

Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

GENERAL NOTICE

NOTICE 752 OF 2010

DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

Call for comments on Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025

I, Angelina Matsie Motshekga, Minister of Basic Education, after consultation with the Council of Education Ministers and in terms of the National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996), hereby invite comments from the public and interested parties on the proposed *Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025* and background document set out in parts A and B of the Schedule.

Part A is a short version of the Action Plan, whilst Part B provides more details on the Plan. A further document with a detailed discussion of national and provincial statistics and targets relating to the indicators of the Plan has been developed and will be made available for public comment as soon as possible after I have sufficiently consulted with the nine MECs for education.

Comments should be in writing and must reach the Department of Basic Education by no later than Friday, 27 August 2010. Letters with comments should be clearly marked 'Comments on Action Plan to 2014'. All comments should clearly indicate the following information about the commentator:

Name of commentator, and organisation represented;

postal and email addresses; and

telephone, fax and cell numbers (if available).

Comments should be addressed to:

Mr PB Soobrayan, Director-General: Basic Education

For the attention of: Mr P Njobe

By post:

Private Bag X895,

Pretoria,

0001

By fax: 012 323 5837

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Angelina Matsie Motshekga, MP
Minister of Basic Education
24 June 2010

SCHEDULE

Part A

Action Plan to 2014

Towards the realisation of Schooling 2025

The shorter version

19 July 2010

This plan is a draft document of the Department of Basic Education intended to elicit public inputs. It is yet not an official policy of the Department or of government.

The goals of the Action Plan

The Action Plan has 27 goals. Goals 1 to 13 deal with **outputs** we want to achieve in relation to learning and enrolments.

- 1 ► Increase the number of learners in Grade 3 who by the end of the year have mastered the minimum language and numeracy competencies for Grade 3.
- 2 ► Increase the number of learners in Grade 6 who by the end of the year have mastered the minimum language and mathematics competencies for Grade 6.
- 3 ► Increase the number of learners in Grade 9 who by the end of the year have mastered the minimum language and mathematics competencies for Grade 9.
- 4 ► Increase the number of Grade 12 learners who become eligible for a Bachelors programme at a university.
- 5 ► Increase the number of Grade 12 learners who pass *mathematics*.
- 6 ► Increase the number of Grade 12 learners who pass *physical science*.
- 7 ► Improve the average performance in *languages* of Grade 6 learners.
- 8 ► Improve the average performance in *mathematics* of Grade 6 learners.
- 9 ► Improve the average performance in *mathematics* of Grade 8 learners.
- 10 ► Ensure that all children remain effectively enrolled in school up to the year in which they turn 15.
- 11 ► Improve the access of children to quality early childhood development (ECD) below Grade 1.
- 12 ► Improve the grade promotion of learners through the Grades 1 to 9 phases of school.
- 13 ► Improve the access of youth to Further Education and Training beyond Grade 9.

Goals 14 to 27 deal with the things we must do to achieve our 13 output goals.

- 14 ► Attract in each year a new group of young, motivated and appropriately trained teachers into the teaching profession.
- 15 ► Ensure that the availability and utilisation of teachers is such that excessively large classes are avoided.
- 16 ► Improve the professionalism, teaching skills, subject knowledge and computer literacy of teachers throughout their entire careers.
- 17 ► Strive for a teacher workforce that is healthy and enjoys a sense of job satisfaction.
- 18 ► Ensure that learners cover all the topics and skills areas that they should cover within their current school year.
- 19 ► Ensure that every learner has access to the minimum set of textbooks and workbooks required according to national policy.
- 20 ► Increase access amongst learners to a wide range of media, including computers, which enrich their education.
- 21 ► Ensure that the basic annual management processes occur across all schools in the country in a way that contributes towards a functional school environment.
- 22 ► Improve parent and community participation in the governance of schools, partly by improving access to important information via the e-Education strategy.
- 23 ► Ensure that all schools are funded at least at the minimum per learner levels determined nationally and that funds are utilised transparently and effectively.
- 24 ► Ensure that the physical infrastructure and environment of every school inspires learners to want to come to school and learn, and teachers to teach.
- 25 ► Use the school as a location to promote access amongst children to the full range of public health and poverty reduction interventions.
- 26 ► Increase the number of schools which effectively implement the inclusive education policy and have access to centres which offer specialist services.

27 ► Improve the frequency and quality of the monitoring and support services provided by district offices to schools, partly through better use of e-Education.

Why this plan is important to you

During 2010 the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga, declared that there would be a plan for schools in South Africa called *Action Plan to 2014*, and that this would form part of a larger vision called *Schooling 2025*. It is important that you as a South African should know about the Action Plan, and *Schooling 2025*, especially if you are a parent or guardian of a learner in a school, if you yourself are a learner, or if you are a teacher or a school principal. The plan is important because it tells you what the government will be doing to make Grades R to 12 schooling better, but also because it explains how you yourself can contribute towards making the goals of the plan and *Schooling 2025* a reality.

This Action Plan explains the 27 national goals that lie at the heart of the plan. Thirteen of these goals are **output goals** dealing with better school results and better enrolment of learners in schools. The remaining 14 goals deal with things that must happen for the output goals to be realised. The goals do not capture everything we must do, but experience has shown that for a plan to work it is important to identify a few key goals that can guide everyone. For all the goals in the plan, it is explained what government is doing and it is explained what you can do to contribute towards success in South Africa's schools.

This is the **shorter version** of *Action Plan to 2014*. It is intended for a wide audience, including all teachers, school principals and members of school governing bodies. There is also a **long version** of the plan which contains more details, for example further details on how goals will be achieved, details on how improvements will be monitored, and what the exact national and provincial targets are for each goal. The long version includes not just the targets we want to achieve by 2014, but also the targets we want to reach by 2025 as part of the *Schooling 2025* vision. If you or your organisation believes that the plan can be made better, you are encouraged to send inputs to the address indicated at the end of this document and to watch for notices in the media for Action Plan and *Schooling 2025* stakeholder meetings. The Action Plan may have to change before 2014, as new challenges are identified and lessons are learnt, and for this process stakeholder participation is vital.

Why we need to improve South Africa's schools

Since democracy was won in 1994 much has changed in South Africa's schools. Many more children complete the compulsory Grades 1 to 9 (80% in 1994 against 99% in 2010). In this regard, our situation now

compares very favourably to what occurs in other countries at a similar level of economic development. The laws that divided learners by race in the apartheid schooling system were removed, resulting in a situation where race is now a less important factor in determining the kind of schooling a child receives. In historically white schools, around 56% of learners are black and 40% are African. Change in historically Indian schools has been even greater. In 1994 government spending on every African school child was on average one-fifth of what it was for every white child. Today there is almost no difference in government spending. The curriculum and learning materials used in schools today help learners to understand their country, Africa and the world and think critically in ways that are a far cry from the narrow memorisation required of most learners before 1994.

Yet it is clear that much must still change in South Africa's schools. Too many schools are plagued by violence and do not feel safe for learners and educators. In too many schools, buildings and facilities are inadequate or not of a standard that would motivate learners to come to school every day to learn, and teachers to teach. But above all, there are too many learners who, after many years of school, have not mastered the skills they should have mastered. Research has shown, for instance, that many learners who complete Grade 6 are not able to write even simple sentences, or to do basic arithmetic. This problem of an unacceptably low level of learning can be found across all grades. The problem exists not in all schools, and not amongst all learners, but amongst far too many schools and learners. In particular, learners from poorer areas of the country are more likely not to have learnt what they should have learnt.

Poor quality learning in schools affects individual learners and their families negatively in many different ways. For instance, it becomes more difficult for learners to enter an FET college or a university later in life. Poor quality learning also reduces one's chances of obtaining the job one wants. But quality problems in our schools also make it more difficult for the country as a whole to prosper. The development of South Africa depends on the skills and education of her people. A nation where everyone receives a solid basic education is more likely to be a nation which is at peace with itself and is free of poverty.

The importance of broad participation

The current version of the plan has been discussed with teacher unions and provincial departments of education. These stakeholders support the overall aims and approaches of the plan. The purpose of this version of the plan is to provide more stakeholders with a chance to make inputs on

the plan. In particular, the Minister of Basic Education is interested in the inputs of organisations representing school governing bodies, school principals and learners. Higher education institutions, FET colleges, organised business, faith organisations and education NGOs are also strongly urged to become involved. And very importantly, the ongoing participation of teacher unions is vital for the success of the plan.

The Action Plan is not about telling everyone exactly what to do. This would be impossible in a system as large and varied as the South African schooling system. At the same time it is important for the Minister of Basic Education, through this national plan, to guide the very large improvements we need in our schools.

For wide participation to be effective, participants need to be well informed not only of what happens in their local school, but also in the schooling system as a whole. The Department of Basic Education will publish every year a report on how the schooling system is doing, and what is happening with regard to learning and teaching, spending by government, collaboration between the Department and teacher unions, and so on. This national report will indicate what complaints are being received by the district, provincial and national complaints officers (these officers are described below), and what action was taken, or will be taken. An easy to follow version of this annual report will be made widely available so that stakeholders have the information they need. If the Action Plan changes, the Department will make sure that these changes are clearly communicated to schools and parents so that there is no confusion around what the plan is saying.

The Department's e-Education strategy is a strategy that involves the use of computers and the internet to get things done faster and better. As part of this strategy, the Department will make sure that the information people need to take part in *Schooling 2025* will be readily available on the internet. Even though not all South Africans have access to the internet (by 2009 people in a quarter of households across the country were accessing the internet) we know that this access, especially amongst younger people, is going up fast.

The vision for schooling in 2025

Important steps towards a shared vision of a better schooling system were made in 2008 in Kliptown (the birthplace of the 1956 Freedom Charter) with the adoption by various stakeholders of the **Code for Quality Education**. This code, a copy of which appears at the end of this document, drives the **Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign**

(QLTC), also launched in 2008. It is also a point of departure for the following vision of where we would like to be in 2025.

Making sure that every young South African receives quality schooling is an urgent need. Yet we realise that this cannot be realised overnight. We need a clear vision of where we want to be in 2025, or before then if possible. And we must make sure that every year we move a bit closer to our vision, recognising that a large improvement is an accumulation of many smaller changes. By 2025 we must see the following in every South African school:

- **Learners** who attend school every day and are on time because they want to come to school, the school is accessible and because they know that if they miss school when they should not, some action is taken. These learners understand the importance of doing their schoolwork, in school and at home, and they know their school will do everything possible to get them to learn what they should. Much learning happens through the use of computers and from Grade 3 onwards all learners are computer literate. Part of the reason why learners want to come to school is that they get to meet friends in an environment where everyone is respected, they will have a good meal, they know they can depend on their teachers for advice and guidance, and they are able to participate in sporting and cultural activities organised at the school after school hours.
- **Teachers** who have received the training they require, are continuously improving their capabilities and are confident in their profession. These 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. They are on the whole satisfied with their jobs because their pay and conditions of service in general are decent and similar to what one would find in other professions.
- **A school principal** who ensures that teaching in the school takes place as it should, according to the national curriculum, but who also understands his or her role as a leader whose responsibility is to promote harmony, creativity and a sound work ethic within the school community and beyond.
- **Parents** who are well informed about what happens in the school, and receive regular reports about how well their children perform against clear standards that are shared by all schools. These parents know that if something is not happening as it should in the school, the principal

or someone in the Department will listen to them and take steps to deal with any problems.

- **Learning and teaching materials** in abundance and of a high quality. The national **Minimum Schoolbag** policy, which is widely understood, describes the minimum quantity and quality of materials that every learners must have access to. Computers in the school are an important medium through which learners and teachers access information.
- **School buildings and facilities** that are spacious, functional, safe and well maintained. Learners and teachers look after their buildings and facilities because they take pride in their school.

The output goals

In 2009, President Zuma released the policy document *Improving Government Performance: Our Approach*, which called for all government departments to focus better on changing the lives of all South Africans. For example, the education departments were requested to focus more on what learners learn in schools. Things such as improving school buildings, teacher training and school lunches are very important, but if they do not lead to better educated learners, then something is wrong.

The 13 output goals of the Action Plan are described below. For each goal there is an indication of what government is doing, and what you should do. What should you do if you believe that government is not doing what it should be doing? If this happens, the first step you should take is to discuss the matter with a teacher or the school principal to see what they have to say. You can suggest that the matter be discussed at the next meeting of the school governing body. The school governing body (or the principal) can then bring up the matter with the district office. However, if you feel that working through the school does not work, you yourself are free to contact the district office or the provincial department directly. Every district and provincial department, as part of the Action Plan, will ensure that it has a **complaints officer** whose job it is to receive complaints, to advise those complaining about their rights, to bring complaints to the relevant people in the Department, and to ensure that appropriate action is taken. If complaining to the district and province does not work, the national department also has a complaints officer. You can phone the national complaints officer, but the national department will also make sure, as part of its e-Education strategy, that information you need and details on steps you can take are easily available on the Department's website.

Goal 1 ► Increase the number of learners in Grade 3 who by the end of the year have mastered the minimum language and numeracy competencies for Grade 3.

What is the problem? In South Africa there has been much focus for many years on how learners do in the Grade 12 examinations. In more recent years there has been a growing focus on how well learners do in lower grades. This has happened partly because we now know that if we want to improve Grade 12 results in future, we need to improve results in all grades. The education experts agree that if a child does not learn the basics in Grades 1 to 3, that child will have difficulties in all the later grades. Tests of learners in Grade 3 have shown that results are unacceptably low, especially for learners in the poorest parts of the country. For example, the Systemic Evaluation tests have shown that fewer than half of all Grade 3 learners pass their language and numeracy tests.

What is government doing? An important recent step taken by government was the launch of **Foundations for Learning** in 2008. **Foundations for Learning** involves getting more materials to primary school learners and making it clearer to teachers how they should teach the curriculum. In 2008 government also began **Annual National Assessments**, or **ANA**, which involves testing all Grades 1 to 6 learners in key subjects using national tests. ANA is being improved to ensure that testing leads to better action and better planning within government. The box appearing below describes what ANA means for you. Apart from ANA, government is doing a lot of other things to improve learning in Grade 3, through the different goals explained in this plan.

How ANA will work

As in 2009, in every year moving forward all learners in all schools in Grades 1 to 6 will write national tests in languages and mathematics at the end of the year. The language tests will cover the learner's home language and the first additional language, which is English for most South African learners. Teachers will mark the tests according to instructions provided by the Department of Basic Education. These instructions also indicate how the school principal and specialists from the district office should check that tests are properly marked. Parents will receive ANA results together with other results in the annual report card for each learner distributed at the end of the year. The school governing body (SGB) will receive, at the beginning of each year, a report from the district office that will look more or less the same across all districts in South Africa. This report, the **district-wide ANA report**,

will allow the school to compare its ANA results to those of other schools in the district. It will also indicate what the results are for schools in different quintiles in the district, in other words schools with more or less the same level of poverty amongst learners. Parents on the SGB will be asked to share the district-wide ANA report with other parents at the school and to discuss ways in which parents and the school can work together to improve results. All the district-wide ANA reports from across the country will be available on the internet.

What the district-wide ANA reports will not contain are so-called league tables, or a list of every school in the district and its average scores. Each school will know its own average scores and will be able to compare these to the average of the district, of each quintile, and so on. However, in a system such as ANA, where schools themselves do the marking, research has shown that if the system becomes too competitive, this just encourages cheating when tests are marked. The main objective of ANA is not to make public the 'winners' and 'losers', but rather to let schools and parents have a better idea of how well they are doing in comparison to schools around them and schools across the country.

In 2011 ANA tests for Grade 9 learners will be introduced, also in languages and mathematics.

How is ANA different to what happened before ANA? The difference is that ANA tests are standardised across schools, so it will be possible to compare results from one school to the results of any other school in South Africa. This will make it easier to know when there are serious teaching and learning problems in your school.

What has just been described is **universal ANA**. Apart from universal ANA, there will be **verification ANA**. Verification ANA will be run directly by the national department and is a bit like the old Systemic Evaluation, but better. As part of verification ANA the national department will send people to some, but not all, schools to run tests that are almost the same as the universal ANA tests. Learners in Grades 3, 6 and 9 will be tested. The national department will then produce a report that will tell everyone if the national and provincial results are improving, and will indicate how accurate the results obtained from universal ANA are. The national report will also explain what the national and provincial targets are, and if we are succeeding in reaching our goals.

To start with, there will not be targets for every school, for example a target saying that 64% of learners in Grade 6 in your school must pass their ANA mathematics test by 2014. National and provincial targets for

this plan and *Schooling 2025* have already been set. What will happen soon is that targets will also be set for districts.

What should you be doing? If you are a parent, there are number of things you can do. If your child is not doing as well as he or she should, for example if your Grade 3 child is not able to read at a basic level yet, then you can help your child by making sure she does her homework and goes to school every day. You should also talk to your child's teacher so that you can understand better what the problem is. You should also make sure you know how well your school is doing in ANA compared to other schools in your area. The problem may be that all or most of the learners in your school are doing poorly. It may not just be a problem with your child. If this is happening, then it is important that all parents, teachers and the school principal at the school meet to discuss what the problem is and to make a plan to improve the situation. What if your child and your school are doing well in the ANA tests? This is obviously a good thing. But that does not mean you should do nothing. We need to improve results in *all* schools in South Africa if we want to realise our vision as a nation.

How will we know when things are getting better? ANA results will tell us how close we are to achieving our Grade 3 languages and numeracy targets.

Goal 2 ► Increase the number of learners in Grade 6 who by the end of the year have mastered the minimum language and mathematics competencies for Grade 6.

What is the problem? As in Grade 3, in Grade 6 there are too many learners who do not learn the basic things they should learn. For example, both the Systemic Evaluation in 2004, and SACMEQ in 2000 indicated that fewer than one in four Grade 6 learners passed minimum standards in mathematics.

What is government doing? Like Grade 3, Grade 6 is covered by government's Foundations for Learning programme. Moreover, Grade 6 is one of the three grades receiving a special focus in ANA. It is important to remember that Grade 6 is the last grade of the three-year intermediate phase in the school curriculum and there are important things that every learner should have learnt by then. Goals 14 to 27 in this plan are aimed at improving learning in schools, including learning in Grade 6.

What should you be doing? See Goal 1 above.

How will we know when things are getting better? ANA results will tell us how close we are to achieving our Grade 6 languages and mathematics targets.

Goal 3 ► Increase the number of learners in Grade 9 who by the end of the year have mastered the minimum language and mathematics competencies for Grade 9.

What is the problem? In Grade 9 standard testing across schools began in 2002, when Common Tasks of Assessments, or CTAs, were introduced. In the CTAs all Grade 9 learners went through the same assessments, which were marked by teachers and moderated by school principals. The results from these CTAs indicated that there was room for much improvement. The Grade 9 ANA testing, to begin in 2011, will provide a better picture of Grade 9 learning than the CTAs, which have been stopped.

What is government doing? To improve performance in Grades 7 to 9, the grades of the senior phase of the General Education and Training curriculum, government will pay particular attention to improving support to teachers so that they are able to teach their subjects with greater confidence.

What should you be doing? Support from parents, as described above, is necessary if Grade 9 results are to improve. We know that it is at the secondary level that problems such as alcohol and drug abuse, and unprotected sex, become important risks. Government efforts to educate youths and promote a healthy lifestyle can only succeed if adults in the home play their part.

How will we know when things are getting better? In Grade 9 ANA will be used to measure progress in learner results.

Goal 4 ► Increase the number of Grade 12 learners who become eligible for a Bachelors programme at a university.

What is the problem? Presently, around one in every eight youths in South Africa receive a Grade 12 pass that is good enough to allow him or her to enter a Bachelors degree programme at a university. This means that only one in eight is able to study to become a medical doctor, an engineer, a chartered accountant or a teacher. This is not enough, and insufficient results in school, and especially Grade 12, are an important reason why South Africa is presently suffering a shortage of people in these professions. Government's aim is to increase the number of youths

who are able to enter a Bachelors programme at a university to about one in five by 2014, and one in three by 2025.

What is government doing? Government will step up its efforts to support learners and their teachers in the difficult Grade 12 year through the distribution of study guides and examples of examination questions. This is largely done through newspapers and materials sent directly to schools. Guidance to Grade 12 learners through radio and television is also important. Government moreover provides support to Grades 10 and 11 learners so that they can be properly prepared when they reach Grade 12. Obviously making sure that every learner in Grades 10 to 12 has the textbooks and materials needed is important. This is discussed below in relation to Goal 19.

What should you be doing? As mentioned in the Code for Quality Education, parents and the families of learners have a special role to play in motivating Grade 12 learners and making sure they have enough time to study, and appropriate space to study.

How will we know when things are getting better? Grade 12 examination results are published in newspapers, and the Department of Basic Education releases a detailed report each year on the Grade 12 results. In addition, districts will be producing a **district-wide Grade 12 examination report** in which SGB members will be able to see how well the school is performing in comparison to other schools in the district, the province and the country.

Goal 5 ► Increase the number of Grade 12 learners who pass *mathematics*.

Goal 6 ► Increase the number of Grade 12 learners who pass *physical science*.

What is the problem? A very serious problem experienced in South Africa is that there are not enough youths leaving the school system with good mathematics and physical science results. This has caused a shortage of people in certain professions such as medicine and financial management. Presently around one in seven youths leave school with a Grade 12 pass in mathematics. The number is a bit lower for physical science. The aim is to increase this to around one in five by 2014 and one in three by 2025, for each subject.

What is government doing? For a number of years government has been paying special attention to improving mathematics and physical science

results in Grades 10 to 12. An important programme of government is Dinaledi, which started in 2001. In 2007 this programme was expanded so that it covered almost 500 schools. Recent evaluations by experts have found that the additional training and resources going to Dinaledi schools did make a difference to Grade 12 results, especially in schools in poorer areas. The challenge is to improve the Dinaledi approach further and to include more schools.

What should you be doing? Passing mathematics and physical science in Grade 12 involves practising certain things again and again. It is important that parents should assist learners to develop the discipline needed for this task.

How will we know when things are getting better? The new district-wide examination reports to schools will help school governing bodies see how well they are doing in Grade 12 mathematics and physical science compared to similar schools.

Goal 7 ► Improve the average performance in *languages* of *Grade 6* learners.

Goal 8 ► Improve the average performance in *mathematics* of *Grade 6* learners.

Goal 9 ► Improve the average performance in *mathematics* of *Grade 8* learners.

What is the problem? Goals 1 to 6 above focus on getting learners to meet minimum standards. However, improving the education situation in South Africa must involve improving results at all levels. We need more schools and more learners to do exceptionally well. International tests that South Africa participates in indicate that the top 10% of learners in South Africa do worse than the top 10% of learners in other developing countries such as Kenya, Indonesia and Chile. We need to improve results at the top end if South Africa is to have world class scientists, designers, analysts and so on. One way of improving our average scores in international tests is obviously to make sure that *everyone*, including those near the top, improves his or her results.

What is government doing? Government has been encouraging excellence through the recognition of outstanding learners and outstanding schools, for instance in public ceremonies. One area where government needs to do more work is in giving exceptional learners better access to focus schools. Focus schools, which have been

established in a few provinces, are schools that pay special attention to certain subjects, such as art or mathematics, so that learners who do very well in these subjects can spend more time in them, and be taught by teachers with additional training and skills in these subjects. We need enough focus schools, but not too many of them. We should not forget that our goal should be to make all schools in the country work properly. Efforts spent on increasing the number of focus schools should not make us forget about this wider goal.

What should you be doing? It is important for parents and teachers to recognise who is performing exceptionally well, or who has the potential to do this, and then to make sure that these learners are given the right support to develop their strong areas further. This could be through placement in a focus school, but this is not the only option.

How will we know when things are getting better? There are two important international testing programmes that South Africa is involved in that will help us to know how successful we are at achieving the above three goals. **SACMEQ**, or the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality, involves the testing of Grade 6 learners in languages (mostly English) and mathematics in fifteen African countries. The next tests will be run in 2012. **TIMSS**, or Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, tests Grade 8 learners in mathematics and science. The next TIMSS is in 2011.

Goal 10 ► Ensure that all children remain effectively enrolled in school up to the year in which they turn 15.

What is the problem? The South African Schools Act says that all children should complete Grade 9, or attend school up the end of the year in which they turn 15. We have been fairly successful at realising this. By 2009, only around 2.5% of children aged 7 to 15 were not in school. Yet this 2.5% represents around 200 000 children who are not in school when they should be. There are many reasons why these children are not in school. Some children live very far from a school. Others are children who need special education and who get told that the local school cannot offer them this. Nearly all those children who are not in school are from poor homes, sometimes with no adults in the home.

What is government doing? Government has taken a number of steps to ensure that all children aged 7 to 15 are in school. One of the reasons why no fee schools were introduced was to make it easier for poor parents to send their children to school. Government will continue to make more no fee schools available, and to work hard at making sure that no fee schools

offer a quality of schooling that is no different to that in schools which charge fees. The number of schools offering learners lunches has increased partly to encourage children from poorer homes to come to school. Government has introduced full service schools in certain districts which, together with existing special schools, make it easier for learners to get access to special needs education. A recent improvement is the **LURITS** system of government. This system, which covers just over half of all schools presently, is a computerised system containing the names plus a special school ID number for every learner. This system is designed to make it easier for the authorities to know when a child leaves the schooling system before he or she turns 15, and to make a follow-up.

What should you be doing? Parents and communities have a vital role to play to ensure that all young children attend school. You must ensure that your own children, or children where you are the guardian, are enrolled at a school and attend regularly. If you are aware of children who are not attending school, you should report this to the nearest education district office. It is the duty of districts to find a school for all children who must be in school, even in the case of children with special needs.

How will we know when things are getting better? Statistics South Africa visits homes across South Africa every year as part of the General Household Survey. The information that Statistics South Africa collects allows us to see how close we are to 100% enrolment of children aged 7 to 15. The 2011 Census will also be important for seeing how close we are to our target.

Goal 11 ► Improve the access of children to quality early childhood development (ECD) below Grade 1.

What is the problem? Studies from around the world, including South Africa, have shown that good pre-primary schooling below Grade 1 makes it easier for a child to learn at primary school. Yet not all South African children get to attend pre-primary classes. The situation has improved in recent years. Between 2003 and 2008 the percentage of Grade 1 learners who had received some pre-primary schooling increased from 60% to 80%. But we want that figure to be 100%, and government's target is in fact that all children who will be starting Grade 1 in 2015 should be in Grade R during 2014.

What is government doing? Spending on pre-primary schooling by government has increased more than spending in any other area in education. By 2011, spending on ECD will be four times what it was in 2006 in real terms (in other words, after inflation has been taken into

account). Much of the additional money has been transferred to public schools so that schools themselves could employ Grade R teachers and pay for materials. Some provincial departments have also employed teachers for Grade R in public schools. Currently government is focussing on ensuring that all Grade R teachers have the minimum qualifications required. It is important that Grade R in public schools should be of a high quality.

What should you be doing? It was not possible for government to introduce Grade R in all public primary schools at once. Those schools which still do not offer Grade R will begin to offer this according to a timetable put together by the provincial department. This timetable prioritises schools in poorer areas. If your local school does not offer Grade R yet, ask when it is supposed to begin offering Grade R according to the timetable. It is possible that Grade R will be introduced in your local school when your child is old enough for Grade R (the year in which your child turns six). Grade R is not compulsory yet, but you should try by all means to enrol your child in Grade R as this can make it easier to learn in later grades.

How will we know when things are getting better? The General Household Survey will help us to know whether we have reached our target of 100% enrolment in Grade R by 2014. Government will also ensure that more studies are done looking at whether more Grade R in South Africa is resulting in better learning in later grades.

Goal 12 ► Improve the grade promotion of learners through the Grades 1 to 9 phases of school.

What is the problem? Repetition of grades in public schools has gone down over the years. However, it is still high. In 2009, 9% of all enrolled learners were repeating their grade (repetition is highest in Grades 1, 10 and 11). The problem with grade repetition is that it causes classes in schools to be larger than they should be. It also results in more over-aged learners in the class. If there are too many over-aged learners in class various problems, including discipline problems, can arise. Learners who repeat grades can also become discouraged, and leave school, sometimes before they have turned 15. This Action Plan places a lot of emphasis on improving results in schools, especially in Grades 3, 6, 9 and 12. What we must avoid is a situation where schools try to bring about better results in these critical grades by keeping learners back unnecessarily in the earlier grades.

What is government doing? Government does not think that grade repetition should be prohibited. There are cases where grade repetition is in the best interests of the learner. But there should be limits on how many times a learner can repeat, and for this reason repetition is limited to once for every three-year phase. The best way to reduce grade repetition is to improve learning and teaching so that more learners learn what they should in each grade. District offices will be checking that schools do not use grade repetition to make their results appear better.

What should you be doing? By supporting your child at school you improve learning and reduce the chances that your child will repeat. If you believe that teachers in your school are repeating learners unnecessarily in order to make its results appear better, you should bring this to the attention of the principal and the school governing body. If this does not help, you should report the problem to the complaints officer in the district.

How will we know when things are getting better? In 2009 the General Household Survey started measuring grade repetition in schools. This information will be used together with information gathered from schools through the Annual Survey of Schools to see how successful we are at reducing grade repetition. The ultimate aim of *Schooling 2025* is that only 5% of learners should be repeating their grade by 2025.

Goal 13 ► Improve the access of youth to Further Education and Training beyond Grade 9.

What is the problem? Presently around 40% of South Africa's youths obtain a National Senior Certificate from a school, and only around 1% obtain some other post-Grade 9 certificate. This means that more than half of South Africa's youths are left with no qualification beyond Grade 9. This obviously makes it difficult for these youths to obtain a job, enrol in a university or feel that they have benefitted from the years they have spent in school. It is clear that getting more youths to obtain qualifications that serve their needs at the Further Education and Training (FET) level (the level after Grade 9) is a key challenge if we are to tackle unemployment and disillusionment amongst youths. Enrolments beyond Grade 9 are fairly good by international standards. Around 75% of learners reach Grade 10, 65% reach Grade 11, and 50% reach Grade 12. A large part of the challenge is getting more learners to 'survive' to the end of Grade 12 and to obtain their National Senior Certificate, but also for more learners to obtain qualifications from FET colleges.

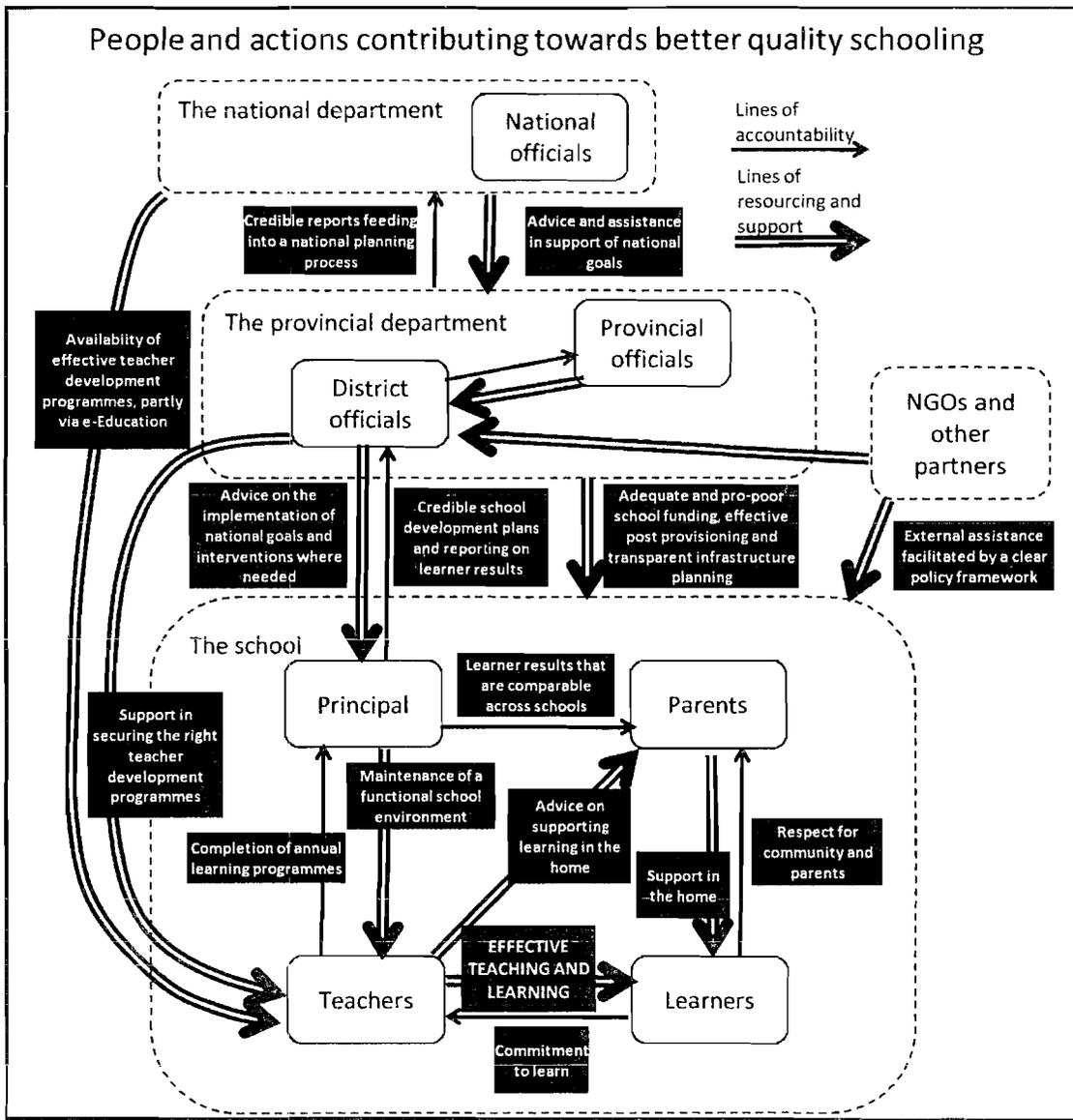
What is government doing? FET is a responsibility of both the Department of Basic Education (which deals with Grades 10 to 12 in schools) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (which deals with FET colleges). Opportunities for youths in FET colleges have increased recently, with the introduction of the NSC(V) qualifications, one for each of the three years of FET college training and increased government funding of colleges. One area which must be improved in the coming years is guidance to learners in secondary schools regarding their options at school, at FET colleges, and beyond. This guidance is provided through the Life Orientation curriculum in schools, but needs strengthening. Above all, it is important for teachers and learners in secondary schools to have more opportunities to meet people from FET colleges, and from companies and organisations that employ FET college graduates. Government is currently working together with employers, unions and higher education institutions on a new plan to deal specifically with the challenges relating to when youths leave school, and what their options are after school. This new plan will influence the shape of the Action Plan and *Schooling 2025*.

What should you be doing? Parents and learners should make use of the available information on what subject combinations to take for the Grade 12 examinations to improve one's chances of passing, what the options are in FET colleges, and what the best grade and age is to move from a school to college (if this move is made). Government is committed to making better information on these matters available.

How will we know when things are getting better? Statistics South Africa provides information on the highest education level obtained by young South Africans. But we must also monitor how employers and higher education institutions react. We will know that we have truly succeeded when fewer universities complain that school leavers are not ready for university studies, and when fewer employers complain about the abilities of school and college leavers who seek employment.

How our desired outputs are to be achieved

If we are to achieve Goals 1 to 13 above, *how* are we to do this? The task is not an easy one but it is made easier if everyone is informed of how the schooling system works. The diagram on the next page provides a picture that might help in understanding how different people and actions can contribute towards better schooling.



Below, Goals 14 to 27 are described. These goals describe what must happen for better quality schooling, and better enrolments, to be achieved. In other words, Goals 14 to 27 support Goals 1 to 13.

Goals 14 to 18 deal with **teachers and the teaching process**.

Goal 14 ► Attract in each year a new group of young, motivated and appropriately trained teachers into the teaching profession.

What is the problem? For many years, the number of newly qualified teachers joining the teaching profession has been too low. On average, around 10 000 teachers leave public service every year, but only around 5 000 have been joining. The main reason why the total number of teachers has not declined is that older people qualified to teach have entered the public teaching force, largely from the private sector. There

are many reasons why there have not been enough young people joining teaching in recent years. There have been many other job opportunities for young South Africans as the economy grew. Another reason is that the schooling system itself has not been producing enough people who are ready to enter a Bachelors programme (for example a Bachelor of Education degree). It is vital that enough newly qualified teachers enter public schools every year if we are to avoid serious teacher shortages in future.

What is government doing? The Funza Lushaka bursary scheme for those leaving school who want to train as teachers was introduced in 2007 to encourage young South Africans to train as teachers and teach in public schools. Presently just over 9 000 students training as teachers are receiving Funza Lushaka bursaries. Government has also improved the salaries of teachers in recent years, partly so that the teaching profession can become a more attractive career option. Between 2000 and 2009 the purchasing power of the average teacher improved by around 40%. But apart from money, there are other things that influence teacher satisfaction and it is important that attention is paid to this (see Goal 17 below).

What should you be doing? If you are choosing a future career, or know someone who is, you may want to take a closer look at teaching. The conditions for teachers have been changing over the years so what you have been told about teaching may no longer be true. There are now more options for teachers, for example promotion options within the classroom for those not wishing to become school principals or managers.

How will we know when things are getting better? When the personnel records of government show that the number of new graduates entering the public schooling system each year equals the number of teachers who retire or leave for other reasons, then we will know that we are on the right track.

Goal 15 ► Ensure that the availability and utilisation of teachers is such that excessively large classes are avoided.

What is the problem? Although teaching posts are given to schools more or less in proportion to their enrolments, class sizes are very different across different schools. Around half of South Africa's public school learners sit in classes with over 40 learners, and around 15% sit in classes with over 50 learners. Very large classes obviously make learning and teaching more difficult. There are three main reasons why very large classes exist. One is that it is difficult to attract teachers to certain areas,

for instance remote rural areas, and so teaching posts remain empty. Another is that the timetable and the use of each teacher's time in some schools is not as good as it should be. Thirdly, many schools still suffer from classroom shortages.

What is government doing? In 2007 government passed policy on additional pay for teachers in remote rural areas. Various reasons, including a lack of funding, have made it difficult for this policy to work properly. In the coming years government will pay special attention to the proper implementation of this policy. The policy on the distribution of teaching posts to schools has been changed slightly so that it now makes it clearer to each school how teaching time should be used. District offices will monitor carefully whether schools are in fact timetabling correctly and will take action when it is clear that poor planning in the school is resulting in over-sized classes.

What should you be doing? Making sure there are enough teachers in a school with the right qualifications, and that teaching time is effectively used, requires a good working relationship between the Department, the school principal and the school governing body. Parents, in particular parents on the school governing body, can assist in making sure that the right decisions are taken.

How will we know when things are getting better? When the Annual Survey of Schools shows that we no longer have learners sitting in classes with over 60, or 50, or 40 learners, then we will know that we have succeeded in tackling this problem.

Goal 16 ► Improve the professionalism, teaching skills, subject knowledge and computer literacy of teachers throughout their entire careers.

What is the problem? Many, and perhaps most, of South Africa's teachers have not received all the training they need to cope with the responsibilities of teaching. Over 90% of our public school teachers have more than 3 years of training. This compares well to other similar countries. However, often this training was not of a sufficient quality. We should remember that most of our teachers became teachers before 1994. SACMEQ and a few other testing programmes have tested not just learners, but also teachers, and found that when it comes to subject knowledge teachers are too often lacking. Government and the teacher unions agree that this is a serious matter that requires urgent attention.

What is government doing? The problem has been recognised for a long time, and there have been many initiatives to provide teachers with in-service training to try and fill the gaps. For example, just over a third of primary school teachers say that they have received formal in-service training recently and three-quarters of these teachers said the training helped them to teach better. However, we have not trained enough teachers and too often the training has been of an insufficient standard. An important step in the right direction was a large Teacher Development Summit in 2009, involving all stakeholders. Presently the recommendations from that summit are being used to put together a new strategy for teacher development which will make it easier for large numbers of teachers to access the training they need. Some of the training will be through distance education where teachers will access materials over the internet. This use of e-Education can greatly assist us in achieving the goal of better skilled teachers. Government's Teacher Laptop Initiative is one important project aimed at improving computer literacy amongst teachers and school principals. We know that many teachers develop excellent teaching materials. As part of e-Education, the internet will be promoted as a way for teachers to share these materials with each other.

What should you be doing? If you are a teacher, then the actions you take as an individual, and in collaboration with the teachers you work with, are vital. Government is committed to making more and better teacher training courses available. However, we will only move forward if teachers show a commitment towards their own development. Most do show this commitment, but some do not. A survey of teachers in 2007 found that 30% of primary school teachers admitted spending no hours on their own professional development, when it is a teacher's responsibility to spend 80 hours a year. Access to good formal training and materials has been part of the problem. However, teachers should also take the initiative themselves. Above all, it is important to strengthen the culture of reading and professional debate amongst teachers. Teachers should also make a special effort to improve their computer literacy and to use the internet to access interesting materials that can be used in the classroom.

How will we know when things are getting better? Government will continue to support research where teachers themselves are tested in order to see where the gaps are in subject knowledge and teaching skills. This research will be an important way of seeing whether we are making progress. The research will respect the dignity of teachers. Results of individual teachers will not be revealed to anyone and will not be used in

any way in the management of individual teachers. The aim of the research will be to get an overall national picture of what the training gaps are.

Goal 17 ► Strive for a teacher workforce that is healthy and enjoys a sense of job satisfaction.

What is the problem? Even if teachers are properly trained, we will not achieve our goals if teachers are not satisfied with their jobs and feel that society does not value the teaching profession. Teaching is a challenging job, especially if learners are from poor homes. Almost every teacher will experience times when the frustrations are great. What we must avoid, however, is a situation where teachers feel that the education policies and the curriculum are poorly designed, or unfair. Teachers cannot decide on the education policies on their own, but these policies must be sensitive to what teachers experience and feel. The challenge is to make our policies, and their implementation, more teacher-centred.

What is government doing? As mentioned above, teacher pay has improved in recent years. In 2008 new promotion options for teachers were introduced. A key challenge that government is working on together with teacher unions is a better system to reward those teachers who are exceptionally good teachers and who go the extra mile. We hope to have this system in place and running very soon. In 2009 the learner assessment rules were simplified so that teachers would need to do less paperwork and could focus more on teaching. This was in response to complaints from teachers themselves. Above all, government is committed to listening more to what teachers need. This will be done both through consultation with the teacher unions and through better use of surveys looking at what teachers see as the problems and the solutions. Part of the task is to look more closely at the health issues teachers face, including HIV and AIDS. As part of government's overall strategy on HIV and AIDS, we must be honest and open on these matters and combat all forms of stigma and prejudice.

What should you be doing? As a parent, you can make a difference by complimenting your child's teacher when you feel that the teacher is making a special effort. School Governing Bodies should acknowledge outstanding performance amongst the teaching staff, keeping in mind that positive feedback can be as effective, if not more effective, than monetary rewards. Teachers and union activists have an important role to play in providing constructive criticism of our education policies. These policies are never cast in stone.

How will we know when things are getting better? Surveys of teacher job satisfaction will be an important tool for government to see what the challenges are and what progress we are making.

Goal 18 ► Ensure that learners cover all the topics and skill areas that they should cover within their current school year.

What is the problem? Recent research has shown that too often teachers reach the end of the year, but have not completed the teaching programme for the year. This causes great problems for the teacher in the next grade, who then finds it difficult to complete his or her programme for the year, and so the problem continues through all the grades. The problem is partly caused by insufficient time being spent in the year on teaching and learning. Time is lost because teachers and learners arrive late, or leave early. Time is also lost during the school day when breaks are extended and teachers are not in class when they should be.

What is government doing? A new system will be introduced to monitor schools and teachers in order to see who does not complete the learning programme for the year, and why. This new system will involve at least one visit to each school by the district office each year in order to monitor how successful teachers were at completing the previous year's programme, and whether teachers are on track in the current year. Where there are problems, the district office and the school will have to come up with a plan to deal with the situation. Some of the schools selected as ANA verification schools every second year will see the ANA officers (who are employed by the national department) spend more time in the school so that the school's work programmes and learner's workbooks can be checked. This will provide a national picture of the situation. It is obviously important that schools and teachers should not rush through the year's programme, or pretend that things have been done when they have not. The new monitoring system will have to check not only whether the year's programme has been completed, but how *well* it has been completed.

What should you be doing? All School Governing Bodies should pay attention to whether learning programmes for the year are being completed. If they are not, the members of the SGB should know this and should help finding solutions to the problem.

How will we know when things are getting better? As part of the new monitoring system district offices will need to submit reports on the situation in their schools to assist monitoring by provinces and the national department. If these reports suggest that there are requirements in

the curriculum that have to change, those changes must be made. Ultimately all schools and all teachers must finish their year's teaching programme every year.

This and the next goal deal with **textbooks, workbooks and other educational materials**.

Goal 19 ► Ensure that every learner has access to the minimum set of textbooks and workbooks required according to national policy.

What is the problem? Although the situation has improved in recent years, there are still far too many learners who do not have access to the textbooks, workbooks, exercise books and stationery they need. We cannot expect proper learning and teaching to take place where learners do not have access to these materials. Spending on materials such as textbooks has gone up in recent years, and information that Statistics South Africa collects from parents indicates that the percentage of parents complaining about a shortage of books for their children at school has gone down, from 16% in 2005 to 11% in 2008. Yet if 11% of parents are complaining this is still much too high. As recently as 2007 one in eight Grade 3 learners did not have their own literacy workbook (the figure for numeracy was the same) and 4% of Grade 6 learners did not have any exercise book or workbook to write in. This is unacceptable.

What is government doing? There are different reasons why learners do not have the materials each learner should have. The Department may not have delivered the materials it was supposed to deliver, or the school may not have bought the materials it was supposed to buy with the funding it received from the Department. Funding that was supposed to arrive from the Department may not have arrived. It is important to keep in mind that because of the way the funding policy works many schools buy materials themselves using funds received from the Department. For instance 30% of schools buy textbooks this way. Materials may not be available because they are not well looked after (so next year's learners are unable to use them) or because of crime (which could involve theft between learners). Government is working on all these problems. One thing that research has shown is that very often there are fewer problems if schools themselves manage the purchasing of materials, using funds from the Department. The national department will be announcing very soon clearer policy on what each Grade 1 learner should have, what each Grade 2 learner should have, up to what every Grade 12 mathematics learner should have. These lists of things different learners must have will be known as the Minimum Schoolbag lists.

What should you be doing? Parents can assist by making sure that where learners take books and materials home, these things are well looked after.

How will we know when things are getting better? There will be better monitoring and action to ensure that every child has his or her Minimum Schoolbag. We will know that we have reached our goal when every child has access to everything in the Minimum Schoolbag, from the first school day of the year, to the last.

Goal 20 ► Increase access amongst learners to a wide range of media, including computers, which enrich their education.

What is the problem? Apart from the Minimum Schoolbag, every learner needs access to a library of good books and materials such as newspapers. It is also clear that children who do not have access to computers during their schooling end up disadvantaged later in life. Around 15 000 schools, or over half of all schools, have no library, and where schools do have a library it is not always sufficient. When it comes to computers, in a way the challenge is to catch up to what learners are already experiencing outside of school. Statistics from 2007 indicate that 50% of Grade 6 learners have used a computer somewhere, but that only 37% have used one inside their school.

What is government doing? As part of government's new plan to speed up improvements to school buildings (see Goal 24), media centres, or libraries, will be built in schools. New standards for what a school must have, developed by the national department in 2008, indicate what kind of library or media centre a school should have, depending on whether it is a primary or secondary school, and depending on the total enrolment of the school. Government will also continue to promote mini-libraries within classrooms, which can assist in giving learners access to materials until the school has a fully-equipped library. As part of the e-Education strategy, government will continue to support the establishment of computer centres in schools. The growth in the number of computers in schools in recent years is partly a result of government action, but also of action taken by schools, sometimes in collaboration with the private sector. Obviously schools cannot promote computer literacy amongst learners if teachers are not computer literate. Better computer literacy amongst teachers is a key aim of government (see Goal 16 above).

What should you be doing? If you are working in the private sector, has your company considered assisting a school to set up a library, a media centre or a computer centre? Getting your company to do this could

greatly improve the educational opportunities for the school's learners. Many companies have already shown that this is an excellent opportunity for the private sector to make a difference.

How will we know when things are getting better? As part of the Action Plan, government will monitor the percentage of learners who have access to library books and computers of an acceptable standard. The number of children and youths who are computer literate will also be an important measure of our success.

This and the next goal deal with **school governance and management**.

Goal 21 ► Ensure that the basic annual management processes occur across all schools in the country in a way that contributes towards a functional school environment.

What is the problem? A school where learners learn and there is a sense of harmony is often a school with an outstanding school principal. The schooling system has many such principals. However, there are also many principals who need support and training in order to do their jobs properly. For good management and leadership, some basic building blocks must be in place. The school needs a budget, a school development plan, properly completed learner and staff attendance rosters, schedules of learner assessment scores, annual financial statements and an annual report. These things on their own are not enough, but if they are not in place it becomes much more difficult to create a functional school environment. We know that these basic building blocks do not exist in all schools.

What is government doing? Training and support is offered fairly regularly to most school principals. For example, over 90% of principals say they receive support in financial management and most say this occurs on average once a year. The problem is that only 40% of principals who receive this support rate it as being good. Government will improve training and support to principals, and ensure that everyone who needs it receives it. There will be a special effort to ensure that all schools have the 'building blocks' mentioned above, and that these documents not only exist, but are put together in a way that contributes to a better run school. As more schools gain access to computers and the internet, more of the administration of schools will become computerised.

What should you be doing? School management is another area where schools and the private sector could work more closely together. If you are in the private sector, consider whether your company could organise

joint management and leadership workshops for school principals in your area.

How will we know when things are getting better? There will be a more logical way than in the past for districts to rate the management and basic functionality of schools. Districts will provide some of the information we need to see if we are reaching this goal. But the national department will also monitor schools directly to check that improvements are happening.

Goal 22 ► Improve parent and community participation in the governance of schools, partly by improving access to important information via the e-Education strategy.

What is the problem? Parent involvement in school governance is fairly good, but it should be strengthened. A 2009 study found that two-thirds of parents had at some time voted for school governing body members. In 61% of schools parents are actively involved in deciding what the school budget should look like. Involving parents in school governance is nearly always a bigger challenge in poorer areas. Parents there may find it difficult to get to meetings at the school and school budgets and reports may not be put together in a way that is understandable to all parents.

What is government doing? ANA will give parents better information than before on what is happening in the school. This should make it easier to get parents interested and involved in discussions on how learning can be improved. Having parents involved is important if one thinks of the vital role that parents play in making sure that learners attend school regularly and do their homework at home. There has been much training of parent members of the SGB over the years. Around 77% of parents currently on SGBs say they have received some training. This training will now have to include training on how to understand ANA and how to take decisions on improving learning. It should also focus on how e-Education makes parent access to information easier. This training should focus strongly on parents in poorer communities.

What should you be doing? Parents should make a special effort to understand this Action Plan and *Schooling 2025* so that they can have a clearer idea of what they can expect government and schools to do, and how they can contribute to the realisation of the goals.

How will we know when things are getting better? Both the district offices and the national department will be monitoring parent

participation and the success of School Governing Bodies and providing reports on this.

This goal deals with **school funding**.

Goal 23 ► Ensure that all schools are funded at least at the minimum per learner levels determined nationally and that funds are utilised transparently and effectively.

What is the problem? A 2009 study revealed that although non-personnel funding for schools has gone up in recent years, a third of schools are paid less than they should be paid according to the national policy. A further problem is that provincial controls over the funding often cause difficulties for schools. For example, when the provincial department spends on behalf of the school (because the school does not have section 21 status) goods often arrive late. And where money is transferred to schools the provincial department may have requirements on how the money should be spent that are impractical for the school.

What is government doing? The national department is presently using the report from the 2009 study to see what parts of the school funding policy should change. The national department is especially interested in ensuring that no fee schools work properly, that concerns around the use of quintiles to classify schools as being poorer or less poor are dealt with, and that schools granting fee exemptions to poorer learners should receive some compensation for this. Government aims to publish the amount of funding that must go to individual schools on the internet so that parents are better informed and there is less room for confusion between schools and the Department.

What should you be doing? Parents and school principals have a right to receive clear information about how much funding the school is supposed to receive, how much was transferred into the bank account of the school, and how much the Department spent on behalf of the school. If this information is not clear, or if not all funds have been paid to the school, you have a right to complain.

How will we know when things are getting better? Financial reporting systems need to improve so that it becomes clearer what is spent on each school. When schools all receive at least the amount indicated in the national policy, schools no longer complain about unnecessary restrictions and there are no reports of fraud in schools, then we will know we are achieving this goal.

This goal deals with **school infrastructure**.

Goal 24 ► Ensure that the physical infrastructure and environment of every school inspires learners to want to come to school and learn, and teachers to teach.

What is the problem? In 2008 the national department came up with a new way of classifying the quality of school infrastructure so that it would become easier to decide which schools to refurbish or rebuild. In the new classification, some schools have reached a **basic functionality** and better schools have reached an **optimum functionality**. We would want all our schools to reach an optimum functionality. Around 5 600 schools (out of a total of around 26 000) have not even reached the level of basic functionality. This is our biggest concern in the period up to 2014. For example, we still have 1 700 schools without water and 700 schools with no toilets. This not only makes learning difficult, but is very bad for the health of learners.

What is government doing? There has been much focus over the years on improving school infrastructure and we have seen improvements. For example, since 1996 the number of schools without water has gone down from 9 000 to 1 700 and the number of schools without electricity has gone down from 15 000 to 2 800. The percentage of classrooms with more than 45 learners has gone down from 55% to 25%. Government will continue to work hard at making all schools functional at the basic level by 2014 but also at taking more schools up to the optimum level. The national department is working closely with the Development Bank of Southern Africa to look at better ways of funding new school infrastructure.

What should you be doing? In many schools the infrastructure problem is not a problem of missing buildings or a shortage of desks and chairs, but the *poor state* of these things. Parents, teachers and communities in general can do more to ensure that school facilities are well looked after.

How will we know when things are getting better? Government now has a better reporting system for school infrastructure. This will make it easier to see where the gaps are and how close we are to reaching our goal.

This goal deals with **learner well-being**.

Goal 25 ► Use the school as a location to promote access amongst children to the full range of public health and poverty reduction interventions.

What is the problem? Proper schooling cannot happen if learners suffer from desperate poverty, malnutrition or illness, or even if they have hearing and eyesight problems. Though the main responsibility of the school must be good teaching and learning, there are things schools can do to ensure that learners are healthy and have access to government programmes aimed at reducing poverty. Around 90% of enrolled primary school learners have never had an eye test and yet poor eyesight can be an important reason why learners find it difficult to follow in class. Around 7% of learners do not have Road to Health cards, when they should all have this.

What is government doing? An important initiative of government is the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP). Around a quarter of all learners receive food directly delivered to the school whilst another one quarter receive school lunches paid for by money that is transferred from the Department to the school. The aim of government is that by 2014 75% of learners should be receiving school lunches. Moreover, the School Health Survey Programme will be implemented in more schools as part of the cooperation between the departments of health and education. Action will also be taken to ensure that learners who are recipients of child support grants do not pay school fees. This is something that is already in policy but we know that in too many schools this policy is not being followed.

What should you be doing? Parents should assist in ensuring that children are tested at a local clinic for eyesight and hearing problems. Parents should also understand that if a child receives a child support grant, then the child cannot be charged a school fee by a public school.

How will we know when things are getting better? Information from schools and households will be used to monitor access to school lunches and other health issues affecting learners.

This goal deals with **inclusive education**.

Goal 26 ► Increase the number of schools which effectively implement the inclusive education policy and have access to centres which offer specialist services.

What is the problem? An important reason why around 200 000 learners aged 7 to 15 are not in school is that there are not enough schools able to offer special needs education. There are also many learners in school who do not receive the special needs attention they need.

What is government doing? There has been training of teachers in ordinary schools to assist them to deal with special needs amongst learners. Around 40% of schools have begun to use the new methods introduced by the national department to identify which learners need what special attention. In 35% of schools specialists from outside the school have come to assist teachers take the inclusive education policy forward. These initiatives need to be expanded so that all schools are covered. So far 20 full service schools have been established in 20 districts. These schools provide special needs support that are difficult to provide in ordinary schools. The aim of government is for there to be one full service school in every one of the 92 education districts in the country.

What should you be doing? If you believe that your child needs special needs support, speak to your child's teacher about this. You should also find out whether your district is one of the districts that already has a full service school.

How will we know when things are getting better? The national department will clearly indicate the minimum staffing and equipment a school should have to be qualified to implement inclusive education. The number of schools which fulfil all the criteria will be monitored to see that we make progress.

This goal deals with **support by district offices**.

Goal 27 ► Improve the frequency and quality of the monitoring and support services provided by district offices to schools, partly through better use of e-Education.

What is the problem? For many of the goals mentioned in this Action Plan, the districts carry a lot of responsibility. For example, they are expected to produce the district-wide ANA report, monitor whether schools teach everything they should within the year, and so on. The

problem is that many district offices do not have enough staff or find that the existing staff do not have all the skills they need. This means they are not able to provide the quantity and the quality of support to schools that is needed, nor are they able to do all the monitoring they should.

What is government doing? Recent statistics indicate that over 90% of schools are visited by district officials at least once in a year, and that 35% of schools are visited four or more times. All schools should be visited at least twice every year and certain schools, especially those needing more support, should be visited more frequently. The national department, together with the provincial departments, will put together a clearer list of support that schools can expect from districts, and information that schools need to provide districts with. This will make it easier for schools and districts to focus on what is really important. When verification ANA occurs every second year, selected schools will be asked to evaluate the support they get from districts so that it becomes clearer what support services need to be improved. Through e-Education the sharing of information between schools and the district office will become easier.

What should you be doing? As a parent on the SGB you should be aware of what the district office requires of the school and what support the district can give the school.

How will we know when things are getting better? The number of visits per year by district officials to schools and the rating that school principals give of the services of the district will be important measures of how well we are doing.

Appendix

CODE FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

The power to improve education lies with all of us. We call on all department officials, teachers, students, parents and community members to make a commitment to a 'Code for Quality Education'.

As a DEPARTMENTAL OFFICIAL, I promise to:

- ensure all schools receive the necessary resources in time for teaching to commence;
- ensure all schools have their full staff allocation, and that any vacancies are filled without delay;
- improve my own knowledge and skills base to be more effective;
- always be available to assist schools, principals and teachers;
- respond to requests or concerns of education stakeholders;
- visit all schools within the district on a regular basis;
- monitor teacher and student attendance, and ensure no child is out of school;
- assist all schools to improve their performance, ensuring regular tests are conducted, and results are reported to parents.

As a TEACHER, in line with the SACE Code of Professional Ethics, I promise to:

- teach, to advance the education and the development of learners as individuals;
- respect the dignity and rights of all persons without prejudice;
- develop loyalty and respect for the profession;
- be punctual, enthusiastic, well prepared for lessons, and of sober mind and body;
- improve my own knowledge and skills base to be more effective;
- maintain good communication between teachers and students, among teachers themselves; and between teachers and parents;

- provide regular information to parents on their children's progress;
- eliminate unprofessional behaviour such as teacher-pupil relationships, drunkenness, drug use, assault, sexual harassment and others;
- make myself available to provide extra-mural activities.

As a LEARNER, I promise to:

- accept that the main reason for being in school is to learn and develop academically, socially and culturally;
- adhere to school rules;
- respect the legitimacy and authority of teachers;
- participate in Learner Representative Councils (LRCs) to safeguard my interests;
- show respect to other learners and not to discriminate;
- avoid anti-social behaviour like theft, vandalism, assault, sexual harassment, alcohol and drug use, and other activities that disrupt the learning process.

As a PARENT, I promise to:

- involve myself actively in school governance structures;
- have regular discussions with my children about general school matters;
- cultivate a healthy, open and cooperative relationship with my children's teachers;
- create a home environment conducive to study;
- assist in the protection of educational resources such as textbooks, chairs, tables and others.

As a COMMUNITY, we promise to:

- ensure that every school-going child is at school;
- ensure a safe and crime-free environment for schooling, and to protect the school and its assets from vandalism;

- monitor the performance of schools, and report problems to relevant authorities.

We pledge to undertake these responsibilities to ensure quality education for all.