

EDUCATION

Government's contribution to public education remains its single largest investment, as that it is the key to reducing poverty and accelerating long-term economic growth.

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The Bill of Rights, contained in the Constitution, 1996 stipulates that everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education and further education, which the State, through reasonable measures, must progressively make available and accessible.

Education spending grew by 14% a year for the past three years and accounted for R140,4 million in 2008/09.

In 2009, following the appointment of the new administration, the ministries of basic education and higher education (HE) and training were established.

The Department of Basic Education includes all schools from Grade R to Grade 12, as well as adult literacy programmes, while the Department of HE and Training deals with universities and the whole field of training, including post-school education and training, as well as coordination of the National Human Resource-Development Strategy (NHRDS).

The scope of the new Department of HE and Training will cover all public and private HE institutions, colleges and the skills development sectors, which include the sector education and training authorities (Setas), the National Skills Authority (NSA) and the National Skills Fund (NSF).

Formal education in South Africa is categorised according to three levels – General Education and Training (GET), Further Education and Training (FET) and HE and Training structures.

Statutory bodies include the Council of Education Ministers, Heads of the Education Department's Committee, General and FET Quality Assurance Council, South African Qualifications Authority, Council on HE and Training, South African Council for Educators,

In October 2009, President Jacob Zuma pledged South Africa's support to a global campaign to ensure education for all the world's children.

The 1Goal: Education for All Campaign is aimed at ensuring the 75 million children not in school are provided with primary education. Half of these children live in Africa.

Many international soccer greats and celebrities are supporting the campaign.



During 2009, the no-fee status of schools was extended from 40% to include 60% of learners nationally by 2010. These learners will be attending 64% of schools.



National Board for FET, Education Labour Relations Council and the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS).

Budget

Education spending remains government's largest item of spending, totalling R165 billion in 2010/11.

To roll out workbooks in all 11 official languages to help raise literacy and numeracy levels and to test all learners in grades three, six and nine, a further R2,7 billion is allocated to the Department of Basic Education.

Policy

Schooling is compulsory between the ages of seven and 15 years. All learners are guaranteed access to quality learning. There are two types of schools: independent (private) and public.

At public schools, parents vote on the level of school fees. Poor parents are given exemption or reductions.

Learners

By mid-2007, the South African public education system had 12,3 million learners, 387 000 educators and about 26 592 schools, including 400 special-needs schools and 1 000 registered private schools. Of all schools, 6 000 were secondary

In May 2009, the then Department of Education announced the "Teacher Laptop Initiative". This is part of a critical strategy to take forward the objective of improving information and communications technology (ICT) in teaching and learning. The initiative aims to ensure that every teacher owns and uses a laptop by providing them with a monthly allowance, which will cover the purchase costs as well as the costs of connectivity. The ICT package will consist of appropriate hardware and software, as well as Internet connectivity, all with prescribed minimum specifications.



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schools (grades eight to 12) and the rest were primary schools (grades one to seven).

Learners attend school for 13 years. The first year of education, Grade R or reception year, and the last three years are not compulsory. Many primary schools offer Grade R, which can also be completed at nursery school.

In 2008, Grade 12 learners wrote the first National Senior Certificate (NSC) based on the new National Curriculum Statement (NCS). A number of 589 912 learners enrolled for the NSC examinations. The pass rate was 62,5%.

In 2009, 68 129 candidates wrote the NSC examination, achieving a pass rate of 60,7%.

Curriculum development

The NCS aims to develop the full potential of all learners as citizens of a democratic South Africa.

It seeks to create a lifelong learner who is confident and independent; literate, numerate and multiskilled; and compassionate, with a respect for the environment and the ability to participate in society as a critical and active citizen.

The NCS is available in all 11 official languages and in Braille, in keeping with the Constitution, which grants parity of esteem to all languages. The NCS has been implemented incrementally.

By August 2009, government was working on a review of the national curriculum to establish challenges in terms of managing, implementing and assessing it.

The report was published in October 2009 and recommended, among other things, changes that will relieve teachers and

By March 2009, the National School Nutrition Programme supported some 5,6 million learners in about 18 000 schools on a daily basis during school terms, at a cost of R1,50 per child per day. This programme received an additional R4 billion in 2009/10 to enhance the programme's sustainability.

There were 6 503 food gardens in schools. About 26 408 food handlers are working on the programme and receive a payment every month.



The Kha Ri Gude (meaning “let us learn”) mass literacy campaign was officially launched in February 2008. Government will spend R6,1 billion over five years to enable 4,7 million South Africans to achieve literacy by 2010.

By the end of 2009, South Africa had an additional 620 000 literate people.



schools of some of the challenges experienced and leave more time for teaching and learning.

It also recommends targeted support for teachers and schools.

Further Education and Training

South Africa has 50 multisite-campus FET colleges.

Each new college operates under a single governing council appointed to oversee effective and accountable management across and within the various FET college campuses and sites.

Expanding and improving capacity at FET colleges is a vital part of government’s growth strategy. Government has set the target to expand the number of young people studying vocational subjects. The 2010/11 budget for FET colleges of R12 billion over three years, has been shifted from provinces to the national department. A further R1,3 billion was allocated to improve the salaries of FET college educators.

Higher Education transformation

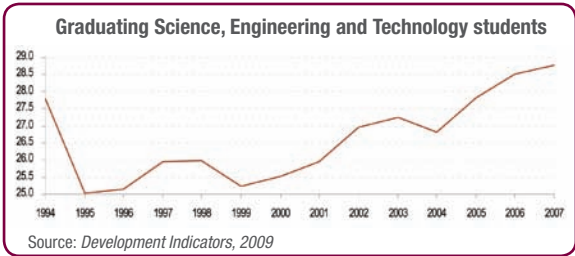
In 2001, the National Policy for HE, which provided the implementation framework for transforming the HE system, set a target participation rate in HE of 20% over a 10-to-15-year-period.

In 2000, the gross enrolment rate in HE was 12,9%. By 2007, it stood at 16,3%.

The department aims to have 800 000 pupils enrolled in Grade R by 2010. By February 2009, 1 732 Grade R sites had registered with the then Department of Education, catering for about 45 950 learners.



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The restructuring of the institutional landscape resulted in the reduction of HE institutions from 36 to 24.

Government's allocation for HE is set to grow progressively over the next three years from R15,3 billion in the 2008/09 year to R21,3 billion in the 2011/12 year.