two face-to-face interactions with District Officials (up from 78% to 87%). A recent report stressed Districts' use of assessment information, strengthening the capacity of Districts, and generating a greater variety of standard monitoring and management reports.

Critical dynamics to interrogate qualitatively included the number of school visits by District officials, especially with a diffuse sense of the purpose/s behind these visits. Of importance is acknowledging that visits do not automatically translate into effective district monitoring and support, and these dynamics must be interrogated further.

The data for the indicator on District Monitoring and Support was collected from document reviews, educator interviews and principals' interviews to get an insight from the school perspective only. District officials were not interviewed because the school's perspective was important for this indicator. The findings and data analysis are discussed under the three sub-topics and then the lessons and recommendations follow.

3.4.1 Document Reviews

In a few schools, the District monitoring and support visits are only mentioned, but there is no evidence to support these claims. There were no entries of visits in the Visitor's Book or such a record book would not exist at all. One school reiterated that they signed the official's documents as proof of the visit, but they did not have a similar proof on their side.

A school mentioned that the District sends a comprehensive visit plan and training dates, while another school mentioned a similar experience of receiving a visit plan which was not followed. There are also schools that experience unannounced visits, or visits happening at very short notice. Other schools would get a telephone notification or a written notice, and some District officials would use the 14-day notice as a method of communication. Evidence was also found of specific correspondence from the District Director, and in another school, mention was made of regular communication with the Circuit Manager in the form of circulars, e-mails and smses. The overall evidence points to erratic monitoring and support visits at irregular intervals and at varying patterns across the sampled schools.

According to the documents observed, District officials do visit the schools, but they differed greatly in the frequency of visits for the stipulated period (May-August 2017). The recorded visits ranged between as low as two (2) and as high as twenty-nine (29). These disparities also existed within a Province and sometimes even within a District. For example, the schools that received two (2) and 29 District visits respectively, are in the same province. There is also a specific District where one school received District visits, while at another school in the District only documentation would be delivered. The quality of the visit to the former school could not be verified. Most visits were for single purposes only and in one Province, there was evidence of up to four (4) officials in the same visit.

In terms of the balance between administration and curriculum support visits, most districts recorded a stronger focus on one function at the expense of the other, and very few got the balance. For example, a school had 14 District visit entries and within those visits, none would be on subject advice. An example of balanced visits is a school with 29 District visits and 13 of those being for curriculum support.

In one school, the Intermediate Phase educators did not think that the District visits really addressed their needs while in the same school, the Foundation Phase educators expressed the view that the visits were spot-on in assisting them in the classroom.

There was evidence of subject advisors conducting a number of cluster-model training workshops. In one school there were up to eight (8) workshops in 2017 which were mostly District-initiated and rarely school-initiated. On the contrary, there were also schools where there is no evidence of training or workshops done by the District or Circuit. For schools that were trained, the training was on different content and in one specific school, the workshop was on Special Needs.

3.4.2 Principal Interviews

The following themes emerged from the interviews during data analysis. In most cases the specific words used by the participants are utilised to convey a more accurate reflection of the exact meaning from the data.

Theme 1: Relationship with the District

One Principal mentioned that there is a very strong link between their school, the SMT and the District. The Circuit Manager has given a lot of support to this new Principal which is demonstrated by the frequency of the visits. The school is regarded as a performing school, and the Principal states categorically that the school has benefitted a lot from the District. In the same Province, another Principal talks about the support of the Circuit Manager who comes to the school to check for any problems and discusses them with the principal. The educators present their term results for the Manager who in turn motivates them to do better. The District also assists in organising holiday schools to encourage more learner distinctions in Grade 12. In another school, the Principal further stated that the improvement in their school results is evidence of the District's good work.

There was also a very interesting scenario where the Circuit Manager arrived at a school at the time the fieldworker was conducting the interview with the Principal. The Circuit Manager was briefly part of the interview transcript, and it was hoped that this participation would become first-hand evidence of the kind of District support this Principal enjoyed. It should be noted that the Circuit Manager did not contribute substantial information. The Principal mentioned that even when the school is experiencing problems with other sections of the Department of Basic Education, with issues such as orders and deliveries of furniture, the Circuit Manager will follow-up with the relevant section in the Department to resolve the matter on their behalf. The Principal said:

> "*I think that is very valuable for us and the support to me, as principal, from my circuit manager is for me of the utmost importance, because this is a hot chair…*"

The other kind of assistance from the District mentioned by Principals is one on the role of Learning Facilitators. They give feedback after their visits on identified problems, assist with learner results and sometimes help with the School Development Plan. Learning Facilitators also provide direction and advice on how to do things, said another principal.

The Curriculum Advisors also provide educators with documentation from the Department, conduct annual CAS moderation and advise on the curriculum. There was also mention of always learning something from a District visit. A Mathematics Learning Facilitator in another province gives feedback via an electronic report which the school says they receive a day after the visit. This feedback indicates the effectiveness and efficiency of District visits in cases that are well planned and executed.

A Principal talked about working together well with the District concerning the curriculum but that when it comes to difficult issues faced by his/her school, there would be no support. S/He says it can take up to a month or two to get help from the District Office and when that help comes, regular follow-up is required. On giving advice he said:

> "…*jou distrik kantoor kan vir jou bietjie meer ondersteun as dit kom by sekere goed, moeilike situasies waarin jy kom."*

> (your district office can give you a bit more support when it comes to certain things, difficult situations which you get into).

One particular school sees only three Curriculum Advisors and there are other schools which do not even know their Curriculum Advisors . Sometimes educators would meet them at workshops, but no other opportunities present themselves for further interaction. At the same time, educators understand that Curriculum Advisors are overloaded, and that they are assigned too many schools. In other schools, they would only visit once, with promises to visit again which never materialise.

> "*Eish 2017 to me, it was not as good as because the circuit manager is visiting us, that one we don't have a problem with it, but our problem is with curriculum advisors"*

As a solution to the lack of support from Curriculum Advisors, schools seek the help of other educators from neighbouring schools. If educators are struggling with certain aspects of the curriculum, they would ask senior educators or HODs but mostly get assistance from their colleagues in other schools. In certain instances, they will even 'outsource' help by getting an educator from another school to teach their learners on Saturdays at a fee.

> "*..but instead we are outsourcing people from our neighbouring schools to help our educators, but I think our curriculum advisors this is their work. They are supposed to come."*

One Principal mentioned that they needed more curriculum support in Grades 8 and 9. There was a general sense that Grade 12 is the main focus of the District, and that this is often at the expense of other grades which may also need their attention. According to the Principal, the educators in the grades mentioned need pace-setters worked out for them as is the case in other subjects such as Business Economics.

Principals also talked about the problematic approach of these visits at times when they do take place. There is very little structure or planning in some visits, something one Principal described as a 'hit and run' approach. This approach is because at any given time the school does not know what the visit is about, what is required of them, what follow-up needs to be done from one visit to the next, or if there would be a next visit. Another mentioned approach was the 'blame and shame' approach where educators are blamed and shamed in front of peers for their school's bad learner performance, perhaps when attending a District workshop. The blamed educators feel that there are many other significant factors that contribute to poor learner performance.

Moreover, it is also reiterated in so many ways by Principals and educators that the District should not use a generalised approach when dealing with different schools in different contexts. In a sense, this sentiment points to the perception that District Officials do not have adequate knowledge of the school to be able to cater to that particular school's relevant and specific needs. A principal stated that the District must ensure differentiation between the needs of different schools. For example, if there are a few schools struggling with discipline, instead of calling all schools for a workshop on discipline, the District should give other schools an option of a 'How to Excel' workshop. More on this aspect is discussed

under Indicator 2 on Professional Development. The following quote summarises the perceptions on Subject Advisors when it was stated that:

> "*Subject advisors need to come to specific needs of each and every subject here pertaining to the school. Not come with a generalised approach".*

Theme 2: Staff Provisioning and Other Resources

One school specifically talked about their need for more educators and administrative support. The Principal manages the school without any administrative support and the educators do their own photocopying while also having to do and submit the official District documents without any assistance. The Principal felt that the Department needs to prioritise secondary schools concerning resources, as primary schools in the area were better resourced than the secondary schools. The school does not have a laboratory or a library,

On the issue of staff, the amount of time to process a post or a promotion shows a 'very incapable administration or District Office', said one Principal. A visit to the Circuit Office is an unpleasant experience for the school staff as it will most likely not yield the required results. Most fortunately in this school, the SGB is able to intervene financially to cover the financial gaps left by the District. A question was then raised by the Principal as to what then happens to schools with no financial resources like them.

> "*It's such unfair things……those are the frustrating things…….he (*Circuit Manager) *is aware, but he cannot do anything"*

3.4.3 Primary Schools Educator Interviews

Even though the School Monitoring Survey 2017 Quantitative Report mentions that 71% of Combined Primary and Secondary School Principals are satisfied with the District visits, the educators are the authentic assessors of the impact of these visits on teaching and learning.

Theme 1: Visit Frequency

For primary school educators, the variation of their experience of visits by Subject Advisors is vast - some educators have not seen any Subject Advisor at all whereas other educators have the experience of Advisors coming into the class and telling the educator that everything they are doing is wrong. An educator reiterates that there is no support from the District as they have not had any visit for a few years. On the same aspect of visits, another educator said:

> "*If they came you could improve somewhere, I have been a educator for 12 years, yet no visit from the district".*

Educators look forward to District visits even if these happened once per year. An educator mentioned that sometimes there is even positive feedback about them which they rightfully question (but no evidence of such positive feedback being recorded was found), as no District person has ever come to observe them.

> "*But if somebody sits in an office somewhere else and they want to tell me I am doing a good job, and they don't even know me."*

Theme 2: Visit Content

The general experience of Subject Advisors who do come to schools is that they go to the staffroom, talk to the educator, check the file and check learners' books without going into the classroom. An educator stated that it would be helpful if the Advisors came into the classroom as they could tell the educator some things they did not know. At the same time, there is awareness by educators of how these class visits should be conducted, that would not elicit a negative reaction from the teacher union. According to the educator, the purpose and approach to class visits should be to come and assist and not to inspect. An educator summarises the situation as follows:

"Dit sal net beter wees om iets uit 'n ander oogpunt uit miskien te sien of maar ons weet nooit regtig is ons reg nie, is ons op die regte pad."

(It will be better to see something maybe from another viewpoint because we don't actually know if we are right, if we are on the right path)

The idea that Subject Advisors do not visit the classroom is interpreted as though they are not interested in improving teaching and learning. Although after more reflection the same educator reiterated that:

"Actually, subject advisors are doing a lot actually here in X…..she is doing a lot".

The latter was said when the educator remembered the weekend away given by the Department of Basic Education, which was also a workshop. This particular educator received second prize for the Educator's Award in the Province. .

Lastly, the educator who experienced of an unpleasant class visit by the Subject Advisor deemed the Subject Advisor as not being useful because s/he came to criticise and not to advise on how to improve teaching. According to the educator, the Subject Advisor's approach, attitude and character is what will give purpose to the class visit. The educator's experience is stated below:

" Last year, the last time I saw a Curriculum Advisor, I was so hurt because she was not pleased with what I am doing. But what I did not like was the fact that he didn't say to me 'I don't like this, how about you put this'….. she said everything I did was wrong. After the visit, I was so heartbroken at the same time I had to pick up my pieces and go back to work."

Theme 3: Suggestions for the District

A number of educators wanted to take the visits a step further, meaning that the Subject Advisors also need to speak with the learners or even teach if possible. One educator had a pleasant experience of a Subject Advisor who showed him or her a teaching strategy they did not know on how 'to teach my kids times tables'.

It can be said that there is a strong desire amongst educators for Subject Advisors to be intricately involved in the actual teaching and learning in the classroom rather than simply to check for compliance.

3.4.4 Secondary Schools Educator Interviews

The School Monitoring Survey 2017 Quantitative Report mentions that nationally 84% of schools had been visited at least twice by District Officials for monitoring and support purposes. Educators and Principals have provided insight during interviews, giving information pertaining the quality of the District visits.

The following themes emerged from the data during analysis. In most cases the specific words used by the participants are utilised to convey a more accurate reflection of the exact meaning from the data.

Theme 1: Visit Frequency

In the Western Cape, an educator mentioned that they get visits once per term according to a schedule, or educators could also call and request a visit. Another educator in the Province said that they have not yet received an individual visit, even last year.

In the Free State an educator states that nobody from the District has come to visit, and that only the colleagues in the English department were visited. No moderation of his work has been done, as moderation was only done for the Grades 10, 11 and 12.

"You are the first person that has come to my class since I've been teaching here….4 years here. In the previous school I taught Grade 8 maths and never saw a Subject Advisor."

This specific educator only had a Life Orientation meeting four years ago as s/he is also a Life Orientation educator. When asked about how balanced the visits were, the answer was:

> *"There is no balance because we don't get regular visits".*

Another educator in the same Province mentioned that the District visits occur twice a year at the end of the third term, when officials monitor the whole year's work.

In Limpopo, an educator mentioned that they do not get any classroom support from the District. This means they might be getting some support but not directly concerning teaching and learning in the classroom. When they were probed further, the educator said:

> *"I remember once they came here".*

The above implies that the visit was a once off event and not a regular or expected occurrence. Another educator mentioned that her/his Subject Advisor would call and mention the day they would be coming as well as what they would require when they got to the school. In this instance, it indicates that the visits are communicated, and the purposes of the visits are made clear.

Theme 2: Visit Content

This section deals with a district visit to schools entails from the perspective of secondary school educators. A Western Cape educator mentioned that usually the official comes to the library to meet with him/her but the official will soon start coming to the class. S/he does not have a problem with class visits. They normally discuss how far the educator is with the curriculum, check the learners' books, educator portfolio and ask how certain concepts are taught in class. The Subject Advisor also gives the educator tips on teaching and assessment methods.

An educator in the Western Cape, mentions how the Subject Advisor normally visits the Grade 12 educators only and not educators for the other grades. Thereafter, the Advisor will talk to the Subject Head to give information and feedback of the visit.

Another Western Cape educator described her/his good relationship with the Subject Advisor, which gave them the freedom to discuss any problem in any area. The Subject Advisor even came to the school to teach the difficult concept together with the educator. The Subject Advisor would also refer them to other resource people who could assist with other aspects of their work. For example, the Subject Advisor contacted an individual from the Science Centre to come and assist the educator at school.

In the Free State, an educator mentioned that the Subject Advisor visited the school but did not come to class for observation. More educators in this province reiterated the fact that Subject Advisors did not come into the classroom. As educators escalate problems especially on 'content' when they arise, the District resolves the problem by giving them solutions or organising courses for them. Sometimes educators would get information to resolve their problems, via e-mail or get CDs at workshops.

In Limpopo, an educator mentioned that when the Subject Advisor finds problems on site, she/he gives advice and then the educator reflects on it. At times they also discover that the problem is beyond the school as reiterated by the educator:

> *"the problem here is learners. The teachers are doing the best they can, but the problem is learners and the environment, cause it's not only the district but we have to do with the environment, the community".*

Theme 3: Benefits of Visit

In the Western Cape an educator mentioned how the visit puts structure into place. They get advice on what to do and what not to do. The Subject Advisor is hands-on, and she comes to the classroom to give practical advice.

> *"Ag you know, I don't know how to say thank you to that woman."*

Another educator in the same Province stated how their Subject Advisor gives classroom support. He brings resources and chemicals for the subject (Science) and also helps to teach difficult concepts.

> *"Ek en hy teach daai onderwerp saam. So dan kom hy spesifiek daai dag in, en hy kom gee klas saam met my vir daai spesifieke groupie en op daai onderwerp wat vir my 'n probleemarea is."*
>
> (Me and him teach that concept together. So then, he comes specifically that day, and he comes to give class with me for that specific group and that concept that is a problem area for me)

They also asked the Subject Advisor about how Google and Google documents work, and as a result the Subject Advisor will organise a workshop for them.

In the Free State an educator explained how they try to rectify problems mentioned in the report after a District visit. For example, the Subject Advisor would tell them that they are maybe five or ten activities short after looking at their activity book, and they will rectify that. The other benefits are that they get a lot of classroom-based support such as examination papers, memoranda and even DVDs.

Another educator in the same Province mentioned how the Subject Advisor is 'a good mentor' for them because they give help if the educator asks for it. As a benefit from a District visit, the educator is sent a lot of information including summaries of work etc.

A Limpopo educator stated that the visits are beneficial because of the opportunity they get to mention the problems experienced at school to the official who will subsequently take them back to the Department. An educator from another school has benefitted from District visits because while s/he used to get 100% pass rate in the past, from 2017 they are starting to get distinctions in Grade 12 English.

Theme 4: Suggestions for the District

The following were suggestions from the Secondary School Educators on how the district can improve on their services to schools:

In the Western Cape, an educator suggested that the District needs to get more resources and study materials to the school.

In the Free State, one educator suggested that the District needs to have open communication with the educators. This educator seemed to have negative interactions involving the new District official who called them for a meeting at the beginning of the year.

In another school they mentioned a lack of learning materials including study guides that could be supplied by the District. It was stated that learners from poor families cannot buy their own study guides. There was also mention that more Grade 8 resources should be supplied to educators.

Another Free State educator requested for more regular District visits including visits inside the classroom. Sometimes educators struggle with new English literature books, and thus they require support in this aspect. If there is support, an educator would know if they are on the right track or they would be told how to improve their teaching strategy.

> *"Just come and have a feeling or that in classroom see the kind of things that we are doing and having that*

feeling coming to class directly and then assisting, they might be able to assist in class."

"Some of them don't know the kind of learners we are working with".

Assistance with infrastructure was mentioned by an educator who does not like mobile classrooms and requested for classrooms to be built.

There seems to be pressure in the Grade 12 syllabus as educators are expected to finish the syllabus in two terms and use term three for revision which the educator says ''it's impossible''. The situation is aggravated by the Common Paper which is written on the whole term's work, two weeks before the term ends. ''It's impossible'', stated the educator because some of the work they write on still needs to be completed in the last two weeks of the term.

A Limpopo educator wanted the Subject Advisor to prepare a lesson plan for her/him.

"I want him or her here to come and visit me and support me where possible."

"Even now I cannot tell you who must I contact if having (problems)"

"If they can prepare a lesson plan for us."

This educator has four requirements for district assistance:

- Firstly, they must take him for training;
- Secondly, they need to come to the school to check if he is doing the right thing;
- Thirdly, they need to support him in class by demonstrating how to teach; and
- Fourthly, they must invite another person if they are unable to assist.

Another suggestion by an educator in this province is that the District needs to ensure that at workshops the correct number of materials is distributed as some educators do not get the materials that are supplied.

One other suggestion from a Limpopo educator is that after a District visit, the educator should be supplied with written comments and not only verbal comments.

Theme 5: Best Practices

The three best practices elicited from the secondary school interviews data were:

- *Tackling difficult concept together* - There is an example in the Western Cape discussed above where the educator teaches difficult concepts with the Subject Advisor. The Advisor is hands-on and offers practical solutions and even demonstrates good teaching practices.
- *Strategic partnership* – Again in the Western Cape there is an instance of an educator who has strategic partnerships with the Science Centre that assists him in his classroom teaching when necessary. This educator also has a partnership with a professor at the University of Western Cape who will be coming with his team to re-do his laboratory at school. This educator demonstrates the importance of strategic alliances and partnerships to improve teaching and learning at school-level and not only relying on the district or circuit offices.
- *Motivation of learners* – A Limpopo educator talked about a Subject Advisor who usually goes to the classrooms to motivate learners and talk to them.

3.5   Assessment – Perceptions, Knowledge and Practice

The element of curriculum implementation during classroom interaction is critical for knowing which learners struggle with which part(s) of their work, during and after every lesson in which new work is presented. The educator must know how to adjust and improve his or her teaching during the same lesson in the next day's lesson at the latest. All assessment lies at the heart of improved learner achievement.

Critical dynamics to interrogate qualitatively on issues of assessment included educators' perceptions and understanding of the assessment modalities on offer, and the role and value of such modalities in improving the teaching and learning engagement in the classroom in order to benefit learner achievement.

3.5.1   Interview data Primary Schools

In total, 14 interviews were analysed from Primary schools. Of the 14 interviews, five came from discussions with Principals and nine interviews were with educators.

The role of large-scale assessment and external testing emerged in 11 out the 14 interviews, and it was closely linked to the role that this type of assessment can play in setting standards and benchmarks. Discussions about what constitutes best practice in assessment was discussed in 10 out the 14 interviews, and participants mentioned a wide range of practices.

Assessment as an integrated part of learning and teaching within a holistic approach was mentioned in eight (8) interviews. Other themes mentioned by five or less participants included using assessments to identify gaps in learning and teaching as well as devising interventions for at-risk learners. A lack of resources resulting in assessment overload was discussed in five (5) interviews. The role that stakeholders such as parents and principals play in assessment and assessment- related training also emerged but was mentioned in only a few interviews.

Theme 1: Large-Scale Assessment and Standard Setting

Most of the participants were not familiar with the international assessments, except for two participants who said they had heard about PIRLS, TIMSS and SACMEQ and had access to the results. All the participants remembered the ANAs, and participants from the Western Cape discussed the systemic testing system in that Province. Four (4) participants discussed their perceptions of the ANAs, which they mostly viewed in a negative light. The main reasons for their negative view of ANAs included mistakes in the memoranda, the tests being of low quality and the unfortunate impression the ANAs created of the Department of Basic Education (DBE). One participant said:

> *"And there were so many errors on the test and on the memos. You feel you get a bit irritated, but it is from the government and from the department and there are so many errors."*

One participant had a positive view of the ANAs, stating that her learners had a lower achievement in the WCED systemic assessment than they had achieved in the ANAs. She felt that the WCED systemic tests are too difficult for her learners and therefore the ANAs were preferred. She also liked the fact that she could mark the ANA tests of her class as this gave her insight into learner achievement. She said that:

> *"Met ANA het ons self gemerk so ons kan presies gesien het wat doen onse kinders."*

> (With ANA we marked ourselves and could see exactly what our children did)

Participants said that the WCED assessment helps them to understand where the standards are and what their learners should aim for. As stated by an HoD, a Grade 6 educator and a Principal:

> *"Yes, the department normally sends that, the result in January when the school opens so it highlights the areas where our learners have done well, where our learners are struggling or have struggled. Both in Mathematics*

and in languages. So, it helps us to be able, you know, to diagnose the strength of learners we have in order for us to be able to devise the right strategies for the kind of learners that we had in a particular year."

"Ja sistemies gee vir jou in geheel die graad ses is daar of daar."

(Yes, systemic gives you an overall indication of whether Grade 6 is at a certain level)

Other participants said the lack of access to standardised assessment makes it more difficult for them to identify benchmarks reached and problem areas. One of the Principals stated:

"How do you measure that? ANAs assisted too to a certain extent but it looks like it might be take place again this year, and there also we were quite in line with between 57 and 63%."

To address the problem of not having access to standardised tests, educators said their schools use their own baseline tests and plan interventions for learners based on the results.

"If I get a progress report from a child from another school enrolling with us and I see, the parents will tell you this is a bright child, but if I look at the Grade average and then you see it's 80 and 78, I know, ho ho, standard-wise ..."

Another Principal felt that:

"And we have our own performance a School -Based assessment and pass rate"

Theme 2: Best Practice in Assessment

Four (4) interviewees touted class work and homework used as informal assessment as best practice.

"And then I can get the mom in and say we have been doing reading now and your child is struggling give maybe extra exercises to do at home, to practice before we do our next assessment, so this child has time to improve."

"When teaching throughout the lesson I give them assessment at the end of the lesson, given them class works, homework, we are giving them informal tests as it demands"

Three interviewees placed emphasis on error analysis of items as well as keeping a database of learner achievement and analysing the results.

"Well every assessment I analyse or every lesson and assessment I go back, and I analyse, and I have a look where the problem areas lie and then we see how and what we can improve. What we can do to, I don't want to say fix, because fix is not really a nice word, but to fix a problem. To see where problems lie and what we can do."

A Principal stated:

"We've got that system, Principal Primary and SA SAMS, the progress reports are printed out, they're being signed, and so forth, and like you see, you saw, we have the combined statistics for the school in each grade, so many males, females, so many retains, so many pass, but then also for the Department we have to do all, in all subjects, we have to provide them with information."

One educator and one Principal felt strongly that assessments should be set to an "average" standard. The Principal mentioned specifically that test results should have an average of between 57 – 63%.

"The Grade average should be between 57 and 63. There's place for remarks. You get it from the educator. The educator already would have written there – the test was too easy, we will change it in future but through

CAS moderation, the marks should be fine when we get to the final mark for the term."

If learners achieve too far above or below this range, s/he would feel the need to investigate. The Principal added that test papers had to be adapted to adhere to this range as it is also what SGB members expect and that as the school is average, the learners should be achieving the expected average of between 57 and 63%.

"If a child is a 70 percenter, it would remain 70 from Grade 1 up to Grade 12 if the standard is in line, so the whole time it must be changed. What we do is, we will change a paper in a, or papers in a grade when we find we have a weaker group, because they should also be able to run at 57 to 63."

Other interviewees (one or two per practice) offered a wider range of practices they deemed ideal for assessment, including peer-marking and self-marking, teaching for content understanding, focusing on both results and how learners can improve, competing in the Maths Olympiad, formal tests once a quarter and progress reports.

Theme 3: Assessment as Integrated Part of Learning and Holistic Practice

Eight of the 14 participants viewed assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning and conducted in an ongoing fashion.

"In class I must time and again assess."

"Ek dink baie informele assessering met die kinders waar ek sommer net een Vrydag, Vrydae is my dae wat ek sommer net vrae vra en hulle moet antwoord..."

(I do lots of informal assessment where on Fridays I ask them questions and they must answer.)

Participants also said that assessment is so integrated into their practice that they take a holistic approach, which includes informal assessments as well the mandatory formal assessment.

"And we do more practical like counting assessment where they just don't write so they actually go to like counters, practical assessment, we try and do different types of assessment throughout the year."

"Gedeelte doen hulle die informele deurlopende assessering wat oor die werk gaan"

(Partially they do informal assessment continuously covering work content)

Theme 4: Identifying At-Risk Learners and Gaps in Teaching and Learning

The role of assessment to identify at-risk learners, gaps in teaching and learning as well as devising interventions was endorsed by five (5) of the interviewees.

"So that actually helps, that helps with to identify which children are struggling and which aren't and then you can see in which area they are struggling so if it reading or oral or written work or maths it definitely helps to identify in which area they are struggling."

"The sooner you identify...The better for the child"

Interviewees said they conducted analysis of learner gaps in learning by analysing available marks, informal tests and classwork as well as other methods such as oral and written tasks.

"Analysis of result each and every term."

"Oh my god most of the kids fared badly in photosynthesis so I think I need to get a group together or ask a subject advisor different ways of teaching photosynthesis en dan kom ons bymekaar dan share ons miskien video clips this is how I do it to make it more exciting or more simple."

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<u>(and we get together and maybe share video clips)</u>

"...in their workbooks they look like they are coping but then with the assessment tasks when they actually have to sit and have a specific time and write the answers they are failing."

Theme 5: Lack of Resources and Assessment Overload

Four (4) interviewees said that a lack of resources (time) and assessment overload affects them. Participants mentioned a heavy workload and parents who are not willing to become involved. As one HoD mentions:

"…their parents are not actively involved because they have excuses of working from early till late so when they come back home they are tired and those learners in Grade 6 and 7, the parents think they are old enough to look after the little ones. So, the kids of Grade 6 and 7, they are burdened of themselves and also their parent's duties that they should do. They should look after the little ones and that is another problem that we are facing here in the school."

"Most of our educators have a whole grade to teach from Grade 4 upwards, because the school is so big."

Principal

One Principal said he felt that some educators lack sufficient content knowledge to be teaching their subjects:

"I think he hasn't got the really knowledge of how to teach Maths."

Theme 6: Stakeholder Involvement

Four (4) participants spoke about the role parents, line managers (HODs) and Principals can play in assessment practices. One (1) participant said that parents should be involved when problems are identified in learning so that the parents can assist the child.

"Notify the parents. So they can support you from home."

HoDs and Deputy Principals as well as principals can serve the important function of checking class books and learner progress.

"Because every Fridays, they know they must be submitted to the HOD and the Deputy should see to it that they're marked and done properly."

One Principal said he felt that assessment improved when he motivated his staff by giving them reasons for his rules:

"If I do something or say something or get something in place, I also give them the reason why."

Theme 7: Assessment Training or Studies

One participant had attended a workshop on how to use informal assessment to monitor learner achievement. Another participant said emphatically that he does not see the need for further training or studies.

3.5.2 Interview data Secondary Schools

The analysis of Secondary School interviews included a total of 12 interviews, of which four (4) interviews were conducted with Principals, and the remaining eight (8) came from teachers. Discussion regarding best practice for assessment was named in 11 out of the 12 interviews. The role of large- scale assessment and standard setting was the second most prevalent theme and was discussed in 10 out of the 12 interviews. The use of assessment for identifying at-risk learners and gaps in teaching and learning emerged in nine (9) out of the 12 interviews. The view that assessment should be seen and implemented as a holistic practice and integrated into teaching and learning was emphasised by eight (8) participants. The other themes, lack of resources and training received, were mentioned in five (5) or less interviews.

Theme 1: Best Practice in Assessment

Both educators and Principals said they viewed weekly class tests, homework and exams as the best methods to use for assessment. The quotations reflect the views of educators who were interviewed. Regular testing, both formal and informal was endorsed by most of the teachers:

> *"I believe in writing a little class test every day"*

> *"I used to give them some class tests, give them this and that I usually present in the classroom and when they are presenting I am able to see that this one is informed, this one is lazy, this one is this."*

> *"Quizzes is on Friday ja if not Friday Monday"*

Class work as integrated with homework was discussed as best practice for gauging the progress learners were making in the classroom. Teachers use the classwork and homework to identify gaps in learning and adjust their teaching focus:

> *"Ja given the class work, after writing the class work I could give them homework."*

> *"No like I think every time I give them a piece of class work activities I get a direction whether which topics they understand more, which concept they don't understand for now for example now I know the rule that they are facing a challenge when it comes to solve a x."*

> *"When I will go and check where the learners got it wrong, and then compile it and look at that topic which killed those learners."*

Theme 2: Large-Scale Assessment and Standard Setting

When asked about large-scale assessment and external testing, most of the interviewees (nine (9) out of 12) vividly remembered the Annual National Assessments (ANAs) and shared their views.

A principal who had negative views on the ANAs, shared his reasons:

> *"When the results came only few learners will pass. Those who are intellectually gifted, they will pass, but others they …"*

Another potential pitfall of external assessment mentioned by participants was that South Africa is diverse and that learners come from a wide variety of backgrounds and resources. Principals and educator expressed their concern with comparing learners from a variety of backgrounds as follows:

> *"There is one thing that the people are not realistic. If I take a learner from Western Cape, and compare with a learner in Zebediela, these two are not comparable. The resources they have are not the same. The other year I was comparing my little girl with her cousin, her cousin was doing form 1, she was doing grade 5, but as they communicate, you can realise that no, no, this one of form 1 is not communicating like the grade 4 one…"*

"So, we are comparing people which are not comparable, unless if the government was pouring the resources to us, that one will be better."

Another concern was that external assessments increased the workload of already overburdened educators. One principal expressed the apprehension as:

"Maybe of value to the school, but the problem is it gives these educators more extra work to do, because when coming to marking, it was a problem, because they have to mark their own scripts for their own subjects and on the other hand they come to ANA again."

The potential inconsistency of standards for external tests was mentioned. Three (3) participants said that the ANAs had varying degrees of difficulty from one year to another.

"There is one ANA paper that we had here then this paper was very difficult, it was not easy to answer especially for the grade nine's. It was as if the language was far advanced for the grade nine learners."

"So, in most cases at the end I don't know it's whether it was only the problem concerning ANA, because what the teacher was doing making class, every year it's 100%. The only thing that we can do is to improve the levels of those learners, because sometimes you may find that the levels of other learners are low, but all in all they pass."

Theme 3: Identifying At-Risk Learners and Gaps in Teaching and Learning

Assessment is used in a variety of ways by educators o identify learning gaps and adjust teaching practices. Compiling lists of learners who need interventions and offering them after-school classes, holiday classes, and re-teaching lessons was discussed by four (4) educators.

"And, that is when we work with them, after school classes, extra classes and then we have seasonal schools for the at-risk learners, that is March Holidays, June Holidays, September Holidays, right, not the end of year. And that is how we try to help, but then we do it for these schools but only for the learners at risk."

"That is two problems né then I will see no they did not understand what I told them yesterday then I re teach it again né."

"We have extra classes that are extra classes for that are that are for the school then we have no on what now, you also have, you make time…"

Regular testing as a method for identifying gaps and tracking learner progress was prominent in five interviews:

"you have said now question 3 none of your learners are able to get a mark there. So, you know, question 3 you as the subject teacher know what question was asked and that is what you will concentrate on for the following year or this year for instance."

"would have the least of those that are actually struggling those that I think will end up getting level one, I have a list informed by the tests that from the class work you see them informal tests then I have a list of those who are actually struggling."

One teacher felt strongly that Grade 9 exit examinations are necessary and that they should be used to direct learners into an academic stream or more practical stream. He said that:

"No, I think if they can make an exit certificate or something at grade 9 and that even the FET recognise this thing, that when the learner pass grade 9 can be admitted there. So, that they can follow their strength. So, I think that one can help learners, because according to me there is no useless person. The only problem is we teach people that are not relevant to their skill."

Theme 4: Assessment as Integrated Part of Learning and Holistic Practice

When participants were asked about their views on the role of assessment in teaching and learning, most answers centred around assessment being integrated into learning and forming part of every aspect of the classroom experience. Examples from the eight (8) participants who held this view included:

"You cannot say you are not assessing, even when I teach. Starting from the lesson."

"This assessment is a very wide; it's got a very wide definition. We talk about assessment. I can assess while I'm sitting here, I can assess what he is doing."

"Assessment is on an ongoing level..."

When viewing assessment as a holistic aspect of teaching and learning, participants said that assessment takes place on a daily or weekly basis, that assessment is emphasised through the lesson intent, that both formal and informal assessments are used and that the definition of assessment is very broad and can therefore include most activities:

"I don't just teach, teach, I teach without a purpose."

"We go for the informal assessment and the formal assessments. Those are the two types that we are doing."

One educator said that she refers to the assessments as "snacks" to make it seem more enticing to learners. Another said that when learners are demotivated by poor exam marks, s/he organises motivational speakers for the learners.

Theme 5: Lack of Resources and Assessment Overload

Five (5) out of the 12 participants spoke about the heavy burden large amounts of marking places on educators. Educators said that heavy assessment loads lead to teacher exhaustion and to difficulties in properly moderating test papers due to time constraints:

"the only big thing is just the challenges language teachers overall there is a lot of markings especially our township schools we have lot of learners. You know you have to imagine marking two hundred and seven essays and then last hundred and seven again written them, essays only…"

"business teachers manage to say why are you still marking and you can't just cheat because you want to know and correct all of those things, you only have many challenges…"

"Because we are given a lot of work here sometimes the companies[?] do not do it and I wanted to mark them on my own I have done that several times…"

One teacher said that the pressure to cover curriculum content before next assessment is due leads to a decrease in teaching quality:

"And even today I was I am preparing for that task three, so I have to make sure that before I give them, or I assess them we have dealt with everything…"

Another teacher emphasised that learners need individual attention but due to large class sizes and the volume of marking this creates, s/he could not always provide learners with the individual inputs they need:

"Help the learners one by one as many as there is but they need more individual attention…"

One teacher said the lack of resources such as learners not having dictionaries affects her/his learners.

"they have got a problem, some of them they do not have dictionaries, the importance of having a dictionary…"

Three (3) participants talked about the assessment training they received or their related studies. One participant had completed an Honours Degree in Assessment and Quality Assurance (AQA) and was also enrolled in a Masters' Degree:

> *"Oh me oh no I did an honours in Assessment and Quality Assurance so now I am just busy with my furthering my studies…"*

The other two (2) participants had attended assessment workshops, and both felt that the workshops had been useful to them:

> *"Yes, I have learned something especially when it comes to assessment."*

One of the participants said /she requires more training:

> *Ja I still need more, I already went to a maths lab workshop, I think somewhere in February né and maths lab workshop and I also went on training for assessment, how to set question papers.*

4. Concluding Remarks

Below are some concluding remarks emanating from analysing the data for the afore-mentioned indicators. This list is however not exhaustive, and more information can still be elicited when interacting with the data and further analyses:

Indicator 2 elicited information that educators' needs for training in digital competencies are closely related to the physical context of the school and community in which they are situated. Digital competencies did not help much if these digital technologies were not available to them in the school where they work. Differentiation in training is needed, since currently, well-seasoned and experienced educators receive the same training as less experienced, struggling educators. A high priority needs to be placed on mentoring opportunities and monitoring of classroom practices through Principal and Head of Department classroom visits. Teacher unions were identified as potentially beneficial role players, especially in cases where the lack of District support means that schools are left without guidance or opportunities for professional development. The increasing beneficial role of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) emerged as a strong theme, with educators providing evidence of where such PLCs provided them with support and opportunities for development.

Indicator 6 provides evidence that the presence of management documents could not be linked to District functionality. It would be expected that more documents were available in better functioning schools and Districts, with fewer documents being available in less functioning schools and Districts. Evidence to support this expectation could not be found, and within functioning Districts, evidence was found of well-functioning schools that could not present documents at all. However, in such cases, schools would acknowledge that the required documents are used informally, in different formats, and are tailored to their specific needs. Buy-in on the importance of management documents (such as School Development Plans, Academic Development Plans, Attendance Registers and Annual Reports) exist, but educators reported feeling alienated from decisions that are being taking based on these documents that affect their day-to-day involvement in the school and management of their classrooms.

Themes for Indicator 7 emerged from specifically interview data with Principals, SGB Chairs and selected members of school SGBs that indicate that good relations exist in general, that are characterised by co-operation and a committed sense of putting the learners' needs first. SGBs could potentially play increasingly more important roles, but only if more training on their roles and responsibilities are provided, specifically in areas of finance. Support for these arguments were presented against the frustration for some schools, where delays in appointing full-time Principals meant that responsibilities could be delegated to the SGB while awaiting formal leadership to take over the management of the school. Rurality seems to be a factor. SGB members from such areas are far from schools and regular visits to the schools are not always possible. An interesting dynamic emerged where a Principal also related the issue of rurality to lack of education and misuse of power. In this instance, it seems that if an SGB member comes from a deep rural

background, with the assumption then that such an individual has little formal education, problems arise because of power relations with the Principal in the presence of lack of informed, educated decision- making skills.

Indicators 12 and 13 provided evidence that District visits occur in a haphazard fashion without long term planning or confirmation of visits to schools. Visits are erratic, varying in frequency and purpose. While no distinct patterns emerge from participants, it is quite clear that more classroom support is needed during these visits where Subject Advisors have the freedom to venture into the classroom and advise the educator on areas of improvement, areas of satisfactory progress or areas where educators are excelling and perhaps need confirmation of this from the Subject Advisor who has been to the classroom.

The additional information on **Assessment Perceptions, Knowledge and Practice** is critical for knowing which learners struggle with which part(s) of their work, in order for the educator to know how to adjust and improve his/her teaching from as early as during the same lesson to, at the latest, the next day or lesson. All assessment lies at the heart of improved learner achievement, therefore the critical dynamics to interrogate here is what educators' perceptions and understanding are of the assessment modalities on offer, and their role and value in improving the teaching and learning engagement in the classroom in order to benefit learner achievement. Evidence from educator interviews on issues of assessment shows that the role of large-scale assessment and external testing is front of mind for most teachers, closely linked to the role that this type of assessment can play in setting standards and benchmarks. Discussions about what constitutes best practice in assessment features as a prominent theme. Assessment as an integrated part of learning and teaching with a holistic approach features with mixed feelings, while using assessments to identify gaps in learning and teaching, as well as devising interventions for at-risk learners, does feature as part of the narrative educators share on issues of assessment. Least likely across interviews is the issue of a lack of resources resulting in assessment overload and the role stakeholders such as parents and Principals have in assessment and assessment-related training.

APPENDIX A: PRINCIPAL, SGB AND TEACHER INTERVIEW GUIDES

Interview Guide – Principal - Questions, prompts and additional background

The following set of interview guidelines to fieldworkers provide the primary questions that each fieldworker should put to every relevant participant. The questions are followed, for each indicator, by additional prompts and background information elaborating on specific contextual matters and providing further focus to the kind of dynamics that should be noted and recorded. A separate Interview Recording Sheet is provided where respondents' answers and related information should be recorded. The table below reflects, for each indicator, which participants fieldworkers have to interview in order to collect the required information.

Sources of information

Indicator / Topic	Principal
Indicator 2: Capacity development	Interview
	Document review of School and Academic Development Plans
Indicator 6: School management	Interview
	Document review of School and Academic Development Plans, and Training Register
Indicator 7: School governance	Interview
	Document review of SGB Minutes
Indicator 12(13): District monitoring and support (and satis-faction)	Interview
	Document review of any relevant evidence found at the school
Indicator 14+: Assessment	Interview

Indicator 2 - Professional development and training:

Importance of the indicator

The Action Plan 2019 argues for an increase in the offering available to educators, both in terms of effort (quantity), and quality. This is supported by observations in SMS 2011 that as many as half our teachers do not even spend 12 hours per year on capacity development and training. The average was 39 hours, only halfway to the target of 80 hours per year. In addition, results from the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) implementation and other sources, such as SACMEQ, indicate that teacher proficiency should be increased. As stated on p.34 of The Action Plan 2019, the process through which learner assessment occurs comprises an important school dynamic, also open for improvement. This will only happen if one knows "which teachers have the strongest need for further professional development within a school, (which) is a prerequisite for effective teacher development programmes". The use of assessment results by educators is also acknowledged as one of the educator proficiencies to attend to, and as such strengthens the argument for selecting to study Indicator 14 (more follows below) in more depth.

Critical dynamics to interrogate qualitatively (How? Why?)

Elements identified for further interrogation in SMS 2017, and now taken further in the qualitative study component and its questions, include:

- Teacher satisfaction and needs related to different types/sources of training (self-initiated, internally and externally initiated);

- The role of and achievements through teacher union participation;

- The need for and functioning of the Continuous Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) system;

- Training in the practical use of learning and teaching resources and materials; and
- Training in digital competencies.

Interview Questions to the Principal:

Could you please tell us more about the usefulness and value of various types of professional development opportunities or training that you as principal have received during 2017 and may need in 2018?

If not already done under Q1 above, please elaborate on the usefulness (value) and gaps (needs) specifically in relation to different sources, types, modes or formats of "training", with reference, in particular to self-, internally- and externally-initiated training.

Prompts: Also reflect on training in: the practical use of teaching and learning materials and resources; and digital technologies; and/or how these helped YOU to carry out your responsibilities as a principal. What other specific areas were focused on, e.g., staff management, data analysis, financial management, curriculum management, etc.?

How do you make professional development a priority for yourself and organise it?

Prompts: Do you plan for professional development activities on a regular (annual) basis? If so, to what extent, if at all, are these professional development opportunities linked to the school and academic development plans, particularly as part of the annual report cycle?

Please tell me about the kinds of professional development opportunities or training you feel have been, or will be, valuable to your teachers.

[Prompts: (i) Please again elaborate on the usefulness (value) and gaps (needs) specifically in relation to different sources, types, modes or formats of "training", with reference, in particular, to self-, internally- and externally-initiated training. Reflect here also on training in the practical use of teaching and learning materials and resources and digital technologies, and/or how these helped teachers to carry out their responsibilities. What specific areas were focused on, e.g., classroom management, data analysis, subject content, curriculum management, assessment, subject pedagogy, etc.? (ii) How do you make professional development a priority for your teachers and organise it for them? Do you plan for professional development activities for them on a regular (annual) basis? If so, to what extent, if at all, are these professional development opportunities linked to the schools and academic development plans, particularly as part of the annual report cycle? And to the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS)?

Original more comprehensive background, context and thinking:

It is important to the DBE that school principals be empowered professionally to deal with the challenges of the job. Please tell us if you participated in any professional development programmes LAST year (in 2017).

Who provided the training, and what was the impact of the training?

For approximately how many hours (or days) was the training provided to you in the different focus areas, over the course of last year?

Has the ideal amount of capacity development been reached? If not, what should it be, and why?

Please comment on any additional matters related to gaps, challenges, needs and value of capacity development and training that you consider to be of critical importance. (One could also ask: "How can training be made more useful to you as teacher?").

Indicator 6 - School Management Information/Processes:

Importance of the indicator

From p.41 and onwards in the Action Plan 2019, the matters of autonomy and leadership are clearly considered strong components of good school management. Although statistics reported on, as collected during 2009 and again through SMS 2011, show that 88% (up from 79%) of schools had school-improvement plans in place, concerns are raised that the mere existence of such still does not sufficiently translate into efficient use and good management. The same would apply to the existence and use of the Annual National Assessment (ANA) results, for instance, which at least gave Principals a useful handle on discussions with educators about curriculum implementation and other aspects of school quality. The picture becomes starker when considering the findings that only 52% of schools had all 11 key documents in place in 2011. This is followed by a strong appeal to investigate the value of these documents for the quality of school management, especially how management problems existing in schools can be addressed through improved policy and capacity building. Two key actions or strategies that education authorities envisage in this regard for the future are the increased use of competency assessments for Principals, and a national training programme for School Managers.

Critical dynamics to interrogate qualitatively (How? Why?)

Elements identified for further interrogation in SMS 2017, and now taken further in the qualitative study component and its questions, include:

- Training needs and modes (as also covered in Indicator 2 above) for Principals, also to prepare them better for competency assessments. (and how the DBE can ensure that all Principals are competent.); and

- The more specific interrogation of the efficiency of use and value of specific 'building blocks' from among the school-management documents (i.e., the various documents of which its presence is surveyed in SMS 2017).

Interview Questions to the Principal:

How often do you use the key documents (see document review table; focus on those not asterisked) for the management of the school? Please explain why the school needs them and how you use them?

What levels of buy-in exist for each? How was that initially achieved at development? Who were all involved? How is buy-in currently maintained? How do you review and improve these documents on a regular basis?

Prompts: Please identify and talk first about those that the principal considers to be of most value. Only when the principal has exhausted his/her inputs, suggest any of the following omitted so far for further follow-up: SA SAMS, LURITS, school improvement plan, academic improvement plan, academic performance report, annual budget, annual report, teacher and learner attendance registers, class registers, time table, asset register, Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) forms, and visitors' book.)

May we ask you to voice your opinion about the school's objectives about learner pass rates, comparing your school to other schools, and similar related matters?

Interview Questions to the Deputy Principal/ HoD:

How often do you use the key documents (see document review table; focus on those not asterisked) for the management of the school? Please explain why the school needs them and how you use them?

What levels of buy-in exist for each? How was that initially achieved at development. Who were all involved? How is buy-in currently maintained? How do you review and improve these documents on a regular basis?

Prompts: Please identify and talk first about those that the principal considers to be of most value. Only when the principal has exhausted his/her inputs, suggest any of the following omitted so far for further follow-up: SA SAMS,

LURITS, school improvement plan, academic improvement plan, academic performance report, annual budget, annual report, teacher and learner attendance registers, class registers, time table, asset register, Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) forms, and visitors' book.)

May we ask you to voice your opinion about the school's objectives about learner pass rates, comparing your school to other schools, and similar related matters?

> Original more comprehensive background, context and thinking:
>
> What are the key documents you are required to have? Can you show us these documents and explain by whom and where these documents are kept and who has access to them?
>
> Why do teachers sign the attendance register? Is it: (a) in anticipation of today's opportunity to make a difference; or (b) in mere compliance?
>
> What role does the labour unions play in the school's management?

Indicator 7 - School Governance:

Importance of the indicator

The phrasing in the Action Plan 2019 (p.42) of this indicator as essentially being about "parent and community participation in the governance of schools, partly by improving access to important information via the e-Education strategy" gives an indication of key policy thrusts in this regard. Calling it one of the cornerstones of democracy and accountability does the same. Some reference is also made in this regard to how the ANA results were brokered further to parents. Although many successes are acknowledged, transcending mere compliance with requirements such as being properly constituted, the number of meetings held per year, keeping minutes, etc., into achieving meaningful governance and participation is key. The involvement of increasing numbers of parents and community members should be strived at. The type of calls and complaints received by the DBE's call centre from parents and communities about the rights and obligations given to schools and parents further testifies to the need for improving governance. A further matter highlighted is the need for SGBs to uphold the constitutional rights of children.

Critical dynamics to interrogate qualitatively (How? Why?)

- How to turn the mere presence of documents, procedures and compliance with requirements into operational value and effective functioning; and

- The Action Plan 2019 calls for not reducing a matter as complex as SGB effectiveness to a mere indicator number, but to understand critical dynamics through qualitative research about the dynamic role of SGBs at schools.

The induction and training of SGBs and their members should be investigated further.

Interview Questions to the Principal:

How would you describe the degree of coherence and collaboration between your school's management team (SMT) (and principal in particular) and its SGB?

Prompts: Does this underpin the effective functioning of the SGB? What should it ideally be? How should the SGB help the school to improve learning and teaching?

Do you think SGBs should be granted more or fewer powers in the governance of the school? Please explain why, and if so, how.

Prompts: What are your thoughts about the currently intended reduction of some SGB powers (e.g., related to the language used in the school, confirming appointments to vacancies, and financial controls)?

What role has the SGB played in the establishment of posts and/or the selection of school staff?

Prompts: How has this process been undertaken, and how has it been of value?

Do you consider the training provided to the outgoing SGB at the beginning of their term three years ago as sufficient? If not, what were the gaps, needs, ideals, challenges?

Prompt: Was there a formal hand-over meeting when you started your first/new term?

Do you have any plans/strategies in place with a view to the coming election of a new SGB for the next three-year term?

Prompt: Do you plan to stand again? Why?

> Original more comprehensive background, context and thinking:
>
> Please give us an idea of the size of your SGB, and how often it met last year, i.e., in 2017.
>
> Do you think the SGB is making a positive contribution to your school? Please explain?
>
> Why does the school need each of the listed powers (see the quantitative instruments), functions or tasks assigned to your SGB?
>
> What role does the labour unions play in the school's governance?
>
> Do you think members of your SGB have the requisite capacity and skills required of SGB members? Please explain.

Indicator 12(13) - District Monitoring and Support:

Importance of the indicator

It is acknowledged in the Action Plan 2019 (p.47) that school weaknesses reflect District weaknesses. The official District Offices Policy, finalised in 2013, is perhaps the best example of what the DBE has been doing in remedying weaknesses in the situation. A marginal increase has been noted over time (2009 to 2011) in the percentage of schools reporting at least two face-to-face interactions with District officials (up from 78% to 87%). A recent report stressed the need for Districts' use of assessment information, strengthening the capacity of Districts, and generating a greater variety of standard monitoring and management reports.

Critical dynamics to interrogate qualitatively (How? Why?)

Visit numbers, especially with a diffuse sense of the purpose/s behind these visits by District officials, do not automatically translate into great District support, and these dynamics should be interrogated further.

Interview Questions to the Principal:

We are interested to learn how the school benefited from interactions with the district/circuit office in 2017.

Please tell me how your school benefited from district interaction, and about ways you see this could be improved to serve the school even better.

Prompts: Describe the process and/or methods district officials used during such interactions, including visits. E.g., what do they discuss with you? How, and what type of feedback, do they provide, if any? What should be the ideal balance between monitoring and support (or, between compliance and capacity development)?

Is there any mutual dependence between the roles, responsibilities and participation (past and current) of district/ circuit officials, on the one hand, and school management, on the other hand, in as far as whole-school evaluation (WSE), school-development (-improvement) plans (SDPs/SIPs) (and eventually the school budget), and your school's annual report are concerned? What should this relationship ideally be? (*Be on the lookout to understand how the district contributed to the development of the school-improvement plan and how the district assumed responsibility for continuous monitoring and facilitation of objectives specified in the school-improvement plan, as well as matters such as information management, human resources and labour issues, finances, and all other planning and reporting.*)

Prompt: What was the role of the district in relation to learner results and pass rates (e.g., communication, reporting, plans, targets, etc.).

What recommendations would you make for improvements that the District office needs to make to better support your school and its teachers?

> Original more comprehensive background, context and thinking:
>
> Have any district officials visited your schools LAST year (i.e., in 2017)? If so, how many times and for what purposes?
>
> Have the district officials made any unreasonable demands or listed any requirements that go beyond your official responsibilities? Please explain?
>
> Do you have any comments about the topics, purposes, frequencies and visitor identity related to district visits/inter-actions?
>
> To teachers:
>
> What kind of district support did you receive in 2017? (frequency, identity of the visitor/caller, purpose of the visit)
>
> What kind of subject-specific district support did you receive in 2017? (frequency, identity of the visitor/caller, purpose of the visit)

Indicator 14+ - Assessment – Perceptions, Knowledge and Practice

Importance of the indicator

Curriculum implementation and assessment practices are integrated activities geared towards the fulfilment and improvement, if required, of learner achievement; hence the inclusion of assessment as a strong focus in this qualitative study. Curriculum implementation during classroom interaction is critical in enabling every educator to know which of his/her learners struggle with which part/s of their work, during and after every lesson in which new work is presented, in order for the teacher to know how to adjust and improve his/her teaching from as early as during the same lesson to at the latest the next lesson. Assessment plays a pivotal role in improving learner achievement, as facilitated by good teaching. Various forms of assessment may play their part in the sedimentation of learning content.

Critical dynamics to interrogate qualitatively (How? Why?)

What teachers' perceptions and understanding are of the assessment modalities on offer, and their role and value in improving the teaching and learning engagement in the classroom to benefit learner achievement. This should be interrogated in a qualitative way as per the proposed questions further below.

We are interested to learn about teachers' and principals' perceptions and knowledge of different types of assessment: National and International; Examinations, and Classroom (Summative and Formative).

Interview Questions to the Principal:

Please tell us about the types of assessment information you have access to.

Prompts: Fieldworkers should look for and record responses about large-scale assessments such as, TIMSS, PIRLS, SACMEQ*; regular tests and examinations either set by schools themselves or common district and/or provincial and/or national assessments (such as the ANA*; and similar systemic assessments, specifically in the Free State and Western Cape); and classroom-based assessment, but without initially prompting the principal.

We are interested to learn how the school has been benefiting from assessment results, i.e., what the value of each of these assessments is. Please tell me how, and why, your school benefited and about ways you see these results utilised to serve the school even better.

Prompts: Have you made use of any formal error analysis (or diagnostic) reports up to now? How have you used them? Are the results from such reports fed back into the professional development and training that you pursue? Make sure not to omit recording some feedback by principals on the value and use of ANA (including opinions about scrapping ANA) and international tests.

Are you aware of discussions in the Department of Basic Education about a new integrated model of assessments in schools? If so, what do you know about that? What do you think the schooling system should pursue in this regard? Why?

To the fieldworker: Please see the range of detailed questions originally considered, but now in the additional background text box further down. Treat them as prompts to ensure that the principal's responses on the foregoing three questions are comprehensive enough.

* ANA = Annual National Assessment/s; TIMSS = Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study; PIRLS = Progress in International Reading Literacy Study; SACMEQ = Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality.

Original more comprehensive background, context and thinking:

To principals:

Please explain how your school used the results of the examinations you administered last year? [Probe if the school uses results other than merely for reporting.]

Did your school participate in any common district or provincial exams? If yes, please indicate the grade and subject of these exams, and the purpose?

If yes, is there any specific preparation the school does for these examinations?

If yes? How did you use the results of these exams?

Do you think that the DBE must implement national examinations at Grade 3, 6 and 9? Please explain your response? What would the benefit of this be?

Do you think that the scrapping of ANA* was a good thing for your school? Please explain why?

How did the ANAs impact on your school? How did your school and/or teachers prepare for the ANA tests?

How did your school/teachers use the ANA results for improving learning and teaching in YOUR school? Please explain.

Did your school get any support from the district or province in the use of the ANA results? If yes, please provide details. If not, what support would you have wanted towards better use of the results of the ANAs?

What value could it have for you to be able to compare the achievement of learners in your school to the achievement of learners in other schools?

How important is it for your teachers to know about summative assessment? Please explain why.

Do you think your teachers need to improve their capacity and skills in the use of summative assessment?

How important is it for your teachers to know about formative assessment? Please explain why.

Do you think your teachers need to improve their capacity and skills in the use of formative assessment?

Interview Guide – SGB - Questions, prompts and additional background

This set of interview guidelines to fieldworkers provides the primary questions that each fieldworker should put to every relevant participant. The questions are followed, for each indicator, by additional prompts and background information elaborating on specific contextual matters and providing further focus to the kind of dynamics that should be noted and recorded. A separate Interview Recording Sheet is provided where respondents' answers and related information should be recorded. The table below reflects, for each indicator, which participants fieldworkers have to interview in order to collect the required information.

Sources of information from each participant

Indicator / Topic	SGB Chair	2nd SGB member
Indicator 7: School governance	Interview	Interview

Indicator 7 - School Governance:

Importance of the indicator

The phrasing in the Action Plan 2019 (p.42) of this indicator as essentially being about "parent and community participation in the governance of schools, partly by improving access to important information via the e-Education strategy" gives an indication of key policy thrusts in this regard. Calling it one of the cornerstones of democracy and accountability does the same. Some reference is also made in this regard to how the ANA results were brokered further to parents. Although many successes are acknowledged, transcending mere compliance with requirements such as being properly constituted, the number of meetings held per year, keeping minutes, etc., into achieving meaningful governance and participation is key. The involvement of increasing numbers of parents and community members should be strived at. The kind of calls and complaints received by the DBE's call centre from parents and communities about the rights and obligations given to schools and parents further testify to the need for improving governance. A further matter highlighted is the need for SGBs to uphold the constitutional rights of children.

Critical dynamics to interrogate qualitatively (How? Why?)

How to turn the mere presence of documents, procedures and compliance with requirements into operational value and effective functioning;

The Action Plan 2019 calls for not reducing a matter as complex as SGB effectiveness to a mere indicator number, but to understand critical dynamics through qualitative research about the dynamic role of SGBs at schools; and

The induction and training of SGBs and their members should be investigated further.

Interview Questions to the SGB Chair:

How would you describe the degree of coherence and collaboration between your school's management team (SMT) (and principal in particular) and its SGB?

Prompts: Does this underpin the effective functioning of the SGB? What should it ideally be? How should the SGB help the school to improve learning and teaching?

Do you think SGBs should be granted more or fewer powers in the governance of the school? Please explain why, and if so, how.

Prompts: What are your thoughts about the currently intended reduction of some SGB powers (e.g., related to the language used in the school, confirming appointments to vacancies, and financial controls)?

What role has the SGB played in the establishment of posts and/or the selection of school staff?

Prompts: How has this process been undertaken, and how has it been of value?

Do you consider the training provided to the outgoing SGB at the beginning of their term three years ago as sufficient? If not, what were the gaps, needs, ideals, challenges?

Prompt: Was there a formal hand-over meeting when you started your first/new term?

Do you have any plans/strategies in place with a view to the coming election of a new SGB for the next three-year term?

Prompt: Do you plan to stand again? Why?

Interview Questions to the Non-Paid SGB member:

How would you describe the degree of coherence and collaboration between your school's management team (SMT) (and principal in particular) and its SGB?

Prompts: Does this underpin the effective functioning of the SGB? What should it ideally be? To what extent are you integrated into the SGB's functioning?

Do you consider the training provided to the outgoing SGB at the beginning of their term three years ago as sufficient? If not, what were the gaps, needs, ideals, challenges?

Prompt: Was there a formal hand-over meeting when you started your first/new term?

Do you have any plans/strategies in place with a view to the coming election of a new SGB for the next three-year term?

Prompt: Do you plan to stand again? Why?

What role has the SGB played in the establishment of posts and/or the selection of school staff?

Prompts: How has this process been undertaken, and how has it been of value?

Do you think SGBs should be granted more or fewer powers in the governance of the school? Please explain why, and if so, how.

Prompts: What are your thoughts about the currently intended reduction of some SGB powers (e.g., related to the language used in the school, confirming appointments in vacancies, and financial controls)?

Original more comprehensive background, context and thinking:

Please give us an idea of the size of your SGB, and how often it met last year, i.e., in 2017.

Do you think the SGB is making a positive contribution to your school? Please explain?

Why does the school need each of the listed powers (see the quantitative instruments), functions or tasks assigned to your SGB?

What role does the labour unions play in the school's governance?

Do you think members of your SGB have the requisite capacity and skills required of SGB members? Please explain.

Interview Guide – Teacher - Questions, prompts and additional background

This set of interview guidelines to fieldworkers provides the primary questions that each fieldworker should put to every relevant participant. The questions are followed, for each indicator, by additional prompts and background information elaborating on specific contextual matters and providing further focus to the kind of dynamics that should be noted and recorded. A separate Interview Recording Sheet is provided where respondents' answers and related information should

be recorded. The table below reflects, for each indicator, which participants fieldworkers have to interview in order to collect the required information.

Sources of information from each participant

Indicator / Topic	Teacher
Indicator 2: Capacity development	Interview (for the two relevant phases each time)
Indicator 12(13): District monitoring and support (and satisfaction)	Interview (for the two relevant phases each time)
Indicator 14+: Assessment	Interview (for the two relevant phases each time) Classroom observation, including some interrogation of practices, and Learner book review (assessment feedback)

Indicator 2 - Professional development and training:

Importance of the indicator

The Action Plan 2019 argues for an increase in the offering available to teachers, both in terms of effort (quantity), and quality. This is supported by observations in the SMS 2011 that as many as half our teachers do not even spend 12 hours per year on capacity development and training. The average was 39 hours, only halfway to the target of 80 hours per year. In addition, results from the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) implementation and other sources, such as SACMEQ, indicate that teacher proficiency should be increased. As stated on p.34 of the Action Plan 2019 the process through which learner assessment occurs comprises an important school dynamic, also open for improvement. This will only happen if one knows "which teachers have the strongest need for further professional development within a school, (which) is a prerequisite for effective teacher development programmes". The use of assessment results by educators is also acknowledged as one of the educator proficiencies to attend to, and as such strengthens the argument for selecting to study Indicator 14 (more follows below) in more depth.

Critical dynamics to interrogate qualitatively (How? Why?)

Elements identified for further interrogation in the SMS 2017, and now taken further in the qualitative study component and its questions, include:

- Teacher satisfaction and needs related to different types/sources of training (self-initiated, internally and externally initiated);
- The role of and achievements through labour union participation;
- The need for and functioning of the Continuous Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) system;
- Training in the practical use of learning and teaching resources and materials; and
- Training in digital competencies.

Interview Questions to the Teacher:

Could you please tell us more about the usefulness and value of various types of professional development opportunities or training that you have received during 2017 and may need in 2018?

If not already done under Q1 above, please elaborate on the usefulness (value) and gaps (needs) specifically in relation to different sources, types, modes or formats of "training", with reference, in particular, to self-, internally- and externally-initiated training to improve teaching and learning.

Prompts: Also reflect on training in: the practical use of teaching and learning materials and resources; and digital

technologies; and/or how these helped YOU to carry out your responsibilities as a teacher. What other specific areas were focused on, e.g., classroom management, data analysis, subject content, curriculum management, assessment, subject pedagogy, etc.? Was any of the foregoing applied specifically to any grade levels, phases, or subjects?

How do you make professional development a priority for yourself and organise it? Put differently: How is your next training identified?

Prompts: Do you plan your own professional development activities on a regular (annual) basis? If so, to what extent, if at all, are these professional development opportunities linked to the school and academic development plans, particularly as part of the annual report cycle? Does the regular Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) fit into this cycle? Does your principal make training for you a priority, and help determine the next most meaningful occasion? Is, or should, (all) training be arranged and organised in such a way that you receive a recognised (a) certificate of attendance, and/or (b) a certificate of achievement / attainment? Does the South African Council of Educators (SACE) facilitate any training? Does its Continuous Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) points system play any role? Are you part of a Professional Learning Community (PLC), sometimes also called a Community of Practice (CoP)? If so, what value does it have for you?

Indicator 12(13) - District Monitoring and Support:

Importance of the indicator

It is acknowledged in the Action Plan 2019 (p.47) that school weaknesses reflect District weaknesses. The official District Offices Policy finalised in 2013 is perhaps the best example of what the DBE has been doing in remedying weaknesses in the situation. A marginal increase has been noted over time (2009 to 2011) in the percentage of schools reporting at least two face-to-face interactions with District officials (up from 78% to 87%). A recent report stressed the importance of Districts' use of assessment information, strengthening the capacity of Districts, and generating a greater variety of standard monitoring and management reports.

Critical dynamics to interrogate qualitatively (How? Why?)

Visit numbers, especially with a diffuse sense of the purpose/s behind these visits by District officials, do not automatically translate into great District support, and these dynamics should be interrogated further.

Interview Questions to Teachers:

Please tell me how teaching and learning in your classroom benefited from interactions with the district during 2017, and about ways in which you see that your teaching can be improved further.

Prompts: Describe the process and/or methods district officials used during such interaction? e.g., What do they discuss with you? How, and what type of feedback, did they provide, if any? What should be the ideal balance between monitoring and support (or, between compliance and capacity development)? Did they come to your classroom, or did you meet in the staff room? What did they discuss with you? (Note any mention of lesson observation.)

To what extent did you receive classroom-based support from the District official/Subject Advisor? To what extent did you receive classroom-based support from the principal or HoD?

Prompt: Watch out for any conflicts, anomalies or gaps in this regard.

What can District officials do to help you to deliver an even better service to your learners?

Prompts: (a) In relation to checking on or asking for examples/evidence of how you are succeeding in your job. (b) In relation to giving you tips, advice, materials, suggestions, encouragement and assistance that would help you becoming always a better teacher?

Indicator 14+ - Assessment – Perceptions, Knowledge and Practice

Importance of the indicator

Curriculum implementation and assessment practices are integrated activities geared towards the fulfilment and improvement, if required, of learner achievement; hence the inclusion of assessment as a strong focus in this qualitative study. Curriculum implementation during classroom interaction is critical in enabling every teacher to know which of his/her learners struggle with which part/s of their work, during and after every lesson in which new work is presented, in order for the teacher to know how to adjust and improve his/her teaching from as early as during the same lesson to at the latest the next lesson. Assessment plays a pivotal role in improving learner achievement, as facilitated by good teaching. Various forms of assessment may play their part in the sedimentation of learning content.

Critical dynamics to interrogate qualitatively (How? Why?)

What teachers' perceptions and understanding are of the assessment modalities on offer, and their role and value in improving the teaching and learning engagement in the classroom to benefit learner achievement. This should be interrogated in a qualitative way as per the proposed questions further below.

We are interested to learn about teachers' and Principals' perceptions and knowledge of different types of assessment: National and International; Examinations, and Classroom (Summative and Formative).

Interview Questions to Teachers:

Please tell us about the types of assessment information you have access to.

Prompts: Fieldworkers should look for and record responses about large-scale assessments such as, TIMSS, PIRLS, SACMEQ*; regular tests and examinations either set by schools themselves or common district and/or provincial and/or national assessments (such as ANA*, and similar systemic assessments, specifically in the Free State and Western Cape); and classroom-based assessment, but without initially prompting the teacher.

We are interested to learn how your teaching has been benefiting from assessment results, i.e., what the value of these assessments are. Please tell me how your class has been benefiting and about ways you see these results utilised to serve your learners even better.

Prompts: Have you made use of any formal error analysis (or diagnostic) reports up to now? How have you used them? Are the results from such reports fed back into the professional development and training that you pursue? Have you been tracking the progress of each individual learner over time? If so, how? And how did you use that information? Make sure not to omit recording some feedback by teachers on the value and use of ANA (including opinions about scrapping ANA) and international tests.

Please tell us about how you use assessment daily or weekly in your classroom to ensure learner success and progress.

To the fieldworker: Please see the range of detailed questions originally considered, but now in the additional background text box further down. Treat them as prompts to ensure that the teacher's responses on the foregoing three questions are comprehensive enough.

Original more comprehensive background, context and thinking:

To teachers:

Have you used the results of the ANAs, PIRLS, TIMSS, National Exams? Please explain how you have used the results of these assessments. And please show us some evidence or document/s of this use. How much of a burden or good learning experience was marking the ANA results at your school for you?

How do you use summative assessment in your teaching?

How do you mark learner's tests and what do you do when you find errors or incorrect answers? [Follow up: How do you ensure that learners correct these errors?]

How do you rate your capacity and skills in the use of summative assessment? Please elaborate on the SPECIFIC skills you are strong in and the specific skills you need to develop further.

How do you use summative assessment in your teaching?

How do you rate your capacity and skills in the use of FORMATIVE assessment? Please elaborate on the SPECIFIC skills you are strong in and the specific skills you need to develop further.

How do you mark learner's regular classwork and what do you do when you find any errors? [Follow up - How do you ensure that learners correct these errors?]

APPENDIX B: DOCUMENT REVIEW GUIDELINES

Document Review Guide - Checklists / Templates

Fieldworkers are to use this form to record their document review work at schools.

Site identification

School name: _____

Dates of visit: _____

Province: _____

District: _____

Respondent name: _____

Designation: _____

Fieldworker name: _____

This set of document review guidelines to fieldworkers specify how each fieldworker should use the tables below. Space is provided for fieldworkers to reflect on and record the responses or information provided in the field by each relevant participant. Fieldworkers need to rely much on their training in the process. (Should more space be required, use additional open pages, and just cross-reference appropriately. Use these field notes to compile your daily field reports, but also return this document review guide, with what you filled in on it, to the fieldwork organisers.)

Sources of information from each participant

Indicator / Topic	Principal*	Teacher**	SGB Chair	2nd SGB member
Indicator 2: Capacity development	Interview Document review of School and Academic Development Plans	Interview (for the two relevant phases each time)		
Indicator 6: School management	Interview (* Also in addition for Dep Principal) Document review of School and Academic Development Plans, and Training Register	Interview (** For an HoD only)		
Indicator 7: School governance	Interview Document review of SGB Minutes	** Interview	Interview	Interview
Indicator 12(13): District monitoring and support (and satisfaction)	Interview Document review of any relevant evidence found at the school	Interview (for the two relevant phases each time)		

Indicator / Topic	Principal*	Teacher**	SGB Chair	2nd SGB member
Indicator 14+: Assessment	Interview	Interview (for the two relevant phases each time) Classroom observation, including some interrogation of practices, and Learner book review (assessment feedback)		

Indicator 2 - Professional development and training:

Collect evidence related to the four documents in the table/template below.

School development plan (SDP)	How does the vision and mission statement specifically direct staff development / career-path trajectories? Then also identify, list, and note how any other sections of the SDP do this.
Academic development plan	How does this document direct staff academic development at each level of employment? (That is, for the principal, deputy principal, HoD, and teachers.)
Training register	How does this document reflect and structure how teacher professional development is assigned and recorded? Note how it supports and implements the CPTD points system. Note how it identifies and distinguishes between self-, internally- and externally-initiated professional development. How are individual needs and accumulation of CPTD points reflected? Who has the responsibility for maintaining the document? Always find, record and comment on the records for the interviewed teacher/s. (Do the hours extend past 80 hours allowed/required per staff member? Are topics and durations of training recorded against staff names?) Do events always occur outside school hours?
Annual report	How does this document report on evaluating and achieving the professional development outcomes reached in execution of the goals and objectives set in the school and academic development plans (1st two items above)? And how is re-planning dealt with in the next cycle, e.g., aligning next events with greatest individual needs)? How does the document comply with the minimum DBE standards set for it?

Indicator 6 - School Management Information/Processes:

Collect evidence related to the three documents in the table. Please record the relevant information below.

School management plan	How does the school management plan guide the roles and responsibilities of each incumbent in the school? How are purposes and objectives set? How are timeframes set?) How is the school management / development plan reviewed and revised?
Curriculum/academic management plan	How does the academic management plan guide the roles and responsibilities of each incumbent in the school? How are purposes and objectives set? How are timeframes set? How is progress monitored? How is the curriculum or academic management / development plan reviewed and revised?
Annual report	How does the annual report evaluate achievement of the school and academic/curriculum management objectives and efficiency of the related information and systems (1st two items above)? How does re-planning for the next cycle deal with any required adjustments?

Indicator 7 - School Governance:

Please get hold of the SGB minutes for all the meetings of 2017. Please record the relevant information below. In the final column, record and reflect on issues such as not having obtained or be given the documentation for all the meetings for the year, etc. Fieldworkers should rely heavily on their training in the process.

Topic	Yes / No	Examples /Deviations
Agenda		
Minutes		
Matters arising / from previous minutes		
Tracking of progress of previously-minuted decisions		
Signed attendance register		
Four meetings in 2017		
Quorum present (Including how many attended, and should have attended / apologies)		
Decisions noted specifically If yes, nature of decisions, and tracking of implementation		

Indicator 12(13) - District Monitoring and Support:

Make a note of any documents that district (or circuit) officials left at the school during 2017 for whatever purpose. Exclude documents not received from the Department of Basic Education (e.g., from the Department of Health), and also not related to education, teaching and learning (such as inoculations, nutrition scheme, etc.). Could correspondence be provided testifying to monitoring and support activities (e.g., a schedule of district visits). Focus on the use and value of these documents and procedures.

Monitoring and support activities / documents	What is the nature of correspondence that testify to monitoring and support activities?
Nature of district visits	Clarify/specify to what extent visits are: (a) unannounced, (b) happening at very short notice, (c) expected because of being arranged in advance, (d) expected because they follow a planned periodic schedule. Do visits mostly have a single purpose, or multiple purposes?
Balance between district officials and subject advisors	To what extent are visits conducted by: district officials for administrative and/or management purposes; and subject advisors for teaching and learning purposes?
Any training / workshops conducted	

The following table should be completed by the fieldworker for entries from 1 May to 31 August 2017 in the visitor's book by officials who visited the school from the district/circuit office:

Date of visit	Visitor designation	Nature of / reason for visit

Indicator 14+ - Assessment – Perceptions, Knowledge and Practice

Collect evidence about whether or not each of the listed documents below, as relevant, have been received by the school.

Evaluate their use and value for teaching and learning at the school.

Some of the information may already be gleaned from the principal during the document-retrieval and -handover session on Day 1.

Also watch out for any documents showing that the school keeps learners behind in Grades 10 and 11 to improve Grade 12 results and record the related dynamics and reasons for it.

Description	Yes/No	Extent and value of use by the school
Examples of ANA reports or any evidence of how ANA results were/are used to improve learning and teaching		
TIMSS 2015 Gr 4/5 Highlights report		
TIMSS 2015 Gr 8/9 Highlights report		
TIMSS 2015 Gr 4/5 National full report		
TIMSS 2015 Gr 8/9 National full report		
TIMSS 2015 Grade 4/5 Numeracy Diagnostic report		
TIMSS 2015 Grade 8/9 Mathematics Diagnostic report		
TIMSS 2015 Grade 8/9 Science Diagnostic report		
TIMSS 2015 International Reports (Maths & Science)		

PIRLS 2011 Summary report		
PIRLS 2016 Summary report		
PIRLS 2016 International report		
Grade 12 2017 report		
Province-specific assessment reports		
SACMEQ IV report (2014)		
Other (e.g. Professional Learning Communities, or Communities of Practice)		
Evidence on use of assessment to improve classroom practices – mainly from teachers#		
Lesson Observation and related teacher assessment practices schedule (done on separate sheet by fieldworkers)		Review learner exercise books for evidence of Formative assessment use
Lesson Observation and related teacher assessment practices schedule (done on separate sheet by fieldworkers)		Look at learners' tests and record evidence of how work is marked

 # For example, showing how and how often test marks are recorded and sent to the HoD or principal for signature and comment; and mark lists and the comments on them; and the comments on learner report cards and how these inform parents on sending something home.

APPENDIX C: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

SMS 2017: Teacher assessment practices

Observation Schedule

The purpose of the observation is to record teachers' use of assessment during lessons.

Date:	Province:	District:
Grade:	LoLT:	Subject/Phase:
Lesson Topic:		
Duration of the lesson:	Start time:	End time:
Name of School:		
Name of Teacher:		
Name of Observer:		

i.   Ask for a copy of the **lesson plan** that the teacher plans to use.

ii.   Ask for **5 workbooks of low-**performing learners and **5 of high-**performing learners. <u>**Select**</u> one book for a low performing learner and one book for a high performing learner to complete section 10.

Attach copy of lesson plan/AfL Preparation Schedule to this document

Copy of lesson plan attached	Yes	No

Description of the classroom context.

Description	Y, N or N/A & Comment
iii. Number of learners	
iv. Classroom walls have relevant wall charts, pictures, etc.	
v. Class has a data projector	
vi. Any other information	

BEGINNING OF LESSON

Record how the teacher started the lesson. Observe whether the teacher linked it to previous lessons or learner's previous experience. Did the teacher start with mental maths or daily reading activity? How did learners respond*?*

1. Does the teacher introduce the lesson objective	Yes	No	2. Does the teacher use Assessment Criteria in the introduction	Yes	No
If YES, please write the Learning objective using the <u>EXACT</u> words of the teacher			If YES, please write the Success Criteria using the <u>EXACT</u> words of the teacher		

Please indicate if you found any evidence for the activities listed below, and mark: either '*Seen', 'Not Seen', 'Often', or 'Sometimes'.*

3.	Formative Assessment					
a)	Teacher uses words <u>We are Learning To (WALT)</u> when introducing the Lesson objective (LO)		Seen			Not Seen
b)	The LO are:	Presented orally	Written on the board	Written on chart	Provided in a hand-out	Other:
a)	Teacher uses words. <u>What I'm Looking for (WILF)</u> when introducing the Assessment Criteria (AC)				Seen	Not Seen
b)	The AC are:	Presented orally	Written on the board	Written on chart	Provided in a hand-out	Other:

DURING THE LESSON

4.	What materials does the teacher use? How does the teacher encourage participation? What kind of questions did the teacher ask? Did teacher invite answers from the learners? Specific evidence of learner-learner interaction in the classroom? Are learners given a chance for discussions?

5.	(Questioning and interaction)	Often	Some-times	Not Seen
a)	When the teacher asks questions, learners put their hands up.	2	1	0
b)	The teacher only asks learners that have their hands up.	2	1	0
c)	The teacher involves more than one learner to answer a single question.	2	1	0
d)	The teacher asks questions for the "whole" class to respond.	2	1	0
e)	Teacher waits a few seconds before getting a response from a learner.	2	1	0
f)	The teacher answers her/his own questions	2	1	0
g)	The teacher uses name/number sticks to select learners.	2	1	0
h)	Learners use mini-boards during the lesson	2	1	0

6.	Oral Feedback		
a)	After giving learners classwork, the teacher walks around to check how learners are doing.	Seen	Not Seen
b)	When checking learners' work, teacher gives guidance or makes comments.	Seen	Not Seen
c)	Once one or more learners responded to oral questions posed by the teacher, he/she each time gives clear indications of the in/correctness of such learner response/s.		

7.	Does the teacher use <u>Peer assessment</u> during the lesson? If yes, complete Question 8a-d, else go to Question 9	Yes	No
a)	Learners are given an opportunity to check their partner's work.	Seen	Not Seen
b)	Teacher reminds learners how they should use peer assessment	Seen	Not Seen
c)	Teacher visits a few learners to check how they conduct peer assessment.	Seen	Not Seen
d)	Teacher gives feedback on how the peer assessments were conducted.	Seen	Not Seen

8.	Does the teacher use <u>Self-assessment</u> during the lesson? If yes, complete Question 9a-e, else go to Question 10	Yes	No
a)	Learners are given an opportunity to check their own work.	Seen	Not Seen
b)	Teacher reminds learners how to use self-assessment e.g. process and rules are reviewed.	Seen	Not Seen
c)	Teacher tells learners to use Success Criteria when checking their own work.	Seen	Not Seen
d)	Teacher visits a few learners to check how they conduct the self-assessment.	Seen	Not Seen
e)	Teacher gives feedback on how the self-assessments were conducted.	Seen	Not Seen

END OF LESSON

9.	Indicate how teacher end her/his lesson. How does the teacher sum up/conclude the lesson? Does the teacher refer to the lesson objectives?

a)	Did the teacher complete the lesson?	Yes	No

b)	Teacher checks whether the Learning objectives have been completed.	Seen	Not Seen
c)	Teacher checks whether Assessment Criteria have been met.	Seen	Not Seen

d)	Please note any other interesting observations you made in this lesson.

10. **Written Feedback: Select exercise book of ONE high- and ONE low-performing learner.**

After the lesson, review learner work STARTING from the first lesson.

Count number of ticks, crosses and signature seen and write down, EXACTLY, any comments/symbols that the teacher wrote in the learner's book.

11a. Low-performing learner

No of ticks_____   No of crosses _____   No of signatures___   Number of stamps _____

(Note what the stamps refer to)

Comments/symbols seen

11b. High-performing learner

No of ticks_____   No of crosses _____   No of signatures___   Number of stamps _____

(Note what the stamps refer to)

Comments/symbols seen

12a. Low-performing learner

No of ticks_____   No of crosses _____   No of signatures___   Number of stamps _____

(Note what the stamps refer to)

Comments/symbols seen

12b. High-performing learner

No of ticks_____   No of crosses _____   No of signatures___   Number of stamps _____

(Note what the stamps refer to)

Comments/symbols seen

website	facebook	twitter
www.education.gov.za	www.facebook.com/BasicEd	www.twitter.com/dbe_sa