

improving education outcomes



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1. Strategic objective

The PGWC will improve the life chances of all its children through the provision of quality education. To this end all children will remain in school for as long as possible and achieve optimal results.

In particular, the focus from 2010 to 2019 will be on improving the reading, writing and calculating abilities of learners. The period 2010–2014 will lay the foundations for these improvements. In the period 2014–2019 the province's children will reap the fruits of a system that has been designed and managed to deliver on the targets set.

The main indicators for measuring the progress made by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) in providing quality education are:

1. Improving literacy and numeracy in Grades 1–6
2. Increasing the numbers passing in Grade 12 including an increase in numbers passing with matric exemption and mathematics and science



2. Problem statement

The majority of children in the Western Cape are not achieving their academic potential. This is largely due to:

1. Inadequate time and attention paid to reading, writing and counting in the first three grades of school
2. Poor levels of accountability for performance from education officials and educators
3. Weak school management and leadership
4. The slow rate of response and support from the education department
5. The low morale of teachers
6. Inadequate quality textbooks and other learning materials
7. Social ills such as poverty and crime
8. The declining quality in school infrastructure
9. A legacy of underinvestment in a number of areas in the Western Cape
10. The pressure posed by inward migration to the Western Cape

The combination of these factors has led to poor learner performance:

- The matric pass rate is dropping. In 2004 we achieved an 85% pass rate, but this continuously dropped over the next five years to 78.6% in 2008.
- Our literacy and numeracy results as measured by Grades 3 and 6 are also particularly disturbing.

- Too many of our learners move through the system, despite being unable to master literacy and numeracy at the appropriate grade. Unable to cope at higher levels, many of these learners drop out of school or fail to pass Grade 12.
- Of the 94 784 learners who enrolled in public schools in the Western Cape in 1997, only 43 470 reached Grade 12. Of those learners who remained in school, only 33% qualified for a matric exemption.
- The number of underperforming schools (schools with less than a 60% matric pass rate) in the Western Cape has consistently increased, from 36 in 2006 to 74 at the end of 2008.



3. Plan to achieve outcomes

3.1 Literacy and numeracy

We will improve literacy and numeracy outcomes by directing maximum resources (both human and financial) to the first three years of schooling. This will be coupled with universal and compulsory testing of learners from Grades 1 to 6 from 2010. Benchmarks and targets will be set at each school.

3.2 Accountability

All officials and principals will sign performance contracts with targets for improving learner performance. These contracts will be monitored on a quarterly basis. There will also be far greater attention given to the management of schools at the district level, with officials and teachers held to account for their role in improving individual school performance.

3.3 Faster response times and support

We will improve the responsiveness and efficiency of the WCED through a focus on changing

the organisational culture and improving the Department's business processes and systems. The head office and district offices of the WCED will be structured, designed and equipped to provide a rapid response service and support to schools and teachers.

3.4 Teacher morale

We will reduce the administrative workload of teachers to provide more time for teaching. Teachers will be provided with texts on time. Teachers will also be provided with opportunities for ongoing professional development and training. Officials will provide administrative and academic support to teachers and schools on demand.

3.5 Quality texts and materials

The WCED will, over the next three years, ensure that every classroom is text-rich with reading books for each Grade 1–6 classroom and for each subject in Grades 4–12. Incentives for textbook recovery and use will be provided. We will also make greater use of technology to deliver a quality curriculum into the classroom.



3.6 Poverty and crime

Poverty and crime impact severely on learning. The WCED, in collaboration with other government departments and civil society organisations, will provide food and other poverty-alleviation measures to address the needs of poor learners. We will strive to make schools safer through physical safety measures, greater cooperation with the SAPS and Metro Police (using schemes such as rent-a-cop) and actively promoting community involvement in protecting schools. In addition, the WCED, with other government departments and the SAPS, will conduct random inspections and tests at schools for drugs and weapons.

3.7 School maintenance

The WCED will develop a list of priorities for infrastructure maintenance and will adopt the most cost-effective and efficient means of maintaining schools, including public-private partnerships.

3.8 Redress

The WCED will direct its human and financial resources to those districts and schools that have historically experienced underinvestment.

3.9 Migration and new schools

The Western Cape government will use the best available research to plan for in-migration to the Western Cape and use research trends to ensure that schools and teachers are available to provide quality education to the children who enter the province. Innovative means will be sought to address current backlogs in infrastructure provision.

3.10 School management and leadership

The WCED will provide targeted management training and in-school support to all members of school management and school governing bodies.

Every decision taken in relation to education in the Western Cape will be informed by the need to attain the learner achievement outcomes stated below. A diversified curriculum will be offered after primary school to ensure that learners are provided with appropriate opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge.

There is no quick fix when it comes to improving the quality of education provided by the Western Cape. It is only through a sustained, focused and systematic approach that we will achieve the stated targets.



4. Targets

POLICY PRIORITY	PERFORMANCE AREA	CURRENT PERFORMANCE LEVELS	TARGETS			
			2010	2012	2014	2019
Improved academic performance in literacy and numeracy in Grades 3, 6 & 9 by testing the full cohort	Literacy Grade 3	53.5%	55%	65%	75%	90%
	Numeracy Grade 3	35%	40%	50%	60%	80%
	Literacy Grade 6	44%	45%	55%	65%	90%
	Numeracy Grade 6	14%	15%	25%	50%	80%
	Literacy Grade 9	40%	45%	55%	65%	90%
	Numeracy Grade 9	35%	40%	45%	55%	80%
Improved National Senior Certificate	Matric pass rate	75.7%	80%	82%	84%	87%
	Matric pass numbers	34 577	36 000	39 000	43 000	50 000
	University admission rates	33.04%	34%	35%	37%	45%
	Exemption numbers	14 522	15 000	16 500	18 500	25 000
	Maths numbers	13 003	13 500	15 000	17 000	22 000
	Physical Science passes	9 690	10 000	11 500	13 500	16 000
Reduction in number of underperforming high schools	No of schools with <60% pass rate	74	55	20	0	0