



SCHOOL MONITORING SURVEY 2017/2018

Policy Summary



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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 set out in Action Plan 2019 and in the Medium Term Strategic Framework 2014-2019. In assessing how far these goals and indicators are being met, the School Monitoring Survey (SMS) 2017 builds on the SMS 2011, allowing us to track our delivery progress over this period.

The SMS focused on gathering information which is not available in other data systems or is collected in a different way and requires validation. In 2017, the SMS focused on 13 of the 15 Action Plan indicators which were measured in 2011. In addition, the SMS collected information about teacher and principal views on provincial, national and international assessments, 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).

The SMS 2017 was conducted in a nationally representative sample of 1000 schools offering Grade 6, as well as in a nationally representative sample of 1000 schools offering Grade 12. Only schools categorised as public ordinary schools formed part of the sample. The samples were designed to allow for reporting by province and by official school poverty quintile status with an acceptable degree of precision. Case studies in 18 schools were also conducted to further understand the mechanisms driving the results in certain indicators, especially since the construction of indicators often entailed reducing a complex matter to a single number.


The 2017 SMS therefore allows the Department to both reflect on the progress made in terms of service delivery, as well as focus on the areas which will require further support. Where possible the survey went beyond measuring the basic provisioning of education resources but attempted to measure if these were accessed by schools, in working condition and being put to effective use. An example of this was measuring if certain school facilities (such as running water) were in working condition on the day of the survey (something which is beyond the control of education departments) rather than only if the infrastructure had been installed. One of the sectoral improvements observed through this survey has been the increased provision of libraries or media centres to schools, with the largest improvements having been experienced among the no-fee schools. There was also a substantial improvement in the percentage of schools where the School Governing Body (SGB) is functioning effectively, especially among Quintile 1 schools. Although not strictly comparable to 2011, the survey also indicates an increase in the number of schools where all allocated teaching posts were filled.

Although the department has made significant strides in building state of the art schools to replace inappropriate structures and has increased the numbers of schools with electricity and water in recent years, the data collected through SMS on school infrastructure indicated that facilities were not always functional on the day of the survey. Overall, the average number of hours per year that teachers spent on professional development activities improved marginally, with more substantial increases seen among secondary school teachers. Addressing the amount of time spent by teachers on professional development activities needs to be done alongside improving the quality of such opportunities.

Finally, the 2017 SMS also provided insights on some interesting trends concerning school management practices, such as the increased practice of centralised procurement of textbooks by provinces, as well as the relative importance placed on various school management documents.

The information provided by the 2017 School Monitoring Survey will enable the Department to fulfil its mandate of monitoring and evaluating education provision across provinces and provide a more informed path towards realising our vision for schooling in 2030.





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