School Monitoring Survey

2017/2018

Summary Report

basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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A Reading Nation is a Leading Nation

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School Monitoring Survey 2017/2018

Quantitative and Qualitative Summary Report

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

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Introduction

In 2017, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) commissioned a national survey to measure public ordinary schools' progress towards achieving the key goals and indicators of the Action Plan 2019 and of the Medium-Term Strategic Framework 2014-2019. In its assessments of how far these goals and indicators were being met, the School Monitoring Survey (SMS) 2017/18 was required to be comparable to the SMS 2011/12, which served as a baseline.

The SMS 2017/18 focused on 13 of the 15 Action Plan indicators in SMS 2011/12. These were:

1. The percentage of schools where allocated teaching posts are all filled:
2. The average number of hours per year that teachers spend on professional development activities;
3. The percentage of teachers absent from school on an average day;
4. The percentage of learners with access to the required textbooks and workbooks;
5. The percentage of learners in schools with a library or media centre meeting certain minimum standards;
6. The percentage of schools with the minimum set of management documents at the required standard;
7. The percentage of schools where the School Governing Body (SGB) meets the minimum criteria of effectiveness;
8. The percentage of learners in schools that are funded at the minimum level;
9. The percentage of schools which have acquired the full set of financial management responsibilities on the basis of an assessment of their financial management capacity;
10. The percentage of schools which comply with nationally determined minimum physical infrastructure standards;
11. The percentage of schools with at least one educator who has received specialised training in identifying and supporting learners with special educational needs;
12. The percentage of schools visited at least twice a year by district officials for monitoring and support purposes; and
13. The percentage of school principals rating the support services of districts as being satisfactory.

The SMS 2017/18 also gathered information about the following priority areas:

- Teacher and principal views on common examinations, national and international assessments;
- Teacher and principal views on the Annual National Assessments (ANA);
- Prevalence of, and provisioning for, Grade R learners in schools;
- The value and use of the South African School Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS); and
- The feasibility of implementing the policy on Incremental Introduction of African Languages (IIALS).

In addition, a qualitative study was conducted after the main SMS survey, on a sub-sample of schools focussing on Indicators 2, 6, 7, 12 and 13; and on assessment practices in schools.

This report provides the key findings emerging from both the qualitative and quantitative studies. Firstly, a brief overview of the methodology is presented, followed by the key findings for each indicator. The findings are presented using the following format: indicator value, context of indicator, key findings from the quantitative and where applicable qualitative studies, comparisons to 2011 (where applicable), and policy implications.

Methodology

This section provides an overview of the sampling methodology by means of which the data was obtained; the instruments used to obtain the data; and the process of data collection, data cleaning and analysis.

Sample

Stratified random samples of 1 000 primary schools and 1 000 secondary schools, which respectively offer Grade 6 and Grade 12, were drawn with probability proportional to size. Data from the SNAP Survey for 2015 were used as sample frames. Only schools categorised as public ordinary schools were included in the sample. Special-needs education schools, specialisation schools and private schools were excluded. The sample was stratified per province so that at least 100 primary schools (i.e. schools offering Grades R to 7) and 100 secondary schools (i.e. schools offering Grades 8 to 12) were drawn per province. Within each province, the sample was also stratified by quintile to ensure that the provincial sample was representative of the quintile ratios within the province. Tables A and B respectively provide the number of schools drawn and visited per province for the quantitative and qualitative surveys.

Table A: Number of schools drawn and visited per province for the quantitative survey

Province	Sample drawn	Realised sample
Eastern Cape	230	228
Free State	213	213
Gauteng	232	218
KwaZulu-Natal	239	234
Limpopo	229	229
Mpumalanga	220	220
Northern Cape	200	200
North West	215	215
Western Cape	222	222
Totals	2 000	1 979

Table B: Number of schools drawn and visited per province for the qualitative survey

Province	District	District location	Functionality	Number of Schools
Free State	District A	Semi-rural/urban	Well-functioning	2
	District B	Urban	Moderate functioning	2
	District C	Rural	Poor functioning	2
Limpopo	District D	Urban	Well-functioning	2
	District E	Rural	Moderate functioning	2
	District F	Semi-rural/urban	Poor functioning	2
Western Cape	District G	Rural	Well-functioning	2
	District H	Semi-rural/urban	Moderate functioning	2
	District I	Urban	Poor functioning	2

Instruments

A primary consideration in instrument development was to strive for comparability of indicators in the SMS 2011 and the SMS 2017. In many cases, the same questions could be used. In some cases, data obtained in the SMS 2011 were shown to provide ambiguous information as indicated in the subsequent analysis reported by the DBE (2013c, 2014). Appropriate modifications were therefore made to the 2017 survey instruments. When such modifications were made direct comparisons between 2011 and 2017 could not be made. The following instruments were developed:

- Principal Interview (schedule);
- Educator Interview (schedule): Grades 6, 9 and 12;
- Educator Interview (schedule): Grade 3 (which included direct observation of workbooks);
- LTSM Questionnaire;

- LSEN Questionnaire;
- Document Analysis (schedule); and
- School Observation (schedule).

All instruments were programmed to be presented via tablet by fieldworkers and to allow for simultaneous recording of participants' responses and/or the related information obtained by means of interviews, observation and document review.

Procedures

Administration

Prior arrangements were made regarding the school visits by fieldworkers. Each school was visited for one day by two fieldworkers to conduct the interviews with the appropriate respondents and undertake the document reviews and observations. Completion of interview schedules on the tablet was set up in such a way that every item had to be completed in order to avoid the problem of missing data. The information was then uploaded directly to a central database. The fieldwork began on 23 October 2017 and was completed by 24 November 2017. The data collection process was monitored in approximately 6% of the schools by senior staff of the service provider while DBE officials also monitored data collection at some schools. The progress of data collection was monitored centrally via electronic media.

Data management

Datasets were cleaned after all data was centrally uploaded. After the field work, the data (comprising 5 Datasets - Principle Questionnaire, Document Analysis, School observation, LTSM and LESEN were combined to ease data Analysis) was exported from droid Survey, the data collection tool utilised, into SPSS format. While minimal data cleaning was required, due to the application controls within the capturing tool, the following checks were performed: verification of completeness to ensure all data from all schools and questionnaires were entered; checks for duplicates to ensure no data from any of the questionnaires was repeated; and system special characters that resulted from the conversion of the data from the tablet formats were removed.

School weights and learner weights were calculated as required by the sampling design in order to generalise findings to the population. The data were made available for analysis in SPSS. The indicators that had to be reported, informed the nature of the calculations required and eventually made. Appropriate weighting of the data, as implied in indicator statements and specified in the quantitative report, was applied.

Qualitative study

To enhance understanding of the information collected on the indicators and to identify potential areas for further research, a qualitative study was also undertaken. This study focused on five indicators in a sub-sample of six schools in each of three provinces. An independent report contains all the foregoing detail.

Reports

Findings from the quantitative and the qualitative studies were compiled in the Report on the Quantitative Study and the Report on the Qualitative study. A Technical Report on the quantitative study containing technical details on the study and additional tables was also compiled. In this summary report, the findings from the quantitative study have been integrated with the findings from the qualitative study for each of the five indicators.

Comparison of indicators: 2011 and 2017

Given some of the changes effected in the 2017 SMS, it was not possible to provide comparisons to the 2011 SMS data for some indicators. These indicators are listed in Table C.

Table C: Indicators for which comparisons were not possible or compromised for 2011 and 2017

Indicator No	Comparable 2011 and 2017	Weight	Reasons	Possible solutions
1	Tenuous	School	The 2011 questionnaire was ambiguous as temporarily filled allocated posts may or may not have been reported as vacant.	Consider reported comparisons with care

Indicator No	Comparable 2011 and 2017	Weight	Reasons	Possible solutions
4	No	Learner	In 2011, information was obtained from observations for Grade 6; no Grade 3 data was collected. In 2017, Grade 6 information was obtained from teachers while Grade 3 data was obtained from learners.	Not possible
8	For 2010 and 2016 only	Learner	Given that the 2017 (and 2011) surveys were conducted before the end of the school year, it was possible that some schools were still to receive their allocated amounts, and thus the information reported was regarded as incomplete.	Consider only figures for 2010 and 2016
11	No	School	In 2011, 10 teachers responded. In 2017, only one teacher considered by the principal to be best equipped to do so responded.	Not possible
13	No	School	In 2011, a number of questions were used. In 2017, only one broad question was used.	Not possible

Presentation of findings

The findings in this report is based on the following format:

1. Fact sheet: provided the indicator value for 2017, indicator trends from 2011, source of information, the weights used and information on the calculations conducted;

2. The rationale underpinning the indicator: highlights the relevance of the indicator within the schooling system;

3. Findings for 2017; and

4. Where possible, trend analysis comparing findings from the data obtained in the 2011 SMS and the 2017 SMS.

Additional details for all indicators can be found in the Main and Technical reports, as well as the Qualitative report for the five selected indicators. In this report, “substantial” differences indicate statistical significance.

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

Indicator value for 2017: 78% (primary and secondary schools combined) **Comparability from 2011 to 2017**: (with caution) **Indicator trend from 2011 to 2017**: 69% to 78%
Source: Principal Interview **Weight**: School weight
Calculation: Indicator value = number of posts filled / number of posts allocated X 100
Qualitative information available to integrate: No

(a) **Context, importance, rationale**

In order to achieve quality teaching and learning for all learners, policymakers must ensure that all schools are provided with the required number of teaching staff as specified by the policy. Key to implementing this policy is a thorough understanding of how many vacancies exist, where they are, and what the most recent trend is over time. Without sufficient human resources, quantitatively speaking, the system cannot even begin to expect optimally productive teaching and learning, through curriculum implementation, the provision and use of learning and teaching support materials, sound assessment practices, and the like.

Temporary teachers, such as substitution staff where maternity leave applies, have been counted in determining the exact numbers of teachers per school.

(b) **Situation in 2017**

The survey results showed that 78% of primary and secondary schools combined had all their teaching posts filled (see Table 1). This masks the fact that a substantiallly higher proportion of primary schools (80%), compared to secondary

schools (72%), had all their posts filled.

Table 1: The percentage of primary and secondary schools combined where allocated teaching posts were filled in terms of categories of compliance level by province

Province	50%-74%	75%-99%	100%	Unknown	Total
EC	5,4%	30,9%	63,4%	0,2%	100,0%
FS	0,0%	22,4%	77,2%	0,3%	100,0%
GT	0,0%	15,6%	83,7%	0,7%	100,0%
KZN	0,5%	10,8%	88,3%	0,3%	100,0%
LP	0,5%	22,9%	76,6%	0,0%	100,0%
MP	0,2%	20,1%	79,7%	0,0%	100,0%
NC	0,0%	16,9%	81,1%	2,1%	100,0%
NW	0,0%	26,2%	72,7%	1,1%	100,0%
WC	0,0%	13,5%	86,5%	0,0%	100,0%
SA	1,5%	20,3%	77,9%	0,3%	100,0%

A substantially lower proportion of primary schools in the Eastern Cape, compared to the national average for primary schools, had all their posts filled. In Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape the situation seemed to be better than the national average for primary schools.

In secondary schools, lower proportions of schools in the Eastern Cape and the North West had all their teaching posts filled, in comparison to the country average for secondary schools. In KwaZulu-Natal and the Northern Cape, the situation seemed to be better than the national average.

Quintile 5 schools seemed better able to fill posts, while Quintile 3 schools struggled most.

(c) **Changes from 2011 to 2017**

Due to the ambiguity in the 2011 questions, the temporarily filled allocated posts may or may not have been reported as vacant.

The national average for primary and secondary schools combined apparently increased from 69% to 78% since the 2011 survey. The situation in schools in the Eastern Cape did not improve and in Limpopo only improved a little. In schools in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape, indicator values improved substantively. The percentages of schools with Quintile 4 and 5 status, that had all their allocated teacher posts filled, increased substantially from 2011 to 2017 with about 15 percentage points.

Indicator 2: Average hours per year spent by teachers on professional development activities

Indicator value for 2017: 40 hours per year (primary and secondary schools combined) **Comparability from 2011 to 2017**: Yes **Indicator trend from 2011 to 2017**: 36 hours to 40 hours	
Source: (i) Educator / (ii) Principal	**Weight**: (i) Learner / (ii) School weights
Calculation: Indicator value = sum of hours recorded for five types of professional development	
Qualitative information available to integrate: Yes	

a) **Context, importance, rationale**

The Action Plan 2019 states (p.9) that "*Teachers who received the training they require are continuously improving their capabilities and are confident in their profession*". Improved teacher capacity and confidence become important factors in teacher professional identity, job satisfaction, and teacher retention. This applies to subject content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. The 2024 target as specified in the Action Plan 2019 (DBE, 2015; ELRC Resolution 7) requires teachers to undertake 80 hours of professional development per year.

Professional development was categorised into five categories: self-initiated; school-initiated; externally initiated by the district, provincial or national office; externally initiated by unions or professional associations; and externally initiated by

other institutions. The scores of approximately 0,5% of educators claiming to have spent more than 1 000 hours per year on professional development were excluded as extremely improbable, inordinately influencing the mean.

In 2011, a maximum of 10 educators, randomly drawn from members of staff across grades and subjects, completed an educator questionnaire which asked teachers to provide information about time spent on professional development. In 2017, two (2) Grade 3 (Foundation Phase) educators, and two (2) each for Language and Mathematics for each of Grades 6, 9 and 12, were sampled to respond to the teacher questionnaire.

This indicator was selected for in-depth qualitative site visits using interview and document review schedules.

b) **Situation in 2017**

Educators

The survey results showed that nationally, teachers from primary and secondary schools combined achieved 40 hours of professional development per year; only half of the number of hours specified as the 2024 target in the Action Plan 2019 (DBE, 2015). Teachers in Gauteng (50 hours) and the Western Cape (76 hours) exceeded the national average, with the Western Cape the only province where the target was nearly achieved. Teachers in the North West, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape spent the least time on professional development (24 to 28 hours per year), way below the national average.

The pattern did not change much when the hours of professional development of primary and secondary school teachers were considered separately. Fewer hours, 36 on average, were devoted by primary school teachers to capacity development, compared to the 44 hours on average spent by secondary school teachers. The 86 hours devoted by secondary school teachers in the Western Cape to professional development is noteworthy, being the only province where the target was reached, with their primary school peers spending 66 hours on average on professional development.

The analysis of patterns within and across primary and secondary schools by quintile showed that teachers at Quintile 4 and 5 schools spent more time on capacity development than their peers from lower-quintile schools. This pattern is consistent for teachers from primary schools and for the figures combining primary and secondary schools. For secondary schools, however, teachers from Quintile 1 schools spent on average 11 more hours on professional development than teachers from Quintile 2 and Quintile 3 schools. This seems to suggest that certain efforts are made to target training to Quintile 1 schools specifically.

Nationally, teachers spent the highest average number of hours on self-initiated professional development (15 hours). School-initiated (11 hours) and Departmentally initiated (10 hours) professional development activities also made a substantial contribution to the average number of hours spent on professional development.

Fifty per cent (50%) of teachers reported spending 17 hours or fewer per year on capacity development. Six per cent (6%) reported spending no time at all on professional development. Twenty per cent (20%) spent six hours or fewer per year. The proportion who achieved at least half the target of 80 hours per year, 40 hours, was 26%. Only 20% of teachers exceeded 53 hours per year. Only 12% of teachers achieved or exceeded the target of 80 hours per year.

Key observations from the qualitative data extended the quantitative findings in terms of educator and principal views on the importance of professional development, including the role of personal studies, peer support and mentoring, and the role of Head of Department (HoD) and principal classroom visits. Results from the study highlighted teachers' need for training in digital competencies, while also finding that these needs 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 teachers in the school where they work. Differentiation in training is also needed, since well-seasoned and experienced teachers often receive the same training as less experienced, struggling teachers. A higher 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.

Principals

School principals on average spent 43 hours per year on capacity development, with large variation evident among the provinces. Figures for principals from schools in Gauteng (77 hours) and the Western Cape (99 hours) were substantially higher than the national average, while those for principals from schools in the Eastern Cape (24 hours) and the North West (23 hours) were substantially lower.

c) **Changes from 2011 to 2017**

The average hours of professional development per teacher per year reflected no substantial change over time, being marginally up from 36 to 40 hours (see Figure 1). Substantial increases were evident among teachers in Gauteng and the Western Cape. The former moved from below to above the national average, while the latter approached the set target of 80 hours at the time of the survey. The hours for teachers from schools in KwaZulu-Natal and the North West dropped substantially from 2011 to 2017.

Figure 1: Average hours a year spent by teachers on professional development (Indicator 2) by province, 2011 and 2017

In relation to quintiles, changes were substantial only for teachers in Quintile 1 schools, where the hours increased over time (by eight (8) hours, compared to the smaller average increase of four (4) hours nationally).

Exploring the professional development hours spent separately by primary and secondary school teachers in 2011, 28 hours on average were devoted by secondary school teachers to capacity development, compared to the 39 hours on average spent by primary school teachers. In 2017, substantial increases in the average hours spent on professional development was evident among secondary school teachers, with the overall average improving from 28 hours to 44 hours. For Limpopo, the increase was 18 hours on average, for Gauteng 34 hours on average and the Western Cape reported an increase of 51 hours on average. Teachers in primary schools in the Free State, Gauteng, the Northern Cape and the Western Cape reported slight increases in the average hours spent on professional development, although an overall decrease of three (3) hours occurred at the national level.

Patterns for 2011 were investigated across primary and secondary schools by quintile. Generally, teachers at Quintile 4 and 5 schools spent more time on capacity development than their peers from lower-quintile schools. This pattern was slightly more pronounced for teachers from primary schools.

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

Indicator value for 2017: 10% (primary and secondary schools combined) **Comparability from 2011 to 2017**: Yes **Indicator trend from 2011 to 2017**: 8% to 10%	
Source: Principal Interview / Document Analysis	**Weight**: Learner weight
Calculation: Indicator value = number of educators present/number employed at the school	
Qualitative information available to integrate: No	

(a) **Context, importance, rationale**

Having a qualified teacher in class on a regular basis is an important factor that not only impacts on learning and teaching, but also on the efficient functioning of schools. By implication, Goal 14 of the Action Plan 2019 on attracting, equipping and eventually deploying teachers to classrooms, to a large extent relates to Indicator 3, as does Goal 15 which refers to avoiding excessively large classes through appropriate availability and utilisation of teachers.

The indicator constructed to reflect teacher absence on a typical day in 2017 was based on information obtained from the school register regarding the number of teachers present on the day of the data-collection visit. This figure was corrected by allowing for the teachers who had not yet signed in. The same information from the 2011 SMS was used when making comparisons across years.

(b) **Situation in 2017**

In 2017, the absence rate of 7% among teachers in Limpopo was much lower than the national average of 10%, while the absence rate was substantially higher in the Eastern Cape, the Northern Cape and the North West. Teacher absence was slightly higher in secondary schools (11%) than in primary schools (9%). No large differences between quintiles were observed except for Quintile 5 primary schools where the teacher absence rate deteriorated from 5% to 12% since 2011.

Teachers should sign the register only on arriving at school and not for future days, yet in 22% of schools, such signing for future days was noted on the registers. There were considerable differences between provinces. At primary schools, a relatively large percentage of signing for future days was observed for KwaZulu-Natal (42%), with a low percentage (9%) in the Western Cape. For secondary schools, there were high percentages of signing for future days in Free State schools (34%) and KwaZulu-Natal (32%), while Mpumalanga schools (11%) displayed low percentages. No large differences between quintiles were observed.

(c) **Changes from 2011 to 2017**

Information on teacher absence in 2011 and 2017 is presented in Figure 2 for provinces and for the country as a whole. In the whole of South Africa, on aggregate, an increase in the percentage of teachers absent from school on an average day from 8% to 10% was found. Large increases in teacher absence were observed in the Eastern Cape, Free State, Mpumalanga, the Northern Cape, the North West and the Western Cape.

Figure 2: Percentages of teachers absent in primary and secondary schools combined by province, 2011 and 2017

Indicator 4: The percentage of learners having access to the required textbooks and workbooks for the entire school year

Indicator value for 2017: Textbooks: 84% (Gr 6, 9, 12); Workbooks: 96% (Gr 3) **Comparability from 2011 to 2017**: No	
Source: (i) Textbooks: LTSM Questionnaire/Principal Interview	**Weight**: Learner weight
(ii) Workbooks: Educator (Gr 3 FP) Interview	**Weight**: Learner weight
Calculation: (i) Indicator value = Transformation of frequencies in %-access categories to single %	
(ii) Indicator value = show of hands in class room / number of learners x 100	
Qualitative information available to integrate: No	

(a) **Context, importance, rationale**

According to policy[1], the Department of Basic Education is expected to provide every learner with a textbook or workbook for each subject he/she is studying. Goal 19 (one of the five priority goals) of Action Plan 2019 describes the task as to "ensure that every learner has access to the minimum set of textbooks and workbooks required according to national policy".

(b) **Situation in 2017**

Access to textbooks varied across grades. About 85% of Grade 12 learners had access to Home Language (HL), First Additional Language (FAL), Mathematics and Mathematical Literacy textbooks. About 81% of Grade 9 learners had access to Home Language (HL), First Additional Language (FAL) and Mathematics textbooks, while for Grade 6, this was approximately 84% of learners. Approximately 46% of Grade 3 learners had Language textbooks and 42% Numeracy textbooks, as workbooks[2] are the predominant resource used in the Foundation Phase.

1 The "Draft National Policy for the Provision and Management of Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM)" issued in September 2014 is general in nature (covering also stationery, consumables, library resources, laboratory equipment, etc.) and refers at most to the National Catalogue and other procedures for procuring, controlling and keeping safe learning materials. Mention is made of "a minimum set of textbooks for every learner for every subject as stipulated in the Minimum Schoolbag Guidelines" (p.17). Sources such as DBE's Annual Report for 2015/2016 (p.37; Table 7) stipulate the exact numbers per school phase.

2 Grade 3 textbook access was not analysed further as 96% of schools used the workbooks provided

The level of learner access to readers and works of fiction for HL and FAL was lower than the other required materials. At Grade 6 and 9 level, approximately 68% of learners had access, while the corresponding figure for Grade 12 learners was 79%.

Nationally, approximately 96% of Grade 3 learners indicated that they had received their first and second workbooks for language and Mathematics. Across all quintiles, a minimum of 92% of learners reported having access to both workbooks. Figure 3 indicates that across all quintiles virtually every learner had access to Mathematics and language workbooks in Grade 3.

Figure 3: Percentage of Grade 3 learners with Mathematics and Home Language workbooks 1 and 2 by quintile, 2017

The global estimate of access to Textbooks in Language and Mathematics in Grades 6, 9 and 12 was put at 84%. Small differences between provinces and quintiles were observed. Access to workbooks in Grade 3 was virtually universal.

(c) **Changes from 2011 to 2017**

Not possible to explore.

Indicator 5: The percentage of learners in schools with a library or media centre fulfilling certain minimum standards

Indicator value for 2017: 62% **Comparability from 2011 to 2017**: Yes **Indicator trend from 2011 to 2017**: 45% to 62%	
Source: School Observation (Schedule)	**Weight**: Learner weight
Calculation: Indicator value = either central school or mobile library, or media centre with written texts in hard copy or digitally	
Qualitative information available to integrate: No	

(a) **Context, importance, rationale**

Goal 20 of the Action Plan 2019 (p.40) is to "(i)ncrease access amongst learners to a wide range of media, including computers, which enrich their education." Based on clearer policy foundations, including key planning and funding provisions, the aim is to equip all schools with libraries or media centres.

(b) **Situation in 2017**

Across the country, approximately 62% of learners had access to a school library/media centre. The higher the quintile status of a school, the more likely it was for learners to have access to library facilities. Access for learners in Quintile 4 and 5 schools was substantially higher than for Quintiles 1, 2 and 3. Access to a library was only marginally better in secondary schools than in primary schools.

Access to libraries varied considerably across provinces as noted in Figure 4. Access to a library was much lower in Eastern Cape, Limpopo and North West than in Free State, Gauteng and Western Cape.

Figure 4: Percentage of learners with access to school or mobile library facilities by province, 2011 and 2017

(c) **Changes from 2011 to 2017**

Figure 5 also shows the substantial increases observed in access to school libraries/media centres from 45% in 2011 to 62% in 2017. Learner access to library facilities improved substantially over time at the national level, and particularly for learners in schools in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and the Northern Cape.

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by DBE.

Indicator 6: The percentage of schools producing the minimum set of management documents at the required standard

Indicator value for 2017: 31% (primary and secondary schools combined) **Comparability from 2011 to 2017**: Yes **Indicator trend from 2011 to 2017**: 44% to 31%
Source: Document Analysis (schedule) **Weight**: School weight
Calculation: Indicator value = having each of a list of 10 required documents in place
Qualitative information available to integrate: Yes

(a) **Context, importance, rationale**

The Action Plan 2019 mentions the importance of school management documents of the required standard as Goal 21. One of the five priority goals is to "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" (p.41). The 2017 survey asked specific questions and made observations to verify the presence of ten important management documents required at the school. Full equivalence between indicator calculations for 2011 and 2017 was achievable.

(b) **Situation in 2017**

The minimum set of 10 management documents was observed in 31% of schools. The list of management documents observed can be seen at the bottom of Figure 6.

Nationally, 33% of primary and 26% of secondary schools had the full set of required management documents. Document presence was better in the provinces of Gauteng, Mpumalanga (both at around 45%) and the Western Cape (65%) than the national average of 31% while document presence was low in the Eastern Cape (13%). Availability of management documents was much better in Quintile 4 and 5 schools than in Quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools.

Figure 5 presents information on the availability of each of the 10 documents asked for from the school. The absence of academic improvement plans and non-textbook asset registers on the overall indicator values was consistent across both provinces and quintiles. Absence of the two listed documents, therefore, substantially reduced the overall indicator value.

Figure 5: The percentage of primary and secondary schools that could produce each individual school management document, 2017[3]

For purposes of the qualitative follow-up on Indicator 6, data collection focused instead on how these documents were used. The findings indicated that the mere presence of management documents could not be linked to school functionality. One would expect that more documents were available in better-functioning schools, with fewer documents being available in less well functioning schools. Evidence to support this expectation could not be found as some well-functioning schools could not present these documents. Where schools could not present management documents, such schools would acknowledge that the required documents were used informally, in different formats, and were 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) existed for all role players, from principals to educators, since these documents facilitated communication with the Department and Districts. However, educators reported feeling alienated from decisions that were being taken based on these documents that affect their day-to-day work in the school and management of their classrooms.

(c) **Changes from 2011 to 2017**

Comparisons between 2011 and 2017 indicate that at the national level, school compliance with the school management indicator decreased substantially from 44% to 31%. The decline was particularly evident in Quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools.

3 Only schools that performed below a certain level on the Academic Performance Report are required to submit an Academic Improvement Plan, it is therefore not expected that all schools will have this document

Indicator 7: The percentage of schools where the School Governing Body (SGB) meets the minimum criteria in terms of effectiveness

Indicator value for 2017: 62% (primary and secondary schools combined) **Comparability from 2011 to 2017**: Yes **Indicator trend from 2011 to 2017**: 54% to 62%
Source: Principal Interview / Document Analysis (schedule) **Weight**: School weight
Calculation: Indicator value = confirming all 4 functions (listed below) and having at least 3 meeting minutes
Qualitative information to available integrate: Yes

(a) **Context, importance, rationale**

The more than 25 000 School Governing Bodies (SGBs) embody the commitment of society towards improving education quality through strengthening schools. The primary intention is to empower parents to be an integral part of improving teaching and learning in schools, as well as to become involved in the progress of learners and school activities. The Action Plan 2019 (p.42) phrasing of this indicator as essentially about "parent and community participation in the governance of schools, partly by improving access to important information via the e-Education strategy", indicates its key policy thrust. Another reason behind surveying this indicator is the intended changes to some SGB jurisdictions.

Four questions obtained the principal's opinion about SGBs. He/she rated the following SGB functions on a four-point scale: whether they promoted the best interests of the school in ensuring increased education quality at the school; supported all staff in their professional functions; administered/managed school property (e.g., buildings, grounds and hostels); and encouraged voluntary service among its stakeholders (staff, learners and parents). Administrative matters such as minutes also had to be in order.

(b) **Situation in 2017**

Nationally the SGBs of 62% of schools had responsibility for the four identified functions and had three (3) sets of meeting minutes. There were small variations among provinces. SGBs at 65% of primary schools and at 55% of secondary schools met the minimum criteria in terms of effectiveness. There was no clear pattern across school quintiles.

The qualitative study focused on issues of collaboration between the school and the SGB, training offered to members of the SGB and powers of SGBs in the selection of school staff. Principals, SGB Chairs and selected members of school SGBs indicated that good relations existed in general, which were 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 were provided, specifically in areas of finance. Support for these arguments was 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 contributory factor. SGB members from rural areas were far from schools and regular visits to the schools were 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 seemed that if an SGB parent member came from a deep rural background, with the assumption then that such an individual had little formal education, problems arose with the principal because of the limited knowledge on roles and responsibilities of SGB parent members in making informed, education-related decisions.

(c) **Changes from 2011 to 2017**

Compliance of schools in terms of SGB effectiveness increased considerably between 2011 and 2017 from 54% to 62%. This can be seen for provinces and nationally in Figure 6. The greatest improvements occurred in schools in the Northern Cape. SGB functioning in schools in the Free State, the North West, Mpumalanga and the Western Cape also improved somewhat over time.

Figure 6 Percentage of schools with the required SGB effectiveness (Indicator 7) by province, 2011 and 2017

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

Indicator value for 2016: 75% received expected funds or more; **Indicator value for 2017**: 66% received at least half of expected funds **Comparability**: Yes for 2010 and 2016 **Indicator trend from 2010 to 2016**: 79% to 75%; **Indicator trend from 2011 to 2017:** 60% to 66%
Source: Principal Interview / Document Analysis (schedule) **Weight**: Learner weight
Calculation: Indicator value = direct reporting of selected item-level response distributions
Qualitative information available to integrate: No

(a) **Context, importance, rationale**

It is important to provide schools with the resources that will ensure good teaching and learning. Adequate funding for schooling in South Africa should enable equitable access to infrastructure, learning materials and qualified staff and thus a good teaching and learning experience for every learner and his/her teacher. The Minister's Foreword to the Action Plan 2019 indicates that such access and participation are essential for delivering on the mandate for good quality and efficient schooling with sound accountability. These allocations form part of government's strategies to alleviate poverty and are intended to lift some of the burden of schooling costs from poorer households. An important element of this dynamic is the monetary transfers made to schools in the form of the per-learner allocation. Exact amounts, not only for the next year but also projected to subsequent years, are specified on an annual basis in the Government Gazette. During interviews, school principals were requested to provide information about whether the expected[4] amount had actually been transferred to the school. It could reasonably be expected that for 2016, the expected amount had been received by the time the survey was done but that was not the case for 2017, as the survey was conducted in October and November, and it was possible that some schools were still to receive their allocated amount.

(b) **Situation in 2017**

In 2017, 66% of learners were in schools that had received at least 51% of their allocation at the time of the survey, while 34% of learners were in schools that had received less than 51% of their allocation. In Mpumalanga 85% and in the North West 73% of learners were in schools that had already received their full 2017 allocation by the time of the survey while corresponding figures for the Eastern Cape and Limpopo Province were 11% and 14% respectively.

Across the quintile categories in 2017, 72% of learners in Quintile 1 schools received at least 51% of their expected allocation while the figure for Quintile 5 schools was 63%.

(c) **Changes from 2010 to 2016**

In 2016, 75% of learners were in schools where the expected amount or more had been transferred while 79% of learners were in such schools in 2010 (See Figure 7).

There was no substantial difference between primary and secondary schools. There were small differences between quintiles, with Quintile 5 schools more likely to report that the expected amount or more had been received. Large differences between provinces were observed with only 45% of learners in the Eastern Cape in 2016 being in schools where the expected amount or more had been received.

4 The fieldworker accepted what a principal considered as the designated allocation amount for the school for the years (2016 and up to the survey date in 2017) that information was requested for and recorded. The source of a school's knowledge of the expected amount was not explored or recorded either.

Figure 7: Percentages of learners in primary and secondary schools combined receiving their specified financial allocation, 2010 and 2016

Indicator 9: The percentage of schools which have acquired the full set of financial management responsibilities on the basis of an assessment of their financial management capacity

Indicator value for 2017: 57% (primary and secondary schools combined) **Comparability from 2011 to 2017**: Yes **Indicator trend from 2011 to 2017**: 74% to 57%
Source: Principal Interview **Weight**: School weight
Calculation: Indicator value = acquiring responsibility for all three required Section 21 functions
Qualitative information available to integrate: No

(a) **Context, importance, rationale**

Measurement of this indicator is based on Section 21 of the South African Schools Act (SASA), particularly sub-sections (a), (c) and (d). Respectively, these refer to the following financial management responsibilities granted to a school and carried out by using funds transferred to it by the provincial education department:

(a) Maintaining and improving the school's property, buildings and grounds (including hostels);

(c) Purchasing textbooks, educational materials or equipment for the school; and

(d) Paying for services to the school (e.g., telephone, electricity, water, etc.).

Questions on these three matters formed part of the school principal interviews in the SMS 2017. The principals' answers to these questions were taken as indicators of the presence of these financial management functions at their respective schools. The Section 21 status of schools was not surveyed.

(b) **Situation in 2017**

Nationally, 57% of schools have acquired the full set of financial management responsibilities in terms of Section 21 of the South African Schools Act.

The overall figure includes the figures of 56% for primary and 60% for secondary schools. Among primary schools, there was a gradual and consistent increase in the proportion of schools with the full set of responsibilities as quintile status increased, with Quintile 5 schools taking on more responsibilities.

The percentage of schools responsible for purchasing learning materials was approximately 20 to 25 percentage points below the percentage of schools who were responsible for maintaining and improving school property and purchasing municipal and other services. The increased central control by provincial offices over recent years may explain this pattern.

(c) **Changes from 2011 to 2017**

A substantial decline occurred in the average national indicator value from 74% to 57% from 2011 to 2017. Only the percentage of schools in the Free State, Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape with the full set of financial management responsibilities increased, moving from below the national average to close to or well above it. Schools in Gauteng, Limpopo, the North West and the Western Cape remained above the national averages throughout. In the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, declines in the percentage of schools were substantially higher than the decline noted in the national average. Information on the change between 2011 and 2017 is presented in Figure 8. Declines among Quintile 4 and 5 schools (4 and 5 percentage points respectively) were not as large as among lower-quintile schools. A possible explanation for this downward trend could be that increased central control by provincial offices over recent years resulted in less responsibility at schools for this. As such this does therefore not signify a decline in financial management.

Figure 8: Percentage of schools assuming the full set of financial responsibilities (Indicator 9) by province, 2011 and 2017

Indicator 10: The percentage of schools which comply with nationally determined minimum physical infrastructure standards[5]

Indicator value for 2017: 59% (primary and secondary schools combined) **Comparability from 2011 to 2017**: Yes **Indicator trend from 2011 to 2017**: 59% to 59%[1]
Source: Principal Interview / School Observation (schedule) **Weight**: School weight
Calculation: Indicator value = all of the following judged sufficient against field guide administered through physical observation on the visit day: sanitation/toilets, electricity, and water
Qualitative information available to integrate: No

(a) **Context, importance, rationale**

Goal 24 of the Action Plan 2019 (p.44) concerns the physical infrastructure and classroom environment of schools. It aims to ensure that these two elements are in place to support improvements in learning and teaching in all schools. For this indicator, the minimum criteria used during the SMS 2011 for physical infrastructure included all of the following: acceptable sanitation (toilets), electricity, running water and adequate classrooms (DBE, 2014, p. 44). Regulation 920 of 2013 defines sanitation facilities as acceptable when separate toilets are available for boys, girls and staff. Flush toilets and Enviro-loo toilets are considered appropriate. Regulation 920 also specifies the adequacy of classrooms in terms of having enough functional classrooms in the school for the number of enrolled learners, adhering to a norm of not more than 40 learners per classroom. The target date for this component was set as November 2020.

(b) **Situation in 2017**

Nationally, 59% of schools complied with the nationally determined minimum physical infrastructure standards.

Levels of compliance to the minimum physical infrastructure by schools in the Western Cape (91%), Gauteng (92%) and the Northern Cape (80%) were highest. Compliance levels among schools in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal (both at 42%) were the lowest.

The higher the schools' quintile status the greater their tendency was to comply with the minimum school infrastructure requirements.

Regarding the percentage of schools with adequate classroom infrastructure (i.e., enough functional classrooms) already in 2017, in preparation for adherence by the set target date of 2020, the figures for Mpumalanga, Limpopo and the North West were considerably lower than the national average, while in the Northern Cape and the Western Cape they were considerably higher than the national average.

(c) **Changes from 2011 to 2017**

Nationally, 59% of schools complied with the determined minimum physical infrastructure standards compared to 59% also in 2011 (See Figure 9), essentially signifying no change or stability over time.

Figure 9: Percentage of schools adhering to minimum physical infrastructure standards for November 2016 by province, 2011-2017

Indicator 11: The percentage of schools with at least one educator who has received specialised training in the identification and support of special needs

Indicator value for 2017: 78% (primary and secondary schools combined) **Comparability from 2011 to 2017**: No

5 Indicator values in this Summary Report are aligned with those infrastructure components included in the three-year targets that had been set in Regulation 920 of 2013 for November 2016. In the full Quantitative Report further information and figures about the achievement of the foregoing targets as well as the seven-year targets set by Regulation 920 for November 2020 are provided.

Source: LSEN Questionnaire	**Weight**: School weight
Calculation: Indicator value = at least 1 teacher has formal/informal training or LSEN qualification	
Qualitative information available to integrate: No	

(a) **Context, importance, rationale**

The Action Plan 2019 (pp. 46-47) sets as Goal 26 to "Increase the number of schools that effectively implement the inclusive education policy and have access to centres that offer specialist services." A key challenge is to utilise existing capacity among teachers in schools properly. Principals need to ensure that time, structures and physical resources are allocated to this end. Steps taken by the Department all along included working on a policy document on screening, identification, assessment and support for special needs education and in support of standardised educational support services in line with the integrated school health policy. School- and district-based support teams, full-service schools and special schools serving as resource centres should all play prominent roles.

(b) **Situation in 2017**

Nationally, 78% of schools had at least one educator with formal/informal training or an LSEN qualification, thus confirming that they had received specialised LSEN training in identifying and supporting LSEN learners. Schools' compliance with this indicator requirement is shown by province in Figure 10. Compliance levels for schools in Limpopo were somewhat lower than the national average; in the Free State, Gauteng and the Western Cape, the indicator levels were substantively higher. There were no substantive differences in the percentages of teachers having received specialised training between schools with different quintile status.

Figure 10: Percentage of primary and secondary schools combined with a teacher who had received specialised training in LSEN (Indicator 11) by province, 2017

In the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and the Northern Cape, slightly fewer primary schools than the national average reported having at least one teacher with formal/informal training, an LSEN qualification and the resulting specialisation to identify and support LSEN learners. Primary schools in the Free State, Gauteng and the Western Cape had relatively high training levels, qualifications and specialisation compared with the national figures. For secondary schools, the general patterns across provinces followed those of primary schools.

Nationally, the indicator value was 12 percentage points lower for secondary schools (69%) than for primary schools (81%). This pattern was largely consistent across provinces.

Teacher confidence in dealing with LSEN showed that in just more than 60% of school teachers were reported to be somewhat confident to confident. In almost 20% of schools, teachers were not confident at all, and in another 20% they were very confident.

(c) **Changes from 2011 to 2017**

The different approaches used in selecting respondents in 2011 and 2017 rendered comparisons impossible. In 2011, 10 teachers randomly selected responded to the question while in 2017, only one teacher considered by the principal to be best equipped to do so responded.

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

Indicator value for 2017: 84% (primary and secondary schools combined) **Comparability from 2011 to 2017**: Yes **Indicator trend from 2011 to 2017**: 86% to 84%	
Source: Principal Interview	**Weight**: School weight
Calculation: Indicator value = receiving at least two visits during the survey year	
Qualitative information available to integrate: Yes	

(a) **Context, importance, rationale**

According to the *Policy on the Organisation, Roles and Responsibilities of Education Districts* published in the Government Gazette No 41445, a key responsibility of the district office is to assist school principals and educators to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their institutions through school visits and other means.

(b) **Situation in 2017**

Nationally, in 2017 about 84% of schools had been visited at least twice by district officials for monitoring and support purposes. A substantively larger percentage of secondary schools (94%) than primary schools (80%) received at least two visits from district officials in 2017.

As Figure 11 shows, a larger percentage of Quintile 4 and 5 schools received two or more monitoring and support visits from district officials than lower-quintile schools. The percentage of visits was lowest in Quintile 1 to 3 primary schools.

Figure 11: Percentages of primary and secondary schools having received at least two visits from district officials by quintile, 2017

For purposes of the qualitative case studies, Indicators 12 and 13 were dealt with simultaneously. An integration of the qualitative findings on these two indicators are presented as part of the findings from the quantitative study for Indicator 13 in the next section.

(c) **Changes from 2011 to 2017**

No substantial difference was found between the national percentage of schools receiving at least two monitoring and support visits from district officials in 2011 (86%) and 2017 (84%).

Indicator 13: The percentage of school principals rating the support services of districts as satisfactory

Indicator value for 2017: 78% (primary and secondary schools combined) **Comparability from 2011 to 2017**: No	
Source: Principal Interview	**Weight**: School weight
Calculation: Indicator value = responses of "Satisfied" and "Very satisfied" entailed satisfaction	
Qualitative information available to integrate: Yes	

(a) **Context, importance, rationale**

It may be expected that schools experience visits from district officials as beneficial to the quality of education they are providing. The ability to measure satisfaction with the support provided by district office officials is important for understanding the relationship between schools and district offices. In the SMS 2011, principals had to rate their degree of satisfaction with district services rendered with regard to 21 areas. The DBE (2011, 2013) proposed various composites of these ratings. The DBE (2013, p.42) suggested that obtaining an overall picture of satisfaction with district support "is often best done through questions dealing with overall satisfaction". Consequently, the SMS 2017 replaced the large number of questions in the SMS 2011 with one broad question and comparisons between years could not be made.

(b) **Situation in 2017**

For primary and secondary schools combined, 78% of principals were satisfied with monitoring and support visits by district officials. The percentage of primary and secondary school principals satisfied with the monitoring and support visits of district officials is shown in Figure 12. The national average for secondary schools (78%) did not differ substantially from the average for primary schools (77%).

The percentages of principals who were satisfied in primary schools in Gauteng, the Free State, Mpumalanga and the Western Cape were higher than the national primary school average. The percentage of Eastern Cape school principals were far below the primary school average. In relation to secondary schools, Limpopo school principals' ratings of their satisfaction with district support visits were much lower than the national average while those for the Free State, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape secondary schools were relatively high. Primary school principals in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal are less satisfied with visits from district officials than secondary school principals in those provinces.

Figure 12: Percentages of principals from primary and secondary schools who were satisfied with the support visits of district officials by province, 2017

Quintile 5 primary school principals showed substantially greater satisfaction with district visits than the national average value for primary schools.

The qualitative study on Indicators 12 and 13 focused on issues of district-visit content, benefit and frequency to schools, as well as the nature of relationships between the district and the school. Evidence from the qualitative data suggests the frequency of district visits was not only determined by quintile status of schools but that these visits also occurred

in a haphazard fashion without long-term planning or confirmation of visits to schools. Visits were erratic, varying in frequency and purpose. While no distinct patterns emerged from participants, it was clear that more classroom support was needed during these visits where subject advisors would have the freedom to venture into the classroom and advise the educator on areas of improvement, areas of satisfactory progress or areas where educators were excelling and perhaps needed confirmation of this from the subject advisor who had been to the classroom.

(c) **Changes from 2011 to 2017**

Trends over time could not be explored because of the considerable differences in instruments and the calculation of indicator values in the two surveys.

Findings on additional information collected

A: Teacher and principal views on national and common examinations

Key values / statistics: 82% (teachers using common examinations) 72% (principals' use of common examinations at the school) 89% (of teachers found common examinations useful) 91% (of principals found common examinations useful)	
Source: (i) Teacher Interview	**Weight**: School weight
(ii) Principal Interview	**Weight**: School weight
Calculation: Values/statistics = response options on use and usefulness of common examinations, and national / international assessments	
Qualitative information available to integrate: Yes	

(a) **Context, importance, rationale**

Teachers and principals were asked about common examinations, which were defined to the respondents as including examination papers provided nationally, by the province or by the district. The purpose of these questions was to determine the percentage of schools that were participating in these common examinations and how useful teachers found such examinations. In addition, information was also obtained from the respondent views of the usefulness of national and international assessments.

Currently, national external examinations are only compulsory for Grade 12 learners. At all other grade levels, examinations are the responsibility of schools, with teachers having to develop and administer mid-year and end-of-year examinations in all grades. Over recent years, there has been an increase in the number of provinces and districts implementing common examinations. The primary reasons for this change in practice are to provide teachers with high-quality examination papers of an appropriate standard, reduce workloads associated with setting examinations and to obtain information on learner performance across the grades, subjects and schools within which these examinations are administered. However, there is currently limited information on the extent to which common examinations are implemented across the provinces and districts, on teacher views on their usefulness and how results from these examinations are being used by provinces, districts, schools and/or teachers.

(b) **Situation in 2017**

An average of 87% of secondary school teachers (excluding Grade 12 teachers) used common examinations, with the Western Cape an outlier at 60,9%. An average of 79,0% of primary school teachers stated that their learners participated in common examinations, with the percentages differing considerably between provinces: 51% in KwaZulu-Natal and 96% in the Eastern Cape. In primary schools, the percentage of principals providing this response was 64%, while in secondary schools it was much higher at 95%. Common examinations can be considered prevalent in the majority of schools. The national figure for teachers stood at 82%. The corresponding percentage for principals stood at 72%.

Nationally, for primary and secondary schools combined, 89% of teachers and 91% of principals found common examinations useful. In primary schools, 88% of teachers found common examinations useful, while in secondary schools the percentage was 92%.

The views of teachers and principals were obtained on the introduction of national examinations at Grade 3, 6 and 9 level. The strongest support (approximately 87% of both teachers and principals), was for national examinations to be introduced at Grade 9 level. A national examination at Grade 6 was supported by 75% of teachers and 80% of principals,

while 63% of teachers and 69% of principals supported their introduction at Grade 3 level (see Table 2A).

Table 2A: Teacher and principal views of the grade at which national examinations should be introduced

(Percentages)		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Introducing a national examination in Grade 9 is a good idea	Teachers	37,7	49,1	11,1	2,2
	Principals	37,4	49,5	11,1	2,1
Introducing a national examination in Grade 6 is a good idea	Teachers	29,4	46,0	20,8	3,7
	Principals	31,4	48,8	17,1	2,7
Introducing a national examination in Grade 3 is a good idea	Teachers	24,7	38,1	29,0	8,2
	Principals	26,5	42,3	24,9	6,3

Much more information appears in the various reports about topics such as the purposes for which national examination results can be used, and how known and useful various instruments such as the ANA, TIMSS, PIRLS and SACMEQ were. Between 20% and 40% of principals and teachers reported that international/regional assessments were unknown to them. The majority of those who knew about these tests, though, found them useful.

When compared to the quantitative data that suggested that teachers were mostly unaware of international or regional assessments, qualitative evidence was to the contrary. Evidence from teacher interviews on issues of assessment showed that the role of large-scale assessment and external testing was at the front of the mind for most teachers, closely linked to the role that this type of assessment could play in setting standards and benchmarks. Discussions about what constituted best practice in assessment featured as a prominent theme. Assessment as an integrated part of learning and teaching with a holistic approach revealed diverse responses, while using assessments to identify gaps in learning and teaching as well as devising interventions for at-risk learners featured prominently in the narrative teachers shared on issues of assessment. Least likely across interviews was the issue of a lack of resources resulting in assessment overload and the role stakeholders such as parents and principals had in assessment and assessment-related training.

(c) **Changes from 2011 to 2017**

Not relevant; these topics were all surveyed for the first time.

B: Teacher and principal views on the Annual National Assessments

Key values/statistics: 51% (of principals and teachers found ANA exemplars useful) 66% of principals/52% of teachers (received written ANA feedback from district/province) 45% of principals and 81% of teachers (found the feedback useful or very useful)	
Source: (i) Teacher Interview	**Weight**: School weight
(ii) Principal Interview	**Weight**: School weight
Calculation: Values/statistics = response options on the need for, and use and usefulness of ANA	
Qualitative information available to integrate: Yes	

(a) **Context, importance, rationale**

The introduction of the Annual National Assessments (ANA) in 2010 comprised part of a national strategy to monitor the level and quality of basic education with a view to ensuring that every child receives a basic education of a high quality, regardless of the school they attend. In 2015, the ANAs were suspended, after a number of years during which the extent to which it was conducted expanded intensively to include all six first grades and Grade 9. However, limited information was available, at the national level, on the perceptions and knowledge of school principals and teachers about the need for, preparation towards, use of and value derived from the ANA.

(b) **Situation in 2017**

About 51% of principals and teachers found all ANA exemplars useful and some of them were found useful by about a further 40% of principals and teachers. Thus 91% of teachers and principals found the exemplars useful, with fewer than 10% finding them to be of no use. The pattern was consistent across provinces.

Sixty-six percent (66%) of principals and 52% of teachers indicated that they had received written feedback from the district/province on the ANA results. An explanation for the larger percentage of principals than teachers receiving feedback may be because the feedback is usually sent to the school and did not reach all individual teachers, with 45% of principals and 81% of teachers rating it as useful or very useful. More information appears in the reports on the quality of the feedback, the use made of it, and how well schools communicate with parents about ANA.

(c) **Changes from 2011 to 2017**

Not relevant; these topics were all surveyed for the first time.

C: Grade R learners in DBE primary schools

Key values / statistics: 91% (of primary schools provided Gr R) 50 learners (on average per school) 30 learners (on average per Grade R teacher)
Source: Principal Interview **Weight**: School weight
Calculation: Values/statistics = responses on numbers of classes, teachers, learners at school
Qualitative information available to integrate: Yes

(a) **Context, importance, rationale**

Given the importance of Grade R in ensuring the school readiness of new learners and of providing them with the requisite pre-schooling proficiencies to enhance their meaningful participation in the teaching and learning process on commencing with the Foundation Phase from Grade 1 in the subsequent year, key information about the human and financial resources devoted to Grade R was surveyed as part of SMS 2017.

(b) **Situation in 2017**

Grade R was found to be well-established in most schools as 91% of primary schools were providing for Grade R learners. Nationally, the average number of classes per school was 1,6. An average of 50 learners and of 1,5 teachers applied per school. The average number of learners per Grade R teacher was close to 30 for most provinces.

(c) **Changes from 2011 to 2017**

Not relevant; these topics were all surveyed for the first time.

D: Use of SA-SAMS

Key values / statistics: 92% (of schools used SA-SAMS) 99% (used it for learner registration / records, assessment reports, and data for DBE) 58% (used it for financial management
Source: Principal Interview **Weight**: School weight
Calculation: Values/statistics = response options on use, value (purposes) and capacity of school
Qualitative information available to integrate: Yes

(a) **Context, importance, rationale**

In our present digital and information technology era, coupled with the need to ensure that administration and management systems enhance the provision of quality teaching and learning in the schooling system, information was collected on various aspects related to the foregoing context as part of SMS 2017 as it pertains to the use of SA-SAMS. The fact and extent to (purposes for) which schools used SA-SAMS were established, followed by information about the availability and use of software, computers and capacity at schools for this, as well as principals' perceptions of its usefulness in supporting school management and the collection, storing and use of various types of records.

(b) **Situation in 2017**

Principals were asked a number of questions about the use of SA-SAMS. The percentages using the software for the purposes stated are shown in Table 2B. In all provinces, SA-SAMS was widely used for the key management functions listed, except for financial purposes, for which it was used by only 58% of schools. About 97% of principals agreed or strongly agreed that it was well-designed; this pattern was the same across provinces. About 82% strongly agreed or agreed that the school had adequate capacity to use SA-SAMS. This pattern was true across all provinces.

Table 2B: Principals' responses (%) about the purposes for which SA-SAMS was used, by province

Province	Learner registration and records	Report on assessment	Financial management	Used to collect data for submission to the department
EC	100,0	100,0	93,5	98,8
FS	100,0	99,8	62,5	98,1
GT	97,9	97,6	37,1	99,5
KZ	98,9	98,8	43,7	98,6
LP	100,0	100,0	32,8	97,8
MP	99,8	99,0	59,3	99,2
NC	100,0	100,0	71,4	100,0
NW	99,4	99,9	63,8	99,9
SA	**99,5**	**99,4**	**57,8**	**98,8**

(c) **Changes from 2011 to 2017**

Not relevant; these topics were all surveyed for the first time.

E: Incremental introduction of African languages

Key values / statistics: 5% (of teachers did not use English as LoLT) 91% (of teachers feel confident in their ability to use English as LoLT) 40%+ (of schools did not find the introduction of another African language feasible)
Source: (i) Teacher interview **Weight**: School weight (ii) Principal Interview **Weight**: School weight
Calculation: Values/statistics = response options on awareness about and feasibility of introducing an additional African language at a school
Qualitative information available to integrate: Yes

(a) **Context, importance, rationale**

A key objective of the Incremental Introduction of African Languages policy aims to is to promote the use of African languages by all learners as well as to promote social cohesion by expanding opportunities for the development and use of African languages in the country. Similarly, the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) requires that mother-tongue based (additive) bilingual teaching and learning takes place during the Foundation Phase. This policy is intended to ensure that learners are equipped with the requisite language proficiency to handle their later schooling from Grade 4 onwards, where School Governing Bodies determine language policy, but which for all practical purposes would mean that the language of learning and teaching is English in a majority of schools, and Afrikaans in a minority of them. In recent times learners in Grade 1 to 3 take two language subjects, being their home language and a first additional language. The possibility is always real that language practice at schools can become a vexed issue, which justified taking stock through the SMS 2017 of critical components of current language usage in the Foundation Phase.

(b) **Situation in 2017**

English is taught as a home language, first additional language or second additional language in practically all schools. No other language could be considered a competitor. Only 5% of teachers do not use English as a medium of instruction while 91% of teachers feel confident in their ability to use English as a medium of teaching. African languages are dwarfed by the presence of English. More than 40% of schools did not find the introduction of an additional African

language feasible.

Quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools found the introduction of an additional African language less feasible than Quintile 4 and 5 schools. At primary schools, 73% of principals at Quintile 5 schools indicated that it would be feasible to introduce the IIALS policy in their schools. The corresponding figure at secondary schools was 61%.

(c) **Changes from 2011 to 2017**

Not relevant; these topics were all surveyed for the first time.

Conclusion

The primary purpose for conducting the SMS is to obtain information to monitor progress towards the achievement of 13 key indicators set out in the Department of Basic Education's (DBE) Medium Term Strategic Frameworks and the Action Plans. First implemented in 2011, the SMS 2011/12 focussed on monitoring progress towards the achievement of key indicators in the Action Plan 2014 and the Minister's Delivery Agreement Outcome 1: Improved Quality of Basic Education.

Focussing on 13 key indicators (see Table C), the SMS 2017/18 sought to determine the extent to which these indicators were met and to compare changes in the indicator values since the SMS 2011/12. In expanding the focus of the survey, and the nature of the data obtained, two crucial amendments were instituted in SMS 2017/18. First, data was gathered about the following priority areas:

- Teacher and principal views on common examinations, national and international assessments;
- Teacher and principal views on the Annual National Assessments (ANA);
- Prevalence of, and provisioning for, Grade R learners in schools;
- The value and use of the South African School Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS); and
- The feasibility of implementing the policy on Incremental Introduction of African Languages (IIALS).

Second, a qualitative study was conducted as part of the SMS 2017/18 survey, on a sub-sample of schools focussing on Indicators 2, 6, 7, 12 and 13; and on Assessment practices in schools.

Key findings: 13 Indicators

Table D provides a summary of the findings emerging from the SMS 2017/2018. Improvements in indicator value from 2011 to 2017 were noted for three indicators (1, 5 and 7), no substantial changes were found for three indicators (2, 10 and 12), declines were found for four indicators (3, 6, 8 and 9), while no comparisons were possible for the rest (4, 11 and 13).

Table D: Key findings for Indicators 1 to 13

No	Definition	Indicator value from 2011 to 2017	Key finding
1	The percentage of schools where allocated teaching posts are all filled.	Improved (consider with caution)	A substantial increase from 69% to 78%
5	The percentage of learners in schools with a library or media centre meeting certain minimum standards.	Improved	A substantial increase from 45% to 62%
7	The percentage of schools where the School Governing Body (SGB) meets the minimum criteria of effectiveness.	Improved	A substantial increase from 54% to 62%
2	The average number of hours per year that teachers spend on professional development activities.	Remained the same	No substantial change, from 36 to 40 hours
10	The percentage of schools which comply with nationally determined minimum physical infrastructure standards.	Remained the same	No substantial change, from 59% to 59%
12	The percentage of schools visited at least twice a year by district officials for monitoring and support purposes.	Remained the same	No substantial change, from 86% to 84%
3	The percentage of teachers absent from school on an average day.	Declined	A substantial decline from 8% to 10%
6	The percentage of schools with the minimum set of management documents at the required standard.	Declined	A substantial decline from 44% to 31%
9	The percentage of schools which have acquired the full set of financial management responsibilities on the basis of an assessment of their financial management capacity.	Declined	A substantial decline from 74% to 57%
4	The percentage of learners, per grade and subject, with access to the required textbooks and workbooks for the entire school year.	Not comparable	In 2011, data obtained from observations for Grade 6; no Grade 3 data was collected. In 2017, Grade 6 data was obtained from teachers while Grade 3 data was obtained from learners.
8	The percentage of learners in schools that are funded at the minimum level.	Not comparable	Given that the 2017 and 2011 surveys were conducted before the end of the school year, it was possible that some schools were still to receive their allocated amounts, and thus the 2017 data obtained was regarded as incomplete. Recommend using 2010 and 2016 figures.
11	The percentage of schools with at least one educator who has received specialised training in identifying and supporting learners with special educational needs.	Not comparable	In 2011, data obtained from 10 randomly selected teachers. In 2017, only one teacher identified by the principal to be best equipped to do so responded.
13	The percentage of school principals rating the support services of districts as being satisfactory.	Not comparable	Several questions were used in 2011, while in 2017, only one broad question was used.

Key findings: Additional priority areas

The key findings emanating from the data obtained on the additional priority areas are noted in Table E. Given that no baseline exists for this data, the findings refer specifically to 2017.

Table E: Key findings for additional priority areas

No	Priority area	Key finding
A1	Teacher and principal views on common and national examinations.	A large majority of teachers (90%) found common examinations useful. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of teachers and principals supported a national examination at Grade 9, while only 66% supported such an examination at Grade 3.
A2	Teacher and principal views on national and international assessment, including the Annual National Assessments (ANA).	The ANA and international assessments were rated as useful by about 60% to 70% of teachers and principals, while 20% and 40% of principals and teachers respectively reported that these assessments were unknown to them
A3	Prevalence of, and provisioning for, Grade R learners in schools.	Ninety-one percent (91%) of primary schools had Grade R classes, with an average of 50 Grade R learners per school. About 68% of Grade 1 learners had completed Grade R in government schools.
A4	The value and use of the South African School Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS).	Excluding the Western Cape, which uses a different system, the SA-SAMS is used in approximately 92% of schools. Ninety-nine percent (99%) of these schools use SA-SAMS for learner registration, reporting on assessments and submitting data to the Department. For financial management, SA-SAMS is used by 58% of schools.
A5	The feasibility of implementing the policy on Incremental Introduction of African Languages (IIALS)	Seventy-three percent (73%) of principals in primary schools and seventy percent (70%) in secondary schools reported that they were aware of the IIAL policy. Quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools found the introduction of an additional African language less feasible than Quintile 4 and 5 schools.

The SMS 2017/18 and SMS 2011/12 provided a comprehensive overview regarding the 13 key indicators identified by the Department of Basic Education. In addition, SMS 2017/18 also reports on five additional priority areas. Notwithstanding the amendments made to the 2017 instruments and methodology, the challenge of obtaining valid and reliable data to ensure reporting of trends for all indicators still remains. Addressing this challenge, and improving on the current survey, remains a key task for the next SMS.

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(Footnotes)

1 Reflecting only infrastructure components included in targets for November 2016.

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