



SA YEARBOOK 2007/08 | EDUCATION



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.

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

The GET band consists of the Reception Year (Grade R) and learners up to Grade 9, as well as an equivalent Adult Basic Education and Training (Abet) qualification. The FET band consists of grades 10 to 12 in schools and all education and training from the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels 2 to 4 (equivalent to grades 10 to 12 in schools), and the N1 to N6 in FET colleges. The HE band consists of a range of degrees, diplomas and certificates up to and including postdoctoral degrees. These levels are integrated within the NQF provided by the South African Qualifications Authority (Saqqa) Act, 1995 (Act 58 of 1995).

By mid-2007, the South African public-education system had 12,3 million learners, 387 000 educators, 26 592 schools, 2 278 Abet centres, 50 public FET institutions, 4 800 Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres and 23 HE institutions. Of the 26 592 schools, 1 000 were independent schools, 400 were special-needs schools and the remainder were ordinary schools. Of all schools, 6 000 were secondary and the rest primary.

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

The matric exam pass rate in 2006 was 67%. Although this represented a slight decrease compared with 2005, the number of learners writing and passing the Senior Certificate increased substantially. Some 20 000 more candidates wrote the 2006 examination than in 2005. A total of 351 503 learners passed the Senior Certificate in 2006, amounting to 4 419 more than in 2005.

In 2006, 85 830 candidates achieved university exemption. A total of 25 217 learners passed Mathematics on the Higher Grade (HG) and 29 781 passed Physical Science HG.

The FET and HE sectors have undergone a major rationalisation process that has reduced the overall number of institutions through mergers.

FET institutions were reduced from 152 to 50, and the new institutional landscape for HE consists of eight separate and incorporated universities,

three merged universities, five universities of technology and six comprehensive institutions.

Education structures Ministry of Education

The National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act 27 of 1996), empowers the Minister of Education to determine national norms and standards for education planning, provision, governance, monitoring and evaluation. The principle of democratic decision-making must be exercised within the context of overall policy goals. In determining policy, the minister must take into account the competence of provincial legislatures and the relevant provisions of any provincial law relating to education.

South Africa has one of the highest rates of government investment in education in the world. Education was allocated R105,5 billion in 2007/08.

National and provincial departments of education

The Constitution has vested substantial power in the provincial legislatures and governments to run educational affairs (other than universities and universities of technology), subject to a national policy framework. The national Department of Education is responsible for formulating policy, setting norms and standards, and monitoring and evaluating all levels of education. It also funds HE institutions through subsidies and by providing financial support to students through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS).

The national department shares a concurrent role with the provincial departments of education for school education, Abet, ECD and FET colleges. The South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996), further devolves responsibility to school level by delegating the governance of public schools to democratically elected school-governing bodies (SGBs), consisting of parents, educators, non-educator staff and (secondary school) learners.

Relations with provincial departments of education are guided by national policy, within which the provincial departments have to set their own priorities and implementation programmes. The National Education Policy Act, 1996 formalised

relations between national and provincial authorities, and established the Council of Education Ministers (CEM) and the Heads of Education Departments Committee (Hedcom) as intergovernmental forums to collaborate in developing the education system.

The role of the national department is to translate the education and training policies of government and the provisions of the Constitution into a national education policy and legislative framework.

The department must ensure that:

- all levels of the system adhere to these policies and laws
- mechanisms are in place to monitor and enhance quality in the system
- the system is on par with international developments.

The core activities of the department are to:

- provide research and policy review
- provide planning and policy development
- provide support to the provinces and HE institutions in their implementation of national policy, norms and standards
- monitor the implementation of policy, norms and standards to assess their impact on the quality of the educational process, and identify policy gaps.

The Department of Education has seven branches:

- Administration
- Auxilliary and Associated Services
- System Planning and Monitoring
- Quality Promotion and Development
- GET
- FET
- HE

Administration

This branch provides administrative support for the overall management of the corporate functions performed for the department.

Auxilliary and Associated Services

This branch co-ordinates and promotes effective international relations, and gives support and advisory services to provincial education departments.

Systems Planning and Monitoring

The Systems Planning and Monitoring Branch provides strategic direction in the development, implementation and monitoring of education policies, programmes and projects.

Quality Promotion and Development

The Quality Promotion and Development Branch provides strategic direction for the development of policies and education programmes to ensure continuous improvement in the quality of learning.

General Education and Training

The GET Branch provides leadership by managing and evaluating programmes for ECD, school education, learners with special needs, education management and governance programmes, district development and human resources (HR) in education.

Key priorities of the branch include expanding programmes; providing Grade R to all children; further developing a truly inclusive system of education, including the consolidation of special schools; ensuring that there are no underqualified educators; co-ordinating the implementation and provision of education to children up to the age of four; and successfully implementing the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS).

The department will develop the capacity of school and district managers to support and ensure quality teaching and learning in schools through its district-development programme and targeted programmes for aspirant and serving principals.

The department aims to remove all barriers to learning so that children with special needs, including the most vulnerable, are able to participate fully.

By May 2007, there were 385 special schools serving 87 865 learners, with 7 294 educators.

Learner access to Grade R is increasing, and the department expects to meet its target of implementing Grade R in all public primary schools by 2010. The department will focus on improving the outcomes of education in the early years of schooling and beyond.

The *White Paper on Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* is being implemented.

Further Education and Training

The FET Branch is responsible for developing policy for grades 10 to 12 in public and independent schools, as well as in public and private FET colleges.

It oversees the integrity of assessment in schools and colleges, and offers an academic curriculum as well as a range of vocational subjects. FET colleges cater for out-of-school youth and adults.

The branch oversees, co-ordinates and monitors the system's response to improved learner partici-

pation and performance in Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST). It devises strategies aimed at the use of information and communications technology (ICT), and supports curriculum implementation through the national educational portal, Thutong (www.thutong.org.za).

In 2006/07, the branch's main achievements included:

- preparing for implementation of vocational education levels 2, 3 and 4 in 2007, 2008 and 2009
- preparing for the implementation of the new curriculum in Grade 11 in 2007 and of Level 2 national certificates in FET colleges in 2007
- monitoring the first year of FET colleges
- preparing for the registration of private FET colleges
- preparing national examinations for Abet Level 4, FET colleges and 11 subjects of the Senior Certificate.

In 2007/08, government allocated R1,8 billion to FET colleges. Over 25 000 students registered in newly developed technical and service skills-related programmes.

Some R600 million was provided for bursaries to FET college students.

Higher Education

HE is central to the social, cultural and economic development of modern societies. The HE Branch provides strategic direction and institutional support for the development of a single co-ordinated system.

The branch provides leadership by:

- developing legislation
- developing policy support to the HE system
- liaising with constituencies in HE
- registering private HE institutions
- overseeing the NSFAS
- implementing the National Plan for HE
- allocating and transferring subsidies to public HE institutions.

Total government funding of the HE system has more than doubled since 1996. More than R2 billion has been allocated to support infrastructure improvement on many campuses, improve academic salaries, and focus attention on academic support over the next three years.

Earmarked funds have been allocated to individual universities for particular initiatives, including refurbishing existing and building new academic and support buildings and student residences, and improving teaching and learning equipment and library facilities, particularly at newly merged historically disadvantaged institutions.

Statutory bodies

Council of Education Ministers

The CEM, consisting of the Minister of Education, the Deputy Minister of Education and the nine provincial members of the executive councils for education, meets regularly to discuss the promotion of national education policy, share information and views on all aspects of education in South Africa, and co-ordinate action on matters of mutual interest.

Heads of Education Departments Committee

Hedcom consists of the Director-General of the Department of Education, the deputy directors-general of the department, and the heads of provincial departments of education. The functions of the committee include facilitating the development of a national education system, sharing information and views on national education, co-ordinating administrative action on matters of mutual interest, and advising the department on a range of specified matters related to the proper functioning of the national education system.

General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Council (Umalusi)

Umalusi assures the quality of GET and FET. The council monitors and moderates learner achievements and issues certificates at key points.

It also evaluates the capacity of education- and training-providers to deliver and assess qualifications and learning programmes according to expected standards of quality. Umalusi is guided by the GET and FET Quality Assurance Act, 2001 (Act 58 of 2001).

To ensure that the final results awarded to learners for the purpose of certification are valid, reliable, fair and credible, Umalusi has adopted the following quality-assurance measures:

- moderating question papers of the various public and private examining bodies

- monitoring conduct in the examinations
- moderating the marking of scripts
- moderating continuous assessment
- standardising learners' marks in accordance with agreed statistical and educational principles.

Through monitoring private providers, Umalusi initiates a full evaluation and accreditation process with institutions that meet the following descriptions:

- institutions that offer NQF-registered programmes that lead to the General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) and the Further Education and Training Certificate (FETC)
- private assessment bodies that assess/moderate the exit points for GETC and FETC, and any other qualifications Umalusi may certify.

Umalusi monitors provincial departments of education and reports on their performance to the Minister of Education. It evaluates provincial departments on their capacity and the quality of their management of provision in districts and learning sites. Public learning sites include:

- public schools (primary and secondary schools)
- FET colleges
- public adult learning centres
- public assessment bodies.

The newly established Quality Assurance of Qualifications and Curriculum Unit is responsible for establishing criteria and procedures within which Umalusi will conduct its function of monitoring the adequacy and suitability of qualifications and the curriculum. This involves guiding the development of qualifications and the curriculum, and the assessment and certification of qualifications.

The Research and Development Unit conducts and commissions research in strategic areas in education. Umalusi also works with partner organisations in conducting research in identified areas. Umalusi has established a research forum, consisting of a selection of leading educational researchers in South Africa, which provides guidance in terms of conceptualising the research agenda, strengthening the research function, assisting with the design of research projects and evaluating the outcomes of research conducted.

Umalusi also offers a certificate-verification service to employers and learning institutions.

South African Qualifications Authority

The Saqa is a statutory body of 29 members appointed by the ministers of labour and of education. The Saqa, through the NQF, ensures that South African qualifications are of excellent quality,

and internationally comparable. The authority oversees the:

- development of the NQF by formulating and publishing policies and criteria for the registration of bodies responsible for establishing education and training standards or qualifications
- accreditation of bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of such standards and qualifications
- implementation of the NQF by ensuring the registration, accreditation and assignment of functions to the referred bodies
- registration of national standards and qualifications on the NQF.

The NQF is a set of principles and guidelines on which records of learner achievement are registered. This enables national recognition of acquired skills and knowledge, thereby ensuring an integrated system that encourages lifelong learning. The NQF also attempts to move the measurement of achievement in education and training away from input, towards outcomes.

The Saqa's Centre for the Evaluation of Educational Qualifications determines the equivalence between foreign and South African qualifications in the South African context.

The Saqa has registered qualifications and unit standards that continue to support the national imperative to attain quality education and training for all. Some 95 new qualifications, including the National Certificate (Vocational), levels 2, 3 and 4 and 1 023 unit standards, were approved for registration on the NQF in 2006.

Some 6 860 qualifications and 1 231 unit standards were re-registered by the Saqa's qualifications and standards committee in 2006. The Saqa planned to generate qualifications and standards, as required by the various sectors, in response to national skills needs, and to register 189 additional qualifications by March 2007.

The Saqa has established the state of quality assurance, ensured that most of the quality-assurance bodies closed all the quality gaps, and was starting a process to move from compliance to performance auditing.

To ensure that all the accredited providers of registered qualifications are monitored and audited by accredited education and training quality-assurance bodies (ETQAs), a targeted monitoring process was undertaken and the performance audit model was refined with all inputs.

The National Learners' Records Database (NLRD) is the key national source of information for human

resource development (HRD) in South Africa in terms of education, training and labour-market supply, and is also the management-information system of the NQF.

It includes information on learner achievements and accredited providers uploaded from ETQAs, as well as the full contents of all qualifications and unit standards registered on the NQF. The NLRD is the first system in the world to contain all of these elements in one relational database.

Council on Higher Education (CHE)

The CHE was established in terms of the HE Act, 1997 (Act 101 of 1997), and is responsible for:

- advising the minister on all policy matters related to HE
- executing responsibility for quality assurance in HE and training
- monitoring and evaluating the achievement of policy goals and objectives, including reporting on the state of South African HE
- promoting students' access to HE.

The CHE also publishes an annual report on the state of HE for submission to Parliament, and convenes an annual summit of HE stakeholders. In addition, the council accredits private providers and programmes for quality assurance.

South African Council for Educators (SACE)

The SACE is a professional council that aims to enhance the status of the teaching profession and promote the development of educators and their professional conduct. The SACE was established in terms of the SACE Act, 2000 (Act 31 of 2000).

The council has three core functions:

- registering educators
- promoting the professional development of educators
- setting, maintaining and protecting ethical and professional standards.

Educators are required to register with SACE before they are employed by any authority. The SACE has a register of about 495 000 educators, of which 19 000 are registered provisionally.

The council has a number of programmes that promote the development of educators and enhance the status and image of the teaching profession. These include, among other things, the

Professional Development Portfolio Project that aims to encourage educators to reflect on their practice and to take responsibility for their own professional development; teacher education and development research activities for purposes of advising the council and the Minister of Education; co-ordinating and managing various professional development activities in the country; and celebrating World Teachers' Day to acknowledge the work of educators.

The ethics function ensures that educators adhere to the SACE Code of Professional Ethics.

On 28 March 2006, SACE passed the resolution on the registration of non-national (foreign) educators. This had been on the agenda of the council since 2002. The resolution emphasises the need for proof of legal entry into South Africa and good ethical/professional standing prior to registration.

National Board for Further Education and Training (NBFET)

The NBFET was launched in June 1999 in terms of the National Education Policy Act, 1996. It provides the minister with independent and strategic advice on matters relating to the transformation of FET. The board may, on its own initiative, advise the minister on any aspect of FET, as well as:

- national FET policy, goals and priorities

In June 2007, the Minister of Education, Ms Naledi Pandor, launched the second *Trends in Public Higher Education* report, which analysed the South African Qualifications Authority's National Learners' Record Database.

The database informs governmental research and decision-making in terms of the labour market, and education and training. It enables individual learners to verify their own achievements, or to request their verification by potential/current employers and/or employment agencies. It also provides unemployed graduates with a portal through which they can access and disseminate their own achievements in a regulated manner.

The database is expected to eventually contain a complete record of the formal learning achievements of all South Africans. By mid-2007, the database contained information on 20 million learning achievements of 7,5 million students, and a register of about 8 000 qualifications and 10 000 unit standards.

- norms and standards, including those regarding funding
- norms and the terms, purposes and conditions of earmarked grants
- reports on FET from provincial advisory bodies.

Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC)

The ELRC is a bargaining council for the education sector. The council consists of equal representation of the employer (the national and provincial departments of education) and employees (trade unions representing educators and other employees in the sector).

The ELRC aims to create effective and constructive labour relations in the education sector, and to ensure the promotion and transformation of education at all levels within society.

Since its inception, the ELRC has concluded many collective agreements that have improved the quality of teaching and learning in South Africa.

National Student Financial Aid Scheme

The NSFAS is responsible for:

- allocating loans and bursaries to eligible students in public HE
- developing criteria and conditions for the granting of loans and bursaries to eligible students, in consultation with the minister
- raising funds, recovering loans, maintaining and analysing a database, and undertaking research for the better use of financial resources
- advising the minister on related matters.

In 2006, the NSFAS made over R1,3 billion available for loans and bursaries to 107 586 students. Between 1991 and 2007, the NSFAS allocated over a million loan awards.

In 2006/07, the NSFAS announced details of plans to increase the number of new teachers trained in HE institutions. Some R700 million would be allocated over the next three years to the Fundza

In April 2007, the Minister of Education, Ms Naledi Pandor, announced the release of the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development.

The framework provides a clear and coherent policy for the recruitment, professional preparation and continuing professional development of teachers.

It also provides for initial professional education for teachers and continuing professional teacher development.

The professional development of teachers enables them to develop further expertise in subject content, teaching strategies, uses of technologies and other essential elements of teaching.

Lushaka Bursary Scheme, which the NSFAS administers.

The NSFAS will assist in developing a system to monitor bursary recipients, to ensure that they either work back or pay back the bursaries in line with the criteria set by the department.

The NSFAS will also administer social-work bursaries in a similar manner to that of teacher bursaries.

In line with the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsgiSA) and Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition objectives, R600 million has been set aside over the next three years to fund FET-college students. This is not a loan scheme but a bursary scheme, and bursaries will be non-repayable.

Equity in education expenditure

Equity between and within provinces is achieved through the equitable division of national revenue between provinces, making use of the Equitable Shares Formula (ESF), the national norms and standards for school funding, and the national post-provisioning norms.

The Government's ESF promotes financial equity between provinces, through the distribution of national revenue to provinces on the basis of relative need and backlogs. In the area of education, the size of the school-age population and the number of learners enrolled in public ordinary schools are taken into account, as well as capital-investment needs.

The national norms and standards for school funding, which became national policy in 1999, aim to achieve equality and redress poverty at schools in terms of non-personnel expenditure within a province. The norms are clearly progressive, with 60% of a province's non-personnel expenditure going to the poorest 40% of learners in public schools. The poorest 20% of learners receive 35% of non-personnel resources, while the richest 20% receive 5%.

To enhance the attainment of equity in funding ordinary public schools, the school-funding norms provide for full, partial and conditional exemption for parents who cannot afford to pay school fees, thus ensuring that learners with financial difficulties cannot be denied access to education.

Considering that about 88% of provincial education expenditure goes towards personnel costs, the distribution of personnel, in particular educators, is a key driver of equity within provinces. Equity in this regard is promoted by the national post-provisioning norms. These norms

have contributed to the narrowing of inequalities regarding educator:learner ratios, and the availability of more educator posts in historically disadvantaged areas.

Education policy Legislative framework

Education policy is informed by the following legislation:

- The National Education Policy Act, 1996 identifies the policy, legislative and monitoring responsibilities of the Minister of Education and formalises relations between national and provincial authorities. The Act embodies the principle of co-operative governance.
- The South African Schools Act, 1996 promotes access, quality and democratic governance in the schooling system. It makes schooling compulsory for children aged seven to 15 years, or learners reaching Grade 9, whichever occurs first. It also provides for two types of schools – independent schools and public schools. The Act's provision for democratic school governance through SGBs is in place in public schools countrywide.
- The FET Act, 1998 (Act 98 of 1998), has been repealed and replaced with the FET Colleges Act, 2006 (Act 16 of 2006). This Act provides for the establishment, governance and funding of public FET colleges, the employment of staff (excluding the principal and deputy principal) at public FET colleges, the registration of private FET colleges, and general provisions for the running of such colleges. The new Act is in line with the *Education White Paper 4 on FET* (1998).
- The HE Act, 1997 provides for a unified and national system of HE and for the establishment, governance and funding of public HE institutions, the registration of private HE institutions, and general provisions regarding such institutions. This Act, together with the *Education White Paper 3 on HE* (1997) and the National Plan for HE, forms the basis for the transformation of the HE sector.
- The Employment of Educators Act (EEA), 1998 (Act 76 of 1998), regulates the professional, moral and ethical responsibilities and competencies of educators. The EEA, 1998 also

stipulates who the employer of educators is, how educators are employed, and who determines their conditions of service. Furthermore, it provides for, among other things, an incapacity code and procedures for poor work performance and a disciplinary code and procedures (for dealing with misconduct).

- The Abet Act, 2000 (Act 52 of 2000), provides for the establishment of public and private adult-learning centres, funding for Abet provisioning, the governance of public centres and quality-assurance mechanisms for the sector.

Quality Improvement and Development Strategy

To improve and develop education by means of a programme that will concentrate on addressing apartheid's legacy in education, government intends to invest some R12,5 billion over the next five years.

Five thousand schools that perform poorly and that are located in the worst-resourced districts will be identified and provided with resources such as libraries, laboratories and teaching material. Their educators will get support in the form of high-quality school-based education-development programmes, and better district-development teams.

Teaching and learning will focus on the acquisition of important content and academic skills and on equipping learners with literacy and numeracy skills.

Progress made by learners and their schools will be assessed regularly. A total of 15 500 poorly resourced schools have been identified through the Quality Improvement and Development Programme for adequate resourcing to improve learning, especially in literacy and numeracy.

By the end of 2006, some 5 233 of these schools had received 100 reading books per school to improve learners' reading competencies in the Foundation Phase (grades R to 3).

Policy developments Improving access to free and quality basic education

School fees are set at annual public meetings of SGBs where parents vote on the amount to be paid.

Parents who cannot afford to pay, or who can only afford a lesser amount, are granted an exemption or reduction in fees.

The 2005 Education Amendment Bill became law in January 2006, providing the legal foundation for introducing no-fee schools in 2007.

In 2007, there were five million learners in 13 912 no-fee schools.

Education

Targets set by the *e-Education White Paper* are to:

- build an education and training system to support ICT integration in teaching and learning and improved management and administration
- build educators' and managers' confidence in the use of ICTs
- build a framework for competencies for teacher development in the integration of ICTs into the curriculum
- establish an ICT presence in schools
- ensure that schools use education content of high quality
- ensure that schools are connected, have access to the Internet and are able to communicate electronically
- ensure that communities use and support ICT facilities.

A number of initiatives that government has embarked on to ensure that school communities are ICT capable by 2013 include:

- adopting a framework for teacher development in ICT, including school principals and subject advisors
- expanding the Thutong portal functionalities so that teachers and learners can have equal access to high-quality and diverse learning and teaching support materials
- establishing an educational network to effect collaboration, communication and the sharing of good practices among teachers
- training school management in the use of ICT.

The National Education Information Management System is, for the first time, expected to facilitate access to information on each individual school, with aerial and actual photographs, and data on water, sanitation, energy provision, laboratories and libraries.

General Education and Training

General school education is structured according to three phases, namely the Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase, and constitutes the compulsory component of the education system. The progressive provision of

Grade R prior to Grade 1 started in 2002 and will be available to all children by 2010.

Curriculum

The National Curriculum Statement (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 respect for the environment and the ability to participate in society as a critical and active citizen.

The NCS requires extensive reading and writing in all subjects. It requires that learners think carefully about what they learn; that they have strong conceptual knowledge and are able to apply this in a variety of situations; that they are critical and curious learners; and that they are aware of the social, moral, economic and ethical issues which face South Africans and citizens around the world.

The NCS builds on the vision and values of the Constitution and the NCS for grades R to 12. These principles include:

- social justice, a healthy environment, human rights and inclusivity
- outcomes-based education
- a high level of skills and knowledge for all
- clarity and accessibility
- progression and integration.

The NCS (grades R to 9) has been implemented in the Foundation Phase (grades R to 3) since 2004, the Intermediate Phase (grades 4 to 6) since 2005, and in grades 7 and 10 since 2006. Grades 8 and 9 were implemented in 2007.

When a new curriculum was introduced in grades 7 and 10 in 2006, Mathematics became compulsory for the first time. By 2008, pupils will be expected to write the National Senior Certificate examination, offering seven subjects from a choice of 29. Examination papers will be set nationally and benchmarked against international papers.

In terms of the curriculum, focus schools can be created and learners offered opportunities for gaining new skills.

At provincial level, schools suitable for conversion into focus schools will be identified and, to meet the demand for new and responsive skills, focus schools of technology will be set up in each province.

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. Teacher guides for each learning area have been developed and distributed to all schools.

Each educator in the GET band has been provided with a copy of the NCS and a set of teacher guides.

The Policy on Religion and Education gives directives on how schools should address the issues relating to religious observance, instruction and education, which are curriculum matters. It recognises diversity among learners and aims to foster tolerance, respect and understanding among learners of different backgrounds.

The National Protocol on Assessment, which regulates the recording and reporting of learner achievement of learning outcomes for grades R to 12, has been finalised and gazetted.

The national guidelines on school uniforms have also been gazetted.

School-admission policy

The age of admission to Grade 1 is five years if the child turns six on or before 30 June in their Grade 1 year.

However, if parents have reason to believe that their child is not school-ready at age five turning six, then they can choose to send the child to Grade 1 at age six turning seven.

The Education Laws Amendment Act, 2002 (Act 50 of 2002), set the age of admission to Grade 1 as the year in which the child turns seven. However, a Constitutional Court challenge to the Bill in 2003 resulted in the school-going age of Grade 1 being changed to age five if children turn six on or before 30 June in their Grade 1 year. This was implemented with effect from the 2004 school year.

When applying for admission, parents must present the school with an official birth certificate and proof that the child has been immunised against communicable diseases.

For non-South African citizens, a study permit, temporary or permanent residence permit, or evidence of application for permission to stay in South Africa, is also required.

National School Nutrition Programme

In 2006/07, the National School Nutrition Programme, formerly known as the Primary School Nutrition Programme, provided meals to 5,9 million learners in 18 039 schools nationally. The total budget allocated was R1 098 billion.

National Treasury provided R200 million in additional funding to provinces to improve infrastructure at schools, such as kitchen equipment, garden tools, and eating and serving utensils. Some 1 222 workshops on food safety and hygiene were conducted across all provinces, targeting food handlers and educators.

Food-production projects were initiated in 4 000 schools, coupled with 237 capacity-building workshops to develop technical skills in food production. The workshops were of benefit to 3 685 educators, 1 125 parents and 1 811 learners.

The department developed a draft guideline document for parents and educators on promoting good nutrition and healthy lifestyles among learners. To support educators in teaching nutrition in the classroom, 84 000 foundation and intermediate phase readers and 42 000 health and hygiene playing cards were distributed to all provinces.

National Strategy for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education

In 2007, the CEM approved the expansion of Dinaledi schools from 400 to 476.

The National Strategy for MST Education was launched in 2001. As part of this strategy, government identified 102 dedicated Mathematics and Physical Science schools (Dinaledi schools).

The Dinaledi schools are mainly located in historically disadvantaged communities. The aim is to double the number of learners passing HG Mathematics and Science in Grade 12 by 2008 to 5 000. The Dinaledi initiative is part of AsgiSA.

In 2006/07, the curriculum for 11 vocational programmes and four fundamentals of the National Certificate (Vocational) were finalised and implemented. Some 1 800 lecturers were trained to teach the new programmes.

In the 2007 academic year, 25 000 students enrolled for the National Certificate with subjects in the engineering, business, tourism/hospitality, information technology and agriculture sectors.

More than 12 500 students benefited from R100 million allocated for bursaries at further education and training colleges. The National Student Financial Aid Scheme is responsible for administering the bursaries.

By 2010, all secondary schools are expected to offer Science and Mathematics, taught by qualified, competent educators.

By mid-2007, the new bursary programme for educator trainees, Fundza Lushaka, had attracted over 3 000 future educators of MST and languages.

The Club 100 Project, which aims to increase the number of learners who write and pass Mathematics on HG, was introduced in 2007. Schools that produce 100 or more matriculants with HG Mathematics at the end of an academic year receive a sum of R50 000.

Further education and training colleges

Major transformation of the FET college sector took place during 2002/03, in which the existing 152 technical colleges were merged to form 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.

The recorded increase in student intake, the development of new programmes, and increased participation in learnerships bear testimony to the potential for growth in this sector.

From 2007, public FET colleges are offering new, exciting, modern and relevant programmes of study in a variety of vocational fields. The new programmes are intended to respond directly to the priority skills demands of the South African economy.

The National Certificate (Vocational) is a new qualification at each of levels 2, 3 and 4 of the NQF. The qualification is designed to provide both the theory and practical experience in a particular vocational field.

The practical component of the study may be offered in a real workplace environment or in a simulated workplace environment. Students will have the opportunity to experience work situations during the period of study. The qualification will also provide an opportunity to enter HE studies, subject to students taking the appropriate subject combinations. To facilitate access to this qualification, the Department of Education has set aside R600 million over three years for bursaries.

The FET College Financial Aid Scheme has already commenced for students at Level 2 of the National Certificate (Vocational) and will be extended to students on levels 3 and 4 in 2008 and 2009 respectively. These bursaries are administered by the NSFAS on behalf of the Department of Education.

Higher Education

The new HE landscape consists of the following institutions:

- University of the Witwatersrand
- University of Cape Town
- Rhodes University
- Stellenbosch University
- University of the Western Cape (incorporating the Dental Faculty of Stellenbosch University)
- University of Zululand
- University of Venda
- University of the Free State (incorporating the QwaQwa Campus of the University of the North and the Bloemfontein Campus of Vista)
- North West University (from the merger of the universities of Potchefstroom, which incorporated Vista Sebokeng Campus with North West)
- University of Pretoria (incorporating the Mamelodi Campus of Vista University)
- University of KwaZulu-Natal (from the merger of the University of Natal and the University of Durban-Westville)
- University of South Africa (Unisa) (after the merger of Unisa, which incorporated the Vista University Distance Education Campus with Technikon SA)
- Tshwane University of Technology (from the merger of Pretoria, North West and Northern Gauteng technikons)
- Durban Institute of Technology (from the merger of Natal Technikon and Technikon ML Sultan)
- Central University of Technology, Free State (formerly Technikon Free State)
- Mangosuthu Technikon
- University of Johannesburg (from the merger of Rand Afrikaans University, which incorporated the Soweto and East Rand campuses of Vista University with Technikon Witwatersrand)
- University of Limpopo (from the merger of the Medical University of South Africa and the University of the North)
- Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (from the merger of the University of Port Elizabeth, which incorporated the Port Elizabeth Campus of Vista University with Port Elizabeth Technikon)
- Walter Sisulu University in the Eastern Cape (from the merger of the University of Transkei, Border Technikon and Eastern Cape Technikon)
- University of Fort Hare (which incorporated the East London Campus of Rhodes University)
- Cape Peninsula University of Technology (from the merger of the Cape and Peninsula technikons)

- Northern Cape Institute of HE
- Mpumalanga Institute of HE, which was launched in October 2006
- Vaal University of Technology.

HE and Training is also referred to as tertiary education. The HE band provides the highest level of education. Entry into HE is through a Grade 12 pass or a Grade 12 pass with exemption.

Private institutions offering HE must register with the department in accordance with the HE Act, 1997. The role of HE in the South African education system is threefold:

- HRD: mobilising human talent and potential through lifelong learning to contribute to the social, economic, cultural and intellectual life of a rapidly changing society.
- High-level skills training: training and providing person-power to strengthen the country's enterprises, services and infrastructure. This requires the development of professionals with globally equivalent skills, but who are socially responsible and conscious of their role in contributing to the national development effort and social transformation.
- Producing, acquiring and applying new knowledge: national growth and competitiveness depend on continuous technological improvement and innovation, driven by a well-organised and vibrant research and development system that integrates the research and training capacity of HE with the needs of industry and of social reconstruction.

National Plan for Higher Education

The National Plan for HE establishes indicative targets for the size and shape of the HE system, including overall growth and participation rates, institutional and programme mixes, and equity and efficiency goals.

It provides a framework and outlines the process for the restructuring of the system. It also provides signposts for the development of institutional plans.

The key proposals of the plan are that:

- the participation rate in HE will be increased from 15% to 20% in the long term, i.e. 10 to 15 years
- there will be a shift in the balance of enrolments over the next five to 10 years between the Humanities; Business and Commerce; and

Science, Engineering and Technology, from the current ratio of 49:26:25 to 40:30:30

- institutions will establish student-equity targets, with the emphasis on programmes in which black and female students are under-represented; and develop strategies to ensure equity of outcomes
- institutions will develop employment-equity plans with clear targets for rectifying race and gender inequities
- institutional diversity will be achieved through the approval of a distinct mission and academic-programme profile for each institution
- the academic programme mix at each institution will be determined on the basis of its existing programme profile, and on its demonstrated capacity to add new programmes
- redress for historically black institutions will be linked to agreed missions and programme profiles, including developmental strategies to build capacity
- research will be funded through a separate formula based on research output, including, at a minimum, master's and doctoral graduates and research publications
- earmarked funds will be allocated to build research capacity, including scholarships to promote postgraduate enrolments
- the institutional landscape will be restructured through collaboration at regional level, in programme development, delivery and rationalisation, particularly of small and costly programmes.

Values

The Department of Education's Values in Education Initiative promotes greater social cohesion in the education system by promoting 10 key constitutional values.

These are: respect, non-racism and non-sexism, the rule of law, ubuntu, accountability, democracy, equality, social justice and equity, an open society and reconciliation.

The Values in Education Initiative aims to build a new national identity within a broader continental awareness. To this end, the Department of Education produced the book, *My Country South Africa*.

The department also initiated, in partnership with the Department of Arts and Culture, the Flag in Every School Project, which aims to ensure that all schools fly the national flag with pride.

Adult Basic Education and Training

South African has about 4,7 million illiterate people (who have never been to school) and another 4,9 million adults who are functionally illiterate to varying degrees (having dropped out of school before Grade 7), according to Statistics South Africa's Census 2001.

Provinces with the largest number of illiterate people are KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and the Eastern Cape, followed by Gauteng, Mpumalanga and North West. The lowest numbers occur in the Free State, the Northern Cape and the Western Cape.

While KwaZulu-Natal has the largest number of illiterate people with no education at all and Limpopo has the highest proportion, the highest concentration is in the Eastern Cape. The language groups most affected are isiZulu, isiXhosa and Sesotho sa Leboa.

The Abet Act, 2000 provides a legislative framework for the establishment, governance and funding of Abet centres.

In 2006, formal Abet programmes reached more than 200 000 adult learners. A further 300 000 learners were reached through other programmes, such as the expanded and skills-based Abet programmes implemented by the public and private sector, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and sector education and training authorities (Setas). About 15 000 of the targeted 25 000 new adult learners in Abet programmes were reached.

The Department of Education is expected to launch a mass literacy campaign in 2008, aimed at reducing adult illiteracy by:

- mobilising potential learners, educators and other support personnel to participate in the proposed mass literacy campaign, targeting 4,7 million learners between 2008 and 2012
- developing learner and educator-support material
- setting up relevant systems at national, provincial and district level to facilitate implementation of the campaign nationally
- establishing and maintaining a database of 4,7 million learners and 40 000 educators over the campaign period.

Advocacy initiatives such as National Adult Learners' Week and International Literacy Day, in September, continue to be celebrated, recognising

and honouring the achievements of learners and their educators.

The Bridges to the Future Initiative is being developed as a pilot programme in Limpopo. Partners include the national Department of Education, Limpopo Department of Education, the International Literacy Institute, Nedbank, Kellogg Foundation (United States of America) and the Molteno Project.

The number of Abet and literacy service-providers and NGOs has grown dramatically, with an increasing number of emerging organisations being accredited by both Umalusi and the Education, Training, Development Practices (ETDP) Setas.

Masifunde Sonke is another project set up by the Ministry of Education to address the challenges of illiteracy and to promote a love of reading.

The Democracy in the Classroom Project was launched in August 2003. It is the result of a partnership between the United Kingdom's (UK) Department for International Development (DFID), the Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa and the Abet Institute of Unisa, in collaboration with the South African National Literacy Initiative (Sanli).

Readathon 2007 included the first-ever award ceremony for those schools that won the competition.

The Department of Education has developed an early-grade reading assessment instrument, which will be piloted in selected districts in Sesotho sa Leboa, Xitsonga, Tshivenda, isiXhosa, isiZulu and English to help educators monitor reading progress in their classrooms.

The remaining languages were expected to be developed in 2007.

Education of learners with special education needs

The national and provincial departments of education provide a wide range of education services to learners who, owing to a range of

In January 2007, the Minister of Education, Ms Naledi Pandor, launched Drop-All-And-Read, a national campaign created to promote the importance and value of reading in schools and beyond.

The campaign, which is planned over five years, will be used to provide Grade R and Grade 1 learners with books during the first year in school. It will also encourage schools to set aside time for learners, educators and school management to read.

factors, experience barriers to learning and participation.

These include:

- autism
- behavioural problems
- visual impairment
- tuberculosis
- children in conflict with the law
- physical disability
- neurological and specific learning disabilities
- multidisability
- intellectual disability
- hearing impairment
- communication disorders
- epilepsy
- over-aged learners.

These services are provided in ordinary and special schools through a range of service-providers such as district curriculum, institutional and special-needs specialists, as well as specially trained educators.

The *Education White Paper 6* acknowledges that many children experience barriers to learning. Some of these barriers lie within the learners themselves (intrinsic), while some barriers are systemic, socio-economic and cultural.

In its quest to accommodate learners who experience barriers to learning, the Department of Education is field-testing inclusive education in 30 districts in the nodal areas. Between 2005 and 2009, some 30 selected ordinary primary schools are being made fully accessible and are being supplied with specialised equipment and training to become inclusive to all learners in the area who have additional support needs.

These “full-service” schools will be seen as models of inclusive education to be replicated in all districts of the country. Learning conditions in identified special schools will be improved to ensure that all learners in the country receive quality education.

Educators will be trained and empowered to teach children with diverse learning needs. District-based support teams will be developed to provide support mainly to educators in these full-service schools.

This will enable children, the majority of whom could not access education in the past because

of the unavailability of specialised services and support in rural and previously disadvantaged areas, to gain access to education.

Once the first phase of implementing inclusive education is completed, the lessons learnt will be applied to the wider education sector incrementally.

Meanwhile, existing special schools will be strengthened so that some of them can serve as resource centres for full-service schools and ordinary schools in their areas.

Early Childhood Development

ECD is a comprehensive approach to programmes and policies for children from birth to nine years of age with the active participation of their parents and caregivers. Its purpose is to protect the rights of children to develop their full cognitive, emotional, social and physical potential.

The Department of Education is responsible for children in grades 1 to 3 as part of compulsory schooling. One of the priorities of the department is to increase access to ECD provisioning through an accredited reception year programme as proposed in *Education White Paper 5*.

This policy focuses on expanding ECD provision, correcting the imbalances of the past, ensuring equitable access to, and improving the quality and delivery of ECD programmes. It also proposes expanding the provision of services to children from birth to four years by developing and implementing intersectoral programmes.

The non-profit sector plays a major role in ECD. Most of the early learning sites across South Africa have been initiated by the non-profit sector in partnership with communities. Nevertheless, for many poor children, quality ECD is still beyond reach.

The medium-term goal of the department is for all children entering Grade 1 to have participated in an accredited Grade R programme by 2010.

Regarding the birth-to-age-four cohort, the Department of Education is leading the ECD Interdepartmental Committee (including the departments of health and of social development), which has developed the Birth-to-Four Integrated Plan.

The plan is closely linked to government's Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

In ECD, the EPWP will create employment and training opportunities by providing education and care services to young children.

The registration of sites is the responsibility of the Department of Social Development in terms of the Child Care Act, 1983 (Act 74 of 1983). Municipalities/local governments also have constitutional power to provide child-care facilities and grants to associations. These regulations are applicable to both public and independent ECD sites.

In 2006, provincial ECD budgets increased by more than 40%, with a further increase of more than 40% in 2007. Since the release of the *Education White Paper on ECD* in 2001, access to Grade R has increased, particularly in the poorest communities.

By mid-2007, 450 000 children were registered in Grade R classes. A total of 5 300 ECD teaching practitioners were undergoing training across the various provinces with strong monitoring support from the Department of Education.

According to an SACE resolution signed in 2004, all ECD practitioners with a Level 4 qualification should be recognised and registered as educators and participate in all professional development programmes.

The *Education White Paper 5* proposes and encourages an integrated cross-sectoral approach to child development. This includes health, nutrition, education and psychosocial factors.

School enrichment

The Department of Education is committed to ensuring learner participation in sport, arts, culture and music activities. The Department of Education is collaborating with Sport and Recreation South Africa in programmes that promote mass participation and competitive school sport.

The department's School Enrichment Unit co-ordinates and strengthens the delivery of national extramural/extracurricular school-enrichment programmes, not only to promote mass participation in sport by young people, but also to promote social transformation and cohesion.

Some of the arts, culture and music flagship programmes the department co-ordinates in collaboration with the Department of Arts and Culture include the South African Schools Choral Eisteddfod, the National Indigenous Games, the Music and Movement Festival, as well as the National Language Festival and Concert.

Through these initiatives, learners are not only given the opportunity to showcase their talents, but

also to develop a love for and appreciation of many forms of music, dance and culture.

Education management and governance development

The Department of Education has developed the Education-Management Policy Framework and the South African Standard for Principals for school managers, along with a new ladder of education-management qualifications.

These include a practice-based qualification for principals and aspirant principals, which will assist in professionalising the management of schools. The qualification was expected to be tested from mid-2006 and to be fully implemented in 2007.

Educator development

The department considers the development of educators, school managers and SGBs a high priority. The medium-term goals are to ensure that all educators are qualified, and to improve the overall quality of teaching and management.

The department continues reducing the number of unqualified and underqualified educators by introducing capacity-building programmes. The following programmes contribute towards educators' development:

- The implementation of the NCS began in 2004. It has been successfully introduced in the foundation and intermediate phases and Grade 7. An orientation programme was conducted for about 2 100 provincial officials and 200 000 foundation and intermediate phase educators and Grade 7 educators across all provinces.
- An MST advanced certificate in education was introduced to reskill and train educators so that the NCS could be introduced.

British Telecom and the United Nations Children's Fund are working together on a three-year development partnership to invest about R21 million to bring education, technology and communication skills to children from poor backgrounds in South Africa, Brazil and China.

Rural schools in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal will be equipped with computer centres.

Apart from installing 250 computers, the sponsorship will help renovate schools, build additional classrooms and provide state-of-the-art computer laboratories.

To make best use of the new facilities being provided, 150 head educators and administrators will be trained in effective school management and leadership skills.

The two organisations believe the new facilities will provide students with practical technological skills that will help them gain economic independence. The primary focus of the partnership will be to create a secure and productive environment, especially for girls.

- By 2007, more than 22 000 teachers had been trained to use ICT in education. A principal's guide to implement and use ICT in schools had also been developed and distributed.
- The National Framework for Teacher Education aims to address historical backlogs in levels of teacher performance, as well as to improve the necessary initial and continuing professional development and support mechanisms. The policy has been approved and the implementation plan is underway.
- The first phase of the development of a professional development system was expected to be completed in 2007.
- The English second-language short course aims to equip intermediate phase teachers with the skills and knowledge to mediate content knowledge through the medium of English. With the increase in budget, 1 800 teachers were expected to be targeted in 2006/07.
- The MST Project aims to improve the qualifications and skills of educators in these subjects. An external evaluation of the MST Project and the process was conducted. Ongoing monitoring of the project will deal with the findings of the evaluation report.
- The National Professional Diploma in Education Programme aims to upgrade the qualifications of those teachers who do not meet the minimum professional-qualification requirements.
- The eighth National Teaching Awards (NTAs) were presented in 2007, with more than 20 000 teachers participating in this initiative. The department intended linking the NTAs with the existing international teacher-exchange-and-visit programmes.
- The Education Information Policy has been instituted. The policy caters for the setting of standard requirements for the administration of national surveys to be conducted by all educational institutions in South Africa.
- By mid-2007, the department was drafting a framework to resuscitate Physical Education in schools. Part of the framework was to incorporate Physical Education as part of the educator-development strategy.

This will encourage more learners to register for Physical Education with HE institutions. The

framework also provides for accredited development programmes to equip life-orientation educators with coaching, sport-management and facilitation skills.

Learner Unit Record Information and Tracking System

The Department of Education has identified the need to design and develop the Learner Unit Record Information and Tracking System. The envisaged system will house unit record level data on individual learners per school at national level and will therefore be capable of answering complex questions on learner movement, learner drop-out and retention rates.

It will be flexible enough to adapt to changing education information needs by examining different relationships between unit record variables. The system's development was expected to commence in 2007 and be implemented in provinces during 2008.

Education infrastructure

In September 2007, Cabinet received the report on the National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS), which is an update on the School Register of Needs. The report highlights the progress the country was making in addressing the school infrastructure backlogs and the challenges that still lay ahead.

Progress between 1996 and 2006 include the following: the number of overcrowded schools dropped from 51% to 24%; the number of schools with electricity increased from 11 174 to 20 713; schools without access to water decreased from 8 823 to 3 152 in 2006; and schools without toilets decreased from 3 265 to 1 532.

Cabinet resolved that innovative ways of accelerating service delivery, such as the establishment of a dedicated agency or public entity; increased use of public-private partnerships; and community participation in provision, should be explored.

The report concludes that some 74% of schools are in a good or excellent condition. However, it is also evident that substantial backlogs still remain in relation to the provision of facilities, and the standard of these.

A capital-investment plan is under development, using the NEIMS data. In implementation, the Department of Education will investigate innovative approaches to the delivery of infrastructure, including greater community involvement, as well as with regard to its financing. The determination of minimum norms and standards for infrastructure, as proposed in the Education Laws Amendment Bill, will assist in this process.

School safety measures

Regulations for safety measures at public schools focus on the safety of learners within schools' premises.

The measures also accommodate school tours and sporting activities. The regulations will, among other things, ensure the following:

- Public schools must take reasonable measures to ensure the safety of learners during tours and sporting activities, including insuring against accidents.
- Learners and educators who undertake a school tour are not allowed to carry drugs, alcohol or weapons.
- Upon return from a tour or sporting activity, the supervising educator must submit a report to the principal, who in turn will submit it to the departmental official who approved the tour.
- A public school must obtain written consent from parents of learners who will be undertaking the tour.
- Public-school vehicles for transporting learners must have insurance and roadworthy certificates, and drivers of such vehicles must be in possession of valid driver's licences and professional driving permits.

The regulations will be published for public comment before being gazetted into legislation.

The Department of Education, in collaboration with provincial school safety co-ordinators, identified 585 schools with high levels of crime and violence.

As part of a ministerial intervention project, nine schools (one in each province) have been identified. A minimum package regarding infrastructural changes has been compiled for schools to address incidents of crime and violence. The minimum package consisted of hand-held metal detectors, the appointment of security officers and installation of a security fence and appropriate lighting.

The impact of the department's intervention will be monitored over six months at each of the nine schools. The remainder of the 576 schools with high levels of crime and violence will be targeted in collaboration with provincial departments, with

focused developmental programmes to curb incidents of crime and violence.

An early warning system, Be Aware – Take Care, has been developed and piloted in three provinces (Eastern Cape, Limpopo and the Western Cape) in partnership with the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention.

Partnerships have been strengthened with the departments of safety and security and of social development, Business Against Crime and the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention to focus on eliminating crime and violence in schools.

Human Resource Development Strategy

In April 2001, the ministries of education and of labour jointly launched the HRD Strategy for South Africa, entitled *A Nation at Work for a Better Life for All*. The strategy is underpinned by a set of institutional arrangements, including Setas, and the general reshaping of FET and HE to meet the HRD needs of the country.

The strategy ensures that integrated HRD planning and implementation is monitored at national, regional and sectoral level. Progress is measured against approved indicators.

The key mission of the strategy is to maximise the potential of people in South Africa through the acquisition of knowledge and skills. It also seeks to introduce an operational plan and the necessary arrangements to ensure that everyone is productive and works competitively to improve their quality of life.

The goals of the strategy include improving the social infrastructure of the country, reducing disparities in wealth and poverty, developing a more inclusive society, and improving South Africa's position on the International Competitiveness Table over the next 10 years.

HIV and AIDS

The Ministry of Education collaborates with the Ministry of Health to ensure that the national education system plays its part in stemming the spread of HIV and AIDS, and ensuring that the rights of all those infected and affected are fully protected.

This priority has been operationalised into three objectives. Each is linked to anticipated outcomes and performance indicators. The three programmes are:

- awareness, information and advocacy
- HIV and AIDS within the curriculum
- planning for HIV and AIDS in the education system.

The ministry's policy on HIV and AIDS for learners and educators has been converted into an accessible booklet for educators, SGBs and district officials.

Educational portal

The educational portal, www.thutong.org.za, offers a range of curriculum and learner-support material, professional development programmes for educators, and administration and management resources for schools.

Thutong – meaning “place of learning” in Setswana – features a searchable database of web-based curriculum resources for various education sectors, grades and subjects.

It also carries news and information on the latest developments in education in South Africa, and gives users the chance to interact with experts from the education community, as well as with their peers throughout the country and abroad.

The portal is a free service to registered users, who must go through a one-off, no-cost registration process. The portal is a partnership venture between the Department of Education and various role-players in the field.

Partnerships, international relations and funding

Central to the education policy framework is the contention that a high-quality education sector cannot be built by government alone. It depends on creative and dynamic partnerships between the public sector, civil society and international partners.

The Department of Education, educator unions, SACE, ELRC and the ETDP Seta signed a historic declaration at the National Education Convention in November 2002, in which they committed themselves to working together to achieve education-transformation goals.

The success of key national initiatives (including Sanli) relies largely on partnerships with the private sector and NGOs.

Several partnerships have been consolidated, providing working models of educational transformation through public-private partnerships. The Business Trust, a partnership between business and government, works in education

through three NGOs, namely the Read Educational Trust, the Joint Education Trust and the National Business Initiative Colleges Collaboration.

Educator unions

The majority of educators are organised into four educator unions, namely the National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa, the National Teachers' Union, the South African Teachers' Union and the South African Democratic Teachers' Union.

A labour-relations framework has been agreed to jointly by the Ministry of Education and the unions. This encompasses both traditional areas of negotiation, and issues of professional concern, including pedagogy and quality-improvement strategies.

In 2003, an agreement was reached on the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS). This agreement provided the Department of Education with a tool to measure the performance of its educators, in order to provide support and development where it was needed. This agreement led to the conclusion of another agreement on the accelerated pay progression for teachers. Through the IQMS, the Department of Education was able to recognise seniority and good performance, and introduce measures to reward these two key principles.

In line with the latter agreement, educators who perform well are able to progress along the notches to higher positions.

An educator who stays longer in the system, and who performs well, is able to progress higher to become a senior educator, and ultimately a master educator. In these positions, such educators are able to use their experience and expertise to guide and mentor new, young and upcoming educators in the system.

Non-governmental organisations

NGOs are emerging as important partners in educational transformation and are often a source of creativity and innovation. The Department of Education is working with NGOs and the private sector to expand relationships, particularly in the areas of educator training, school improvement, Abet, ECD and FET, as well as evaluation, research and monitoring. The private sector, in particular, is

engaging increasingly in the provision of basic education by funding FET initiatives, building schools in needy communities, and supporting the provision of teaching and learning equipment.

Gender equity

The Girls Education Movement (GEM), launched in 2003, is one of the key gender focus programmes of the department, implemented in partnership with the United Nations' (UN) Children's Fund.

This programme aims to ensure that girl learners not only access education but that their retention and achievement rate increases. It is founded on three pillars, namely career mentorship, skills development and advocacy.

Girls are placed in partner companies during the easter, winter and spring school breaks to discover first-hand how skills acquired in school and the skills-development programme relate to the workplace.

They are exposed to a structured job-shadowing programme, and to new and exciting career paths in the fields of Mathematics, Science and Commerce. The GEM Skills Development Programme aims to address gender disparities through education and advocacy.

The international community

The international community's contribution to the transformation of education is important. The department co-operates with UN agencies and numerous donors to improve access to basic education, FET and HE.

Development co-operation with partners such as Flanders, France, Germany, Italy, Japan International Co-operation Agency, Norway, the Danish Agency for Development Assistance, United States Agency for Development, the Sweden International Development Agency, the UK's DFID, the Netherlands, the Irish Agency for International Development, the Finnish Government and the European Union have been instrumental in the provision of technical and financial assistance to the national and provincial departments of education.

In 2005, the Netherlands gave the Department of Education a grant of R213 million over a four-year period to help empower educators.

The grant was also expected to be spent on the NTAs, the development of the National Framework for Teacher Education, as well as support material for educators to implement the NCS.

The UK government provided R226 million to the Limpopo Department of Education. The assistance, which is spread over six years (2003 to 2009), is

known as the Khanyisa Education Support Programme.

The programme aims to improve learning achievement, support and service delivery across the whole education system.

The Ministry of Education also played a leading role in developing the Southern African Development Community Protocol on Education and Training, which aims to achieve equivalence, harmonisation and standardisation of education in the region.

International partnerships and South-South exchanges are fostered, particularly within the African continent.

The department has a strong collaborative relationship with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. A key initiative of the collaboration is the development of national Education for All (EFA) action plans.

As part of regional consultations on implementation, the department participates in assessing progress in the elaboration of the EFA plans of countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and exchanges information on best practices in the development of these plans.

Libraries

Library and information services (LIS) sector

South Africa's growing LIS sector includes a national library, public/community libraries, special libraries, government libraries and HE libraries.

By mid-2003, South Africa had more than 11 373 libraries, with 77 HE libraries, 9 416 school libraries, 79 government departmental libraries, one national library with two branches, and 1 800 public libraries provided by provincial and local government (library services and metro libraries).

The nine provincial library authorities provide, in partnership with local governments, extensive public-library services. Public libraries, among other things, increasingly render community and general information services, and provide study material and facilities for school and tertiary students.

The approximately 1 800 public libraries in the country have to provide services to a total population of about 48,5 million.

National Council for Library and Information Services (NCLIS)

The NCLIS was established by the NCLIS Act, 2001 (Act 6 of 2001). The object of the council is to advise the ministers of arts and culture and of education on LIS matters.

To this end, the council advises the ministers on the development, co-ordination and promotion of LIS, on legislation and policies, on the allocation of public funds, on LIS education and training, on the promotion of literacy and a culture of reading, and on the use of ICT to improve the quality of LIS.

National Library of South Africa (NLSA)

The NLSA was constituted in 1999, in terms of the NLSA Act, 1998 (Act 92 of 1998). This new institution emerged after the merger of the former State Library in Pretoria and the former South African Library in Cape Town, and includes a specialist unit, the Centre for the Book.

The NLSA is a custodian and provider of the nation's key knowledge resources. It is mandated by the NLSA Act, 1998 to collect and preserve intellectual documentary heritage material, and to make it accessible worldwide. It ensures that knowledge and information are not lost to posterity and are available for future research.

The National Library's collections contain a wealth of information sources, including rare manuscripts, books, periodicals, government publications, foreign official publications, maps, technical reports, and books on special interest, including Africana material and newspapers. These may also be available on CD, microfilm, in digital format or on the web.

The functions of the NLSA are to build a complete collection of published documents emanating from or relating to South Africa; to maintain and preserve these collections, and to provide access to them through bibliographic, reference, information and interlibrary-lending services; as well as to promote information awareness and information literacy.

The Centre for the Book in Cape Town is a specialised unit and promotes the culture of reading, writing and publishing in all official languages of South Africa.

In terms of the Legal Deposit Act, 1997 (Act 54 of 1997), the NLSA receives two copies of each book, periodical, newspaper, map, manuscript material or other publication that is published in South Africa in any medium, whether print or electronic. The other legal deposit libraries are the Library of Parliament in Cape Town, the Mangaung Public Library in Bloemfontein and the Msunduzi Municipal Library, formerly the Natal Society Library, in Pietermaritzburg.

The Legal Deposit Act, 1997 also provides for the establishment of official publications depositories (OPDs). The first OPD is at the Constitutional Court Library and the second one is at the Phuthaditjhaba Public Library in the Free State.

Libraries in the Higher Education sector

The HE libraries hold the bulk of South Africa's scientific and scholarly information resources and fulfil more than half of all interlibrary loan requests. Pressures on HE libraries include redistribution of educational resources, rising prices and declining student numbers.

These libraries have responded by forming consortia, looking at access and exploring digital resources.

Special libraries are libraries that consist of subject-specialised collections, including private organisations' libraries and libraries of government departments. (See also Chapter 4: *Arts and culture*.)

Acknowledgements

BuaNews

Department of Arts and Culture

Department of Education

Estimates of National Expenditure 2007, published by National Treasury

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National Library of South Africa

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