



Plan of Action

Improving access to free and quality basic education for all

14 June 2003



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Foreword

Public ordinary schools in our country, and in particular access to and the costs of basic quality education, have been the subject of intense research and public debate during the last year. This Plan of Action represents a key output emerging from this work. The lessons Government has learnt from the intense analysis and broad consultations inform this document strongly. We have come a long way in improving our understanding of what works best in our mission of making schooling, in particular compulsory schooling that is of a high quality, accessible to all South African learners. There have been clear successes since 1994 that we should be proud of as a country, especially given our point of departure of a schooling system that had marginalised the vast majority of learners. Our analysis has highlighted the extent of the major resource shifts towards the poor since 1994, leading to a better and more equitable per learner expenditure level. However, problems persist in terms of closing the gap between current levels of expenditure, and levels we can regard as adequate. Moreover, there are problems in the way we allocate resources, and, very importantly, in our translation of resources into quality education for all our learners.

This plan includes valuable strategic pointers for ensuring that Government's substantial, yet limited, resources are used effectively to accomplish our education mission. The emphasis in this Plan of Action is very much on ensuring that the poorest 40% of learners in South Africa continue to experience improvements in the quality of the schooling they receive, and that all barriers to access, be they distance, school fees, or some other barrier, be definitively removed in the next three years. Much of the groundwork has been laid since 1994, and for this reason we believe that the goal is attainable. Our emphasis on the poorest 40% falls within a broader strategy of promoting stability, quality and access in the schooling system as a whole. Government therefore remains committed to a schooling system that is inclusive, and widely representative of our society, and quality enhancement across the entire spectrum of that system. Specifically, Government sees the key input of the school allocations improving for all public schools in the country.

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1 Introduction

- 1. The historical legacy and our mission to transform.** The schooling system in South Africa was for decades a brutal instrument of oppression against the intellect and aspirations of the country’s youth. Yet that same system also served as a site for an intense struggle against oppression, a struggle in which many of today’s leaders learnt the meaning of freedom and justice. In 1994, a Government elected by the people of our country could at last set that schooling system on a more normal course, where institutions could nurture our youth in an environment of peace, and could produce the scientists, teachers, voters, mothers, fathers, politicians and business people of the next generations, generations for whom apartheid and the denial of access to learning would be a thing of the past. We have taken remarkable strides in the direction we wanted to go. We have made some mistakes along the way, and have learnt from them. In some ways, we have only just begun the journey towards the full transformation of our schools. Given the depths of oppression, deprivation and marginalisation visited on our people under apartheid, we have tackled the project of transformation with extreme urgency. We are understandably impatient for change. The speed of the changes may, therefore, seem painfully slow at times, but we are confident that we have

chosen the best path, and that our progress since 1994 has been a heroic feat, for which all stakeholders should take credit, of improved access to schools, healthier budgets, and significantly improved equity.

2. **Practical and realistic transformation tasks.** This plan takes stock of our recent experiences, reiterates our commitment to the basic right to free schooling of a high quality, and explains some key strategies for achieving this. The strategies are practical and realistic, and are informed by what we can now consider our fairly substantial experience in governing a schooling system in a democratic South Africa.
3. **In-depth research and public participation in the process.** This plan follows the release of the Department of Education's report titled *Review of the Financing, Resourcing and Costs of Education in Public Schools*, released in March of this year. That report analysed key aspects of the schooling system, and outlined recommendations for a better schooling system. The public was invited to comment on the report, and the Department of Education was pleased to receive both considerable praise and valuable constructive criticism. The responses from the public and various stakeholder groups were carefully considered in drawing up this current plan. The *Review* contains a wealth of analysis of the major achievements since 1994, and of specific challenges that we currently face. The reader is encouraged to read the *Review*, as its analysis is one major key to understanding our highly complex schooling system and its attendant challenges.
4. **The planning and implementation processes of Government.** The reader will find important arguments relating to the rationale of our strategies, and an outline of specific things Government plans to do in improving the schooling system. The broad scope of this plan includes a number of activities that are underway or intended in the education system as a whole. Some aspects of this plan will therefore be elaborated in the strategic and operational plans of the Department of Education and of the nine Provincial Education Departments (PEDs). The substantive location of each activity is determined by the distribution of powers and functions within the education system and depends on the current framework of intergovernmental fiscal relations. We encourage the reader to monitor this process as it unfolds, and to participate in the steps that take this plan forward. There are many opportunities at the national, provincial and local levels for this to occur.

2 Access to free and quality education for all

5. **Constitutional imperatives.** Our 1996 Constitution guarantees the right of all South Africans to a basic education. The *South African Schools Act* of 1996 (SASA), which forms the legal foundation for schools in the country, makes schooling compulsory for all learners aged seven to 15. Compulsory education is the cornerstone of any modern, democratic society that aims to give all citizens a fair start in life and equal opportunities as adults. Government is, moreover, bound by the Constitution to progressively improve access to further education and training (FET) (which is Grades 10 to 12 in schools). The current programme to expand Grade R into all public primary schools, following the recommendations of *Education White Paper 5* on early childhood development

(ECD), will result in compulsory schooling that begins in Grade R, and continues to Grade 9.

6. **The Dakar Framework.** South Africa is a signatory to the *Dakar Framework for Action* of 2000 and to a number of other international agreements, where we commit ourselves to combating poverty and uplifting our people through the provision of basic education that is compulsory for all children of school-going age, that is of good quality and in which financial capacity is not a barrier to access for any child. According to the Dakar agreement, this target should be achieved by 2015. We are well on the way to attaining this target before 2015, and have a record that is impressive by international standards. With regard to the funding of public schools, we promulgated a pro-poor funding policy in 2000. We have gone further down the road of progressive, or pro-poor, school funding than any other developing country. Our current emphasis is very much on ensuring that our pro-poor funding mechanisms bring about adequate funding for *all* poor schools by 2005, at the latest. Our objective goes beyond free education for the poor. We seek, through this plan, to achieve a schooling system that is *free and of a good quality* for all poor in the country.
7. **Inequality within the public schooling system.** We need to recognise the special nature of South Africa's public schooling system, resulting from the legacy of apartheid. Our system includes schools in suburbs that display 'First World' opulence, where parents contribute vast sums of money to the school in order to maintain costly sporting facilities and extensive media centres. Our system also includes schools that serve rural communities that are desperately poor, and where parents are mostly illiterate. Even though Government will continue to make a significant investment of public resources in schools catering for the non-poor, it is these stark inequalities that make it an imperative for Government to spend more on poor schools than rich schools, and to bring about cross-subsidisation of poor learners by parents of rich learners, through the fee exemptions mechanism, where both poor and rich attend the same school. This occurs within the broader framework of Government's transfer of resources towards the historically disadvantaged. We seek to do this while maintaining a unified public schooling system in which the overwhelming majority of learners in the country participate, and that is inclusive of the middle class. This is a necessary condition for nation building and social cohesion. The move towards free basic education for the poor in South Africa must be seen in this context.
8. **Healthy debate needed.** The way we deal with the inequalities of schooling will no doubt continue to provoke lively debate. As long as this debate is well informed, it will add value to the discourse.

3 The schooling system in the education system as a whole

9. **The budget programmes in education.** The public ordinary schooling sector occupies budget programme 2 in each of the provincial education systems. This plan focuses very much on that programme. However, other education sectors in the provincial systems are closely linked to the schooling system, and are necessary for education as a whole to succeed. A quick overview of developments in the other sectors follows:

- **Independent schools** (programme 3) are funded according to the *National Norms and Standards for the Funding of Public Schools* (also referred to as the *School Funding Norms*), which were amended in 2002 in the interests of a more effective formula for the funding of independent schools.
- **Special schools** (programme 4) are currently subject to a transformation process, laid out in *Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education*, that involves the inclusion, wherever possible, of learners with special needs in public ordinary schools. The inclusion process has far-reaching implications for public ordinary schools. However, it is not the intention of this plan to deal specifically with inclusion, nor the future function of special schools, as the exact nature of inclusion is currently being piloted in a sample of school districts, and therefore has a slightly separate planning trajectory.
- **Further education and training colleges** (programme 5) were merged into 50 new institutions in 2002. Currently, a funding policy for this sector is being finalised. Synergy between these colleges and FET in schools in the task of tackling the severe skills shortages in the country, as outlined in Government's *Human Resource Development*, is a major concern and goal of Government.
- **Adult basic education and training** (programme 6) will be reorganised during 2004 in accordance with a new funding policy for this sector that is aimed, firstly, at improving this service and, secondly, at expanding coverage to more adults. The greater use of school facilities in providing this service forms part of our strategy for this programme.
- **Early childhood development** (programme 7) is a sector that will continue to experience major expansion during the rest of this decade. In accordance with *Education White Paper 5*, Grade R will become a universal service offered mainly in existing public primary schools. The roll-out process will be strongly pro-poor, with poor schools being incorporated first into the new system, and receiving more funding. Amendments to the *School Funding Norms* in order to deal with the specific resourcing requirements of Grade R are in the process of being finalised. The roll-out of Grade R implies major systems changes for public ordinary schools. The fact that this matter is not dealt with explicitly in this plan does not negate its importance. Detailed plans for rolling out Grade R will be drafted as soon as the funding policy is in place, and the plan laid out in this document is written in full cognisance of the Grade R process.

Programmes 1 and 8 cover administration and auxiliary services, respectively, and do therefore not represent education sectors.

10. The reader is encouraged to track overall developments across all education sectors in the strategic plans and annual reports of the Department of Education and the nine Provincial Education Departments. These documents, all of which are requirements in terms of the *Public Finance Management Act* of 1999, have been improving over the years, and are set to improve further, in line with the budget reform process aimed at providing the public with better information about Government's service delivery.

4 The framework of this plan

11. **The economic view of education.** Economists often view the education process as a production process, with the chief inputs being educators, learner support materials and other non-personnel items, and physical infrastructure. The output of the production process is considered to be learner performance, or the skills and knowledge that learners have acquired at the end of a school year, or at particular exit points in the system.
12. **Schools as builders of communities and the nation.** Government views schooling as much more than a production process providing us with skills and knowledge. Schools are centres of community life, a vibrant public schooling sector is important for post-apartheid nation building, and the sector is so large that it has a dynamic effect on various aspects of the economy, from the building industry to the public transport sector. The 350,000 educators working in public ordinary schools represent around 3% of all employed adults in the country, and are therefore a powerful political, cultural and economic group.
13. **The link between efficiency and quality.** However, this does not imply that the pursuit of optimal cost-effectiveness in the education process is ignored. Our success in discharging our full mandate for public schooling, consistent with our wider goals in education, is contingent on the pursuit of optimal cost-effectiveness. It is vitally important that we focus on getting the mix of inputs right in our schooling system. Educators without adequate learner support materials (LSMs) cannot teach effectively. Costly and exciting LSMs in dilapidated school buildings are an anomaly. It is also vitally important that our schooling system as a whole, and our individual schools, be managed in such a way that inputs are effectively utilised to empower learners and communities with skills and knowledge. If we improve the resourcing of schools, we should see improved learner performance. Anything short of this represents a waste of public resources, and a betrayal of our learners. Education budgets in the country have been improving in real terms, and this trend continues through the current MTEF period. We need to ensure that improved budgets do lead to a more educated and a better trained nation. Moreover, the major resource shift towards poorer schools that we have seen since 1994 should not be an end in itself. We are shifting resources towards historically disadvantaged communities in order for the quality of education to improve for the majority of our people. Our funding policies have established pro-poor funding mechanisms in recognition of the fact that addressing the legacy of apartheid, and tackling poverty, means we must spend more on the poor if we want to give everyone an equal start in life. We should never lose sight of this goal. For this reason our plan for a better schooling system places significant emphasis on the measurement of learner performance, and on the need for improved management to ensure that education resources are translated into quality teaching and learning, and into the meaningful economic, political and cultural empowerment of all of our people.
14. This plan groups our strategies and activities according to three inputs:
 - **Personnel inputs and the curriculum.** The implementation aspects of our curriculum are dealt with here, owing to the close linkages between the provisioning of personnel and the curriculum.

- **Non-personnel non-capital inputs (NPNC).** This category includes all non-personnel inputs other than buildings and access-related inputs. Hence LSMs, furniture, and equipment are included here.
- **School infrastructure and the question of access to schools.** Here the grounds and buildings of schools are considered. Inputs required for the physical access of learners to schools, in particular scholar transport, are also dealt with here, owing to the close relationship between the physical location of schools and learner access.

The plan furthermore considers systemic changes required within the Department of Education relating to all the above inputs. That section is titled **Improved functionality within DoE**. The question of additional private resources that are contributed towards public schooling, generally by parents, is addressed in **School fees and other private inputs**. Lastly, and very importantly, the section **Performance of the schooling system** deals with the output side of the education process, and in particular with the need for quality education for all.

Informing our entire plan, and hence reiterated throughout the document, is the need for *free and quality education for all*. This implies that -

- public funding of schools, especially where learners are poor, must be sufficient to cover the cost of all the basic inputs required for a quality education;
- schooling must provide all learners with meaningful knowledge and skills that will empower them to take part fully in the economic, political and cultural life of the country; and
- no learners, especially those of compulsory school-going age, should experience any economic, physical or other barriers to attending school.

5 Personnel inputs and the curriculum

In a nutshell

Our successes since 1994 in bringing about greater equity in the provisioning of personnel are impressive. Our post provisioning model, within which this move to equity has occurred, has recently been improved through the incorporation of a pro-poor weighting, making the net effect of the model clearly pro-poor. Closely linked to post provisioning is the matter of curriculum diversity in historically disadvantaged schools. It is crucial that this matter be addressed, though not at the cost of our focus on enhancing quality across the full spectrum of the curriculum. There is a need for more research into, and a better informed strategy for, education human resourcing. Educator productivity needs special attention. Better in-service training programmes, LSMs, incentives and improved school management are key factors that can enhance educator productivity. A national policy on the provisioning of non-educators to schools will be finalised soon. Our research needs to provide us with a better understanding of teacher identity in South Africa, something that is key to formulating workable educator strategies.

5.1 Background

15. **Successes in redistributing personnel resources.** As pointed out in the *Review*, since 1994 we have seen a major redistribution of educators in the schooling system, and the effective elimination of the apartheid practice of supplying the rich with more state-paid educators. Considering that personnel expenditure comprises the bulk of expenditure on schooling, as it does in all schooling systems across the world, our success in redistributing educators towards the poor also implies a major overall shift of Government expenditure towards the poor. The redistribution of educators was pursued as part of a strategy to tackle the problem of unacceptably large classes in poor schools, a clear barrier to quality schooling. Though we still find instances of unacceptably high L:E ratios, the average L:E ratio in poor schools has dropped considerably since 1996. The redistribution of non-educators (e.g. school secretaries, cleaners and gardeners) has been less successful, and uneven across provinces, owing, largely, to a lack of national policy in this regard.
16. **The post provisioning model.** Since 1998, educator posts have been distributed amongst schools on the basis of an affordability-driven post provisioning model using as inputs mainly straight enrolment, but also grade in which learners are enrolled, language of learning and teaching, and curriculum offerings in Grades 8 to 12. The use of curriculum offerings in the model in the case of secondary schools caused some controversy, because historically advantaged schools tended to offer more scarce subjects, such as music and certain technical subjects, and therefore enjoyed a slight advantage in terms of the overall L:E ratio. Part of the problem was the slow speed with which curriculum equalisation for Grades 10 to 12 occurred across the schooling system. The post provisioning aspect, though not the curriculum aspect, of the problem was addressed in 2002 with a pro-poor weighting, which effectively cancelled out the advantage that certain middle class schools had enjoyed. The pro-poor weighting currently governs 2% of all educator posts, though this will rise to 5% within some years.

17. **The way we perform our education human resource planning.** The education departments and relevant labour unions have established a clear modus operandi over the years, and relations between employer and employee organisations have on the whole been driven by constructive debates and a firm commitment on all sides to the mission of transforming our education system. However, both the state and employee organisations have experienced problems of insufficient information and research to support decision-making, where decisions have far-reaching implications for how the entire education system works. Government did commission a major teacher audit in 1996, and a large national teacher conference was held in 2001 to address fundamental questions of human resource strategy in the education system. However, the challenges facing us are not static, and various issues, from HIV/AIDS to changing attitudes towards the educator profession amongst our youth, mean that we continually need to revisit our strategies.
18. **Educator productivity.** International studies show that the ‘returns to investment’, or learner performance obtained with money spent on inputs, is particularly low in South Africa. We lag behind in terms of the skills and knowledge of our learners, even when we compare ourselves to countries that spend less on education than we do. Low teacher productivity has been cited as the main reason for South Africa’s relatively poor performance. Most of our educators received most of their training under apartheid, and herein lies an important key to understanding the problem. Government has actively sought to address the training problem through extensive in-service training programmes. However, for some educators, the training programmes have been experienced as inadequate, or ‘crash courses’, whilst other educators have not received any in-service training at all. Clearly, the task of reskilling our educators to provide quality schooling is a mammoth task, which depends not only on Government programmes, but also on initiatives from the school level. Many individual educators and schools have taken the initiative of running training workshops using materials that have become available to schools, with positive results.

5.2 Educators who are empowered to offer quality education

19. **More effective in-service training approach.** Government will continue to roll out training programmes to help educators in schools to implement the new curriculum, and to upgrade themselves in terms of generic skills and knowledge pertinent to their tasks as educators. The Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education, set up in 2003, is examining how we can improve our performance in this task. Analysis of the cost effectiveness of the various training models now in existence is being undertaken as part of this process. We believe that incentives for schools and districts to initiate their own skills development programmes, within Government’s framework of in-service training, should be strengthened.
20. **Better administrative and other support in schools.** Whilst work performed by educators outside of the classroom in preparing for classes does contribute directly towards quality teaching, work outside the classroom on administrative tasks like procurement of materials and liaising with the Department on salary matters does not. In fact, time spent on these administrative tasks often implies less time spent on class preparation. A national policy on the provisioning of non-educators is overdue. Draft policy has already been formulated. *Government will*

ensure that a final policy is passed by no later than 2004. The ultimate goal of this policy should be to enhance teaching in the classroom. The policy will include a strategy and framework for educator assistants, not with a view to undermining the educator corps, but so that there is a framework in place when temporary pressures, for instance pressures arising out of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, require the provisioning of additional support to educators.

21. **Non-personnel resources.** Government recognises the importance of providing adequate non-personnel resources if we want educators to render a quality service. This matter is dealt with in a separate section below.

5.3 Educators as nation builders

22. **Understanding our Constitution and its implications.** It has been pointed out that Government views schooling as much more than a production process. Educators are to a large degree the midwives in the nation building process. Educators themselves need to possess a clear understanding of our Constitution, of the long process that brought us to our democracy, and of the serious challenges, especially the challenge of inequality, still facing us. Educators, whatever their curriculum specialisation, should also be well-versed in matters of human rights, and linguistic, religious and other diversity. An educator who does not understand the nation building task at hand, cannot effectively provide quality education. Discrimination by educators, both overt and covert, against poor learners, or learners of a particular race or language group, or for some other reason, is unfortunately a reality in our schooling system, and is something we must eradicate. Government is currently strengthening the nation building component of our advocacy and training programmes, and this process will continue.

23. **Accountability of educators.** Publicly employed educators in schools are accountable to both the state as the employer, through the school principal, and to the communities that they serve. We have educators whose accomplishments exceed even the high expectations placed on them by the system and the community. These are the heroes of our schooling system, and there are many of them, many more than will ever be given their due credit in awards ceremonies like the high-profile Annual Teaching Awards. Sadly, we also have a minority of educators who not only fail to give of their best in the classroom, but contravene school rules by, for instance, arriving late at work in the morning, and engaging in criminal acts such as improper relations with learners and sexual abuse. The harm that such behaviour inflicts on our schooling system, on the reputation of the teaching fraternity and on the next generation of South Africans is very high. For this reason we regard it as a priority to deal decisively with educators who fail to execute their duties to the best of their abilities as professionals and as citizens.

5.4 Achieving educator job satisfaction

24. **Educator identity.** Educators are a diverse group, with diverse notions of their own identity. It is important for us to understand that identity, and to foster it in a way that strengthens the willingness and ability of educators to offer quality education. Job satisfaction is as important for educators as it is for employees in other organisations. We have made great strides in bringing greater transparency,

predictability and fairness into the remuneration system for educators, yet we believe that we can make further improvements in this regard.

25. **Increases in both personnel budget and productivity.** Government believes that the principal approach to dealing with the productivity problem should be to raise educator productivity to an acceptable level, so that our expenditure on education is fully justified in terms of the knowledge and skills that our learners have. We recognise that raising educator productivity is not a one-dimensional task. It involves a carefully balanced combination of in-service training, improvements to the conditions of service, access to better support materials, awareness-raising campaigns, an effective system of rewards and incentives and decisive yet fair disciplinary procedures. Importantly, unlike many other developing countries under the intense pressure of foreign debt, our Government does not believe that we need to shrink our personnel budgets in the education sector. After the difficult 1996-1998 period, when personnel budgets skyrocketed to unsustainable levels and had to be reigned in, we succeeded in securing a sustainable level of personnel expenditure, and now see increases in real terms in our personnel expenditure in public ordinary schools.
26. **Incentives for educators.** Whilst we do not plan for decreases to the salary bill, this does not mean that we regard the current system whereby educators are remunerated as optimum. We believe that we need to pay a premium to certain educators in at least three cases. Firstly, exceptional effort on the part of educators and school principals must be rewarded. The practicalities of this are not easy, partly because educators are faced with vastly differing constraints, but we are confident that we will find a system for achieving this. Secondly, educators with specialisations that are scarce, for instance educators with a mathematics or a science specialisation, must be paid more, at least in the interim, in order not to lose those educators to other sectors of the economy. We should remember that certain specialisations are scarce because we have not trained enough educators in those fields. Ultimately, our teacher training strategy should take into account expected losses of educators with particular specialisations. Thirdly, we need to break the current pattern whereby more marginalised schools in rural areas suffering serious poverty are always the last choice of employment for educators, thus making quality education a more remote possibility in these schools. This can only be done by providing incentives to work in marginalised rural areas, or urban areas regarded as difficult.
27. **Good management in schools.** Studies have shown that improving school management is one the most, if not the most, effective way of bringing about quality education in schools. Educators in well-managed schools are more satisfied as workers and professionals. Good time management in a school, in particular a good timetable, means workload amongst educators is fairly and effectively spread, and learners focus on appropriate things at the different times of the day and the week. For this reason we believe it is in the interests of everyone for Government to pay particular attention to management training, the remuneration of managers, support systems for managers, and the building up of a corps of education managers, or school principals, that is committed and that has earned the respect of educators and communities.

28. **Class size.** Despite our successes in reducing class sizes in historically disadvantaged schools, and despite a post provisioning system that currently distributes slightly more educator posts to poor schools than to non-poor schools, we believe that we still have problems with unacceptably large class sizes in some schools. There are many reasons why this problem might persist. Posts that have been created are not filled, educators are absent from schools, increasingly due to illness, and an inadequate physical infrastructure in the school forces large classes to occur. We need to address these root causes. We should also consider declaring a maximum permitted class size, above which the Department should be obliged to take extraordinary and temporary measures. However, we should not blindly be driven by the L:E ratio alone. The L:E ratio is not the only determinant of quality education. If there is a choice between using a limited increase in the budget to reduce class size by four learners, and using that same increase to improve the physical conditions of the classroom and purchase better LSMs, some educators may well choose the latter as the best option for enhancing quality. We simply cannot apply the same criteria to all schools.

5.5 The implementation of our curriculum

29. **Practical solutions to curriculum implementation.** The practicalities of bringing the curriculum to the classroom need further attention. LSMs must not only support the curriculum pedagogically, they must also be economically viable. We should therefore place greater focus on the trade-off between the durability of our LSMs, and cost, as well as storage within schools, and retrieval of textbooks from learners. This matter is dealt with in some more depth in section 6 below.
30. **Quality and diversity.** In Grades 10 to 12, where different learners can take different curriculum combinations, we are focusing on bringing more curriculum diversity to historically disadvantaged schools. The lack of diversity in these schools has been strongly criticised, partly because, with the current post provisioning norms, which are partly driven by the curriculum offered by the schools, curriculum diversity translates into a slight advantage in terms of educator posts (this effect has been offset since 2003 with a countervailing pro-poor amendment to the post provisioning formula). Greater curriculum diversity in historically disadvantaged schools, and, linked to that, the scaling down of *state* resourcing in terms of posts for scarce curriculum offerings in middle class schools, has resourcing implications related not only to educator posts, but also to physical infrastructure and LSMs. Implementation plans for the roll-out of the new FET schools curriculum are taking this into account. It is important that we maintain a careful balance between bringing diversity into the curriculum of all schools with FET, and our efforts to enhance quality across the curriculum. We should not make the mistake of believing that diversity on its own improves quality. What we want is diversity with good quality, not diversity with poor quality.

5.6 'TSUDI' research and strategy

31. **Research and strategy formulation.** International practice has shown that proper human resource planning in a schooling system requires a level of investment in research and strategy formulation well above what is currently the case in South Africa. The Department of Education will increase its current capacity in this

regard significantly over the coming years. ***By 2004, a major study, with strategy recommendations, will have been completed.*** The Department of Education will carry out this work in collaboration with key stakeholders in order to promote shared ownership of the final product, although the Department of Education takes final responsibility for the output. The current Ministerial Investigation into Teacher Development is to be regarded as one key project leading towards the finalisation of the larger research and consultation project. The document released in 2004 should include a thorough analysis of past trends and the effectiveness of current policies, as well as realistic proposals for medium- to long-term strategy, based partly on international best practice. The scope of the document should encompass the following ‘TSUDI’ (teacher supply, utilisation, development and identity) issues:

- Educator **supply**: The anticipated educator supply crisis, the pre-service training trajectory, educator demand factors, long-range age profiles of educators, the attractiveness of the educator profession, economic factors that attract and retain educators, and educator attrition are some of the issues that should receive attention.
- Educator **utilisation**: The efficacy of the current post provisioning approach, district-level deployment of educators, school-level time management, the role of SGBs, class size, classroom technology, and systems of support, reward and punishment for educators are some of the issues that should receive attention.
- Educator **development**: The effectiveness of existing training programmes, training systems that can reach all educators over a space of time, appropriateness of current training materials and schools-based and district-based educator development initiatives are some of the issues that should receive attention.
- Educator **identity**: The way educators view themselves, the way educators are viewed by society, and how this impacts on educator policy and strategy should receive attention.

6 Non-personnel non-capital inputs (NPNC)

In a nutshell

The *School Funding Norms* represent a victory in terms of pro-poor funding in South Africa, though the attainment of adequate levels of funding has been slow. We will be norming the school allocations in rand terms in order to ensure that at least all poor learners receive enough for a ‘basic minimum package’. Moreover, we will use national instead of provincial poverty quintiles to drive funding so that equally poor learners across the country will be subject to the same pro-poor targeting. Accelerated but sustainable conversion to SASA section 21 status for schools is something we regard as important in order to empower schools. Non-section-21 schools will obtain increased procurement powers, whilst the Department retains authority over finances, in order to improve services to these schools. The roll-out of asset management systems to all schools is a key target.

6.1 Background

32. **Progressive funding norms.** The *School Funding Norms*, first implemented in 2000, created a national system for providing non-personnel non-capital (NPNC) school allocations. This system is progressive and states that 60% of the budget should go to the schools with the poorest 40% of learners. The policy has been a key tool in the move towards the adequate funding of all poor schools.
33. **Funding and resourcing problems.** Success in the implementation of the policy has varied across provinces, partly because provinces have experienced varying budgetary space with which to fund the school allocations, and partly because provinces have varied in their capacity to translate funding into physical resources. In 2002, the school allocation to the poorest provincial quintile of learners varied from around R60 for North West and Limpopo to about R450 for the Northern Cape and Gauteng. About 22% of schools in the country have spending functions transferred to them in terms of section 21 of the *South African Schools Act*, on the basis of an evaluation of management capacity, and are hence called ‘section 21 schools’. These schools have their school allocations transferred straight into their bank accounts. In the case of non-section-21 schools, on the other hand, the school allocation is held in trust by the Provincial Education Department, which is responsible for procuring non-personnel goods on behalf of the school. This arrangement has been problematic, as the administration involved is cumbersome, and PEDs have limited administrative capacity. The result has been that many non-section-21 schools received goods late, or not at all, during the financial year (in which case funds would be returned to the Provincial Treasury).
34. **What NPNC includes.** The NPNC category covers clearly consumable items, like exercise books, pens and electricity, as well items that are at least partly capital items, in the sense that they last more than one year, like textbooks, furniture and equipment such as photocopiers. There has been some degree of confusion over precisely what the school allocations should purchase, and this has led to an under-provisioning of certain inputs, notably equipment. The important distinction between NPNC items required for regular running of a school, and those required where schools have expanded, or where there are historical backlogs, has not been clear in expenditure plans, and this has aggravated the problem of inadequate funding.

6.2 The national resource targeting framework

35. **A basic minimum package.** In order to bring about adequate funding of schools, and hence eliminate the need for schools to charge school fees, it is important for Government to establish how much funding the average general education and training (GET) learner requires per year in NPNC funding. Different calculations of the basic funding required render different results, depending on one’s definition of what exactly a ‘basic minimum package’ of NPNC inputs entails. From preliminary research conducted, we can say that the basic minimum package costs between R600 and R1 000. This amount is well above the current funding levels, even the funding levels for poor learners in the provinces with the best funding. We can also approach the question from the point of view of affordability, and ask how much Government can afford to spend on the average

learner. Given the overall budgets of provinces, and what one could reasonably expect provinces to spend on education, on public ordinary schools, and on NPNC goods, we arrive at an amount of about R500 for the *average* learner (in 2002 rands). Currently, these funds are not available for NPNC budgets in public ordinary schools as a result of a variety of factors, but in particular owing to expenditure pressures, especially in poorer provinces, in areas of service delivery other than education.

36. **National minimum norms for the school allocations.** In view of the importance of allocating to each poor learner an amount that is as close as possible to an adequate amount, Government believes that national norms should be established that specify what the minimum amount is that Provincial Education Departments may allocate for each poor learner. ***Government will finalise norms to this effect, in the form of amendments to the current School Funding Norms, during 2003.*** We will refer to this, and the other changes to the system of school allocations referred to in this plan, as a *national resource targeting framework*. The minimum school allocation per learner for the poorest learners should be R450 in 2004, R563 in 2005, and R703 in 2006. The 2004 norm represents an increase over the 2002 level, in nominal terms, of around 200% in the case of the provinces with the lowest NPNC budgets at the time. For the provinces with better historical expenditure levels, the 2004 norm represents more or less the actual level of expenditure in 2002. The 2004 to 2006 trend in the norms stipulated here represent a 25% per annum increment in nominal terms. We believe that the schooling system has the capacity to spend these amounts, though there would have to be considerable management effort dedicated to ensuring that blockages in the administration that we are aware of were dealt with decisively. We furthermore believe that the amounts are affordable, and that they will have a significant impact in terms of realising quality schooling and removing the pressures schools presently experience to charge school fees.
37. **National instead of provincial quintiles.** In accordance with the *School Funding Norms*, Provincial Education Departments divide their schools up into five groups, or ‘quintiles’, from poorest to least poor, where each quintile has an equal number of learners. Given that provinces experience different levels of poverty in the population, and given that we would want to see equally poor learners funded at the same level across the country, the provincial quintiles that are currently used in the calculation of the school allocations will be replaced by national quintiles. This means that Statistics South Africa data will be used to determine what the size is of each *national* poverty quintile in each province. The next table indicates the breakdown according to 2000 StatsSA data (this breakdown is subject to further verification).

	National quintiles					
	1 (poorest)	2	3	4	5 (least poor)	Total
Eastern Cape	34%	26%	18%	10%	11%	100%
Free State	33%	20%	16%	14%	18%	100%
Gauteng	7%	11%	18%	28%	35%	100%
KwaZulu-Natal	19%	22%	22%	21%	16%	100%
Limpopo	27%	25%	22%	15%	10%	100%
Mpumalanga	14%	23%	25%	21%	17%	100%
Northern Cape	18%	17%	21%	20%	23%	100%
North West	20%	19%	23%	23%	15%	100%
Western Cape	4%	10%	16%	29%	40%	100%
South Africa	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	100%

38. **Distribution of funding across the five national quintiles.** Currently, the *School Funding Norms* determine that a 35-25-20-15-5 distribution of funds should be followed across quintiles 1 to 5, where each figure represents the total percentage of funding received by each quintile. This distribution has been criticised as differentiating too much between different groups of poor people, in particular quintiles 1 and 2. Government's successes in rolling out welfare grants to the very poorest, especially during the last three years with regard to the child support grant, has implications for redress funding within the schooling sector. We need to view Government's poverty alleviation programmes holistically. Public funding flowing through the Department of Social Development that assists poor and vulnerable learners in the home have a direct impact on the opportunities that learners have of accessing and realising quality education. Because of the changing context of overall Government service delivery, and in view of the anticipated increases in the school allocations over time in absolute terms, we regard it as important that the national norming process should be linked to a distribution across the five national quintiles that is flexible and responsive to changing trends. However, whatever distribution curve is chosen should ensure that at least 80% of funding flows to the poorest 60% of learners – this is the case in the original *School Funding Norms* distribution curve as well as in the distribution proposed in the following table. The following table indicates what percentage of the funding for the school allocations will be taken up by each national quintile, and what the amounts will be. The amounts for all quintiles represent increases over the current expenditure levels in the country, in other words even non-poor schools can expect to see increases in their school allocations. Moreover, non-poor schools in the poorer provinces may benefit from a shift to a lower quintile, for instance from provincial quintile 1 to national quintile 2. The Minister of Education may declare revisions to the following schedule, and will at appropriate points in time indicate what the minimum level of funding is after 2006. Moreover, the timing of the phase-in approach represented in the schedule is subject to the finalisation of key budget decisions to be made in the current financial year.

	National quintiles					Total ¹
	1 (poorest)	2	3	4	5 (least poor)	
2004	30.0	27.5	22.5	15.0	5.0	100.0
	R 450	R 413	R 338	R 225	R 75	R 3.3 bn
2005	30.0	27.5	22.5	15.0	5.0	100.0
	R 563	R 516	R 422	R 281	R 94	R 4.1 bn
2006	30.0	27.5	22.5	15.0	5.0	100.0
	R 703	R 645	R 527	R 352	R 117	R 5.2 bn

39. **Affordability of the norms.** The normed minimum amounts in the previous table result in a sum of individual provincial budget shortfalls of between R1.1bn and R1.5bn per year. Our analysis has shown that this shortfall, which would be spread across three provinces only, could possibly be dealt with within the current fiscus if we reprioritise within the existing budgets. This matter will be vigorously pursued within the budgeting process. Insufficient budgets in the interim may influence the timing of the implementation process, but we are confident that the approach is optimal as well as sustainable.
40. **Measurement of school poverty.** The current practice, specified in the *School Funding Norms*, of basing 50% of the poverty weighting of each school on the household income of the area, and 50% on observations relating to the conditions at the school, will be changed so that only household income is taken into account. The use of conditions at the school has been found to create perversions in the poverty targeting process, for instance the unfair disadvantaging of poor schools with new buildings. Research has shown that this change would bring about a measurement of poverty that is more relevant to the level of school funding required by the school.
41. **Poor learners in quintile 5 schools.** The 5% of resources flowing to quintile 5 schools, stipulated in the original *School Funding Norms* and in the distribution outlined above, can be regarded as high if we consider the steepness of the country's income distribution curve at the non-poor end. The school allocations flowing to quintile 5 schools are intended to make it possible and fair for these schools to enrol poor learners to a level where 25% of learners would be granted full exemption from school fees. Where quintile 5 schools can show that more than 25% of learners have been granted full exemption from school fees, where those school fees are not excessive, the criteria used for measuring the income of the community around the school will be reviewed for schools on a case-by-case basis, and schools may be moved to a different position on the resource targeting list. Where the number of poor and exempt learners in a quintile 5 school falls below the 25% level, the Department would reserve the right to claim back a part of the school allocation granted to the school. The details of these mechanisms, which are aimed at reducing barriers to access for poor learners in historically advantaged schools, will be laid down in the amended *School Funding Norms*.

¹ The rand amounts in the last column refer to the total cost for the whole schooling system, assuming 11 million learners.

42. **Items covered by the school allocations.** The original *School Funding Norms* stipulate that items such as cleaning materials and routine maintenance are not covered by the school allocations. The intention of this provision was to encourage community participation in relation to school maintenance. However, this provision also adds to the pressure for school fees to be charged. This provision will therefore be removed from the policy. Moreover, the policy amendments will specify all the items that the school allocations are intended to cover, what items are not covered, and how these items that are not covered will be financed, for instance out of the capital investment budgets of the Department.

6.3 Systems to support the national resource targeting framework

43. **Clearer national policy to regulate school finances.** Currently, the *South African Schools Act*, the *School Funding Norms* and various provincial notices regulate how school funds are managed, what the budgeting and accounting procedures are, and the relationship between the PED and the school in terms of financial accountability. We believe that this legal framework needs strengthening, and that it should be a national one. For this reason, we will be engaging with the Provincial Governments and National Treasury to explore greater cohesion, and the closing of certain loopholes, possibly through an addition to the *School Funding Norms*.
44. **Move towards SASA section 21 status.** Government remains committed to a long-term goal in the schooling system whereby all schools become responsible for managing the non-personnel funds received from the state, and have the capacity not only to manage their finances well, but to translate financial resources into the physical resources that will most cost-effectively promote quality education. We do not see this as a reduction in the responsibility of the Provincial Education Departments. With the increasing transfer of financial management responsibility to schools, PEDs will increasingly be able to shift their focus to the responsibility of monitoring how successfully schools translate inputs into learner performance. Section 21 status is no longer a synonym for ex-Model-C schools. Many of the schools now applying for, and receiving, section 21 status are township and rural schools, which have benefited from our management development programmes and are clearly in a position to take greater control over their finances. We regard this as a very healthy development.
45. **New interim measures for non-section-21 schools.** The *Review* identified the expenditure of the school allocations in non-section-21 schools as a particular problem. We will continue to have a large number of non-section-21 schools in our schooling system for many years, and it is imperative that we address this problem effectively. We believe that there are ways in which we can improve the efficiency of the NPNC resourcing situation in non-section 21-schools, whilst retaining financial management control in the Department. The DoE and PEDs will jointly be developing mechanisms whereby non-section 21-schools will be able, at their request, to assume greater control over the procurement process, for some or for all items, though financial accountability would rest with the PED. What this means, is that schools would be able to go to suppliers themselves and order materials such as books or cleaning materials, and the PED would on behalf of the school transfer funds to the suppliers concerned. Accountability at the school would rest with the school principal, in terms of the existing *Public*

Service Regulations. The responsibility of the PED would then be to ensure, firstly, that the funds were in fact transferred to the supplier and, secondly, that the purchases were in line with the budget of the school, which is in any event approved by the PED. We will furthermore be exploring the possibility of transferring the school allocation of non-section-21 schools to bank accounts pertaining to individual schools (this is currently what occurs with section 21 schools), but with an arrangement whereby the PED and the school exercise joint authority over the release of funds from these accounts. ***The new interim measures for non-section-21 schools will be finalised during 2003 and 2004.***

46. **Asset management systems in schools.** The *Review* concluded that the lack of proper asset management systems in many schools, including proper systems for the retrieval and storage of textbooks, is an important factor contributing to leakages of resources and hence the under-resourcing of schools. We believe that there are some basic steps we need to take in the near future to ensure, firstly, that school management is aware of the importance of asset management and, secondly, that systems, even very simple paper-based systems, exist in all schools. We moreover believe that we should develop a partnership with the South African Police Service (SAPS), focusing specifically on reducing theft of school items. Very clear and indelible marking of school property will assist SAPS and communities to identify what items belong to the local schools. ***The Departments of Education will ensure that by 2004 at least 80% of schools have asset management systems in place, and that, by 2005, all schools possess this facility.***
47. **Electricity and water consumption.** A problem identified in the *Review* was the inability of many schools to control their electricity and water consumption, and to avoid wastage of these utilities. We will ensure that all schools have both electricity and water meters, and that school management knows how to read them in order to manage consumption. We will also pursue the option of installing pre-paid electricity meters in schools using a pay card as a tool for managing consumption and for allowing the school itself to disconnect the electricity supply during, for instance, school holidays. Importantly, our premise is that electricity is a resource that ought to be consumed in all schools, in the interests of providing quality education, but that schools should be in a position to control consumption, so that wastage of this item does not adversely affect expenditure on other items in the school.

6.4 School nutrition

48. **Poverty targeting in our school nutrition programme.** The Primary Schools Nutrition Programme (PSNP) will be transferred from the Department of Health to the Department of Education during 2004. Preparations for this transfer began in 2002, and we are confident that Government will be in a position to move closer to its target of providing nutritious lunches to all poor learners on every school day. ***During 2004, we will realise our target of providing a nutritious meal to 20% of learners on a pro-poor basis on every school day.*** These learners will be all the learners in schools which offer any of the grades in the Grade R to Grade 7 range, and targeting will start from the poorest schools and cover 20% of learners.

49. **Poor learners in non-targeted schools.** In order to provide school feeding to individual poor learners in schools not fully covered in the programme, we will set up a mechanism whereby schools will be able to apply for funding to provide lunches for these individual learners. In this case, eligibility for poverty-based welfare grants will be used as a criterion for eligibility for a publicly funded lunch.

7 School infrastructure and the question of access to schools

In a nutshell

A comprehensive capital investment plan for education, as well as an improved national implementation plan, will enhance our ability to tackle backlogs and provide an acceptable physical infrastructure in all schools. We believe our physical infrastructure planning must focus strongly on making schools accessible to all learners, and that scholar transport should be a supplementary strategy to achieve this goal.

7.1 A capital investment policy and plan

50. **A comprehensive capital investment policy.** The *Review* outlined some of the complexities around planning how we spend our capital investment budgets. It is vital that our measurement of physical infrastructure backlogs leads to targeting of expenditure that most effectively and most rapidly addresses barriers to quality schooling in poor, and especially rural, areas. Moreover, we need to take into account migration patterns, which are particularly dynamic in our schooling system, in order to ensure that we build and improve structures in the right locations. Different modes of service delivery, including public private partnerships (PPPs), should receive attention. For better planning and budgeting relating to our substantial capital investment budgets to occur, we need a well-informed national policy framework. *The Department of Education will complete the formulation of a comprehensive capital investment policy for education during 2004.*
51. **Plans with better targeting of critical areas of need.** There is currently an extensive planning network supporting our capital investment budgets, but we believe this aspect of our delivery system can improve. Physical planners in all the Education Departments need better models and planning tools, and training on how to use them, in order for us to speed up the process of eliminating the physical infrastructure backlogs bequeathed to us by the apartheid system. This work must also occur within a technically sound and widely consulted national plan for infrastructure development. We believe that we can make improvements to our current national plan. *By 2004, we will have come up with an improved national capital investment plan for the targeting of critical areas of physical infrastructure need.*

7.2 Scholar transport

52. **Maximum time that each learner should spend on transport.** Infrastructure development in the schooling system is closely linked to the matter of scholar transport. Our goal should not just be to provide school buildings, but also to ensure that we have an infrastructure that makes schooling easily accessible to all

learners of compulsory school-going age. Government believes that no poor learner should be further than one hour away from the closest school offering the grade he or she must attend. This is particularly important in the case of primary school learners.

53. **Study into learner transport options.** Provincial Education Departments have embarked on a variety of scholar transport programmes since 1994. We believe it is time to take stock of the many initiatives that have been running, and to assess which approaches can best serve our goal of making schooling accessible for our learners. *During 2004, the Department of Education, in conjunction with the Department of Transport, will conduct an assessment of current initiatives, and formulate recommendations for the way forward.* In arriving at recommendations, we will look broadly at the available options, including school buses, subsidies for learners using the general public transport system and bicycles. Hostels, boarding allowances and independent schools will also be looked at as options for those areas and situations where transport schemes are less viable.

8 Improved functionality within DoE relating to all inputs

In a nutshell

Capacity in the Department of Education will be improved in respect of budget monitoring and support, school systems development, liaison with key suppliers of goods and services, data collection, and research.

54. **Budget Monitoring and Support Office (BMSO).** An instrument through which we seek to enhance the capacity of the Department of Education to provide support to PEDs, will be the Budget Monitoring and Support Office. This office will monitor trends in provincial education budgets closely, and will make assessments of these budgets in relation to our education policies, our equity targets, and mixes of inputs that are sound from an economic point of view. Furthermore, staff from this office, as representatives of the DoE, will participate actively in the provincial education budgeting processes, advising provincial colleagues where necessary. The office would compile periodic reports on their assessments, and comparative analyses of provincial practice. These reports would be of a high standard, and would assist in guiding provincial planners regarding best practice across provinces in achieving our policy goals. We believe this service in the DoE would be a powerful lever for improving the resourcing situation in schools, and, hence, for accelerating our attainment of access to free and quality schooling for all. Specifications for the BMSO have already been formulated, and the DoE is working closely with the National Treasury to ensure that a clear modus operandi is established whereby the work of the BMSO is aligned with the budget process driven by the National Treasury. *The Budget Monitoring and Support Office will deliver its first reports in 2004.*
55. **Dedicated staff focusing on school systems.** Schools require a host of administrative systems in order to deliver a quality service to learners and communities. They require application forms for new learners, records with details regarding learners and parents, attendance registers, learner assessment records, inventories of textbooks and other assets, and so on. There will be

increasing pressure to computerise the various administrative systems of schools and to network school administration computers to larger systems. In the interim, however, it is important that effective paper-based systems exist. In fact, computerisation of school systems works best if there is a history of effective utilisation of a paper-based system. The enormity of the task of setting up school systems has been underestimated. In most provinces, even paper-based systems tend not to be very effective. Often, the systems used are still those inherited from the apartheid era. Up until now, the development of school administration systems has largely been a function of the Provincial Education Departments. However, the costs of this task are high, and there are clear benefits to a more standardised, national approach. In fact, the *National Education Policy Act* of 1996 underlines the importance of a national approach to systems development. ***By 2004 the Department of Education will have established a function to deal with school systems, and by 2005 the DoE will have produced its first comprehensive report, with recommendations, relating to school systems.*** As part of this responsibility, the DoE will focus on systems at the level of the district to complement systems at schools. The work involved in this function will include research into current systems, and may include the purchasing of standard systems for all schools across the country and the establishment of frameworks within which PEDs or schools may develop their own systems.

56. **An industry liaison office in the DoE.** Schools require resources that are often supplied by large national or multinational firms. It is difficult for individual schools, or even individual provinces, to negotiate favourable prices or procurement arrangements with these firms. The DoE can fulfil a strategic role in this respect, by liaising either with individual firms, or with entire industries. The textbook industry is a particularly important industry with which the education system must interact. There are both curriculum and economic benefits that result out of closer and more regular collaboration between this industry and the education sector, through the Department of Education. Lack of coordination in textbook specifications has been cited as one factor contributing to high textbook prices. A short-term approach to textbook orders also pushes textbook production costs up. Ideally, the industry and the education sector should jointly arrive at medium- to long-term plans relating to the demand and supply of textbooks. Both sides stand to gain from this. ***In the interests of lowering the prices of inputs required by schools, the DoE will, during 2003, strengthen its capacity to liaise with relevant industries, in particular the textbook industry. By 2004, the Department of Education, together with the Provincial Education Departments, will have concluded a strategy with the textbook industry to ensure the cost-effective and timely supply of textbooks for schools.***
57. **Further improvements to the collection of school data.** The Department of Education surveys schools on a regular basis, mainly through the Annual Survey of Schools and the School Register of Needs. These data collection processes are being improved on an ongoing basis in order to provide a better picture of what the trends are in schools. What will receive particular attention, in view of the critical nature of the issues, is data on school fees and data on textbooks at schools. We need to know what the trends are in the country with regard to school fees, so that we are in a position to monitor whether improved public resourcing has in fact resulted in lower school fee pressure on poor communities, and, hence,

in improved access of poor learners to schooling. It is also important for parents themselves to be empowered with national and provincial information regarding fees, so that proposals for excessive fees in individual schools will be opposed by parents in the fee-setting process. Data on textbooks is important insofar as it can assist us in determining the effectiveness of our textbook retrieval campaigns and systems, and the degree to which learners have adequate access to textbooks, and, hence, to the possibility of quality schooling.

58. **More sample studies of schools to track resourcing issues.** In order for the Department of Education to conduct more in-depth research into particular issues relating to the adequacy of public funding, pressures on households, access of learners to schools, and whether learner performance justifies the inputs, extensive and very specialised data sets on schools are needed. It is not economical for the Department of Education to collect this specialised data from the more than 25,000 schools in the country. Instead, the DoE needs to select a representative sample of schools as an object for the study, and collect the required data from the selected schools only. This approach has been followed in the DoE's Systemic Evaluation programme. This programme will be extended so that it can provide more in-depth information and research on the full range of resourcing issues. *The DoE's first in-depth sample study into the resourcing of schools will be conducted during 2003, and the report will be made public during 2004.*

9 School fees and other private inputs

In a nutshell

Our most urgent goal is to ensure that no poor school should need to charge school fees owing to inadequate public funding. We believe that in the period 2004 to 2006 we can take major strides towards achieving this goal. Poor schools with improved public funding will have to provide sound reasons for continuing to charge school fees, in order for this to be approved. Our fee exemptions policy will be strengthened with the aim of ensuring that no parent should be charged school fees that are unaffordable. A school uniforms policy will eliminate abuses relating to school uniforms and is expected to bring the prices of uniforms down.

9.1 School fees and free education

59. **The progressive roll-out of free education.** The amounts that will be normed as minimum permitted school allocations will, in the case of the vast majority of poor schools in the country, be greater than the sum of public NPNC funding *plus school fees* in 2002. The net effect of the norms will therefore be improved funding for schools *even if school fees are not collected*. It is in the interests of society to ensure that better public funding does in fact result in lower pressure to charge fees, and not, for instance, in an unchanged school fee regime in order to finance non-essential inputs in schools. Government does not believe that a complete school fee ban in the case of poor schools with better levels of public funding is the optimum solution. We believe that school communities, including poor school communities, exist where the charging of a small school fee, subject to strict exemptions criteria, is justified on the basis of particular community-based projects for improving the school. We believe Government should take care

not to put barriers in the way of such legitimate community-based projects. For now, Government believes that our best option is to strongly discourage or limit the charging of school fees in poor schools, on the basis of improved public funding, but to allow communities with good motives for charging fees, and with a good system of exemptions in place, to retain the right to charge fees. We believe that currently this is best approach in balancing our commitment to free education with the rights of communities.

9.2 Fee-setting

60. **Limitations to the right to charge school fees.** From 2004, schools in national quintiles 1 and 2 will be obliged to seek Departmental approval for the charging of school fees. Approval will be granted on the basis of sound arguments relating to the necessity to charge fees, and adequate understanding of, and school capacity to support, the exemptions procedures. This obligation will be laid out in the amended *School Funding Norms*.
61. **A more transparent fee-setting process in schools that charge school fees.** We believe that the current fee-setting policies are adequate, and that school fees, where schools are permitted to charge them, should continue to be determined at the AGM of the school governing body. However, we also believe that it is Government's duty to empower parents with guidelines on what acceptable levels of school fees are, based on Government's own thorough analysis of the financial situation in schools, and the relationship between inputs and learner performance. If a school's fees can be lowered without impacting negatively on learner performance, we believe those fees are too high. It is with this understanding that we need to empower parents so that they are in a position to distinguish between reasonable school fees, and excessive school fees.

9.3 Fee exemptions

62. **Amendments to the fee exemptions policy.** The fee exemptions procedures and criteria as laid out in the *School Funding Norms* and the Government notice *Exemption of parents from the payment of school fees* of 1998, will be amended in order to close certain loopholes that have become apparent, with a view to ensuring that all those who cannot afford to pay school fees are duly exempted from doing so. ***The exemptions procedures and criteria will be amended during 2003.***
63. **Parents paying the fees of more than one child.** According to the 1998 policy, eligibility for exemptions is considered on a learner-by-learner basis, and not on the basis of how much a parent or a household spends on school fees in total. This has created particular problems for poor parents paying school fees for more than one child. Amendments to the policy will state that parents with a combined annual gross income of less than a certain amount per annum may count the annual school fees of more than one learner when applying for partial or full exemption from the payment of school fees. This amount must still be determined, but our aim is to provide relief to parents, especially single mothers, who earn lower middle class incomes and below. The lowest fee per learner will be multiplied by the number of learners for whom school fees must be paid. This is to avoid a situation whereby schools with low fees are unduly deprived of income

simply because a parent has another learner in a school with relatively high school fees.

64. **Additional private costs and the exemptions formula.** Amendments to the exemptions policy will furthermore state that in the calculation for eligibility, one-third of the cost of the school uniform and the full value of any additional 'hidden fees' paid by parents will be added to the school fee.
65. **Automatic exemptions for recipients of welfare grants.** The amendments will explain how the fee exemptions criteria will be aligned with Government's integrated poverty alleviation efforts, in particular with the eligibility for welfare grants. Where households are receiving welfare grants on the basis of poverty, exemption from the payment of school fees should be automatic. The amendments will explain how exactly these automatic exemptions are to be defined. They will also outline the role of social workers and community development workers employed by the state in ensuring that learners from poor households and other problem households do not experience school fees as a barrier in the way of access to schooling.
66. **Awareness of the right to fee exemptions.** As part of its awareness campaigns, the Department of Education will place renewed emphasis on the rights of poor parents to fee exemptions. It is essential to raise the awareness that no household can be discriminated against in terms of access to public schooling on the basis of poverty, and that people guilty of perpetuating such discrimination will be dealt with severely. We will step up our efforts to ensure that copies of the exemptions application form, and the exemptions criteria, are available in all schools, so that they can be distributed to parents as stipulated in the 1998 policy.

9.4 School uniforms

67. **A school uniform policy.** Government believes that school uniforms can play a positive role in the schooling system, in particular inasmuch as they are a potential equaliser between learners of different socio-economic standings, and engender a sense of pride in the traditions and identity of the school. However, Government is also acutely aware of practices relating to school uniforms that have very little to do with this positive role. For this reason, we believe that our education system needs a policy dealing specifically with the parameters for acceptable school uniform practice. Above all, we want to ensure that school uniforms make access to schools easier for disadvantaged learners, and not more difficult. *Government will pass a school uniforms policy by 2004 at the latest.* This policy will address immediate pressures relating to school fees, whilst more fundamental change to the school uniform regime will be subject to a long-term process of consultations and investigation.
68. **School uniform specifications.** Our school uniform policy will state that specifications for the school uniform determined by the school must be wide enough to allow parents to purchase the uniform from more than one local retailer. Moreover, the specifications must translate into clothing that is widely affordable. Ties, badges and other adornments with school-specific designs will be permitted, though their use will not be compulsory, and limitations will be specified in terms of the supplier and cost.

69. **More active parent participation in the determination of the school uniform.** The school uniform policy will state clearly that the SGB has the power to determine the school uniform. Furthermore, a process will be outlined according to which parents could make changes to the school uniform.
70. **Uniforms not obligatory for the poor.** Schools will be prohibited from taking any action against, or marginalising in any way, a learner who does not comply with the school uniform, where there are grounds to suspect that the reason for non-compliance is economic hardship in the household of the learner concerned.
71. **A long-term uniform strategy.** The Department of Education will lead a national process to look into a long-term strategy with regard to school uniforms. Various options, including the new status quo and a standardised school uniform, will be considered. However, any major change in approach would be phased in gradually, and after thorough consultation with all stakeholders, in recognition of the sensitivity of the matter for communities, and of the fact that an established local industry that employs a large workforce and that supplies the current demand for school uniforms exists.

9.5 Compliance with the law and respect for human rights

72. **Stepping up of rights awareness campaigns.** The need for more effective advocacy and awareness campaigns targeted at parents, educators and learners has already been emphasised. The point of departure for these campaigns in dealing with questions of the right to education should be our Constitution, including our Bill of Rights, as well as the Dakar Framework for Action.
73. **An Education Complaints Office.** The Department of Education will establish an Education Complaints Office (ECO), which will receive written and telephonic queries and complaints from parents and other role-players regarding the rights of learners to a free basic schooling that is of a good quality. This Office will advise people of their rights and will assist those who complain about denial of their rights through referral to appropriate service delivery points in the system, but also through follow-ups of action taken by the Provincial Education Departments. The ECO will be contactable through a toll-free telephone number, and will be integrated with the Gateway Initiative of the Department of Public Service and Administration, which constitutes Government's flagship public access to information project. *The Education Complaints Office will begin to render a service to the public during 2003.*

10 Performance of the schooling system

In a nutshell

The monitoring and evaluation framework of the DoE will be strengthened. Data from the systemic evaluations and other assessment activities in education will be integrated into a performance report that will be widely distributed with a view to empowering communities with better information on the relative education performance of particular education districts.

74. **A better M&E framework.** The DoE's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework, which describes how we measure the success and effectiveness of the

education system, is currently under review. It is important that our M&E framework cover adequately both learner performance and the performance of the system, including schools as institutions. Clearly, an effective system and well-managed schools contribute to better learner performance. Moreover, it is important that, in determining the criteria for learner performance, we consider the curriculum as a whole, which covers not just outcomes in terms of traditional scholastic skills, but also outcomes related to values that comply with our Constitution, such as a sense of citizenship, respect for diversity, and non-racism and non-sexism. *The review process relating to the M&E framework will be finalised during 2003, after which the framework will be fully integrated into the monitoring and systemic evaluation programmes of the DoE.*

75. **Strengthening of the systemic evaluation programme of the DoE.** The Department of Education embarked on its first major sample study of learner performance in 2001, as part of its systemic evaluation programme. In 2001, Grade 3 was the focus of the study. In 2003, Grade 6 will receive attention, and in 2004, Grade 3 will again be the focus. The DoE will ensure that this programme continues to receive the attention it should, and that the results of the systemic evaluations are made public and inform the planning processes of the schooling sector.
76. **Access by all to learner performance statistics.** The *Review* argued that accountability of Government and schools to communities and parents would be enhanced if the public had easier access to reliable learner performance statistics that indicated how well schools in the country as a whole were performing, and how well individual provinces and districts were performing. The *Review* further argued that we need to be careful when comparing the performance when we are dealing with very different situations in terms of the poverty of the community, physical infrastructure backlogs, and so on. For this reason, we need to view learner performance statistics in conjunction with statistics indicating the level of poverty of the community. A poor school district where 60% of learners are achieving a minimum level may well be performing better than a rich school district where 70% of learners are achieving this level, if we take into account the barriers to learning faced by the poor district. Finally, the *Review* recommended that broad public dissemination of learner performance statistics down to the level of the district would be beneficial for public accountability, but that releasing statistics on individual schools in this manner could cause perversions, including unacceptably high levels of inter-school migration, and should therefore not be pursued. *The Department of Education will by 2004 have begun integrating existing examination and quality assurance data and will by 2005 have produced its first public report on learner performance down to the level of the district.*
77. **A major annual sector report.** The outcomes of the various research projects relating to the schooling system that the DoE is or will be engaged in, many of which have been referred to in this document, will be reflected annually in a major review of the schooling sector. This review will provide stakeholders and the public with a comprehensive analysis of how well the schooling system is succeeding in translating inputs into learner performance in an efficient manner, and in providing access to free and quality education for our learners. *The first*

major annual sector report will be released in 2004, and thereafter on an annual basis.

11 Summary of planned action

78. The following table summarises key activities that the Department will embark on.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Research</i>	<i>Policy change</i>	<i>Systems changes</i>	<i>Implementation targets</i>
2003		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Amendments to the <i>School Funding Norms</i> to establish a national resource targeting framework. ▪ Amendments to the exemptions policy to align exemptions with Government's overall poverty alleviation strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finalisation of the DoE's monitoring and evaluation framework insofar as it relates to schools. ▪ Setting up of Education Complaints Office (ECO). 	
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A major 'TSUDI' report covering educator supply, utilisation (including the post provisioning norms), development and identity issues. ▪ A joint Department of Education and Department of Transport assessment of current scholar transport initiatives. ▪ Report from in-depth sample study of schools focussing on resourcing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The finalisation of national policy governing the provisioning of non-educators in schools. ▪ The finalisation of a comprehensive capital investment policy. ▪ A school uniforms policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The finalisation of measures that will bring about easier access by non-section 21 schools to their school allocations. ▪ Improved capital investment plans. ▪ A fully operational Budget Monitoring and Support Office in DoE providing support to the provincial education budgeting process. ▪ Formulation of a long-term plan, by Government and the textbook industry on the supply of affordable textbooks to the education system. ▪ Release of first major sector review focussing on schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 20% of learners will receive a nutritious meal on every school day within a pro-poor targeting framework. ▪ 80% of schools will have asset management systems in place.
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comprehensive school system report produced by new DoE office dedicated to developing school systems. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Release of first district-level learner performance reports to the public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All schools will have asset management systems in place.