



Western Cape
Government

Education



EDUCATION MINISTRY - WESTERN CAPE
**PROGRESS MADE IN ACHIEVING
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

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MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION – WESTERN CAPE

PROGRESS MADE IN ACHIEVING STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

In November 2009, the Western Cape Provincial Government released its strategic plan for education 2010 – 2019. The overarching objective of this plan is to improve learner outcomes in this province significantly.

In formulating this objective we were clear that there is no quick fix when it comes to improving the quality of education provided in the Western Cape, and that it is only through a sustained, focused and systematic approach that we would achieve the objectives we have set for ourselves.

The plan focused on 10 key priority areas that aim to improve the life chances of all learners in the province through the provision of quality education.

Two years later, the Western Cape Provincial Government can confidently say that we have made significant progress with establishing the foundation necessary to achieve the objective of improving learner outcomes in the Western Cape.

This document provides a summary of what we have achieved so far and what we plan to achieve into the future.

Literacy and numeracy

Strategic goal – 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 compulsory testing of learners from Grades 1 to 6 from 2010 throughout the province. Benchmarks and targets will be set for each school.

In the last two years, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) has prioritised the improvement of literacy and numeracy skills by implementing a number of interventions within the system, particularly in the Foundation Phase.

These interventions include the testing of learners in Grades 3, 6 and 9 to assess literacy and numeracy performance. Over 240 000 learners take part in these tests which inform our literacy strategy and identify schools and areas where remedial action is needed.

The Western Cape is the only province in South Africa to implement systemic testing of this nature to date. It is a huge logistical exercise, but we believe that testing of learner abilities is essential and provides valuable information for improving the provincial education system.

The WCED is also currently implementing recommendations arising from research commissioned specifically for this purpose in 2010. Central to these recommendations is an increased focus on the role of Foundation Phase curriculum advisors (CAs) in regularly observing classroom practice for extended periods. Curriculum advisors and other district officials specifically observe levels of cognitive demand, pacing and time on task. Since the release of the report, Foundation Phase CAs have undergone training in effective monitoring of classroom practice.

A significant intervention, and one that we are most proud of, is the emphasis on text-rich schools which will contribute significantly to building stronger foundations in literacy and numeracy and improving learner outcomes. As part of this initiative, the WCED has invested approximately R133 million this year in texts of various kinds, in addition to workbooks distributed nationally. R466 million will be invested in this plan over the next four years. For the first time the WCED has committed itself to providing to schools all the key texts needed by learners to support the curriculum.

Teacher development is also critical to improvements in literacy performance, and we have developed and hosted a number of workshops and conferences that are contributing to the improved teaching of literacy and numeracy to our learners.

Accountability

Strategic goal – 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 focused on the management of schools at the district level, with officials and teachers held to account for their role in improving individual school performance.

After over a year of development and consultation, the revised Western Cape Provincial School Education Act was introduced at the beginning of 2011. Amongst other things this legislation allows for increased accountability within the system.

The Act includes provisions that will enable the WCED effectively to evaluate the performance of schools and to implement, after consultation, the signing of performance agreements for principals and deputy principals. This will for the first time see performance directly linked to learner outcomes. We are confident that this will effectively increase the levels of accountability within the system and will in turn strengthen the ability of the provincial government to act decisively against schools that are serial underperformers.

This year we committed ourselves to a series of consultations with relevant stakeholders on the implementation of a performance agreement for principals and deputy principals. This process is now in its final stages and the pilot will begin early next year.

We will further strengthen levels of accountability in 2012 by asking both our primary and high schools to set targets for the Grade 3, 6 and 9 literacy and numeracy tests and the National Senior Certificate examinations. These targets create a much needed sense of focus and urgency in the system and they will be used as one of the benchmarks for evaluating performance.

Faster response times and support

Strategic goal – We will improve the responsiveness and efficiency of the WCED through a focus on changing the organisational culture and improving the WCED’s business processes and systems. The Head Office and District offices of the WCED will be structured, designed and equipped to provide rapid response service and support to schools and teachers.

Effective information and communication systems are critical for the purposes of communication, planning, and supporting our schools. In the last two years, we have made a range of improvements in this regard. For instance, we are currently piloting a project that will enable schools to run their school administration processes in a networked environment to collect and manage information on learners, educators, parents, the curriculum, finances, and time-table modules.

The WCED has also set up a District Management Information System (DMIS) that allows districts to capture, plan and report on all school visits. This system increases accountability, reduces the time spent on reporting, facilitates problem-solving and supports service delivery.

Another area of improvement in the last two years is the dramatic acceleration in the filling of vacancies. Previously, there were two teacher vacancy lists per annum. This has been increased to a minimum of five vacancy lists per annum. Improved business processes have led to a ten day turnaround time for the appointment of principals, thereby reducing the periods for which teachers are in acting positions. By installing management and leadership in the school as quickly as possible, we are contributing to a positive school environment and ensuring greater stability within the system.

The WCED has also halved the numbers of days taken for sick leave by assisting applicants to complete forms correctly, by fast-tracking applications, advising unsuccessful applicants to return to school and meeting regularly with labour unions to deal with grievances arising out of the process.

Improving teacher morale

Strategic goal – 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.

Teacher training and development is one of the core responsibilities and priorities of this Government.

In 2011, the Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute offered a variety of in-service teacher development training. Approximately 1 148 teachers attended 30 training interventions and over 2 000 educators attended various seminars and conferences during school holidays.

We also introduced training programmes on the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). More than 8 000 educators received CAPS training and 2 700 principals attended CAPS orientation workshops.

In September the WCED released a planning calendar for the 2012 school year which includes a number of dates for training programmes and workshops that will be compulsory for educators. Dates for literacy and numeracy training for the Foundation and Intermediate Phases, as well as CAPS training and meetings, are examples.

In addition, there are a number of other training programmes and meetings on offer that are optional courses to meet specific needs, such as ICT proficiency, special needs education, training for aspiring school principals, literacy and numeracy workshops and subject-specific training for various grades. Many of these programmes are targeted at schools where learners are underperforming.

The planning calendar also includes a schedule of dates for meetings, tests and examinations, as well as other important administrative deadlines that will allow principals and educators to plan ahead in good time.

Quality texts and materials

Strategic goal – 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 textbooks for Grades 4-12 for each subject. 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.

This Government is firmly of the belief that textbooks are an essential educational resource for the development of reading, writing and language skills, and we are well on our way to meeting the objective as detailed above.

For example, this year, the WCED has gone beyond the national norm for textbook allocation, by allocating an additional R133 million for textbooks, particularly in the Foundation Phase.

We have made an unprecedented commitment to ensure that over the next three years, every child from Grades 1-12 will have a textbook in every subject that he or she is taking. We have already broken new ground by ensuring that all learners in Grades 2-7 have a mathematics textbook and reading schemes for every classroom in Grades 1 to 6 have been delivered. We are now in the process of ensuring the delivery of over a 'record breaking' 2 million textbooks, which includes 7 textbooks for each Grade 10 learner and the first ever mathematics textbook to be used in Western Cape schools in Grade 1.

In 2011 the WCED introduced a system that makes it easier for schools to order textbooks online, while also offering a good choice of textbooks. Schools generally met their deadline to place orders for textbooks and the WCED is on track to deliver the textbooks by the end of the 2011 in time for the 2012 school year.

The WCED has also negotiated excellent prices with publishers, resulting in savings of between R5 million and R6 million. These savings will be ploughed back into further book purchases.

In terms of technology, the WCED is pleased that the Western Cape is recognised as the leader in the delivery and roll-out of ICT infrastructure in its schools. We are confident that by the end of the 2011/2012 financial year technology will be incorporated in every school in the Western Cape.

Recently, the Western Cape completed an audit to ascertain what is needed to facilitate the introduction of a Wide Area Network (WAN) for schools.

The audit covered all aspects of information technology used at schools (including current internet systems) and will determine the extent of the investment that is required to provide reliable, high-speed broadband internet connectivity at Western Cape schools.

It is our view that high speed broadband connectivity that is provided on an equitable basis and accessible to all users regardless of their location is the foundation on which information technology can be integrated into our schools. This will enable the WCED to improve education through the provisioning of high quality curriculum material and teaching aids and will assist in providing a vehicle for improved communication and remote technical support.

Poverty and crime

Strategic goal – 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 co-operation with the SAPS and Metro Police 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.

In 2011, the WCED increased the budget allocated to its school nutrition programme by R54 million, benefitting an additional 78 196 learners. 427 196 learners at 1 021 schools are now part of this scheme.

More nutritious meals to young, exceptionally poor and vulnerable learners are now being provided and we have placed emphasis on replacing and improving kitchen equipment so that warm meals can be served.

In terms of school safety, an additional 100 schools have, in the last two years, been provided with improved security infrastructure. This infrastructure includes physical security measures such as safety gates, burglar bars, stone guards, access gates and alarm systems linked to armed response companies.

The WCED has been working hard to form partnerships with government departments such as the SAPS, the Department of Justice & Constitutional Development, the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport and others as well as with non-governmental organisations whose focus is on safety. In the past year, we have engaged with a number of communities to encourage them to take ownership of their schools, which is a critical element in ensuring the long-term safety of our schools.

With regard to search and seizures and drug testing, the revised Western Cape Provincial School Education Act strengthened the policy for conducting random searches of learners at schools. The intention of this policy is to restrict incidents of violence and the use of illegal substances by learners at school, thus creating a suitable and safe school environment.

The Act provides clearly defined powers to conduct search and seizure operations at schools. In October the WCED released to schools specific guidelines for random search

and seizures at schools. These guidelines set out processes and procedures by which random search and seizures should be carried out by principals or their delegates at school in order to reduce and contain the incidents of violence by learners at school. We have also released guidelines to schools on how to administer testing for illegal substances.

School maintenance

Strategic goal - 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.

The process of identifying maintenance priorities has been streamlined and each district has identified and submitted a prioritised list of schools that are in need of maintenance.

The WCED has now compiled a list of scheduled maintenance for the 2012/2013 financial year and is currently investigating the proposal of clustering maintenance projects in order to reduce costs.

The WCED's infrastructure plan addresses the need to replace schools that have deteriorated over time and were built with inappropriate materials. We are currently building 8 new schools and planning a further 12 schools as part of this plan.

Although we have increased the maintenance budget by 48% in the last two years, annual increases in costs have impacted on the extent to which our maintenance projects can be addressed. The WCED is currently investigating and negotiating ways in which it can bring the public sector on board. A number of public-private projects have already been successfully implemented.

Redress

Strategic goal - The WCED will direct its human and financial resources to those districts and schools that have historically experienced under-investment.

This Government's policies and priorities are aimed at improving the performance levels of our poorest learners and ensuring greater access to quality education.

The vast majority of our resources are quite rightly put into schools that serve poorer communities. For example, we have prioritised the allocation of educator posts to our poorer schools, with the maximum allowable of 5% of posts being top sliced and allocated to poorer schools. Poorer schools also benefit from the majority of textbooks and other resources provided by the WCED to schools.

40% of the learners of the Western Cape also attend no-fee schools. Our poorer schools in National Quintile 1 receive a per learner allocation which is six times more than that received by schools in National Quintile 5.

In 2011, the WCED paid out, in fee compensation to schools, an amount over R20 million to cover the costs of poorer learners who were exempt from paying school fees.

Schools achieving good results receive assistance if they need it, which allows us to direct

the majority of our resources to those schools that desperately need proper and sustained remedial action and support.

Interventions in our underperforming schools include intensive management support from our district offices, mentoring programmes, subject specific support for schools with historically low pass rates, and the delivery of additional textbooks in critical subject areas.

As part of our Grade 12 improvement plan, the WCED increased its support given to all schools with passes below the provincial average by providing a tutoring programme for complex areas of the syllabus, holiday camps and the provision of a 'tips for success booklet' to every Grade 12 learner in the province.

Migration and new schools

Strategic goal - The Western Cape government will use the best available research to plan for the in-migration to the Western Cape and use research trends to ensure that schools and teachers are available to provide quality education to children who enter the province.

An audit of the province's infrastructure at the end of 2009 indicated that there was a significant need for new schools to meet the demands of increased enrolment in certain areas caused by, amongst other things, inward migration and new housing developments.

Since the announcement of our infrastructure plan in 2010, the WCED has already planned and completed the building of eight new schools in the province with 11 new schools currently in the final stages of construction and an additional 12 new schools in their planning stages.

The majority of these schools are in areas that serve rapidly growing communities.

In order to provide quality education to all our learners, and not only to those that have recently entered our province, the WCED introduced the 'classroom expansion' plan, which ensures that learners from a diversity of backgrounds, most especially from disadvantaged communities, have access to increased opportunities to gain entry into some of our province's schools with a record of success. In this way we are expanding access to quality education.

In the first-phase roll-out there are a total of 19 classroom expansion plan projects. Once completed, there will be an additional 112 classrooms, benefiting 3 900 learners across 19 successful city schools.

School management and leadership

Strategic goal - The WCED will provide targeted management training and in-school support to all members of school management and SGBs.

A number of principals and school management teams have participated in training workshops that have been held this year.

In 2011, the WCED introduced a mentoring programme for principals. The programme included developmental support to all new principals, as well as to existing principals who

were struggling or who needed further professional support.

Mentors attended induction sessions hosted by the various districts. Over 140 new principals and 45 existing principals were placed on the programme this year.

Principals have already been informed about the various seminars on offer for 2012 in the planning calendar sent out in September to all schools.

Compulsory training for all our new School Governing Bodies has also been planned for next year to coincide with the elections that must take place in March 2012.

It is important that this type of training is in line with the relevant legislation and policy and that the unfolding demands and needs of schools are met.

The amended Western Cape Schools Education Act has introduced a number of important changes which will impact on the nature and content of such training. In addition, new disciplinary processes and a code of conduct for school governing bodies will necessitate extensive training and orientation for the leadership of our schools, including both principals and school governors.

The recent appointment of an Education Council also flows from the changed legislation and we expect that the members of this council will also contribute to the identification of relevant training needs.

INDICATORS FOR SUCCESS

With reference to the performance levels included in the table below, it is evident that we have improved the quality of education in this province in the last two years.

POLICY PRIORITY	PERFORMANCE AREA	2009 PERFORMANCE LEVELS	CURRENT PERFORMANCE LEVELS
Improved academic performance in Literacy and Numeracy in grades 3, 6 & 9 by testing the full cohort	Literacy Grade 3	53.5%	54.9%
	Numeracy Grade 3	35%	48.3%
	Literacy Grade 6	48.6%	52.3%
	Numeracy Grade 6	17.4%	24.4%
Improved National Senior Certificate	Matric pass rate	75.7%	76.8%
	Matric pass numbers	34 017	35 139
	University admission/ Exemption numbers	14 324	14 414
Reduction in number of under-performing high schools	No of schools with <60% pass rate	85	78

Conclusion:

While the Western Cape still has some way to go to achieve the objectives set out in its strategic plan, we can point to significant progress that has been made so far.

In 2010, we laid the foundations needed to complete this plan, and in 2011, we built on these foundations, specifically targeting our poorer schools and the Foundation Phase.

We are extremely proud of what we have achieved and are expecting even further improvements in both literacy and numeracy and in the National Senior Certificate this year.

These results will also determine what strategies are working and will provide us with new targets for the 2012 school year.

What we are sure of is that we have some exciting times ahead. The introduction of the performance agreements for principals and deputy principals is the first of its kind in South Africa and it can have significant implications in our schools. We are also looking forward to growing our relationships with the private sector, especially in terms of maintenance and infrastructure development.

Many of our learners are, for the very first time, ensured that they have the relevant textbooks and we plan to introduce further technology into our schools to enhance teaching and learning practices.

But, in everything we do, we will continue to put our learners first and ensure that our teachers are treated as the valued professionals that they are.

Every decision taken in relation to education in the Western Cape will continue to be informed by the need to improve learner outcomes in this province and to provide greater access to quality education.

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