



Western Cape
Government



Western Cape Education Department

Strategic Plan

2025-2030



**Western Cape
Government**

WCED Strategic Plan 2025-2030
Department of Education

Executive Authority Statement



The Western Cape Education Department's Strategic Plan for 2025 to 2030 highlights our commitment to providing quality education for every child, in every classroom, in every school in the Western Cape.

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



David Maynier
Provincial Minister of Education
Western Cape Government

Accounting Officer Statement



The next Five-Year strategy of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) rests on our vision for Quality Education for every child, in every classroom, in every school in the Province.

We are working to optimize the opportunity to change the lives of our youth and to enable them to acquire the knowledge, competencies, skills, and values to succeed in a changing world.

The Provincial Strategic Plan (PSP) 2025-2030 sets out the Western Cape Government's (WCG) strategic priorities and goals for the next five years and builds on the Recovery Plan's framework, retaining the following four priorities:

1. Growth for Jobs
2. Safety
3. Educated, Healthy and Caring Society
4. Innovation, Culture & Governance

This WCED Strategic Plan is carefully aligned with Western Cape Government priorities, focusing on:

- Skills development
- Social infrastructure improvement
- Economic opportunity creation through quality education
- Promoting social mobility and cohesion

It also draws extensively from the Education Sector Analysis (ESA) report conducted by the World Bank. This report enabled an informed prioritization of policy actions and reforms to improve access to quality education and identified areas where resources can make the biggest impact in our effort to build a more equitable, resilient, and effective education system.

The department has identified the three policy priorities below:

1. Strengthen foundations of learning
2. Improved learner outcomes
3. Infrastructure and partnerships

The WCED's Strategic Plan for 2025-2030 outlines six core outcomes that directly align with these policy priorities. These outcomes are as follows:

- Outcome 1: Improved Early Childhood Development (ECD) coverage
- Outcome 2: Improved learning outcomes across all grades
- Outcome 3: Improved professional development of educators
- Outcome 4: Promoting social cohesion through multi-stakeholder collaboration
- Outcome 5: Improve school infrastructure and related facilities
- Outcome 6: Strengthening corporate governance and accountability

By embedding the three priorities across the six strategic outcomes, the WCED demonstrates a comprehensive, systemic approach to driving meaningful and lasting improvements in the Western Cape education system.

The WCED has over the years implemented and maintained strict efficiency and austerity measures to ensure that the department continues to direct all plans, funds and efficiencies to support its core business and as a result, its delivery priorities. Any further reductions to the department's baseline will impact on service delivery.

Despite the continued pressure placed on the system, there has been steady progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the WCED, albeit at a slower pace than the department would have wanted, largely due to the advent of COVID-19 and the subsequent learning losses, growth in learner numbers and budget pressures.

The department remains committed to achieving the objectives of the Western Cape Government and the National Development Plan through supporting the priorities identified in the Medium-Term Strategic Framework through the articulation of those priorities as set out in this Five-Year Strategic Plan for 2025 – 2030.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Walters', with a long horizontal flourish extending from the bottom.

Brent Walters
Western Cape Education Department

Official Sign-Off

It is hereby certified that this Strategic Plan:

- Was developed by the management of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) under the guidance of Minister David Maynier.
- Considers all the relevant policies, legislation and other mandates for which the WCED is responsible.
- Accurately reflects the Impact, Outcomes and Outputs which the WCED will endeavour to achieve over the period 2025-2030



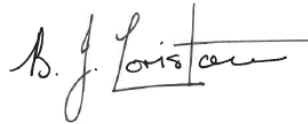
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Part A: Our Mandate

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) operates within a complex governance structure that balances provincial autonomy with national oversight. As part of the provincial government, WCED has the primary responsibility for implementing and managing school education within the Western Cape.

Our mandate includes determining provincial expenditure on education from the equitable share of national revenue allocated to the province. This financial autonomy allows the department to adapt its budget to meet the specific needs of learners in the Western Cape.

The department is tasked with establishing and managing Education Districts and District Offices. These structures aim to provide localised support to schools and improve service delivery, bringing educational administration closer to the communities they serve.

While the department has significant operational autonomy, it must function within the policy and legislative framework set by both the National Department of Basic Education (DBE). This requires a delicate balance of adhering to national standards while addressing provincial-specific challenges and opportunities.

The department's responsibilities encompass policy implementation, monitoring, human resource management and performance assessment within the province's basic education system. The department must ensure that these functions align with national objectives while being responsive to local needs.

Ultimately, WCED's mandate is to work in a system of cooperative governance, promoting standardisation and integration of educational policies and programmes. This collaborative approach aims to complement national efforts while leveraging provincial insights to enhance educational outcomes in the Western Cape.

1. Constitutional Mandate

The Constitutional mandate of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) is rooted in Section 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (the Constitution). This section guarantees the right to education and places an obligation on the state to ensure that everyone has access to education Section 29(1) of the Constitution.

2. Legislative and other mandates

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) implements its constitutional mandate through a series of targeted programmes. These include Administration, Public Ordinary Schools, Independent School Subsidies, Public Special Schools, Early Childhood Development, Infrastructure Development, and Examination and Education-Related Services.

At the core of WCED's responsibilities is the Public Ordinary Schooling programme. This programme oversees the provision of primary and secondary education to all learners in the Western Cape, ensuring accessible and quality education across the province.

The WCED also plays a crucial role in supporting Independent Schools. This involves providing subsidies to qualifying institutions and maintaining rigorous oversight to ensure these schools meet the necessary standards for continued funding.

Special education forms another key focus area for the WCED. The department is tasked with providing comprehensive schooling for learners with special education needs, spanning from Grade 1 to Grade 12. This includes both formal education and non-formal programmes tailored to diverse learning requirements.

The function shift of Early Childhood Development (ECD) responsibilities from the Department of Social Development (DSD) to the Department of Basic Education (DBE), and specifically in the Western Cape to the WCED, took effect on 1 April 2022. This shift marked a strategic realignment to enhance ECD services' quality by linking them more directly with educational outcomes. The primary purpose of moving ECD under education is to improve early learning outcomes, starting from birth to school entry. It aims to better prepare children for formal schooling, ensuring that ECD programs are designed to promote cognitive, emotional and physical development.

DSD's role focused primarily on the registration and regulation of ECD centres for compliance with health, safety, and developmental standards. WCED now takes responsibility for developing curricula, teacher training and overall early learning quality, integrating ECD into the formal education system. The shift also includes the formalisation of Grade R as part of the schooling system, enhancing access to early education.

This function shift is part of a broader national strategy to promote school readiness and educational equity from the earliest stages of development, ensuring that children, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds, have access to quality early learning.

ECD is a priority for the WCED, with a specific focus on Grade R provision. This programme extends across state, private, and community centres, ensuring a strong educational foundation. Additionally, the WCED offers support for pre-Grade R learners, recognising the importance of early learning interventions.

Through diverse yet interconnected programmes, the WCED strives to create a comprehensive educational ecosystem. This structure allows the department to address the varied needs of learners across different age groups and educational contexts, while maintaining a focus on quality and accessibility in line with its constitutional mandate.

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996)
- Constitution of the Western Cape Province, 1998 (Act 1 of 1998)
- Western Cape Provincial School Education Act, 1997 (Act 12 of 1997)
- South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996)
- National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act 27 of 1996)
- General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, 2001 (Act 58 of 2001)
- Employment of Educators Act, 1998 (Act 76 of 1998)
- Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999)
- Annual Division of Revenue Act, 2012 (Act 5 of 2012)
- Public Service Act, 1994 (Proclamation 103 of 1994)
- South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995 (Act 58 of 1995)
- South African Council for Educators Act, 2000 (Act 31 of 2000)

(a) Education Legislation

Basic Education Laws Amendment (BELA) Act, 2024 (Act 32 of 2024)

The Basic Education Laws Amendment Act (2024) revises sections of the South African Schools Act (1996) and Employment of Educators Act (1998) to address administrative challenges in schools. The BELA Act aims to formalise Grade R, criminalises school disruptions, and enhances governance and financial accountability.

The key provisions of the Act, include inter alia —

The amendment of the South African Schools Act, 1996:

- to provide that attendance of grade R is compulsory;
- to confirm the role of the Head of Department in relation to the admission of a learner to a public school, after consultation with the governing body of the school;
- to provide that the South African Sign Language has the status of an official language for purposes of learning at a public school;
- to confirm the authority to make certain determinations in regard to the composition, and related matters, of governing bodies of schools for learners with special education needs;
- to extend the powers of the Head of Department to conduct an investigation into the financial affairs of a public school and to provide that the governing body of a public school must submit quarterly reports on all income and expenditure to the Head of Department;
- to provide for a dispute resolution mechanism in the event of a dispute between the Head of Department or the Member of the Executive Council and a governing body; and
- to provide for matters incidental thereto.

The amendment of the Employment of Educators Act, 1998:

- to exclude further education and training centres, adult basic education centres and institutions, from the ambit of the Act;
- to prohibit an educator from conducting business with the State and to create an offence in relation thereto;
- to extend the powers of the Minister to make regulations; and
- to provide for matters incidental thereto.

The National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996) (NEPA), as mended

The National Education Policy Act establishes a foundational framework for education governance in South Africa. It empowers the Minister of Education to formulate national policies for planning, resourcing, management, and evaluation of the education system.

Central to this Act is the principle of cooperative governance, aligning with the constitutional structure of shared responsibilities between national and provincial governments in education.

The Act reinforces the rights enshrined in the Constitution's Bill of Rights and relevant international conventions, emphasising education as a fundamental human right.

Key principles of the Act include:

- Promoting lifelong learning opportunities
- Achieving equitable education access
- Addressing historical inequalities in education
- Advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in the education sector

Through these provisions, the Act serves as a guiding document for the Western Cape Education Department, ensuring its policies and practices align with national objectives while addressing provincial needs.

The South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996), as amended

The South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) provides a comprehensive framework for basic education in the country. It establishes uniform norms and standards for public schooling, emphasising access, redress, equity, democracy and quality education. The recently enacted Basic Education Laws Amendment (BELA) Act, 2024 has introduced important revisions to sections of the South African Schools Act (SASA), 1996.

Key provisions of SASA (as amended by the BELA Act) include:

- Mandating high-quality education access for all learners
- Empowering school governing bodies with democratic governance responsibilities
- Making school attendance compulsory for learners aged 6-15 or until the last day of the school year in which such learner will complete grade 9, whichever occurs first
- Recognising two types of schools: public and independent
- Establishing learner representative councils to advocate for learner interests

The Act's Amended Norms and Standards for School Funding introduce the No Fee Policy and outline financial allocations for public schools. This framework addresses:

- Funding mechanisms for public schools
- Exemptions for parents unable to pay school fees
- Subsidies for qualifying independent schools

SASA serves as a crucial guide for the Western Cape Education Department, ensuring its policies align with national standards while allowing for provincial implementation strategies.

Early Childhood Education

In South Africa, Early Childhood Development (ECD) is governed by several legal frameworks, including:

Education White Paper 5 (2001) on ECD provides the legislative framework for expanding access to ECD, with a focus on universalising Grade R. It aims to protect children's rights to full cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development from birth to nine years.

Key aspects of the ECD policy include:

- The Department of Education's responsibility for Grade R up to compulsory schooling age
- Progressive introduction of Grade R as part of 10 years of basic, compulsory education (Grades R-9)
- Commitment to constitutional principles of access, redress, equity, and quality education
- Implementation of National Norms and Standards for School Funding for Grade R (2008)

The funding model prioritises previously disadvantaged communities, aligning with the government's Pro-Poor Policy. It supports the goal of universalising quality ECD services, particularly for Grade R learners. For the Western Cape Education Department, this policy framework guides the implementation and expansion of ECD programmes, emphasising equitable access and quality early education across the province.

[National Integrated Early Childhood Development \(ECD\) Policy \(2015\)](#), which promotes access to ECD services for all children, including health, nutrition, education and protection services, with a goal to provide universal ECD services. It supports the alignment of programmes and policies between various government departments, making ECD an inter-sectoral responsibility.

[The Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998, as amended and the Public Service Act \(Proclamation 103 of 1994\), as amended](#)

These Acts provide for the employment of educators and public service staff and the conditions of service, discipline, retirement and discharge of educators and public service staff, respectively.

It is important not to view the Employment of Educators Act, 1998, in isolation but rather in conjunction with existing legislation, more specifically, the recently enacted Basic Education Laws Amendment Act, 2024. The Basic Education Laws Amendment Act, 2024, has revised certain sections of the Employment of Educators Act, 1996.

[South African Council for Educators Act 31 of 2001, as amended](#)

The department is responsible for effecting the provisions of the South African Council for Educators (SACE) Act 31 of 2001. The purpose of this Act is to promote the professional development of educators by ensuring that all educators are appropriately certified to carry out their professional duties. In addition, the Act attempts to ensure that all educators observe the SACE code of conduct and conduct themselves within the ethical and professional standards established for educators.

[Regulations Relating to the Minimum Uniform Norms and Standards for Public School Infrastructure, 2013](#)

The Regulations Relating to the Minimum Uniform Norms and Standards for Public School Infrastructure (2013) outline the minimum physical infrastructure requirements that all public schools in South Africa must meet. These regulations focus on ensuring that schools provide a safe, conducive learning environment by setting standards for:

- Basic facilities such as classrooms, sanitation, electricity, water and access to technology.
- Health and safety standards, including fencing and emergency measures.
- Maintenance to ensure long-term usability of infrastructure.

The goal is to address disparities in school infrastructure and promote equal access to quality education.

[The National Curriculum Statement \(Grades R to 12\), 2011](#)

The National Curriculum Statement (Grades R-12) comprises three policy documents:

- The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) for all approved subjects for Grades R-12.
- The National Policy pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements of the National Curriculum Statements Grades R-12.
- The National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12.

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 multi-skilled; and compassionate, with respect for the environment and the ability to participate in society as a critical and active citizen.

[National Education Information Policy, 2004](#)

The effective gathering, analysis and dissemination of information in the education system is critical for sound education planning, monitoring and delivery. This policy creates an environment for advancing democracy, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the South African education system. It allows for the coordinated and sustainable development and use of the education information systems of institutions and education departments. Information systems increasingly yield more valuable data and statistics needed for planning and monitoring purposes and therefore allows for better quality information to be distributed to the public. This promotes greater accountability at all levels of the education system – from the individual institutions and provincial education departments to the National Department of Basic Education.

b. Provincial legislative mandate

National legislative changes necessitated provincial alignment, leading to a review of provincial laws.

[The Western Cape Provincial School Education Act, 1997 \(Act 12 of 1997\) as amended in 2010 and 2018](#)

In 2018, several important amendments were made to the [Western Cape Provincial School Education Act, 1997 \(Act 12 of 1997\)](#), aimed at improving governance, accountability and the management of public schools in the province. Some of the most pertinent amendments include: the establishment of an evaluation authority to be known as the Western Cape School Evaluation Authority (or “SEA”), which is intended to improve the school quality assessment framework and establish a new SEA in the Western Cape to conduct independent evaluations of school quality that are credible, transparent and effective in enabling school improvement in the province. The outcomes of these assessments are published.

Collaboration Schools and Donor Funded Schools. Our approach to Collaboration Schools reflects the commitment of the Western Cape Government to consider all innovative options for improving opportunities, especially in marginalised communities.

The establishment of intervention facilities for learners who have been found guilty of serious misconduct, as an alternative to expulsion.

The enabling of classroom observation and providing for an exception to the prohibition of alcohol on school premises, on application to the Head of Department, to permit the consumption or sale of alcoholic liquor on school premises or at any school activity held on school premises.

Good governance and legislative responsibilities

Beyond education-specific laws, the Department adheres to various legislative acts to ensure good governance:

- Public Finance Management Act (1999): Ensures efficient financial management.
- Public Service Act (1994) and Employment of Educators Act (1998): Govern staff employment conditions.
- Skills Development Act (1998): Facilitates employee skill improvement.
- Promotion of Access to Information Act (2000): Ensures public access to departmental information.
- Batho Pele White Paper (1997): Guides service delivery transformation.
- Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (2000): Ensures fair administrative actions.

These acts collectively promote financial responsibility, staff development, transparency and improved service delivery within the Department.

3. Institutional Policies and Strategies over the 5-year planning period

The department aligns with and incorporates various national and provincial development frameworks, including the National Development Plan, its Five-year Implementation Plan, the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP), Spatial Development Plan, and other relevant sector and local priorities.

Service Delivery Improvement Plan (SDIP)

In accordance with the item 38 of the Public Service Regulations, 2016, as amended and the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) directive of 2019, departments must submit their approved SDIPs to the DPSA by 31 March every five years. The latest SDIPs must be aligned to the Strategic Plans of each department, which is echoed within the Department of Performance Management Evaluation's (DPME) "*Guidelines for the implementation of the revised framework for strategic plans and annual performance plans*".

The WCED TOPCO engaged and supported the identification of relevant Citizen Centric Client Services (Call- and or Walk-in Centre Services) for improvement over the next 5-years. These areas are directly linked to amongst others the WCED strategic outcomes: Promote Social Cohesion Through Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration and Improved Corporate Governance and Accountability.

a. Institutional Policies

The National Development Plan (NDP) 2030

The National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 emphasises the importance of Early Childhood Development (ECD), highlighting the need to address physical stunting due to poor nutrition in South African children. It proposes that basic education departments take on greater responsibility for ECD, including managing public funding for ECD centres.

For basic education, the NDP outlines several key areas for improvement. It stresses the importance of stakeholder collaboration, improved school infrastructure, curriculum stability, and mother-tongue instruction in early years. The plan also emphasizes the need for better career guidance, sports and cultural education, and the retention of more learners through Grade 12. Furthermore, the NDP sets long-term goals for basic education, primarily focusing on improving learner achievement in language and mathematics. It proposes strategies to enhance human capacity in education, including increasing the number of teachers, improving teaching quality, and refining teacher deployment processes.

To improve school management, the NDP suggests strengthening support and accountability for principals, enhancing district capacity, and implementing performance contracts for school leaders. It also proposes a results-oriented mutual accountability system involving schools, districts, and parents.

The plan addresses infrastructure improvements, emphasizing the need for better coordination, data-driven planning, and cost management. Finally, it calls for an "education pact" to promote common understanding among stakeholders and support ongoing efforts for school improvement.

Overview of the Medium-Term Development Plan 2024-2029

The Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) 2024-2029 serves as the five-year strategic plan for South Africa's 7th Administration under the Government of National Unity (GNU), formed following the 29 May 2024 general elections. It acts as the implementation framework for the National Development Plan (NDP): Vision 2030, aligning with its goals while emphasizing development outcomes and economic growth.

The MTDP replaces the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) and is designed to focus on fewer, high-impact interventions to drive measurable results. It was approved by Cabinet Lekgotla on 29 January 2025 and is structured around three core strategic priorities:

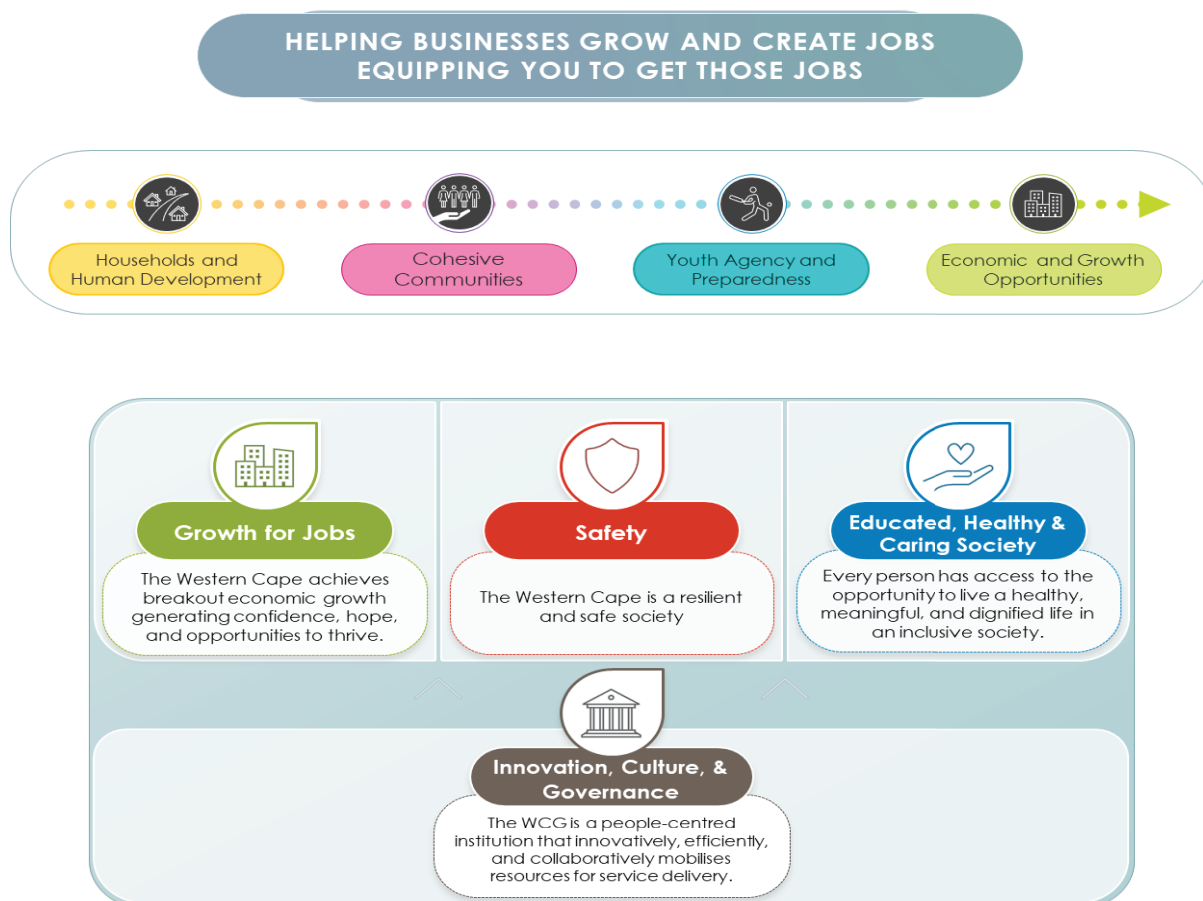
1. Inclusive growth & job creation (Apex priority) – driving economic interventions across all spheres of government.
2. Reducing poverty & tackling the high cost of living – ensuring social protection and economic inclusion.
3. Building a capable, ethical & developmental state – enhancing governance, law and order, and enabling infrastructure.

The WCG aligns its strategies with the MTDP's priorities while maintaining its own provincial mandates through the Provincial Strategic Plan (PSP) and the Provincial Strategic Implementation Plan (PSIP).

- Economic Growth & Job Creation: WCG will contribute through provincial economic policies, investment attraction, skills development, and infrastructure projects that support the national focus on inclusive growth.
- Poverty Reduction & Social Interventions: WCG's social development programs, health initiatives, and education reforms will align with the national emphasis on lowering the cost of living.
- Building a Capable State: The WCG's governance innovation, service delivery efficiency, and regulatory frameworks will support the national goal of strengthening institutional capacity and ethical leadership.

Provincial Strategic Plan 2025-2030

The Provincial Strategic Plan (PSP) 2025-2030 sets out the Western Cape Government's (WCG) strategic priorities and goals for the next five years. It provides overarching direction for government action, focusing on people-centred outcomes that drive meaningful change for residents.



Provincial Portfolios

The implementation of the PSP is driven by four Provincial portfolios. The portfolios are clusters of Departments that provide strategic direction and coordinate efforts to implement programmes aligned with the Western Cape Government's key priorities. These priorities span economic, safety, social, and institutional policy domains.

The portfolios monitor and steer high-priority projects and programmes, ensuring a cohesive and coordinated approach to achieving shared outcomes. Each Department contributes to one or more portfolios by implementing targeted interventions that support the intended impact of that portfolio.

The four strategic portfolios are:

	Growth for Jobs	The Western Cape achieves breakout economic growth generating confidence, hope, and opportunities to thrive.
	Educated, Healthy, and Caring Society	Every person has access to the opportunity to live a healthy, meaningful, and dignified life in an inclusive society
	Safety	The Western Cape is a resilient and safe society.
	Innovation, Culture, and Governance	The WCG is a people-centred institution that innovatively, efficiently, and collaboratively mobilises resources for service delivery

Integrated Impact Areas



To maximise the effectiveness of government interventions, the PSP follows a life course and systems approach. This means that policies and programmes consider the needs and responsibilities of residents from childhood to old age, ensuring government services are structured accordingly.

The PSP promotes an integrated approach where Departments and entities work together towards the Integrated Impact outlined for each of the four areas of the life course.

These integrated impact areas are:

	Households and Human Development	Creating safe, healthy environments that promote lifelong development and self-sufficiency
	Cohesive Communities	Strengthening social ties to build safe, caring, and resilient communities.
	Youth Agency & Preparedness	Empowering young people with the skills and opportunities to participate in society, access economic opportunities, and continue learning.
	Economic & Growth Opportunities	Expanding economic opportunities and fostering confidence, hope, and prosperity.

In addition, two transversal areas address broader structural and environmental factors that shape service delivery and enable people along the entire life course:

	Resource Resilience	Creating safe, healthy environments that promote lifelong development and self-sufficiency
	Spatial Transformation, Infrastructure, and Mobility	Strengthening social ties to build safe, caring, and resilient communities.

Department's Alignment with PSP Focus Areas

The PSP outlines key focus areas that align with its Portfolios and Integrated Impact Areas. Each department aligns its Strategic Plan with these focus areas to ensure a coordinated approach to achieving provincial priorities.

Key focus areas for the Western Cape Department of Education include:

 Growth for Jobs	 Safety	 Educated, Healthy & Caring Society	 Innovation, Culture, & Governance
Access to Employability and Economic Opportunities	Integrated Violence Prevention	Improved Child Wellbeing Increased Youth Resilience, Civic, Educational and Economic Participation Improved Spatial Transformation and Social Infrastructure	Integration and Collaboration Culture and People-Centred Delivery Ease of Doing Government

Through the above focus areas, the Department contributes to integrated impact in Households and Human Development, Cohesive Communities, Youth Agency and Preparedness, Spatial Transformation, Infrastructure, and Mobility and Service Delivery Enablers.

Key Education Strategy Documents:

UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

SDG 4 focuses on "Quality Education" and aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030.

Education 2030 Framework for Action:

Adopted by UNESCO to implement SDG 4, providing guidance for countries to develop their education systems.

African Union's Agenda 2063:

The "Africa We Want" blueprint includes education as a key component for development.

South Africa's Action Plan 2030 for Basic Education

Vision and Goals

- Improve overall quality of basic education; Increase access to education, especially in underserved areas and reduce inequality in educational outcomes

The department aims to address the persistent challenges in South Africa's basic education system while setting ambitious goals for improvement by 2030, in line with national development objectives and global education targets.

4. Relevant Court Rulings

Names of Parties Involved	Centre for Child Law and Others v Minister of Basic Education and Others (2840/2017)
Brief facts	The first application was brought by the Centre for Child Law and the School Governing Body of Phakamisa High School concerning the lawfulness of a policy decision by the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDE) to withdraw funding to schools in respect of undocumented learners. The second application was brought by the 37 children - challenged the lawfulness of clauses 15 and 21 of the Department of Basic Education's (DBE) Admission Policy as well as sections 39 and 42 of the Immigration Act of 2002 (Immigration Act) on the basis that they infringed upon several constitutional rights of undocumented children.
Judgment	The court confirmed the following: ▪ everyone has the right to basic education regardless of their status or their ability to provide proof of identity through the production of a birth certificate or other official documentation. ▪ Clauses 15 and 21 of the Admission Policy unjustifiably limit numerous constitutional rights including the right to equality (section 9), the right to dignity (section 10), the right of children to have their best interest considered paramount (section 28(2)) and the right to basic education (section 29(1)(a)) by excluding undocumented learners from public schools. ▪ Clauses 15 and 21 were accordingly declared to be unconstitutional.

Implications	The judgment necessitates that the Department of Basic Education revise its admission policies to ensure that they comply with constitutional provisions. Schools cannot require documentation that is not a prerequisite for attending school, thus allowing undocumented learners to be admitted. This means that schools must create inclusive policies that recognise the rights of all children, ensuring that undocumented learners are treated equally when seeking admission.
Names of Parties Involved	Hesewu // School Governing Body of Sunningdale Primary School & Minister for Education: Western Cape, 2020
Brief facts	The parents of a learner approached the court seeking an order declaring that the school's admission policy giving preference to learners residing in Sunningdale and to those who had siblings already in the school, be declared invalid, unlawful and inconsistent with the Constitution. The Court referenced section 5(5) of SASA which provides in unqualified terms that a public school's governing body determines the school's admission policy. Further, it emphasized that the Head of Department's authority to determine feeder-zones is qualified because it may only exercise it after consultation with the governing body.
Judgment	The Court dismissed this application for the following reasons– ▪ No objectively verifiable evidence to support an allegation of racially based exclusion or unfair discrimination. ▪ The learner's admission application failed because it was submitted comparatively late relative to the competing applications. ▪ The sibling preference is racially neutral - it avoids the pressure on parents who could otherwise have to drop and collect children at or from different schools and its beneficial for siblings to have attend the same school. ▪ The governing body was within their rights not to admit the learner to the school as the learner did not live in the Sunningdale area. The school where the learner was enrolled at, was within closer proximity to their home (West Beach).
Implications	The ruling reinforces the autonomy of school governing bodies in determining their admissions criteria, but it also emphasizes the need for these policies to align with constitutional provisions, particularly regarding non-discrimination and equal access to education.

Names of Parties Involved	Milnerton High School and Others // The Minister of Education and Kamil Yunus N.O. [2020] HCSA CT 16385
Brief facts	This case relates to Milnerton High School's refusal to admit a learner. Their admission criteria were based on sporting and academic achievements, then residential proximity. The learner alleged that the school unfairly discriminated against him by admitting other learners not residing in the community while the applicant resides close to the school. The learner initially appealed to the MEC and the appeal was upheld. The school was ordered to admit the applicant. The school then approached the Court requesting that the Court substitute its decision for that of the Minister, refusing the learner admission to the high school. The school also alleged that the number of applicants it received outweighed the number of available spaces.
Judgment	The court found that the decision of the MEC to uphold the learners appeal was correct and that the MEC had correctly applied the school's own admission policy. The court relied on section 5(1) and 5(2) of SASA and held that for the school to use their admissions policy to exclude learners who resided in the area, preferring learners who resided outside of the area but were "academically stronger" or displayed "greater sporting prowess" went against Section 5(2) of SASA. The school was thus ordered to admit the applicant.
Implications	The judgment serves as a reminder for the WCED to align its admission policies with the South African Schools Act (SASA) and the Constitution, which advocate for the right to basic education. Schools must not implement arbitrary criteria that could lead to discrimination. The decision places an onus on the WCED to monitor schools more closely to ensure compliance with legal frameworks regarding admissions. It may require the department to develop clearer guidelines and provide training to governing bodies on how to implement fair admission practices. The implications of this judgment might lead the WCED to revise its policies and practices to foster inclusivity and ensure that all children can access quality education without discrimination.

Names of Parties Involved	Equal Education and 5 Others // Head of Department: Western Cape Education Department and 4 Others Case No. 7271/2024
Brief facts	This case involves delays experienced by learners in the Metro East Education District (MEED) of the Western Cape Department of Education (WCED) in being placed in public schools, which the applicants argue violates the learners' constitutional right to basic education as outlined in section 29(1)(a) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. The applicants sought an urgent mandatory interdict to— ▪ compel the first to third respondents to place unplaced late applicants in schools within ten days, ▪ provide remedial catch-up plans for learners placed after March 2024, and ▪ investigate the reasons for the delayed placements.
Judgment	On 17 May 2024, the court ordered the first to third respondents to place all unplaced learners within ten days but denied the relief related to catch-up plans and investigations, requiring the respondents to pay the costs, including for two counsel. The court found that the WCED's failure to timely place learners infringes on their constitutional right to education.
Implications	The judgment has significant implications for the WCED. It emphasises the need for the WCED to adequately address delays in placing learners in schools, particularly those who apply late. The judgment may compel the WCED to develop more inclusive policies that ensure all learners, regardless of their application timing, are granted access to education.

Names of Parties Involved	<i>Equal Education & SADTU v MEC for Education (12880/2019)</i>
Brief facts	In the <i>Equal Education & SADTU v MEC for Education (12880/2019)</i>, the High Court of South Africa [Western Cape Division, Cape Town] dismissed the challenges brought by Equal Education (EE) and the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) against the Western Cape Provincial Schools Education Amendment Act (WCPSEA). The applicants challenged provisions of the WCPSEA that established Collaboration Schools, Donor-Funded Schools, and Intervention Facilities, arguing these provisions conflicted with the South African Schools Act (SASA) and the Constitution. Their main concerns included the governance structure of these schools, the exclusion of parents and learners from decision-making, and the eligibility criteria for donors and operating partners.

Judgment	The court rejected these arguments, ruling that: ▪ Collaboration and Donor-Funded Schools comply with SASA, with adequate checks for governance participation. ▪ There was no conflict between WCPSEA and SASA, as provinces have legislative discretion in education matters. ▪ The establishment of Intervention Facilities did not violate learners' constitutional rights and provided better support than current disciplinary measures. ▪ The Western Cape Schools Evaluation Authority (WCSEA) and the allowance of alcohol on school premises under controlled conditions were also deemed constitutionally valid.
Implications	The judgment has significant implications for the WCED and its education policies: 1. Validation of the Collaboration Schools Model: The court's dismissal of the challenges against Collaboration Schools and Donor-Funded Schools reinforces WCED's authority to continue implementing these models. The ruling upheld the provincial department's autonomy to introduce alternative school governance structures, allowing private donors to partner with public schools and play a significant role in management. This affirms the WCED's strategy of utilising external resources to improve education quality, especially in underperforming schools. 2. Provincial Legislative Power Affirmed: The judgment reinforces the WCED's right to pass and enforce provincial education laws, even if they differ from national frameworks like the South African Schools Act (SASA). By recognising the constitutionality of the WCPSEA, the court acknowledged that provincial governments have the flexibility to legislate in education as long as they do not conflict with national laws or constitutional principles. This autonomy enables the WCED to innovate within the public education system to address regional challenges. 3. Governance and Democratic Participation: The judgment confirmed that while private partners can control 50% of the seats in school governing bodies (of Collaboration Schools, there is still room for parental, teacher, and learner representation, provided under SASA. This finding protects the democratic ideals of school governance, ensuring that stakeholders still have a voice despite the presence of external operating partners. 4. Intervention Facilities: The court's support for the establishment of Intervention Facilities as a measure to address student disciplinary issues provides the WCED with a new tool to manage learners with behavioural problems. This decision allows the department to formalise disciplinary processes and prevent expulsions while maintaining learners' access to education in a controlled environment.

5. **School Evaluation and Quality Monitoring:** The validation of the Western Cape Schools Evaluation Authority (WCSEA) strengthens the WCED's ability to evaluate schools independently from national evaluation policies. The decision allows the WCED to monitor and improve educational outcomes using its own metrics and evaluation standards, potentially improving teaching quality and school performance.
6. **Alcohol provisions:** The ruling on alcohol consumption on school premises, permitting it under regulated circumstances, allows the WCED flexibility in organising school-related events where alcohol might be involved, subject to strict controls and safeguards to protect learners.

In summary, the judgment supports the WCED's innovative approaches to education reform and governance while maintaining constitutional and participatory safeguards.

**On 13 February 2024, Equal Education (EE) and the Equal Education Law Centre (EELC) appeared in the Western Cape High Court to seek permission to appeal the [judgment](#) handed down on 17 July 2023. Their application for leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Appeal was successful. **

Part B: Our strategic focus

1. Vision

QUALITY EDUCATION

for every child | in every classroom | in every school in the province

2. Mission

The mission is to ensure that every child has quality learning opportunities in a functional and enabling environment to acquire knowledge, competencies, skills, and values to succeed in a changing world.

3. Values

The guiding principles that define the department's mission and our core beliefs constitute our fundamental values. These values fortify professional accountability, operational endeavours to enhance client services, administration, support services, and quality teaching and learning.



Caring

To care for those, we serve and work with.



Integrity

To be honest and do the right thing.



Competence

The ability and capacity to do the job we were employed to do.



Innovation

To be open to new ideas and develop creative solutions to problems in a resourceful way.



Accountability

We take responsibility.



Responsiveness

To serve the needs of our citizens and employees.

4. Situational Analysis

Introduction

This Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Strategic Plan 2025-2030 draws extensively from the Education Sector Analysis (ESA) report conducted by the World Bank. The report, commissioned by the Western Cape Provincial Government through the National Treasury, provides a comprehensive picture of the education sector in the Western Cape. It enables an informed prioritization of policy actions and reforms to improve access, quality, and equity in our education system. The analysis forms the foundation for identifying areas where resources can make the biggest impact in our effort to build a more equitable, resilient, and effective education system. While primarily informing the strategic direction of the WCED, this report also serves as a valuable resource for the broader Government of South Africa and various education stakeholders.

Furthermore, the WCED operates in a dynamic educational landscape, addressing emerging trends and the diverse needs of its learner population. In alignment with national legislation, including the South African Schools Act and the Inclusive Education Policy, the WCED implements targeted strategies to support women, youth, and people with disabilities. These efforts encompass inclusive education practices, gender equity initiatives, youth development programmes, and comprehensive support for learners with disabilities. The department is also responsive to the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, integrating digital literacy and skills development into its curriculum. This approach aims to prepare learners for the evolving job market while addressing persistent socio-economic challenges. The WCED's commitment to building an inclusive, equitable, and future-oriented education system is reflected in its ongoing teacher training, policy reviews, and collaborative partnerships with NGOs and other government departments. Regular monitoring and evaluation ensure that programmes remain effective and aligned with the changing needs of all learner groups, contributing to the broader goals of reducing poverty, driving inclusive growth, and fostering a capable, ethical, and developmental state.

Education is a human right, and enhances development as it drives economic growth, reduces poverty, reduces gender-based inequality and fosters social cohesion (World Development Report, 2018). Whilst education is regarded as a human right and a means to improve lives, a report released by Bustillo and Patrinos (2023) identified several mega trends facing the delivery of impactful education in developing countries, five of the trends are listed below:

Learning Crisis which exacerbated after COVID-19

Internationally benchmarked assessments suggest that about 60% of children from low and middle-income countries cannot read for meaning by age 10 (SEACMEQ 2017, PIRLS 2021). It is estimated that the situation worsened after COVID-19, with about 70% of these children unable to read. The long-term impact of this is loss of income in the future particularly for children from disadvantaged countries. Addressing the issue of learning losses through evidence-based research, innovation and technology might be the opportunity to turn things around (Fredman et. al, 2023).

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

ECCE is important in laying a good foundation for children (UNESCO, 2024). Some of the ECCE objectives include universal access to ECCE, fostering the holistic development of the child, play-based pedagogy and inclusiveness and diversity. The challenge is that many countries do not have a legal framework to the ECCE universal access. Differently, South Africa, committed to this sector in 2012 through the National Development Plan 2030 and the National Integrated Early Childhood Development (ECD) Policy. It is expected that ECCE will be accessible to every child in the country by 2030. However, the shrinking budget of government is the challenge, whilst one would like to have universal access, the quality of the ECCE offering must be maintained. This presents planners with opportunities to invest in partnerships and funding opportunities to make the delivery of ECCE and its intended outcomes a success (Fredman et. al, 2023).

Demand for quality educators amid the aging teacher population

Most educators lack the necessary instructional skills. Additionally, there is an insufficient number of educators who teach essential subjects like Mathematics, Science, Engineering and Technology and this is common across the world (Bustillo and Patrinos, 2023). The TIMSS 2015 report revealed that 79% of educators teaching Mathematics in Grade 6 lacked knowledge of the subject.

The issue of quality educators is not the only challenge, the budget cuts, an aging teacher population and teacher shortages exacerbate the situation (United Nations, 2024). South Africa is also heavily affected by the situation, for example earlier in 2024, the Minister of Basic Education announced budget cuts that would result in the loss of about 2 400 educators in the Western Cape, meaning more overcrowded classes and more administration and less contact time for the remaining educators (Nene, October 2024).

These challenges present education planners with opportunities to invest in the training of quality educators and to also think about attractive salaries to keep such educators (TIMSS, 2015). Educator shortages can be addressed through funding, meaningful collaborations, and the use of digital learning and other innovative teaching and learning methods.

Urbanisation

At least 50% of the population globally resides in urban areas. South Africa is one of the African countries with rapidly growing urban populations and, it is expected that the population residing in urban areas will rise by 71% (Massey and Gunter, 2018). Whilst urbanisation creates opportunities such as the population growth, technological advancement, infrastructure development and economic growth, it is also a challenge. In the space of education delivery for instance, the movement from rural to urban areas results in high demand for schools, educators and resources and this can hinder the delivery of quality education (Mji, 2014). The Western Cape is one of the fastest growing provinces in the country and the rapid movements have put pressure on the already exhausted resources in WCED schools, particularly in the urban areas with about two-thirds of the population residing in the city (World Bank, 2024)¹. Between 2020 and 2024, the WCED has been receiving at least 19 000 new learners from other provinces and countries every year.

Lack of evidence-based policy making including informed decision making

Evidence-based decision making is crucial for the realisation of the SDG Goal 4 targets. Research suggests that empirical evidence is still not used to inform policies (Bustillo and Patrinos, 2023). Also, whilst there are many interventions aimed at improving education outcomes, there is little to no monitoring to track their correct implementation and to measure their effectiveness or impact in the end. This deprives education institutions of opportunities and management tools that generate information that can assist to better manage interventions (UNEG, 2012). In addition, whilst there are many data sources that can be used to enrich decision making (TIMSS, SEACMEQ, PIRLS and the WCED Systemic Testing Programme), this data could be better utilised to align relevant stakeholders towards a common goal and to track the performance of various policy reforms (World Bank, 2024).

¹ Western Cape Education Sector Analysis

It is imperative that planners and policy makers in the Western Cape are aware of these trends for the realisation of an equitable, resilient and effective education system compatible to international trends (World Bank, 2024).

This Situational Analysis provides insights about the current environment within WCED. The analysis of data for period 2015 to 2024, has enabled us to gain a comprehensive understanding of:

- areas of success,
- areas needing improvement, and
- internal and external factors affecting the delivery of quality education particularly inclusive and equal access to compulsory education, curriculum planning, curriculum implementation and the achievement of learning outcomes.

Information documented is aimed at informing the decision-making process, to evaluate current programmes, to develop targeted interventions and to establish a responsive workforce, thus creating an enabling environment for educators towards the delivery of quality education for every child, in every classroom, in every school in the province.

4.1 External Environment Analysis

The WCED recognises the external factors that affect the delivery of quality education in the province hence the analysis and monitoring of the historical, current, and future trends. By monitoring the external factors, WCED can anticipate future events and effectively manage the demand. The PESTEL framework is used to establish how Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal factors impact the delivery of quality education.

4.1.1 Political context

The South African National and Provincial elections were concluded on 02 June 2024 with none of the political parties gaining outright majority votes to govern the country. This set a new political landscape as political parties had to negotiate, bargain and be willing to consider some trade-offs. Consequently, the Government of National Unity (GNU) was formed to kick start the seventh administration.

The formation of the GNU has the potential to facilitate policy development and to ensure effective governance, sustainable development, and social cohesion. This is due to the composition of the GNU, formed by multiple political parties, thus inclusive in nature (Maleka, 2024).

One of the GNU's priorities is to develop and empower South Africans through the development of a plan to universalize access to ECD by 2030, expanding vocational and technical training in schools, teacher training and pursuance of demand-led approach to skills development (DPME, 2024)².

² Towards the Medium-Term Development Plan 2024-2029

4.1.2 Economic context

Western Cape Economic Profile

Table 1: GDP Actual Growth & Forecast

Country/Grouping	2023	2024(f)	2025(f)
Global Output	3.3	3.2	3.2
Advanced economics	1.7	1.8	1.8
United States	2.9	2.8	2.2
United Kingdom	0.3	1.1	1.5
Japan	1.7	0.3	1.1
Euro Area	0.4	0.8	1.2
Emerging Markets	4.4	4.2	4.2
China	5.2	4.8	4.5
Brazil	2.9	3	2.2
Russia	3.6	3.6	1.2
India	8.2	7	6.5
Sub-Saharan Africa	3.6	3.6	4.2
South Africa	0.7	1.1	1.7
Western Cape	0.7	1.3	1.8

Source: IMF, PERO & MTBPS 2024 –

Table 1 presents the historical (2023) and the forecasted growth for 2024 and 2025. The Western Cape is among the best performing regions on key macroeconomic indicators amongst the nine provinces in the country (World Bank, 2024). The Western Cape economic growth forecast of 1.3% in 2024 is 0.2% above the National forecast. This comes after increasing by just 0.7% in 2023. In 2025, the province is projected to grow by an annual average of 1.8%. The muted growth highlights the need for a strategy to radically encourage the provincial growth rate as cited in Growth for Jobs Strategy (2023).

4.1.3 Social Context

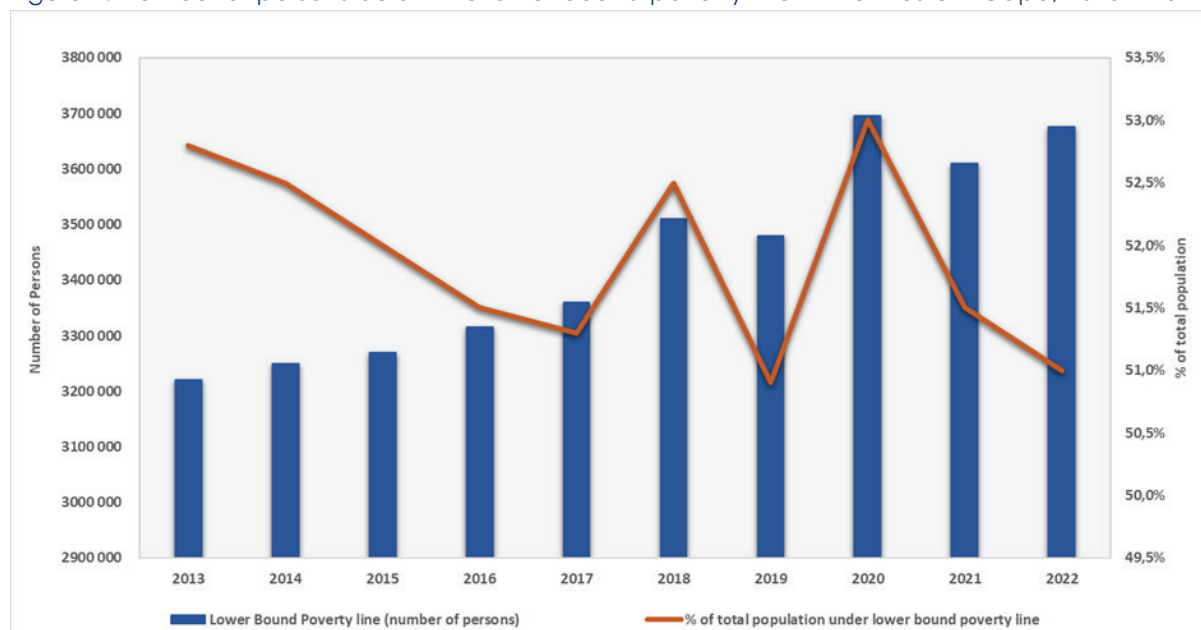
Poverty

Poverty in the Western Cape presents significant challenges, especially for children, with around 40% of those aged 0-17 living below the upper bound poverty line despite some decline in overall child poverty rates. This socio-economic hardship has dire health consequences, as malnutrition accounts for approximately 4% of deaths in children aged 1-4. A key indicator of this issue is stunting, which affects 18% of children under five, with higher rates in rural (26%) and urban informal areas (21%). Furthermore, among younger children, (6-23 months), only 40% receive a minimum acceptable diet needed for healthy growth and development (World Bank, 2024)³.

³ Western Cape Education Sector Analysis

Poverty lines are significant tools that allow for statistical reporting on poverty levels and patterns. These also assist in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of poverty reduction programmes and policies. The analysis of the extent of poverty is necessary as research suggests that there is a correlation between the socio-economic status and learner performance (Lacour and Tissingtin, 2011; Greever, 2014; Chikoko and Mthembu, 2021). Further, the performance of learners in NQ1-NQ4 schools is lower compared to NQ5 (WCED Systemic Testing Programme, 2023). This statement holds for internationally benchmarked assessments (SEACMEQ, 2017; PIRLS, 2019; TIMSS, 2019).

Figure 1: Number of persons below the lower bound poverty line in the Western Cape, 2013 – 2022



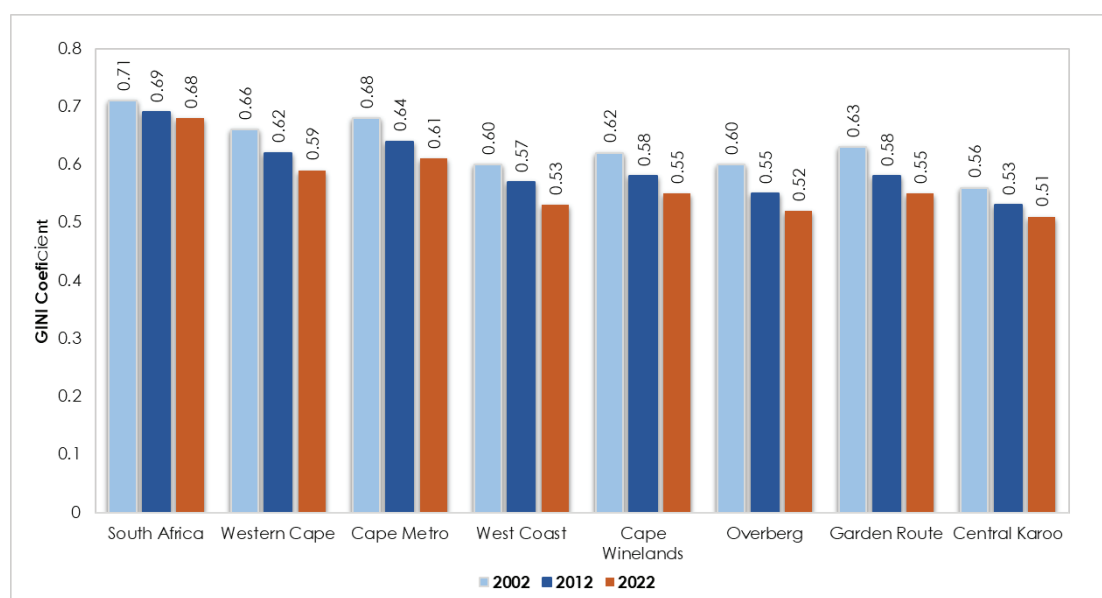
Source: PERO, 2024

Since 2020, there has been a persistent surge in the number of people living below the poverty line with approximately 53% of the Western Cape population remaining below the lower bound poverty line in 2020. This was reduced to about 51% in 2022.

In South Africa, about 33.2% of adults live under poverty (Stats SA, 2024). Between 2018 and 2022, child poverty increased from 9.2% to 18.1% (Hall, 2024)⁴. As a result, about 75% of the R255 billion budget tabled in 2024 was spent in services aimed at eradicating poverty such as well-being, learner transport and school nutrition and other pro-poor programmes (Nene, 2024).

⁴ Child Poverty, 2024, University of Cape Town

Figure 2: Gini Coefficient for South Africa and the Western Cape by District, 2002 – 2022



Source: PERO, 2024

Figure 2 demonstrates shifts in the Gini coefficient for ten-year periods 2002, 2012 and 2022, comparing South Africa to the Western Cape and its districts. A marginal decline in income inequality is recorded in the Western Cape from 0.66 in 2002 to 0.59 in 2022. Cape Metro with 0.61, remained higher than the provincial Gini coefficient of 0.59 in 2022.

In the education space, addressing inequality demands infrastructure investment, teacher excellence, diversity and inclusion. An equitable education system provides all learners with the resources to succeed and break the poverty sequence. According to the Medium-Term Budget and Policy Statement (MTBPS) (2024), the basic education will prioritise quality improvements such as piloting a nutrition programme in ECD and, placing emphasis on early foundation phase reading to improve learning outcomes.

The 2024 CEMIS data revealed significant inequities in educational resources across schools, particularly between different socio-economic quintiles. There are 620 Public Ordinary schools that do not have libraries, and of which 272 were quintile 1 schools.

In 2024, sixty-one (61) secondary schools had no science laboratories. Of the total 24 quintile 1 secondary schools 8 or 33% do not have science laboratories, whilst 19 or 12.3% of the 155 quintile 5 schools have no science laboratories.

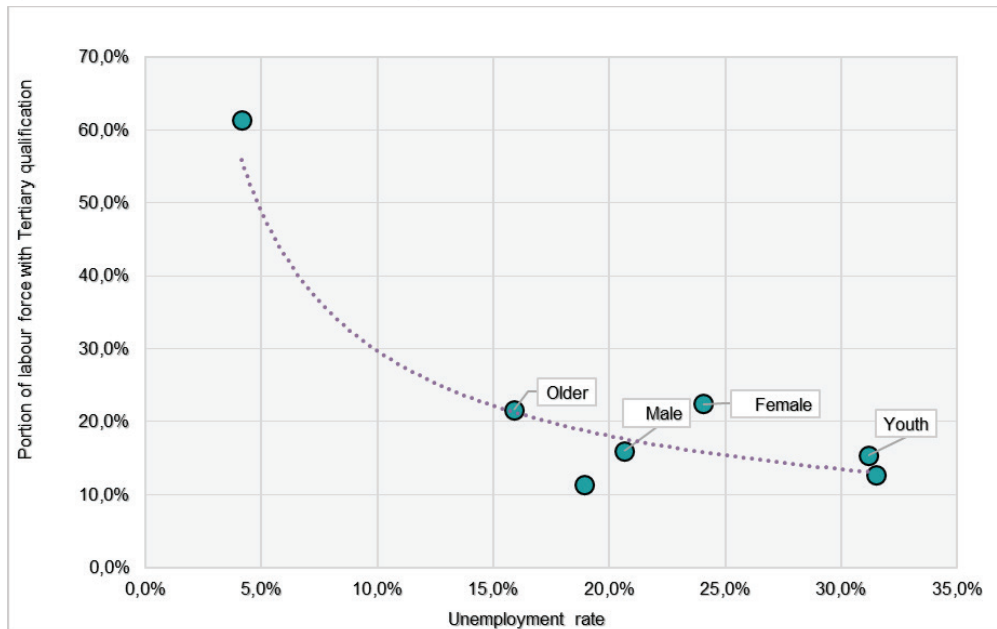
The inequalities pose a challenge for learner learning and career preparation, as it suggests that socio-economic status greatly affects educational quality and access to resources as suggested by the disparities in resource availability and performance gaps provided in the previous paragraphs.

The World Bank report on the WCED education sector analysis based on the 2022 data had a similar finding (World Bank, 2024).

Unemployment

Unemployment in the Western Cape is low compared to the other provinces, 19.6% in the third quarter of 2024 compared to the 34% of Gauteng and national at 32.1%. However, some groups are more affected than others as 36% of Africans are unemployed compared to the 22% Coloured, 12% Asian and 8% White unemployed population (Stats SA, 2024).

Figure 3: Correlation between the unemployment rate and portion of labour force with tertiary qualifications in the Western Cape, Quarter 2, 2024



Source: PERO, 2024

When assessing the optimal tertiary qualifications for employment predictions, results illustrate that vocational tertiary education tends to suggest constructive employment results with higher wages and lower financial risks compared to academic degrees at the beginning of a career. Degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics fields are particularly beneficial due to high demand, although degrees that emphasise practical skills and align with industry standards generally enhance employability across various fields (PERO, 2024). To keep the unemployment levels low, the alignment of education curriculum with economic opportunities is crucial.

According to the Growth for Jobs Strategy (2023), the weak labour market outcomes suggest a need to align curriculum offering with the needs of employers, especially jobs for the future. It is for this reason that one of the Growth for Jobs components focuses on improving pathways for learners, entrepreneurs and aspirant job seekers. Curriculum offering and learning must link to employment demand more effectively which is known as workforce preparation skills. Further, there is a need for accessible support to guide learners and jobseekers towards the skills required by the economy. Economic modelling shows that the strategy has the potential to generate over one million jobs if implemented, monitored, evaluated and adjusted correctly.

Human Development Index

The HDI is computed using three separate indices – life expectancy, education, and income. Its values range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicative of greater human development. Table 2 shows the estimated Human Development Index (HDI) of Western Cape.

Table 2: Western Cape HDI 2040 Projections

Western Cape (ranking in 2010)	2010	2020	2030	2040
	0.68 (91 st)	0.74 (62 nd)	0.81 (39 th)	0.85 (27 th)
Reference Countries (2010)	China	Russia	Hungary and Portugal	Austria and United Kingdom

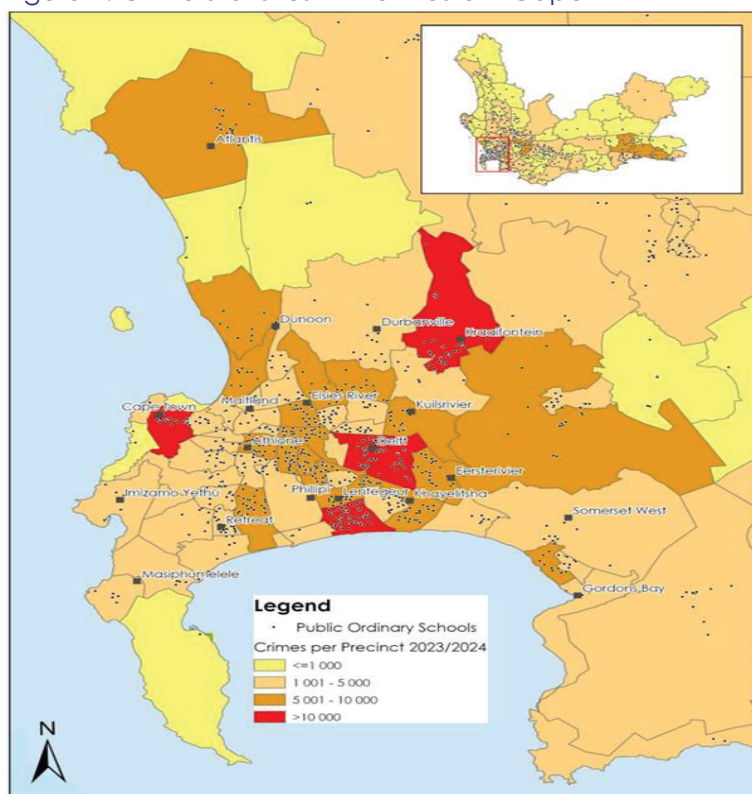
Source: *Future Cape Policy Brief 2040*, 2013

In 2010, the WC province was ranked 91st with an index score of 0.68 which was comparable with China. The ranking improved in 2020 to 62nd with a score of 0.74 which was comparable with Russia. The projections by the Futures Cape Policy Brief, suggest that the Western Cape HDI is expected to be higher at 0.81 and 0.85 by 2030 and 2040, respectively, in line with some of the developed nations. Provincial governments play a crucial role in improving HDI through targeted education and healthcare initiatives (PERO,2024). The Western Cape needs to strengthen investment in education and health to achieve the estimated 2040 HDI.

Safety and Security

The Western Cape recorded the highest number of drug-related crimes in the country during the 2023/24 financial year (SAPS, 2024), accounting for 41.8% of the national total. Gauteng followed with 22.0% cases and KwaZulu-Natal ranked third with 13.4% cases

Figure 4: Crime Statistics in the Western Cape



Source: www.saps.gov.za, 2024

Figure 4 highlights the SAPS precincts and the total number of crimes reported for the 2023/24 financial year. In the Western Cape, five precincts reported over 10 000 crimes during this period, all located within the Cape Town Metropolitan area, with drug-related offenses being the most prevalent. There are 153 schools in these precincts, exposing children to drug-related activities, which further contribute to a range of other criminal activities.

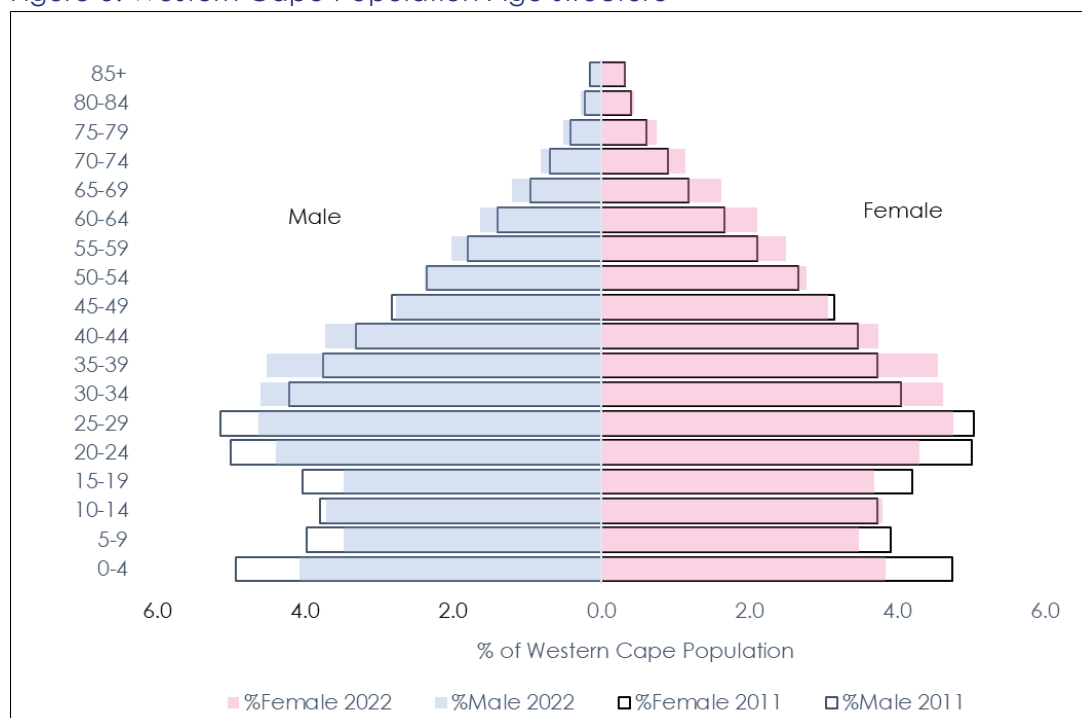
The Western Cape faces significant challenges due to high levels of gang violence and drug-related abuse, particularly in informal settlements. The high crime rates pose a risk within the learning environment for many students, according to the World Bank (2024), 33% of learners attend schools classified as 'less than safe and orderly', while only 19.9% are in 'very safe and orderly' schools far below the international average of 48 %. The impact of poverty is also evident, as 42% of no-fee school students attend unsafe schools compared to 26% of those in fee-paying schools.

Western Cape Population Profile

Age structure

The education sector budget is affected by demographic changes hence the need to study population trends particularly the School-Going Age (SGA). Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) and DBE are the primary and official sources of education-related statistics with Stats SA responsible for the yearly mid-year population estimates and Census data. The Western Cape population age-structure is captured below.

Figure 5: Western Cape Population Age structure

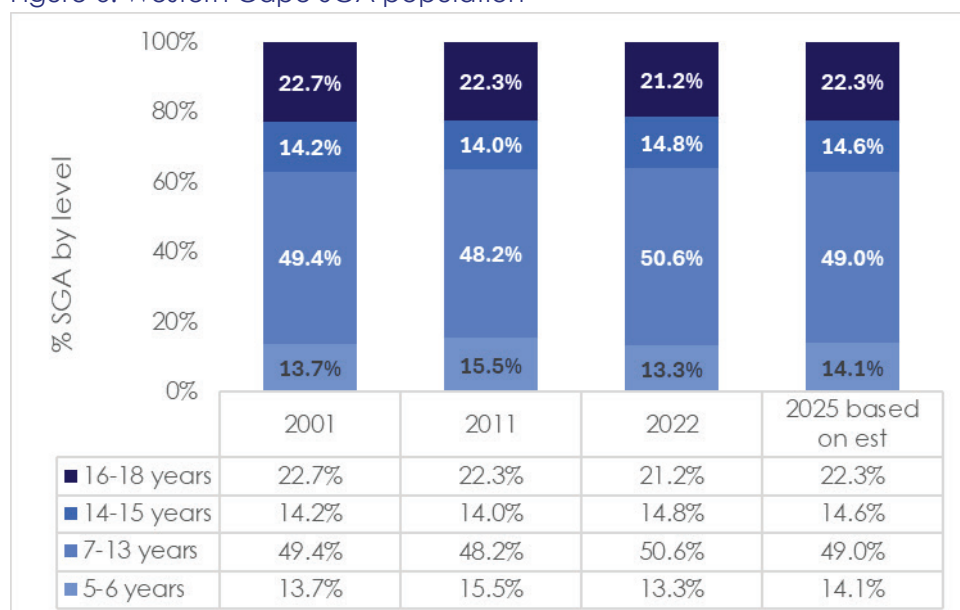


Source: Stats SA Census, 2022

Figure 5 shows the Western Cape age-structure as depicted by the Census 2022.

- The Census data head count shows that the province had 7 433 020 people in 2022 (Stats SA, Census, 2022). This figure is higher than the 5 822 735 people recorded in the 2011 Census by 1 610 286 or 27.6%. The annual average population growth rate is 1.8%. The 27.6% recorded between the two censuses suggests that the province is experiencing a rapid population growth, hence the wide base and narrow top.
- Whilst the province attracts a lot of people, there has been a decrease in the population aged 0-29 years when 2011 is compared to 2022. This might be due to the low birth rate between the two censuses and the youth emigrating. However, the net-migration is positive, an indication that more people enter the province than those exiting.
- Differently, there has been an increase in the population aged 30-44. The growth might be because of the migration of the working population that enters the province, in search of job opportunities.
- Further, the recorded increase in age-group 55-84 years suggests that the older people in the Western Cape live longer, probably an indication of development and improvement in the health and education services to the society.
- It is estimated that in 2025, the Western Cape will have 7 459 140 or 26 120 more people, with the economically active population growing by a marginal 0.3%
- It is further estimated that the Western Cape population will exceed 10 million people by 2040 whilst the compulsory SGA population will decrease by a marginal 0.5%. (Stats SA, Census 2022). The growth in the SGA population is presented in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6: Western Cape SGA population



Source: Stats SA, Census 2001- 2022; MYPE 2024

Figure 6 shows the Western Cape headcount of the SGA population distributed by age-group, comparing Censuses 2001-2022 and the 2025 MYPE based on Census 2022 data.

- The primary school age-group has the highest share of the Western Cape SGA population across censuses, showing a marginal growth between the 2001 and 2022 censuses. Also, the primary school age group constituted about 51% of the total SGA population in the 2022 census.

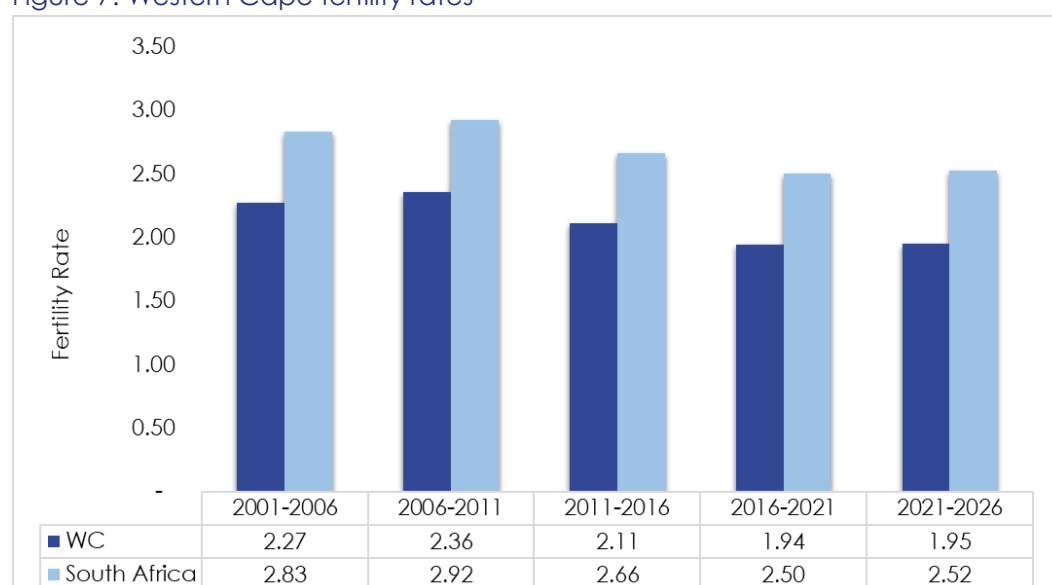
- Whilst age-groups 7-13 years and 14-15 years decreased in the 2011 census, both groups recorded increases in the 2022 census. Both groups are estimated to experience small declines in 2025.
- The ECD and upper secondary school age-groups (5-6 years and 16-18 years) are estimated to increase when the 2025 estimates are compared to the actual census.
- The headcount decreases in the ECD age groups between the 2011 and 2022 censuses correlate to the declining fertility rate. It might also indicate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which increased home schooling (Fontenelle-Tereshchuk, 2021).

The above statistics will continue to increase the demand for more schools and jobs in the province.

Fertility

Fertility rates reflect the causes and effects of economic and social development. A fertility rate of 2.1 children per woman ensures a stable population. Fertility is important as it can be used to estimate the growth in the number of children that can be expected to attend ECD and first grade in the future, thus is vital in education planning. Figure 7 below compares the Western Cape fertility rate to national.

Figure 7: Western Cape fertility rates



Source: PERO, 2024

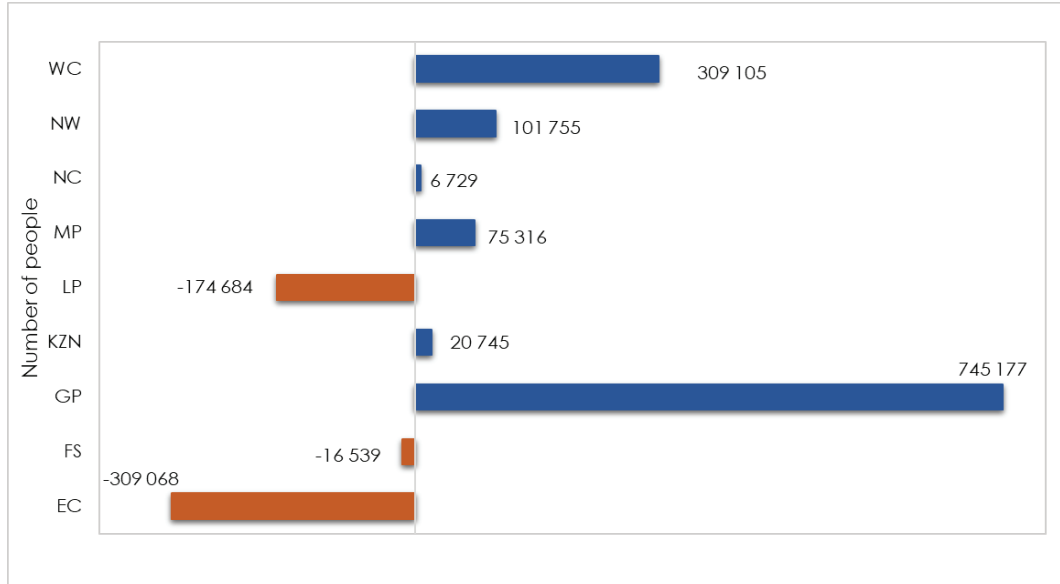
Figure 7 is a comparison of the projected fertility rate, comparing the Western Cape to National for period 2001 to 2026. From Figure 7, the average fertility rate of the Western Cape is consistently below that of the country. The provincial average fertility rate is further estimated to have marginally increased from 1.94 to 1.95 between periods 2016-2021 and 2021-2026 (PERO, 2023).

According to (PERO, 2024), the primary driver of declining fertility is increased educational attainment, particularly among women, which results in delayed childbirth and smaller family size. In addition, economic factors, such as the rising costs of childbearing and the necessity for dual-income households, further contribute to this trend.

Migration

Migration is an important demographic indicator, as it shapes the age structure of a region's population and affects the population size, (PERO, 2021). Migration trends for the province are captured in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8: Estimated net migration by province, 2021-2026



Source: PERO, 2024

The province received the second largest number of in-migrants, and it is estimated that the province will have 309 105 more citizens between 2021 and 2026, with the net-migration contributing 4% towards the total population, (PERO, 2024). It is further estimated that by 2030, in-migration will overtake the natural population of the province. The provincial in-migration is driven by the strong working opportunities relative to the neighbouring provinces, (Kleinhans and Yu, 2020).

While the provincial equitable share formula covers migration, it does not completely reimburse the province for additional infrastructure. In-migration has been a challenge for the province especially when the SGA population is considered, often resulting in the late placement of learners in the new academic year.

4.1.4 Technological Context

In South Africa, the National Advisory Council on Innovation (NACI) established in 1997 drives all the innovation activities including research and development to fulfil the national objectives (No.18425, Government Gazette, 1997).

At the provincial level, the Western Cape Government is committed to policies, strategies, and interventions in response to improving the way of working and to address technology-related demands. The province has also increased access to free internet in public libraries and other public institutions such as schools and clinics, thus ensuring continuous access to learning and teaching resources even during weekends and school holidays, (WCG Digital Government Programme, 2023).

4.1.5 Environmental Context

Climate change projections for the Western Cape suggest a likelihood of more frequent and more intense extreme weather events threatening food security and economic growth in South Africa and the Western Cape. Climate change modelling shows that annual temperatures are rising, and the number of colder days will decrease. Droughts, floods and heat waves will become more regular, and these trends highlight the need for a coordinated response from governments, tertiary institutions and the private sector to mitigate against and adapt to the impact of climate change⁵.

The Western Cape Government is a founding member of the Mediterranean Climate Action Partnership (MCAP) which was formally established on 2 December 2023. The MCAP is comprised of 14 government leaders representing regions in Africa, Australia, Europe, and North and South America.⁶

Regions around the world with a mediterranean climate characterized by cold, wet winters and hot, dry summers, are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of the climate crisis. While development and economic conditions vary between countries, increasing temperatures and sea level rise are ubiquitous and will only magnify in impact throughout the 21st Century. Drought, wildfire, and extreme heat is expected to increase in both severity and frequency, affecting the resilience of communities and ecosystems.

Traditionally, mediterranean climates are located between about 30° and 45° latitude north and south of the Equator and on the western side of continents. Due to global and regional trends, impacts will be exacerbated in the coming decades, especially if global warming exceeds 1.5 to 2°C above the pre-industrial level.

Drought, wildfire and extreme heat have been selected as being the focal areas on which the partnership will first focus. Western Cape Government has been nominated to Chair the Drought Task Team.

Severe and consistent changing weather conditions pose a risk within the learning environment impacting on resource allocation and delivery of quality education.

The groundbreaking collaboration, launched at the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 28) in Dubai, reflects a growing understanding of the worldwide effects of climate change, and the need for global collaboration to address rising threats to humans and the environment by building the resilience of social and natural systems.

⁵ AgriProbe Vol 21 | No 1 | 2024

⁶ MCAP Media Statement, December 2, 2023

4.1.6 Legal Context

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) operates within the legal framework of South Africa's national and provincial education laws, primarily rooted in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 ("the Constitution"). Basic Education is a human right contained in section 29 of the Constitution, especially for children below the age of 18.

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) collaborates with other bodies to ensure that the rights of children are not violated (Chapter 1, of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

National legislation such as the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996) and the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act 27 of 1996) sets standards that the WCED must implement at the provincial level. Additionally, the Western Cape Provincial School Education Act, 1997 (Act 12 of 1997) outlines the WCED's responsibilities in managing public schools, funding and ensuring compliance with both national and provincial education policies.

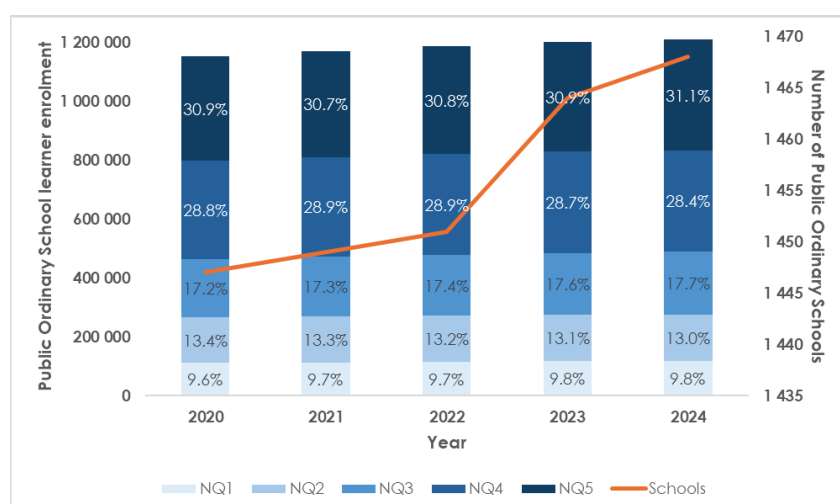
The Employment of Educators Act, 1998 (Act 76 of 1998) is the framework that informs educators about their roles and thus is responsible for creating harmony in the relationships between educators and education sector stakeholders (Pillay, 2014). All the legalities and laws guiding the delivery of education are listed and discussed in Section 5 of this document.

4.2 Internal Environmental Analysis

The social investment in education is the responsibility of the government and it is mandatory for all children aged 6 to 15 years to attend school, hence the NDP thrives for an education system that contributes towards building an inclusive society, provides equal opportunities and ultimately helps South Africans to realise their full potential, particularly those from previously disadvantaged communities (DBE, 2020).

The South African Education System is divided into 4 levels, Early Childhood Development (ECD), Primary School Education (Grade 1-7), Compulsory Secondary School Education (Grade 8-9) and Non-Compulsory Secondary School (Grade 10-12). Primary and Compulsory Secondary School Education is referred to as the General Education and Training (GET) band, whilst Non-Compulsory Secondary School education is referred to as the Further Education and Training (FET) band.

Figure 9: Number of Public Ordinary Schools and learners enrolled.



Source: Annual School Survey, 2020 – 2024

From Figure 9, there are 1 208 621 learners enrolled in 1 468 Public Ordinary Schools in 2024 (excluding SNE and ECD schools). There was an increase of 4.9% (56 034) learners for the period 2020-2024 while the growth in the number of schools was about 1.5% for the same period. Most of the learners are enrolled in NQ5 schools which is consistent over the 5-year period.

4.2.1 WCED facilities and learner numbers

Infrastructure is provided through the Provincial Schools Build Programme. The Provincial Schools Build Programme focuses on the provision of new schools, extension of existing schools, new and upgrading of services and maintenance of schools. Provincial Education Departments submit infrastructure plans (U_AMPs) to the DBE. In the U_AMPs, provinces identify MTEF targets with progress monitored and reported on quarterly (National Education Infrastructure Management System Report, 2021). Figure 10 below shows the Western Cape overall enrolments and schools in ordinary SNE for the period 2020 to 2024.

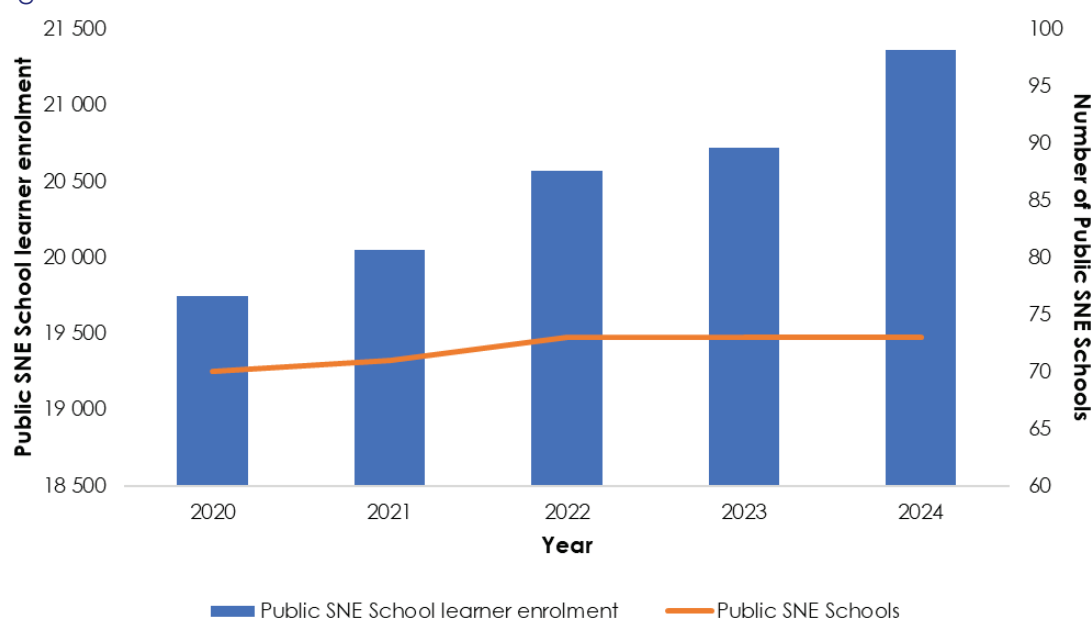
Inclusive and Specialised Education Support

The debate on school inclusion has been ongoing since 1994 (Salamanca, Spain, 1994) and governments worldwide must ensure the delivery of inclusive universal education of all children in every classroom in a school (Rapp and Corral-Granados, 2021).

One of the 7th Administration's key focus areas of the Minister of Basic Education is to increase efforts to improve access to and the quality of inclusive education for learners in vulnerable communities and learners with special education needs.

The WCED has made strides towards this objective, aligning closely with Goal 4.5 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which advocates for eliminating disparities and, to ensure equal access to education by all, including persons with disabilities (Word Bank Group and the 2030 Agenda, 2017).

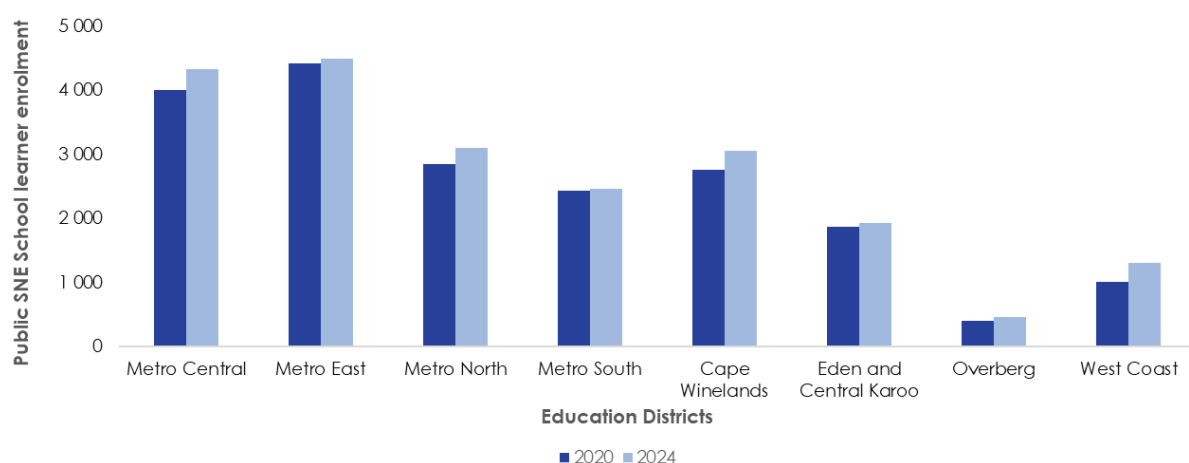
Figure 10: Number of schools and enrolments in Public SNE schools



Source: Annual School Survey, 2020 – 2024

Over the past five years (2020-2024), the WCED has observed a steady growth in both learner enrolments and the number of Special Need Schools across the province. Figure 10 above indicates that enrolments in SNE schools increased by 7%, which reflects the department's ongoing commitment to expanding access to education by all. This is attributed to concerted efforts that have been made to improve early identification processes and strengthening School Based Support Teams and increasing the number of SNE with the view of improving access and support.

Figure 11: Distribution of SNE learners by geographic location comparing 2020 to 2024



Source: Annual School Survey, 2020 – 2024

The expansion of inclusive education in the Western Cape is steadily on the rise, with 18 660 learners with special educational needs currently enrolled in public ordinary schools. These learners are supported through a network of dedicated resources and teams, including Inclusive Education Outreach Teams, Learning Support Teachers and Circuit-Based Support Teams.

The statistics in Figure 11 suggest that:

- Between 2020 and 2024, SNE enrolments increased across districts with a greater share of learners found in Metros East and Central.
- The number of learners and schools in rural Cape Winelands is almost equivalent to that of Metro North.
- There is a need to channel resources towards Metro East to avoid the demand challenge experienced in mainstream schools. Whilst the number of schools has remained the same in this district over the same period, Metro Central has more schools (17 and 18).
- Similarly, Metros North and South have roughly 2 thirds of the total number of learners compared to Metro East. The two districts have almost the same number of schools as Metro East, with Metro South adding one more school in 2024.
- Overberg has the least number of SNE schools and learners (2) in the Western Cape.

The WCED emphasizes a citizen-centric culture, ensuring that educational services are tailored to meet the diverse needs of all learners including those with special educational needs. By focusing on innovation for impact, the department incorporates assistive technology and teaching methodologies, aiming to improve accessibility for learners with special educational needs.

Disaggregation of WCED Schools by Institution Type in 2024

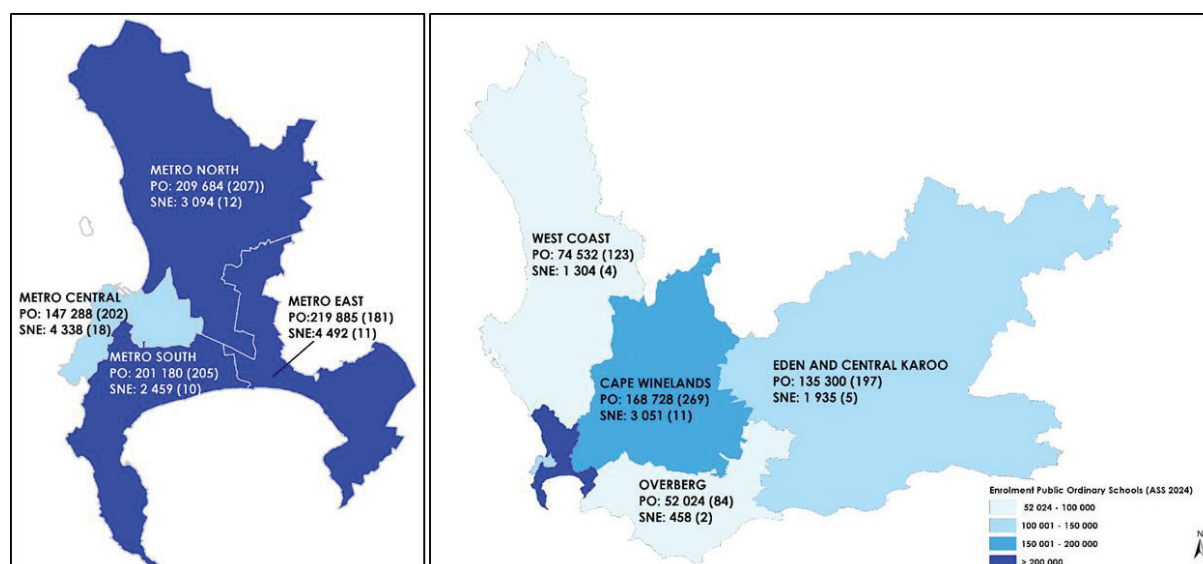
Table 3: Public Ordinary Mainstream and SNE institutions by school type

School Type	Number of institutions	Number of learners	% of learners
Early Childhood Development	8	665	0.1
Public Ordinary Primary Schools	1 064	778 698	63.3
Public Ordinary Secondary Schools	404	429 923	34.9
Public Ordinary Special Needs Schools	73	21 131	1.7
Province	1 549	1 230 417	100

Source: Annual School Survey, 2024

Table 3 shows that of the 1 549 institutions, the majority are mainstream, 1 468 (94.8%) hosting the largest share (1.2) of the total WCED learners. Primary schools accommodate the largest share of the total learners, 63.3% (778 698). The statistics in Table 3 are further represented spatially in Figure 12.

Figure 12: WCED Education Districts, schools and learner numbers by sector



Source: Annual School Survey, 2024

Figure 12 shows that high learner enrolments are prevalent in urban and peri-urban areas. This is familiar as parents tend to seek for better opportunities in urban areas and this results in a corresponding movement of their children. This trend precipitates unequal learner distribution across school districts, which in turn, causes greater pressure in certain districts.

Disaggregation of WCED Public Ordinary Primary Schools by learners enrolled

The WCED has been aggressively building schools to address the issue of increasing learner numbers. Tables 4 and 5 below show learner enrolments in Primary Schools and Secondary Schools by capacity or learner intake.

Table 4: Public ordinary primary school enrolments by classification

Classification	Learners Enrolled	Number of Primary Schools
Micro Primary School	<135	138
Small Primary School	$135 \leq \text{learners} \leq 311$	130
Medium Primary School	$312 \leq \text{learners} \leq 621$	188
Large Primary School	$622 \leq \text{learners} \leq 930$	237
Mega Primary School	931 or more	371
Province		1 064

Source: Annual School Survey, 2024

Table 4 shows learner enrolments in Primary Schools by capacity or learner intake. From Table 4:

- 13% or 138 of the 1 064 Public Ordinary Primary Schools enrolled less than 135 in the 2024 school year and, 99% or 137 of these schools were in the rural districts.
- 35% or 371 of the 1 064 Public Ordinary Primary Schools enrolled 931 or more learners in the 2024 school year and,
- Of the schools above, 69% or 257 are in the Metro districts.

Table 5: Public ordinary secondary school enrolments by classification

Classification	Learners Enrolled	Number of Secondary Schools
Small Secondary School	≤ 200 learners	1
Medium Secondary School	$200 < \text{learners} \leq 401$	15
Large Secondary School	$401 < \text{learners} \leq 601$	52
Mega Secondary School	602 or more	336
Province		404

Source: Annual School Survey, 2024

Table 5 shows learner enrolments in Public Ordinary Secondary Schools by capacity or learner intake. From Table 5:

- Only 1 of the 404 Public Ordinary Secondary Schools enrolled 200 learners or less in the 2024 school year.
- 83% or 336 of the 404 Public Ordinary Secondary Schools enrolled 602 or more learners in the 2024 school year.
- Of these schools, 66.1% or 222 are in the metro districts.

Whilst the demand for education is common in Primary and Secondary schools and across districts, it can be stated that demand is severe in the metros and secondary schools. This is because of the high growth of the SGA population. The Western Cape has about 64% or 966 290 of the SGA population located in the metros.

The few small and medium secondary schools, 28 or 7%, are an indication that secondary schools are pre-dominantly large.

The Rapid School Build Programme represents a strategic response to competing demands in educational infrastructure planning and delivery. By accelerating construction timelines and streamlining project management, this initiative aims to efficiently address urgent capacity needs, aging facility replacement, and evolving demographic challenges while maintaining quality standards and optimizing limited resources across multiple concurrent projects.

The WCED is aware of the high demand for education and plans to expand access at the secondary school level. At a minimum, an estimated 1 440 classrooms are needed to respond to this growth pressure. Further, the WCED has a dedicated (U-AMP) which outlines and addresses the infrastructure challenges. For instance, many of the new schools are situated in the metros.

4.2.2 Overcrowding

Generally, the accepted class size standard is at most 37 learners per class for effective learning to take place. Internationally, the acceptable class size is 30 learners. Table 6 shows the number of classes with more than 40 learners per class.

Table 6: Classes with more than 40 learners

Level	Number of classes > 40 learners					Number of learners in classes with > 40 learners				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
ECD (PREGRR-GRR)	13	11	11	12	13	575	497	477	555	610
Primary School (Grade 1-7))	5 340	5 192	4 862	4 388	4 236	238 526	232 740	217 061	194 759	187 942
Secondary School (Grade 8-9)	2 431	2 329	2 456	2 373	2 347	115 092	114 143	117 059	110 624	109 072
Secondary School (Grade 10-12)	1 932	2 007	2 113	3 597	2 154	90 871	97 135	99 552	98 919	99 229
Province	9 716	9 539	9 442	10 370	8 750	445 064	444 515	434 149	404 857	396 853

Source: Annual School Survey, 2020– 2024

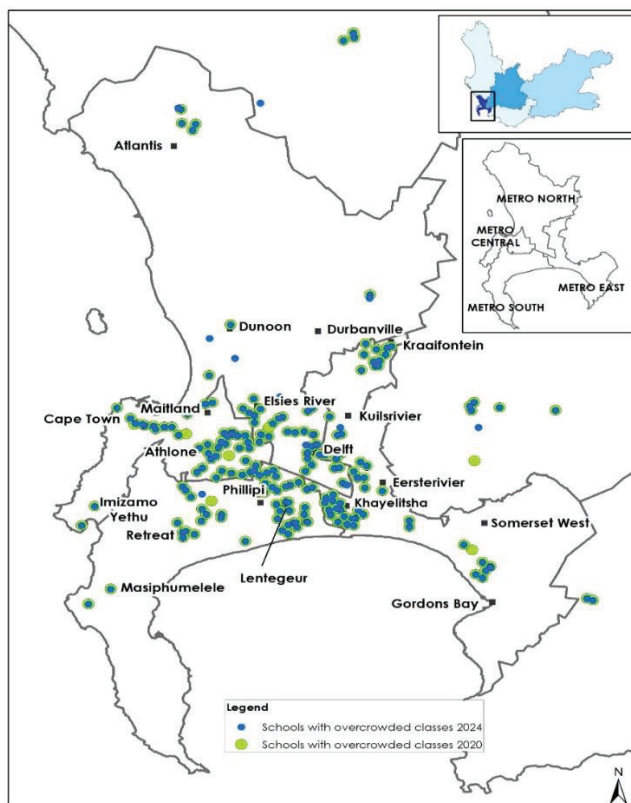
From Table 6:

- In the period under review, primary schools constitute the highest number of overcrowded classes and learners. Overcrowded classes range from 42% to 55% whilst learners range from 47% to 54%. This is followed by schools offering grades 8-9.
- However, the data suggest a consistent decrease in the number of oversized primary schools. This is due to WCED's response to curb overcrowding, an indication that the institution is data driven.

- In 2024, the WCED has a total of 396 853 learners were in overcrowded classes. This is 32.8% of the 1 208 621 learners in PRE-GRR -12.
- Another concern is the consistent increase in the number of learners sitting in overcrowded classes offering Grades 10-12, although marginal. Between 2023 and 2024, the number of learners in overcrowded classes increased by an additional 310 learners.

The WCED has invested to secure basic material conditions for teaching and learning in most schools, but there is still room to improve these conditions, especially to reduce overcrowding in classrooms (World Bank Group:2024, Page 25).

Figure 13: Distribution of the overcrowded classes in Public Secondary Schools by Education district



Source: Annual School Survey, 2024

From Figure 13, overcrowded classrooms are primarily found in secondary schools in the Western Cape. Between 2020 and 2024, the number of schools with overcrowded classes rose by 6%, totalling 17 schools.

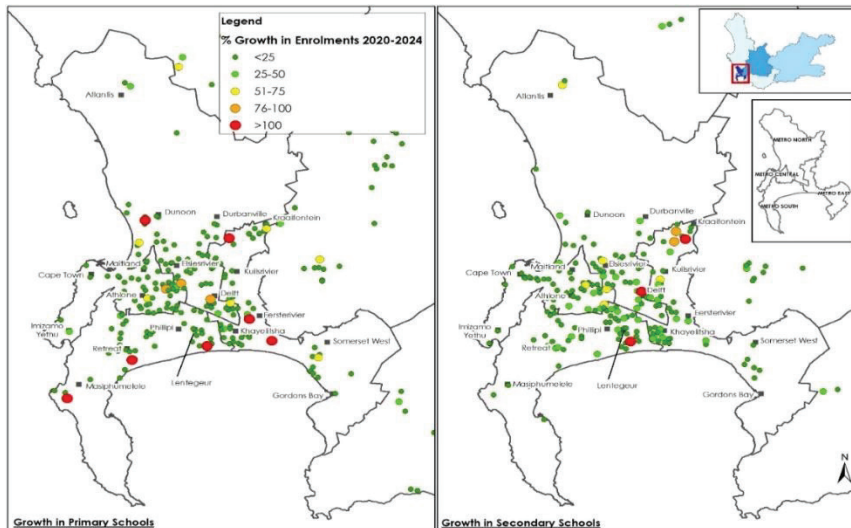
The WCED is doing its best to respond to the challenge of overcrowding which is mostly caused by in-migration and, to reduce the learner number imbalance where some of the districts are under pressure compared to others. For instance, in 2024, the three districts (Metro East, North and South) with the largest number of overcrowded classrooms received the highest number of additional classrooms, 215, 216 and 102 classrooms respectively. This intervention created 26 944 education access opportunities and reduced the Learner to Class ratio (LTC) ratio to 1:32 (MTEC, 2024)⁷.

⁷ Western Cape Provincial Government MTEC 1, 2024

4.2.3 Increasing Demand for Placements

In the discussion of the external environment, we showed how the SGA age group had increased, comparing censuses 2001 to 2022. The MAP below shows Primary Schools and Secondary Schools with learner growth exceeding 100% because of the population growth for period 2020 to 2024.

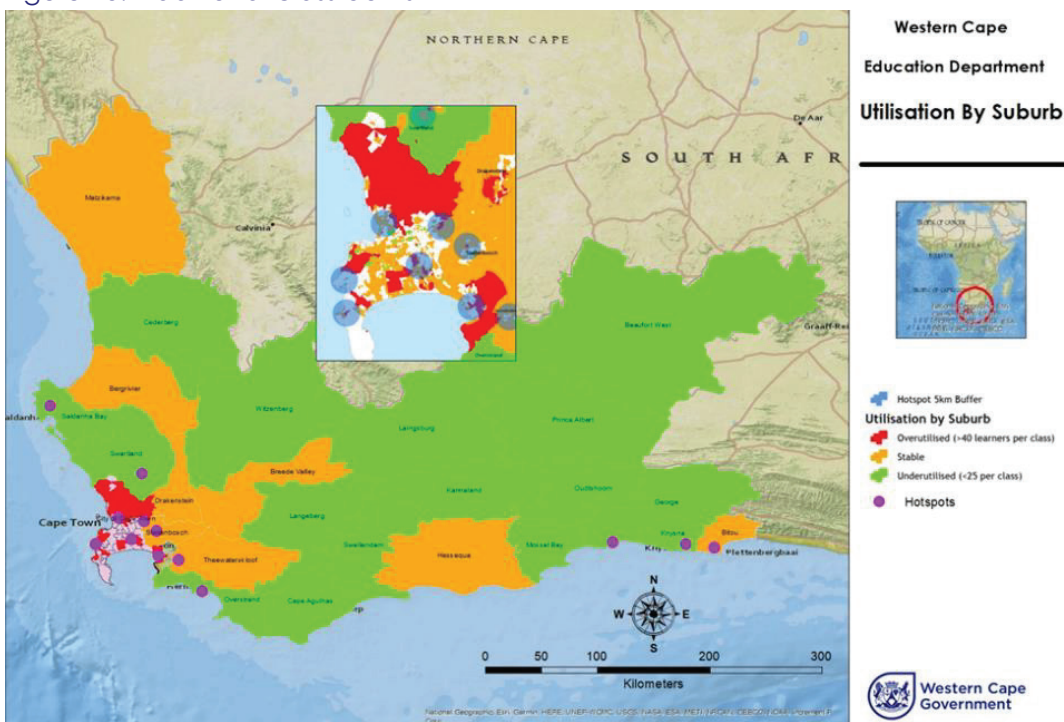
Figure 14: Growth in WCED schools for period 2020-2024 in the Metro



Source: Annual School Survey, 2020-2024

Figure 14 shows Metro schools with growth in learner numbers for the period 2020-2024. Seven primary schools and three secondary schools experienced a growth of more than 100 percent. Primary schools with growth in learner numbers were mainly in Metros East and South.

Figure 15: Additional classrooms



Source: WCED U-AMP, 2023/24

The utilisation rates for schools have been reviewed based on the latest classrooms data transposed to a systems level as part of the spatial logic principle. Ongoing infrastructure investments and demands constantly change the landscapes of schools from a utilisation perspective and therefore are best analysed rigorously at a localised level. Hence Figure 15 depicts patterns which indicate the location of over-utilised schools and therefore further investment in the form of building new schools.

4.2.4 Contribution of in-migration Towards the Increasing Demand for Placements

Table 7: First-time learner enrolment (in Public Ordinary Schools) from outside the Western Cape

Province	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	5-Years
Eastern Cape	16 911	16 085	13 424	13 780	10 840	71 040
Free State	285	284	247	292	159	1 267
Gauteng	1 035	1 151	1 214	1 318	876	5 594
Kwazulu-Natal	332	339	374	494	271	1 810
Limpopo	133	129	137	160	87	646
Mpumalanga	146	128	129	140	93	636
North-West Province	201	124	213	205	145	888
Nothorn Cape	487	448	433	463	363	2 194
Other Country	1 491	1 549	1 341	964	1 310	6 655
Total	21 021	20 237	17 512	17 816	14 144	90 730

Source: Annual School Survey, 2020 – 2024

Table 7 shows the total number of new learners from other provinces and countries entering WCED schools between 2020 – 2024.

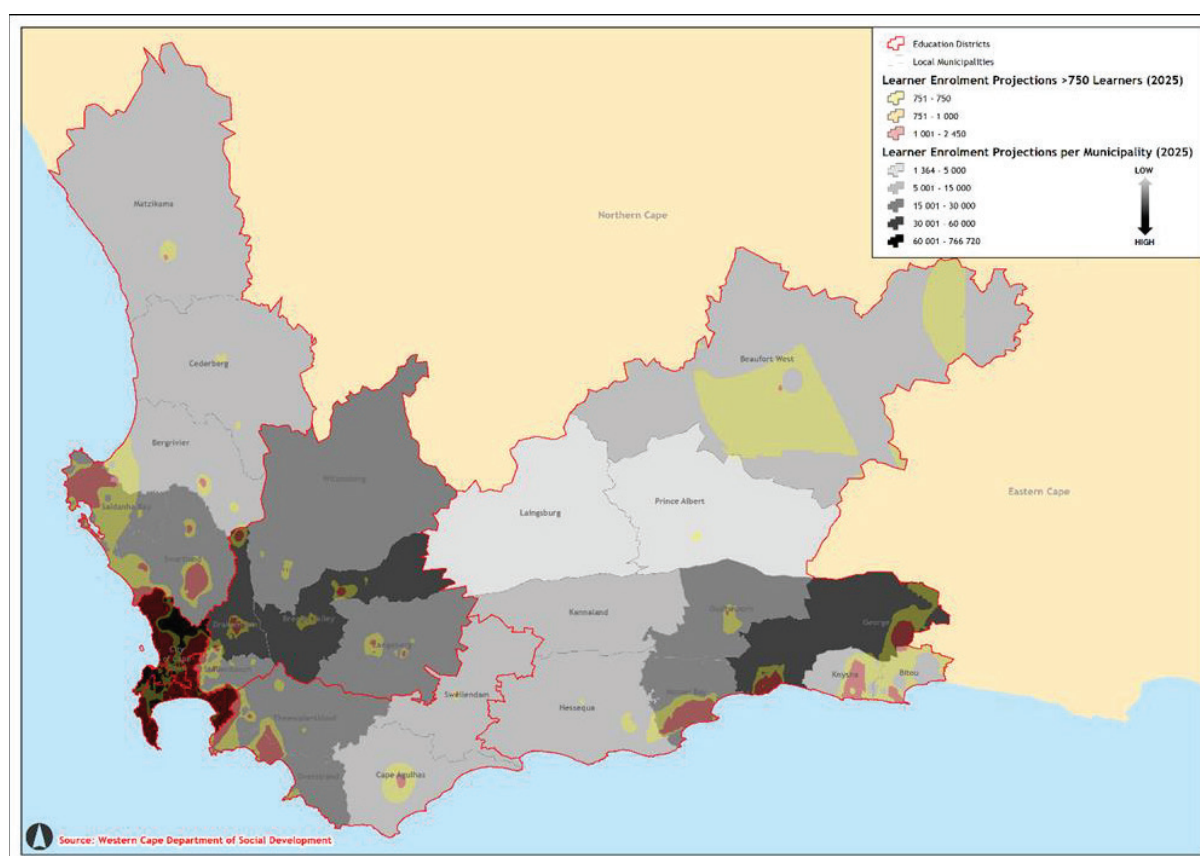
A total of 90 729 new learners entered WCED schools during the period under review with the Eastern Cape contributing the greatest share, 78% (71 040).

Learners from other countries and Gauteng, are above 5% with a share of 7.3% and 6.2% respectively.

This trend presents a strain on the limited resources and complicates the planning of effective education delivery. The [Infrastructure Response Programme](#) is responding strategically to the high demand for additional school infrastructure by considering spatial planning and future school design modalities.

The WCED has highlighted plans to build in accessible locations to cater for everyone in response to the growing demand. The use of spatial planning has proven to be a useful tool to inform where to build schools (WCED U-AMP, 2023/24). Areas with low and high enrolment rates are shown below.

Figure 16: Learner projections per municipality linked to high enrolment projections per school



Source: 2023/24 WCED U-AMP, 2024

The WCED in collaboration with DSD plans to incorporate demographic and economic analysis (including scenario analysis) into its future planning analysis. Figure 16 shows the preliminary learner enrolment projections for both school and municipal level up to 2025 based on historical data. From an enrolment perspective, the projections provided are an indication of areas that the WCED should monitor as part of its future planning (WCED U-AMP, 2023/24).

4.3 Resources for Functionality and Quality Education

Goal 4(a) of the SDGs advocates for the building and upgrading of education facilities for an effective and inclusive learning environment for all (World Bank, 2017). The provision of infrastructure such as desks, learning materials and classes creates an enabling environment for learners and teachers.

4.3.1 Infrastructure

Given the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, a decreasing resource base, limited capacity to implement and the continuing growth in learner numbers (demand), the need for WCED to be innovative in the approach to infrastructure planning and delivery has never been greater than in the 2023/24 MTEF period (WCED U-AMP, 2023/24)

Environment Friendly School Infrastructure

The WCED has an established track record for delivering on energy projects, which to date has focused on researching demand, conducting energy audits, replacing inefficient lighting, installing Solar PV systems, adding battery backup for critical school loads and delivering measurable cost savings to schools with interventions that drive sustainable improvement in energy consumption. Benchmark data pertaining to the energy loads at schools of varying sizes, functionality, spatial location and physical environments will inform the design and costing of future Solar PV installations.

The 2025/2026 MTEF budget allocation for Programme 6 on Vote 5 earmarked R70 million to deploy solutions that improve energy efficiency and resilience at schools. Some of the projects are:

- Replacing existing fluorescent lights with modern efficient LED lights. LED lighting is expected to cut energy costs and free up funding to be spent on improved educational outcomes.
- Schools will benefit from improved energy efficiency and reliability with the installation of solar PV installations, including the Battery Energy Storage Systems and the accompanying infrastructure, designed to fit the context of the school. The solar system will cut energy costs and protect schools from future energy disruption requirements.

4.3.2 Innovation and Technology

The NDP chapters highlight the need for a highly effective and efficient innovation and technology and, for this to be realised all three spheres of government should be well positioned and conducive for innovation and technology approaches to be easily implemented.

The ICT infrastructure is essential for stimulating economic development and the creation of a knowledge-based economy. Over the past 10 years, mobile communication has increased dramatically: 89% of the Western Cape population has access to mobile telephones. However, access to internet has been stagnant over the past seven years: only 44% of households in the Western Cape have access, Western Cape Infrastructure Framework (2013, p26). It is therefore crucial that all the schools have internet access and fully equipped with ICT infrastructure so that even those learners whose homes have not internet or lacking technologically can be catered for and benefit from what is available at school.

The move by the WCED to incentivise service delivery innovation and create special purpose facilities at schools to foster new ways of learning and skills development is applaudable. Drive context-responsive school designs and invest in catalytic projects that create new places and spaces for learning (hybrid learning environments). All of these goals are aimed at exposing learners or children to innovations believed to transform what and how children learn and, to help all young people develop the breadth of skills they need to thrive today and, in the future (WCED U-AMP, 2023/24).

Information and Communication Technology

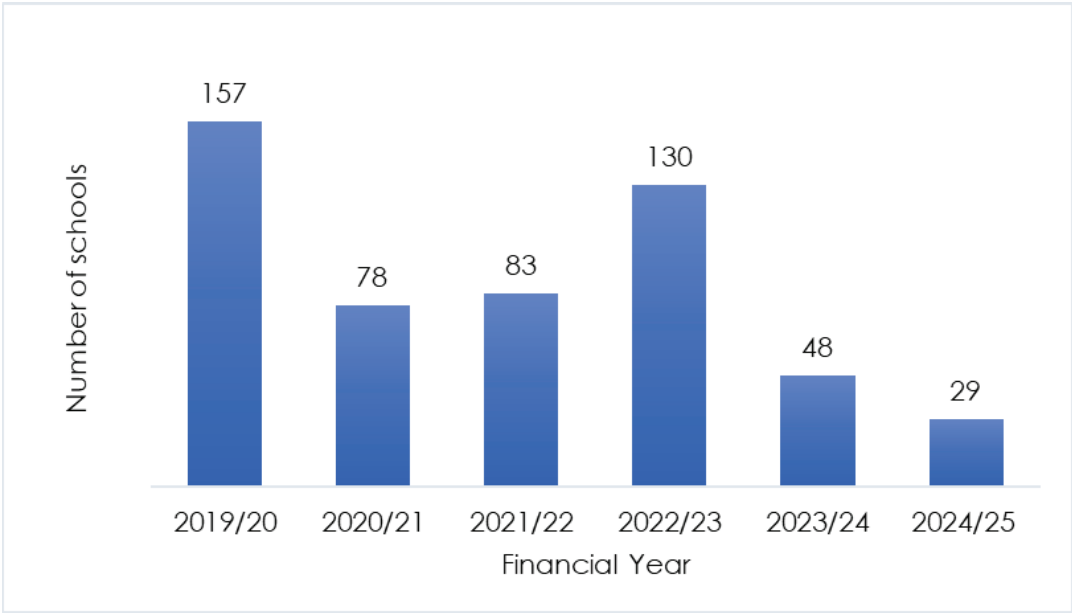
For the 2024/25 period, the department remains committed to the path of digital inclusion and improving access to enabling environments, capacity building and digital and online offerings through the expansion of the eLearning strategy.

Figure 17 below indicates the delivery of each of the ICT interventions by WCED from 2019/20 to 2023/24.

Provision of Local Area Networks (LANs)

The LAN Project provides school sites with a wireless distributed network for internet and inter-connectivity. The LAN implementation is rolled out in manageable batches. The schools are approved and assessed according to the existing LAN contract. The targets set have been adjusted due to Treasury cost containment measures implemented. Since the inception of LAN installation, a total of 988 schools were equipped. Figure 17 shows the distribution of the 525 schools equipped with LAN from 2019/20 to 2024/25.

Figure 17: Number of Schools provided with Local Area Networks (LANs)



Source: WCED Annual Report 2023/24, (Page, 85 – 86)

Subject-specific computer laboratory refreshes, SMART classrooms and subject-specific computer refreshes

Subject-specific computer laboratory refreshes

The Computer Applications Technology (CAT), Information Technology (IT) and Engineering Graphics and Design (EGD) project's main focus is on refreshing technology and provisioning of technology to schools that have introduced or expanded CAT/IT/EGD subjects or combination thereof (3-to-4-year cyclical period). Some analysis is done based on previous deployments to identify the qualifying schools.

District CAT/IT/EGD advisers and the e-Learning advisers confirm the needs in the district and make available a priority list for each year and submit to the Directorate: eLearning. Following this, a request is made for project plans per school to be drawn up, indicating the specific needs at each of the schools.

SMART classrooms

The Smart Classroom provides teachers in identified schools with technology for teaching and learning in their classrooms. The technology comprises of a teacher computing device and projection technology. The schools are identified according to set criteria, presented to the HOD for approval.

Subject-specific computer refreshes

Online blended digital learning is not only about providing digital infrastructure and equipment to schools but also a strategy of ensuring that learners in the province are equipped with necessary skills that will allow them to fit and be able to compete in the world that is technologically driven. The statistics of the three are presented in the Table 8 below.

Table 8: Summary of the education technology provision from 2019 to 2025.

WCED initiatives	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 Targets
Number of subject-specific computer lab refreshes provided	72	0	89	0	80	80
Number of technology-enabled classrooms (Smart classrooms) provided	0	1 016	1 164	0	0	1 000
Number of schools provided with multi-media resources	0	103	160	0	0	90

Source: WCED Annual Report 2023/24, (Page, 85 – 86)

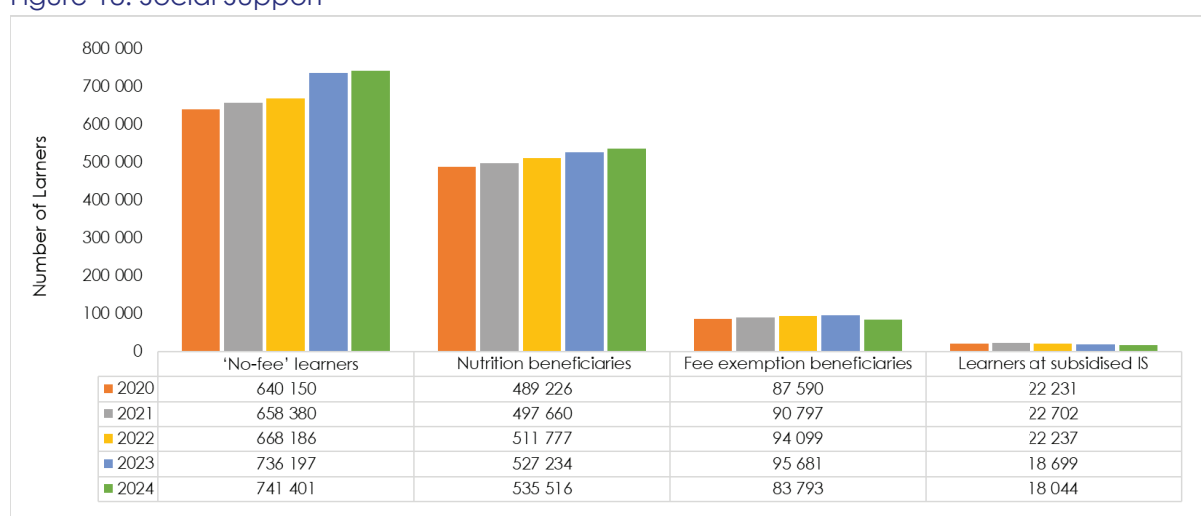
From Table 8

- Between 2019 and 2024, the number of subject-specific computer lab refreshes increased from 72 to 80, SMART classrooms increased from 1 016 to 1 164 with the number of schools provided with multi-media resources increasing from 103 to 160 in the same period.
- Lab refreshes were discontinued in the 2022/23 financial year to resume with 80 refreshes in the 2023/24 financial year.
- Similarly, SMART classroom and multimedia projects were discontinued between 2022/23 and 2023/2024 due to financial constraints.
- It is estimated that the number of computer lab refreshes will be kept at 80 in the 2024/25 financial year, there will be an estimated 1 000 SMART classrooms whilst it is estimated that 90 schools will be provided with multimedia resources in the same period.

4.4 Provision of Social Support

The WCED provides social support to counter social ills experienced by disadvantaged learners. The no-fee schools, fee-exemption, learner transport scheme and school nutrition interventions are aimed at addressing equity and to relieve parents who struggle to make ends meet. The statistics in Figure 18 below were supplied by Management Accounting (compensation for fee exemption), WCED National School Nutrition Programme (nutrition beneficiaries) Institutional Management and Governance (learners at subsidised IS) and Institutional Resource Support (transport beneficiaries). Information provided is for the period 2019 to 2024.

Figure 18: Social Support



Source: Directorates Management Accounting, 2024, National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), 2024, Institutional Resource Support and Institutional Management, 2024 & Governance supplied the information, 2024.

There is a huge need for learner support in an environment marked by huge social inequalities, hence the establishment of interventions such as the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), No-Fee school policy, and Learner Transport Scheme (LTS).

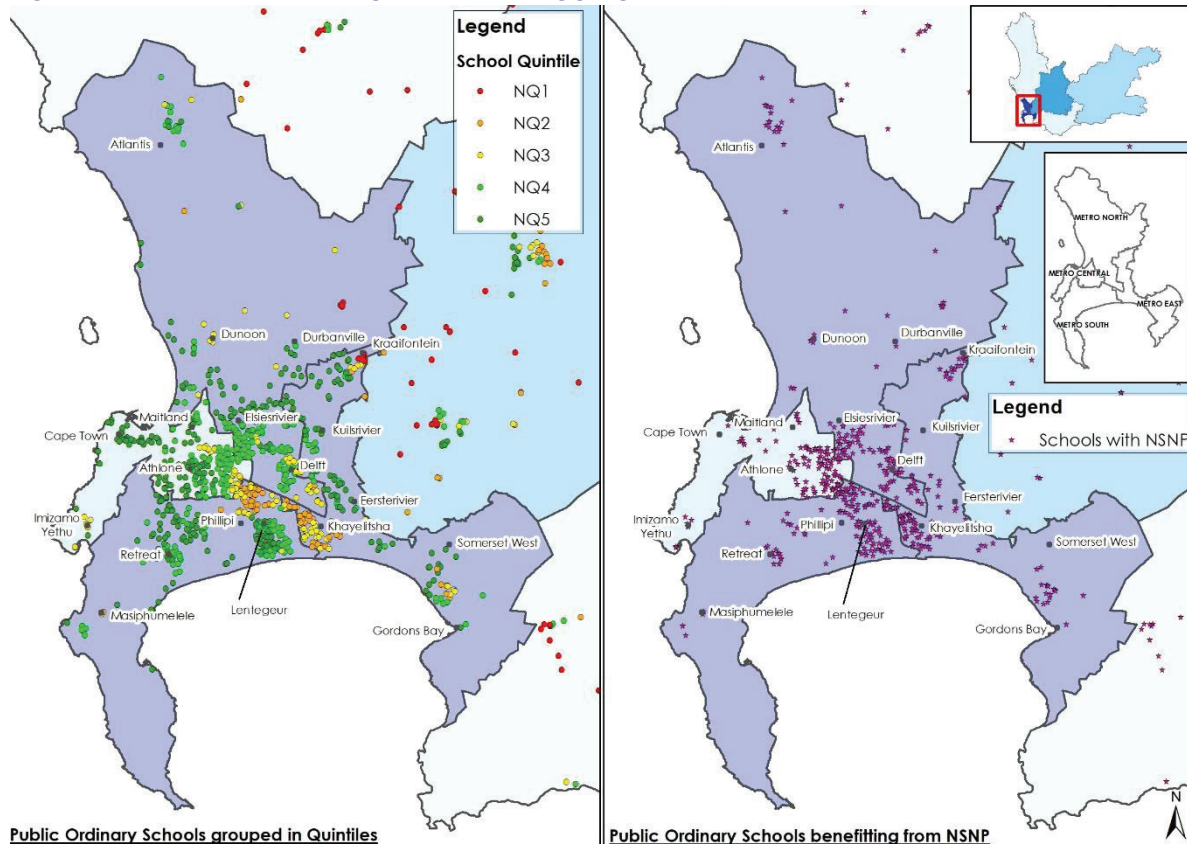
4.4.1 Learners benefitting from the National School Nutrition Programme

The National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) aims to improve the health and nutritional status of the poorest learners in South Africa. Its main objective is to enhance learning by providing a nutritious meal on time daily. There are 1 055 schools (including public ordinary and special schools), benefitting from the NSNP.

The number of learners benefitting from the NSNP programme increased by 9.5%, 46 290 learners from 489 226 in 2020, to 535 516 in 2024. The highest annual increase in the number of beneficiaries during this period occurred between 2021 and 2022 reaching 4%, which amounted to an additional 20 117 learners. Since 2022/23 the number of nutrition beneficiaries were above 50% of the total number of learners in public ordinary schools.

The map below shows public ordinary schools (1 001) benefiting from the NSNP programme grouped by quintile.

Figure 19: Schools benefitting from NSNP aggregated by Quintile



Source: Annual School Survey 2024 and Nutritional School Programme (November 2024)

From Figure 19, one can see that meals are provided to most of the schools, irrespective of their quintile; most of the schools in the Metro are Quintile 4 and 5 schools. (Quintile 1 is the group of schools in each province catering for the poorest 20% of learners, Quintile 2 schools cater for the next poorest 20% of schools, and so on. Quintile 5 schools are those schools that cater for the least poor 20% of learners.)

4.4.2 Learners Benefitting From 'No-Fee' Policy

The No-Fee Policy is key to ensuring that children from poverty-stricken households are adequately funded and attend school. The WCED's response to the No-Fee Policy is as follows:

The number of learners benefiting from the "no-fee" policy increased by 15.8% (101 251) between 2020 and 2024. An increase of 68 011 learners was registered between 2022 and 2023, the increase is almost 4 times the number of beneficiaries compared to 2020 and 2021 (18 230). The 741 401 beneficiaries for 2024 translate to more than 50% of the total number of learners in public ordinary school in the province who benefited from the No-Fee policy.

Figure 20: Growth in No Fee paying Public Ordinary Schools for period 2020 to 2024

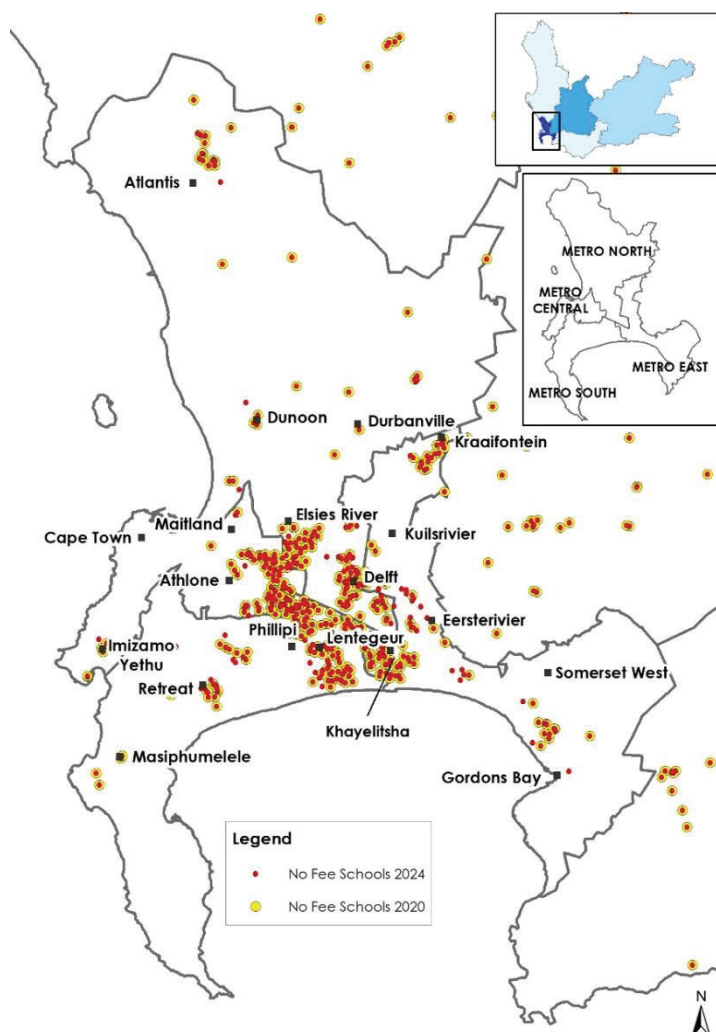


Figure 20 shows No Fee-paying schools in the Metro.

The map shows the number of No Fee-paying schools in 2020 with additional No Fee paying schools in 2024. There was a 20% increase in No Fee-paying schools in the Metro from 2020 to 2024.

Metro East, Metro North and Metro South had an increase of 20 and more schools, with the highest number (26) in Metro North. Schools in the Mitchell's Plain and Blue Downs areas were mostly affected.

Currently WCED has 973 No Fee paying schools (ranging from Quintile 1 to 5) with rural Cape Winelands having the largest number (209) and in the Metro, the district with the highest number is Metro North with 125 No Fee paying schools.

Source: Annual School Survey, 2020 – 2024

4.4.3 Learners benefiting from fee exemption

The fee exemption is calculated from the beginning of the school calendar year. With the fee exemption intervention, parents can enrol their children in schools that offer quality education irrespective of their background. The WCED's response to the fee exemption is as follows:

The highest increases in the number of learners benefiting from the “compensation for “fee exemption” were registered between 2020 and 2022, an increase of 3.7% between 2020 and 2021 from 87 590 beneficiaries in 2020 to 90 797 in 2021. The increase registered between 2021 and 2022 was 3.6% or 3 302 more learners. The lowest number of beneficiaries was recorded in 2024, 83 793 learners.

4.4.4 Learners benefitting from subsidized Independent Schools

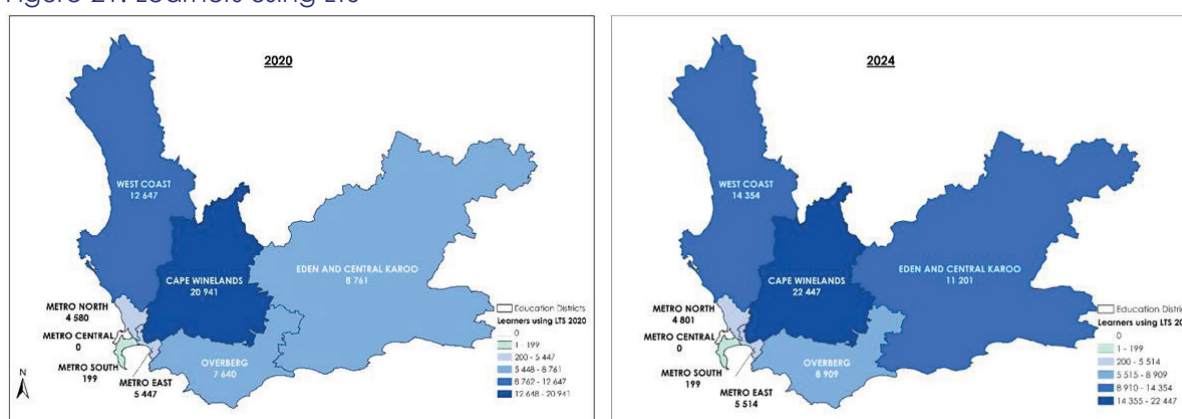
It must also be noted that not all the learners in subsidised independent schools are from affluent families, it is therefore important that they are supported. It also contributes towards the reduction of the burden of unplaced learners. The WCED's response to the subsidised Independent Schools is as follows:

Long term statistics suggest that subsidy beneficiaries decreased by 19% (4 187) learners between 2020 and 2024, from 22 162 to 18 044 learners and this is the lowest decrease in the period under review. Attributed to some of the reducing numbers is the level of compliance. Independent schools must apply and adhere to prescribed conditions before subsidies are approved and paid out to eligible schools. This initiative assists in alleviating the admission pressure experienced by public ordinary schools.

4.4.5 Learners benefitting from the Learner Transport Scheme

Access to education is mandatory and, the LTS ensures that learners attend school without having to walk long distances. Consequently, the reduced distance allows them to engage in learning. Learners apply for the LTS and approvals are granted based on LTS applications submitted by schools, via Education District offices. The map below shows the number of approved learners per Education District. Eden and Central Karoo had a 27.9% increase in learners using the LTS from 2020 to 2024.

Figure 21: Learners using LTS



Source: Annual Reports 2019/20 and 2023/24

From Figure 21:

- In 2024, a total of 67 425 WCED learners used the LTS with Cape Winelands registering most of the learners, 22 447 or 33.3% transported in 2023/24 financial year.
- This is an increase of 7 210 or 12.0% learners compared to 2020.
- Each of the rural Education districts transported at least 8 000 learners. This is understandable as rural schools are mostly situated on farms that are far from the villages. Also, homesteads in the rural areas are scattered.
- When the Metros are observed, Metros East and North have the highest number of learners travelling to school, 5 514 and 4 801 respectively.
- There are no routes in Metro Central.
- The map also shows an increase in the use of LTS per district and it is clear that Eden Central Karoo and Overberg recorded the biggest percentage growth, 27.9% in Eden and Central Karoo and 16.6% in Overberg. There was no increase in Metro South.

The WCED will continue to provide support to alleviate the impact of poverty, unemployment, and inequality. As the economy recovers, the department may be able to reduce some of the additional support provided. The risk is eminent that a dependency is created when social support is provided with no clearly stated end-date.

4.5 WCED Employee Profile

The education department is unique in that the institutional knowledge of employees benefits the growth of the education system hence the need for creative succession planning. The employee distribution by age is presented below.

Figure 22: Age distribution of WCED employees (2024)

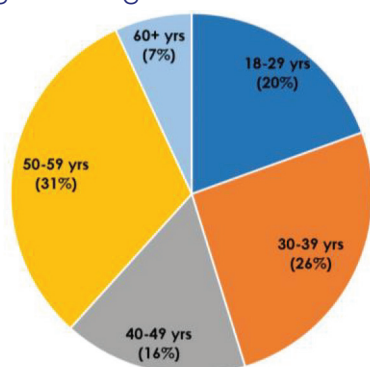
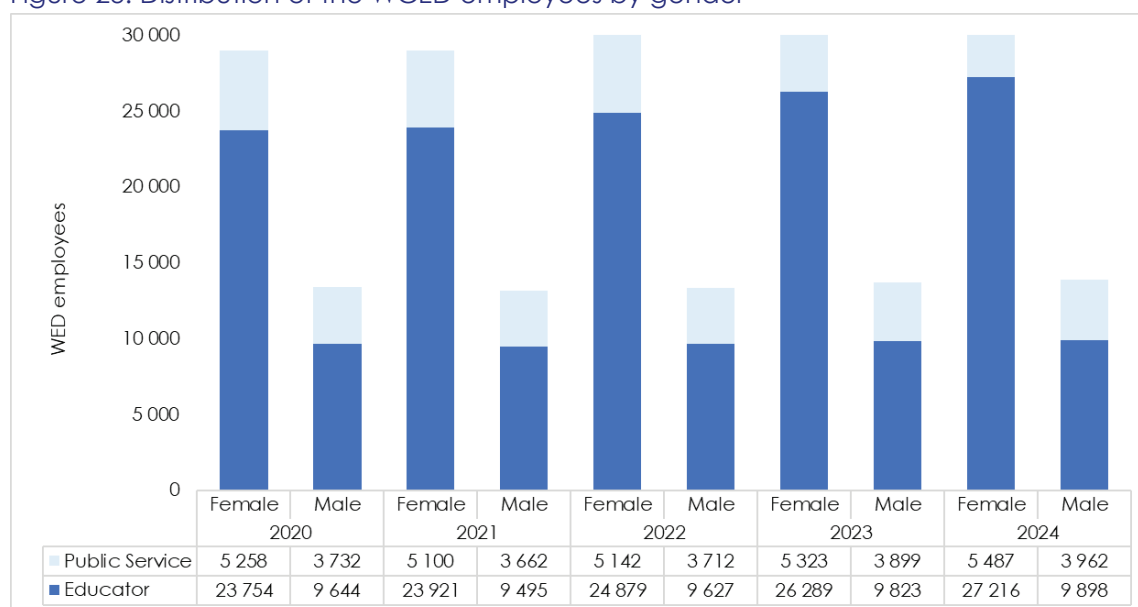


Figure 22 shows the distribution of the WCED employees grouped by age. The WCED has a total 46 563 employees, with 37 114 in the Educator sector and 9 449 in the Public Service sector. It is noted that 62% of employees are younger than 50 years with 38% at least 50 years old and older. The 60+ age group contributes 7% towards the total WCED employees. Thus, the employee distribution is imbalanced and skewed towards the younger employees.

Source: WCED Annual Reports 2023/24 (based on PersalShare Reports)

Figure 23: Distribution of the WCED employees by gender



Source: WCED Annual Reports, 2020/21-2023/24

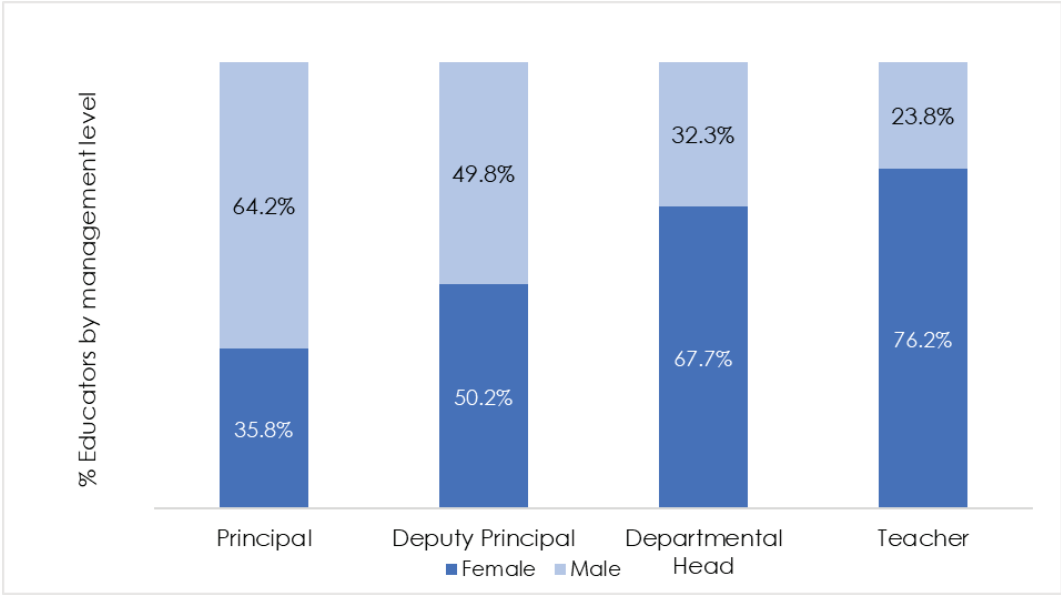
Figure 23 shows the distribution of WCED employees grouped by gender and sector.

The majority of the WCED employees are educators recording an upward trajectory for the period under review. The higher number of educators is understandable as WCED has more than 1.2 million learners.

The gender breakdown of the WCED for 2023/24 shows that there are more females compared to males; 70.2% females compared to the 29.8% males. The composition of the WCED workforce agrees with the population split of 69.7% females and 30.3% males. However, males are dominant in senior positions with 53% in senior management (level 13-16) and 73% in top management (level 14-16). The same applies when institution-based educators are observed, as depicted in Figure 24.

4.6 Profile of institution-based educators

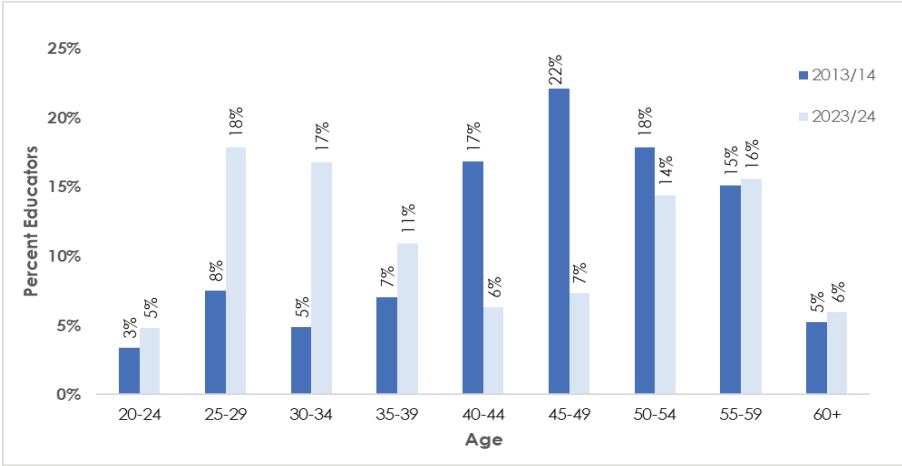
Figure 24: Institution based educators by post level.



Source: PERSAL, 2024

Figure 24 shows the distribution of the WCED institution-based educators grouped by gender and post-level. Of the total 37 114 institution-based educators recorded in 2024, 73.3% are female. However, only 42.9% females occupy Principal and Deputy Principal positions. The Medium-Term Plan (MTP) proposes a responsive and gender transformative approach (DPME, 28 September 2023). Possibly, the MTP proposal will reverse the dominance by males in senior and executive positions in the future.

Figure 25: Age profile of institution-based educators



Source: WCED Annual Reports 2013/14 and 2023/24 (based on PersalShare Reports)

Over the past 10 years, the number of educators aged 40-49 has decreased, while younger age groups have seen an increase.

The wellbeing and safety of staff and learners is imperative to WCED. Employees benefit from the Employee Health and Wellness Programme (EHWP), including institution-based staff, whilst schools have access to the School Safety programme. Both programmes are discussed below.

4.6.1 Wellbeing and Psycho-social support

The EHWP came into effect in 2006. The programme was a response to both the increasing number of ill-discipline and violence incidents experienced by institution-based employees. It also, recognised the personal but sensitive challenges some of its staff are facing such as stress, family, sickness, finance, relationships, substance abuse and work-related anxieties, (WCED, 2018). The programme has a toll-free number and email that distraught employees can use on a 24-hour basis.

4.6.2 School Safety

School Safety is guided by the SASA Act 84 of 1996, which mandates Provincial Departments, Education Districts, Circuits and School Governing Bodies (SGBs) to improve and maintain buildings and grounds occupied by schools including boarding facilities. Safety is also one of the provincial priorities.

The WCED Safe Schools Programme works with schools to ensure safe school environments needed for successful teaching and learning. The Safe Schools programme has a three-pronged strategy (environmental programmes, developmental and systems programmes).

Environmental programmes

Where the physical structure of the school is secured through target hardening strategies which includes repairs to fencing up to 35m, electronic gates with access control mechanisms, installation of comprehensive alarm systems that have been linked to an effective Armed Response company, intercom/videocom and stone guards.

In addition to the above, the WCED provides a subsidy for Holiday Security to support schools at risk to prevent burglary & vandalism and funding for emergency security for a limited period, normally 2 weeks:

- to protect life and limb in the event of gang violence or learner and community protests
- vulnerability of schools during school upgrades
- post burglary & vandalism to prevent further loss of assets

Developmental programmes

The WCED's developmental programmes aim to influence behavioural and attitudinal changes through targeted support and training for parents, educators, and learners. Safe Schools delivers comprehensive training and interventions covering essential areas including behaviour management, gang prevention, substance abuse prevention, and anti-bullying initiatives. The program extends to occupational health and safety, victim empowerment, conflict resolution, and youth development through after-school and holiday activities. Interactive sessions provide practical training in specific areas such as drug testing procedures, safety frameworks, first aid, firefighting, and conflict resolution techniques, all designed to create safer and more supportive school environments.

Systems programmes

Systems programmes focus on systemic development, community relationships and effective partnerships that incorporate a holistic approach to changing how the whole school operates as far as safety is concerned.

Safe Schools has a whole-of-society approach (WOSA) as well as a whole-of-government approach (WOGA) to address school safety promotion and violence prevention and worked in partnership with numerous stakeholders. These stakeholders include amongst others the South African Police Services, the Department of Police Oversight & Community, the Department of Health & Wellness, the Department of Social Development and the City of Cape Town's Law Enforcement division.

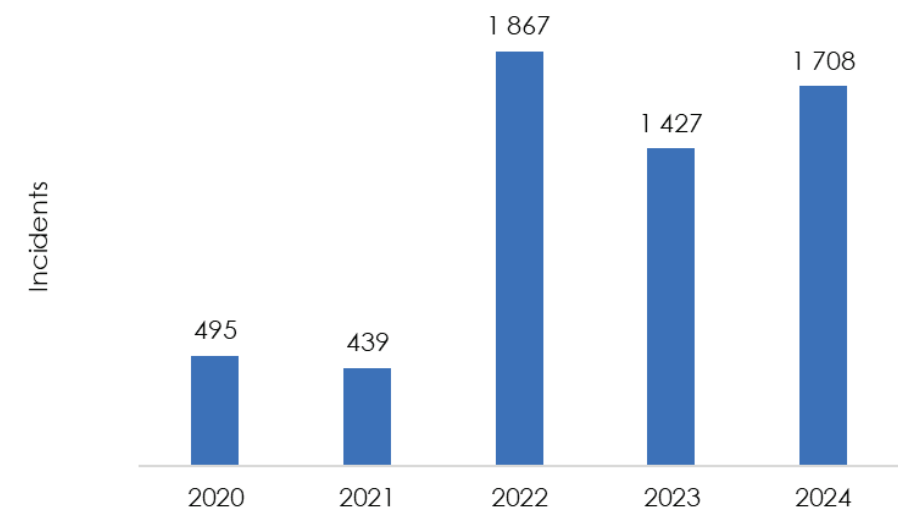
During this financial year, the WCED funds 36 School Resource Officers at 18 schools as part of the Area Based Teams concept and co-funds 28 School Resource Officers at 14 schools at risk'. [These 33 schools are captured as Priority Schools on the City's records.]

The City funds the deployment of 44 law enforcement officers at an additional 22 schools at risk.

School Resource Officers are law enforcement officers stationed at WCED schools responsible for crime prevention and safety. As part of the partnership, the programme has also elicited the support of the Law Enforcement Advancement Project (LEAP), to stabilize situations in the vicinity of some schools to enhance a safe teaching and learning environment.

Learners, parents and educators use the Safe Schools Call Centre which provides them with guidance or information regarding education-related safety issues such as gang violence, fatal incidents, burglaries, vandalism, physical assault, and abuse. Callers receive online debriefing in both crisis and non-crisis calls. Callers are directed where necessary to the counselling agencies of the WCED, non-governmental agencies and community-based organization. Figure 26 shows the number of reported crimes occurring in the school premises over a six-year period.

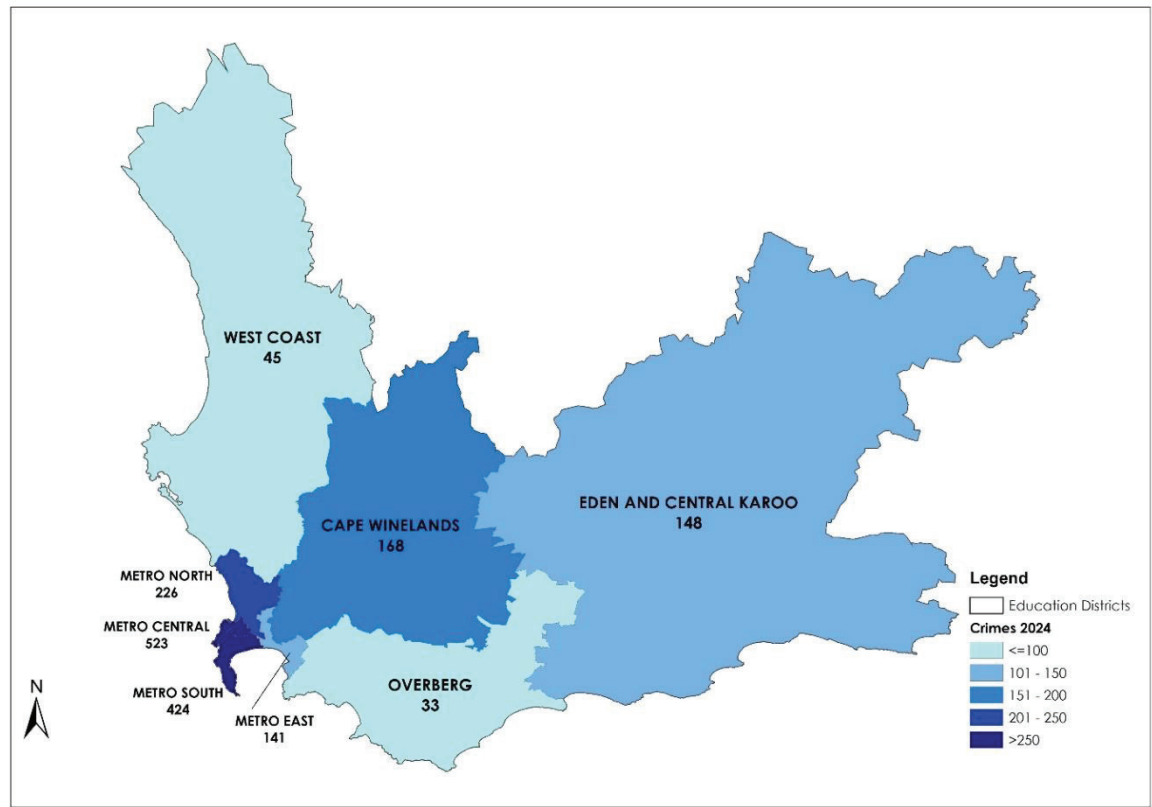
Figure 26: Reported crime in school premises



Source: Education Safety, 2024

The low number of incidents reported in 2020 and 2021 might be attributed to the total shutdown of schools in 2020 and the slow return to normal schooling in 2021. When the full yearly school incidents of 2022 and 2021 are compared, school premise reported crimes are four times more. Reported school incidents dropped by 440 when 2022 is compared to 2023, to increase by 281 when 2023 is compared to 2024. This is an indication that interventions focused at addressing safety in schools are working although not stable. The 2024 school incidents are further aggregated by district in the map below.

Figure 27: Reported Crime on School Premises for the 2024 school year



Source: WCED School Safety, 2024

A total 1 708 crimes on school premises were reported for the 2024 academic year. The highest number of incidents in school premises were reported in Metros Central, South and North with 523, 424 and 226 respectively. In the rural areas, Cape Winelands and Eden Karoo recorded the highest numbers namely, 168 and 148.

Some of the schools in rural districts had higher school crime incidents compared to Metro East which is surprising as Metro East is one of the districts with the most overcrowded classes.

The statistics suggest that school safety needs to be addressed more firmly to ensure that learners are completely safe at school.

4.7 Access and participation

Chapter 9 of the NDP, titled 'Improving education, training and innovation', deals with the entire education system from ECD to advanced post-school studies and promotes universal access to basic education, (DBE, 2020).

In addition, the 7th administration is clear on ensuring the realisation of the 2030 basic education targets outlined in the NDP as it intends to offer quality education that will lead to significantly improved outcomes as well as improving the efficiency and quality of education offered.

Access and participation are measured using the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) and the Net Enrolment Rate (NER). The GER measures the total number of children enrolled and is calculated as a percentage of the total population of children as captured by the Mid-year Population Estimates provided by Statistics South Africa. The NER measures access by age-appropriate learners, calculated as the number of children enrolled expressed as a percentage of the age-appropriate population. The sections to follow look at access and participation across the four levels.

4.7.1 Early Childhood Development (ECD)

The SDG target for ECD in 2030 is for all girls and boys to attend compulsory preschool education before they start Grade 1. The NDP calls for universal access to two years of ECD prior to entering Grade 1 by 2030.

Studies based on the historical and current achievement in benchmarked assessments, suggest a need to improve the quality of education and care to children aged 0-6 years, hence goal 11 of the DBE action plan focuses on improving access of the quality of education offered before Grade 1 (Action Plan 2024, DBE).

In this document, ECD is separated into categories, firstly access for children aged 0-4 years. This focus is in line with the 7th administrations' "Mass Registration for all ECD Programmes" aimed at addressing compliance issues, as well as the improvement of quality and access of, and to ECD programmes.

The second category is aimed at children aged 5 – 6 years or Pre-GRR and Grade R. The advocacy for access to quality ECD especially two years prior to Grade 1 has been part of the NDP and, strengthening of this drive saw the transfer of ECD from the Department of Social Development (DSD) in April 2022 to the DBE. The statistics in the situational analysis are based on data recorded on CEMIS.

Within the department, the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Directorate focuses on the commitment statement as expressed in the NDP to improve child outcomes. By focusing on Access through registration and funding, adopting a pro poor policy, improving the basic skills of children through registration of quality programmes and upskilling of practitioners.

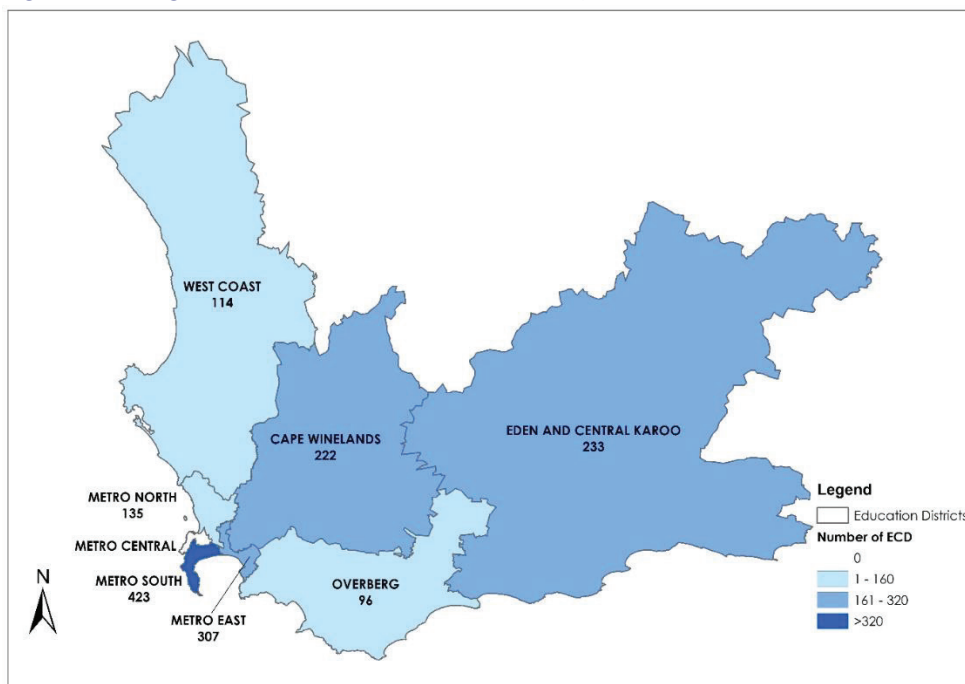
The WCED embarked on an “AS Is” audit of the processes within the department to improve the service delivery to all young children. Registration of ECD facilities assisted by Social Sector Organisations, aims to improve access for children, to registered ECD programmes. Support for unregistered ECD facilities in the form of a Mass Registration Drive commenced which enables all ECD facilities to be brought into the regulatory net, thus, increasing the number of children accessing ECD facilities.

Progress towards Mass Registration

The 7th administration recognises the need for a solid foundation prior to formal schooling. As such ECD through the Mass Registration for all ECD programmes to ensure compliance, improved access and the quality of programmes offered is one of the main priorities.

The processes within the directorate and the registration of ECD facilities in collaboration with the Social Sector Organisation aim to improve access for children. Unregistered ECD facilities are supported through the Mass Registration Drive thus increasing the accuracy reporting on access, participation and quality of services offered in ECD institutions.

Figure 28: Registered ECDs in the Western Cape



Source: Directorate Early Childhood Development (ECD), WCED, 2024

Figure 28 depicts the number of registered ECDs per Education District. (Note that data displayed on the map is captured per boundary as used by DSD.)

- A total 1 530 ECD facilities were registered in 2024.
- In the rural districts, Eden and Central Karoo has the most ECDs at 233.
- Metros East and South have 307 and 423 registered ECDs respectively.

Enrolment of children aged 0-4

There has been an increase of 32% from 494 children in 2020 to 649 children in 2024. Also, the statistics show that whilst early-learning for children aged 0-4 is dominated by independent practitioners, 397 in 2020 to 457 learners in independent centres in 2024, public centres have also grown from 97 to 192 children in 2024, a growth of 98%. While enrolment in this age group remains low, it is likely that widespread registration of these institutions could lead to higher participation rates.

ECD enrolment rates and gender equity two years prior to Grade 1

South Africa conducted a National ECD pilot project from 1997 to 1999. The project recommended that the ECD pilot be expanded to include Grade R (GRR). As a result, in 2019, the Minister of Basic Education emphasised the need to make the first two years of GRR compulsory. The lack of standardisation led to shifting ECD to basic education thus ensuring an integrated approach and alignment, resulting in a much more prepared cohort of children for primary education (Segooa and Ntshangase, 2024).

If the focus is only on 6-year-olds, the statistics show that in the Western Cape, 85% are enrolled in GRR (The World Bank, 2024). This shows how the WC has contributed towards the significant increase towards access to GRR (World Bank Group, 2025).

Whilst the shift of ECD from DSD to DBE will strengthen the drive to more children having access to the first 2 years of education prior to Grade 1, proper planning by all relevant stakeholders at WCED is required as it carries the national and provincial policies, financial, infrastructure and human capital implications. These include both the estimated costs for a child in ECD and to universalise the sector.

As discussed in Section 4.7, access and participation are measured using the GER and the NER. The GER focuses on all enrolments in Pre-Grade R and Grade R whilst the NER focuses on the appropriate age of all enrolments. Table 9 shows participation in the ECD using the GER and the NER.

Table 9: Early Child Development absolute enrolments against the population aged 5 to 6 years

ECD Statistics	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Population aged 5-6 years	229 797	230 748	229 900	228 958	228 178	226 895	223 497	221 146	223 957	230 086
Gross enrollment PRE-GRR-GRR	94 121	90 758	93 009	92 912	93 903	94 925	90 198	90 051	92 674	93 948
NET enrolment PRE-GRR GRR (5-6 years)	88 785	89 214	90 376	91 422	91 478	90 139	88 531	89 460	90 268	92 024

Source: 2015-2024 Annual Survey & 2022 Stats SA MYPE

The statistics in Table 10 suggest that about 60% of the population aged 5-6 years is not attending school. Further the statistics suggest that those who attend are already old. For instance, the NER was 38.6% in 2015 compared to the GER of 41% of the same year. During the period under review, attendance decreased particularly after 2020, possibly because of COVID-19.

The NER recorded in 2024, 36.6% is still below that of 2015 whilst the GER of 41% is at the 2015 level. This calls for intense advocacy of ECD participation if the 2030 target is to be realised. Hopefully, the mass registration of ECD centres will result in higher numbers. Table 10 shows the GER and NER by gender to assess the extent of equal access to ECD.

Table 10: Early Child Development participation rates

Enrolment Rates	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
GER boys	40.4%	38.9%	39.8%	39.9%	40.9%	41.1%	39.4%	40.2%	40.9%	40.2%
NER boys	37.8%	38.5%	38.5%	39.5%	39.7%	37.8%	38.8%	40.4%	39.5%	39.2%
diff boys (GER-NER)	2.5%	0.4%	1.3%	0.4%	1.2%	3.3%	0.6%	-0.2%	1.4%	1.0%
GER girls	41.6%	39.8%	41.1%	41.3%	41.4%	42.6%	41.3%	41.3%	41.9%	41.5%
NER girls	39.5%	38.8%	40.1%	40.4%	40.5%	41.7%	40.4%	40.5%	41.1%	40.8%
diff girls (GER-NER)	2.1%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%	1.0%	0.9%	0.9%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%
diff(NER boys-NER girls)	-1.6%	-0.4%	-1.6%	-0.9%	-0.7%	-3.9%	-1.6%	-0.1%	-1.6%	-1.7%

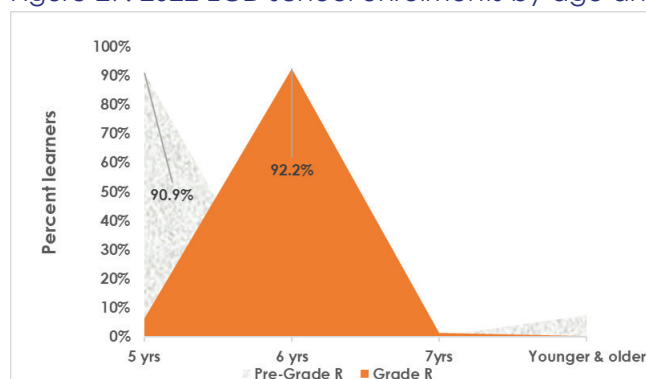
Source: 2015-2024 Annual Survey & 2022 Stats SA MYPE

Table 10 suggests that:

- The ECD participation rates are marginally lower in 2024 compared to 2023.
- When the 2024 participation rates of boys and girls are compared, attendance by girls is higher, GER of girls is higher by 1.3% with the NER higher by 1.7%.
- Overall, ECD attendance rates are low and contributing factors might be parents' personal decisions, affordability, negligence, and lack of understanding of the value of ECD attendance.
- With the current rates, the ECD attendance target for 2030 may not be reached.
- WCED plans to expand access to Grade R over the medium term. Furthermore, the universalisation of Grade R has always being an integral part of the WCED approach.

ECD age distribution in 2024

Figure 29: 2022 ECD school enrolments by age and grade



Source: Annual School Survey, 2024

Figure 29 shows the 2024 ECD enrolments by age and grade, including younger and older learners.

- 90.9% of the children who attended Pre-Grade R in 2024 were aged 5, meaning that the other 9.1% were either younger or older.
- The Grade R attendance was higher with 92.2% of children aged 6 attending.

WCED is in the process of simplifying ECD registration, increasing both the number of ECD centres and access to Grade R in support of early learning. The biggest challenge for the WCED are systems to accurately account for all the ECD centres in the Western Cape whilst at the same time providing for the needs of the sector like the training of educators, building of facilities and resource allocation.

Progress towards the universalisation of Grade R

Over the next five years, the WCED's focus will be on further increasing access to GRR in public ordinary schools, including utilising existing ECD Structures and independent schools to provide better access to GRR. Understanding the specific contexts and environments where access needs to be expanded is crucial.

GRR, known as the reception year, is for children turning 6 years in the GRR enrolment year. It differs from pre-GRR, which is the first step into schools and focuses on having fun and learning through play by drawing, participating in physical activities, and learning to share and interact with other children.

Upon completing GRR, children are expected to have exposure to letter formation, reading, writing and phonemic awareness. The literacy skills attained in GRR give children an advantage when they advance to Grade 1 (CAPS 123, 2023).

In 2022, the WCED issued a circular (0035/2022) detailing the process for the progressive universalisation of GRR. The circular established GRR as part of the Foundation Phase, subject to the provisions of both the Employment of Educators Act (EEA), 1998 (Act 76 of 1998, as amended) and the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM). It further outlined the process for GRR appointments beginning in 2023 and the allocation of GRR posts in public schools. Additionally, the circular described how the WCED was exploring a qualification pathway leading to the required full qualification (REQV 12/NQF 5) as an initiative to upskill underqualified GRR practitioners (REQV 13/14).

A report released by the World Bank revealed that in the Western Cape, 85% of children were enrolled in GRR. This exhibits how the Western Cape has contributed to the significant increase towards access to GRR (World Bank Group, 2024).

The WCED facilitated GRR access in independent and public ordinary schools. While significant progress has been made in increasing access, challenges persist in infrastructure, resources and quality.

Early childhood education is a global priority, with many countries investing in universal access for optimal development. A standardised curriculum would ensure quality education, with curriculum advisors supporting implementation. Teacher training, including ongoing professional development and collaboration with Higher Education Institutions, remains essential.

The WCED should focus on increasing GRR access in public ordinary schools, particularly where expansion is needed. The WCED should remain committed to maintaining high-quality teaching and learning standards across GRR offerings.

Universalising GRR requires a multi-faceted approach addressing infrastructure, teacher training, resources, quality assurance, parental engagement and community partnerships.

Teacher qualifications are central to GRR professionalisation. The WCED should actively encourage and support qualification improvement opportunities for underqualified and unqualified individuals currently working within the system.

4.7.2 Primary School Education

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) has made significant progress in enhancing access to Grade R in public ordinary schools, public special schools, and registered Early Childhood Development (ECD) independent sites. This growth has been consistent over the years, except during the COVID-19 pandemic. This progress has positioned the WCED to continue implementing compulsory Grade R under the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act, amended South African Schools Act.

Over the next years, the focus must be on further increasing access to Grade R in public ordinary schools, public special schools as well as independent schools. Understanding the specific contexts and environments where access needs to be expanded is crucial.

It is essential to ensure that access to Grade R is embedded in WCED decisions going forward. Ensuring quality teaching and learning across various Grade R offerings is vital to uphold system standards. Training for Grade R teachers on the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), Early Literacy and Numeracy (ELIT), and Grade R Mathematics is essential.

Through the universalization of Grade R, teacher qualifications play a key role in the professionalization process. Opportunities to improve qualifications for underqualified and unqualified individuals within the system should be encouraged.

Primary school education is crucial as it is the foundation for higher levels of education. It is at primary school that children are equipped with skills and the knowledge for a functional and normal life. The first seven years of schooling (Grade 1-7) or primary school attendance are compulsory. As part of promoting access, Target 4.1 of the SDGs tracks primary school attendance by gender. Table 11 below shows the primary school participation over 10 years using the GER and the NER.

Table 11: Primary school absolute enrolments against the population aged 7 to 13 years

Primary School Statistic	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Population aged 7-13 years	712 490	738 246	765 770	785 220	798 575	806 566	809 098	810 279	806 369	801 485
Gross enrolment Gr 1-7	670 953	694 535	716 702	733 147	745 203	752 783	753 774	753 780	756 008	751 791
NET enrolment Gr 1-7 (7-13 years)	624 750	648 592	670 158	685 883	697 038	703 743	704 796	704 349	704 364	705 775

Source: Annual School Survey (2015-2024) & 2022 Stats SA MYPE

The statistics in Table 11 indicate that about 11.9% or 95 592 of the population aged 7-13 years is not attending school. Further the statistics suggest that those who attend are already old. For instance, the NER was 88.1% in 2024 compared to the GER of 93.8% of the same year. During the period under review, attendance decreased particularly after 2020, possibly as a result of the COVID-19.

Both the NER and GER recorded in 2024 are below that of 2015, 88.1% against 87.7% of 2015 and GER of 93.8% against 94.2% of 2015. Whilst COVID-19 contributed to the decline in enrolments, other factors include the declining fertility rates and the booming of online schools as well as home-schooling for which, WCED cannot account. This calls for a plan or policy to collaborate with the latest contenders to ensure accurate reporting on participation numbers. The current statistics are based on CEMIS data. Table 12 shows the GER and NER by gender to assess the extent of equal access to Primary School Education.

Table 12: Primary school enrolment rates and gender equity

Enrolment Rates	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
GER boys	94.1%	94.0%	93.7%	93.5%	93.3%	93.4%	93.1%	93.0%	94.1%	93.9%
NER boys	86.5%	86.6%	86.4%	86.2%	86.1%	85.9%	85.7%	85.5%	86.0%	86.7%
diff boys (GER-NER)	7.6%	7.4%	7.2%	7.2%	7.2%	7.4%	7.4%	7.6%	8.1%	7.2%
GER girls	94.2%	94.2%	93.5%	93.3%	93.3%	93.3%	93.2%	93.0%	93.4%	93.7%
NER girls	88.9%	89.2%	88.6%	88.5%	88.6%	88.6%	88.6%	88.4%	88.8%	89.5%
diff girls(GER-NER)	5.3%	5.0%	4.9%	4.8%	4.8%	4.7%	4.6%	4.6%	4.7%	4.2%
diff NER boys - girls	-2.5%	-2.6%	-2.2%	-2.2%	-2.5%	-2.7%	-2.9%	-3.0%	-2.8%	-2.8%

Source: Annual School Survey (2015-2024) & 2022 Stats SA MYPE

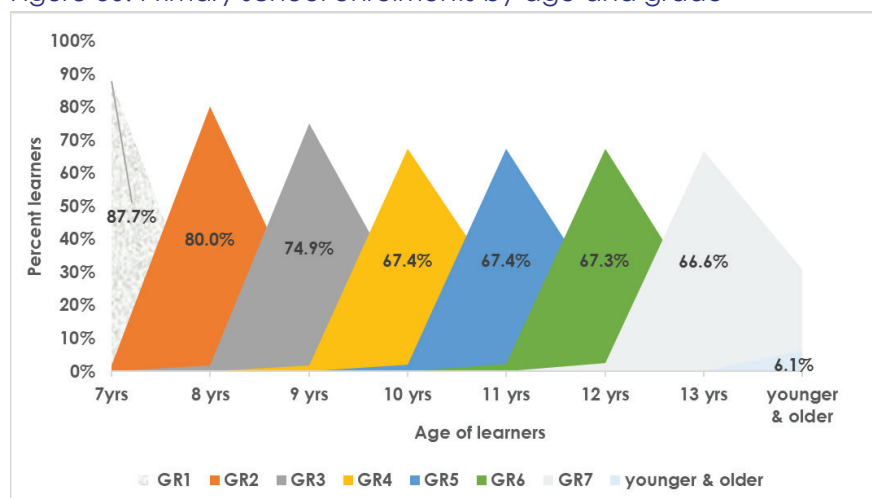
In 2024, boys constituted 50.7% of the total primary school enrolments including younger and older learners. The School Realities report by DBE had a similar finding (School Realities, 2022). In SNE schools, boys dominate, with boys constituting 65.8% of the total SNE primary school enrolments.

From Table 12:

- The 2015-2024 GER suggest that primary school attendance is at the global level of at least 90% for both genders. However, the NER shows that about 13.3% of boys and 10.5% of girls aged 7-13 years were not attending school in 2024
- There is a marginal difference of about 0.2% between the GER of boys and girls.
- The gap between boys and girls widens and, is 2.8% when NER is compared, suggesting that boys might be either repeating or starting school later compared to girls.
- Primary school education is the foundation for children as it is at primary school that children are introduced to the skills of learning. Non-attendance therefore deprives children that opportunity.

Primary School Age Distribution in 2024

Figure 30: Primary school enrolments by age and grade



Source: Annual School Survey, 2024

Figure 30 shows the 2024 primary school enrolments by age and grade, including younger and older learners.

- In 2024, there is a wide age range in primary school attendance.
- Between 12.3% and 33.4% of learners are older for the grade they are attending.
- The risk of having children older than the grade they are attending increases as the grade increases.
- By Grade 7, 66.6% (68 100) of the enrolled learners were age-appropriate, the rest were either older or younger.
- 1.4% (1 160) of children aged 7 were still attending ECD. This suggests that about 12.2% of children aged 7 were not attending school in 2024. The none-attendance of school by children is a violation of children's rights and needs to be monitored (Section 1(1), South African Education Act 84,1996).

4.7.3 Secondary School Education

The South African Secondary education is categorised into compulsory, (Gr 8 and Gr 9) and non-compulsory secondary education (Gr10, 11 and 12) or the Further Education and Training (FET) phase. Compulsory and non-compulsory secondary education participation by gender and age are covered below.

Table 13: Compulsory Secondary school absolute enrolments against the population aged 14 to 15 years

Compulsory Education Statistics	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Population aged 14-15 years	185 129	184 195	186 033	194 120	205 419	214 072	222 626	232 348	237 106	238 893
Gross enrolment Gr 8-9	162 918	159 836	162 224	167 470	175 361	182 801	186 856	194 881	204 368	205 683
NET enrolment Gr 8-9 (14-15 years)	107 338	106 014	108 794	115 897	123 709	131 465	136 446	145 156	153 588	153 468

Source: Annual School Survey (2015-2024) & 2022 Stats SA MYPE

The statistics in Table 13 show that about 35.9% or 85 740 of the population aged 14-15 years was not attending school. Further the statistics suggest that those who attend are already old. For instance, the NER was 64.2% in 2024 compared to the GER of 86.1% of the same year. Different from the ECD and Primary school statistics, the NER recorded in 2024 is above that of 2015, 64.2% against 58% of 2015 whilst the GER of 86.1% lower than the 88% of 2015.

The decrease in the GER might be because of interventions aimed at reducing repetition rates.

Whilst there is improvement in both the NER and GER over time, there is a need to account for learners of the SGA who are missing the opportunity. This calls for a plan or policy to collaborate with the latest contenders to ensure accurate reporting on participation numbers as the current statistics are based on CEMIS data. Table 14 shows the NER and GER by gender to assess the extent of equal access to Compulsory School Education.

Table 14: *Compulsory or Lower Secondary School Enrolment Rates and Gender Equity*

Enrolment Rates	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
GER boys	83.4%	82.5%	82.5%	81.6%	81.0%	81.2%	79.8%	79.6%	82.3%	82.7%
NER boys	52.2%	51.6%	52.0%	53.0%	53.8%	54.6%	54.5%	55.4%	57.6%	57.3%
diff boys (GER-NER)	31.2%	30.8%	30.5%	28.6%	27.3%	26.6%	25.3%	24.3%	24.7%	25.4%
GER girls	92.7%	91.1%	92.0%	91.0%	89.7%	89.6%	88.1%	88.2%	90.2%	89.5%
NER girls	63.8%	63.6%	65.0%	66.5%	66.7%	68.2%	68.1%	69.7%	72.1%	71.0%
diff girls (GER-NER)	28.9%	27.6%	26.9%	24.5%	23.0%	21.4%	20.0%	18.5%	18.1%	18.5%
diff boys-girls (NER)	-11.6%	-11.9%	-13.0%	-13.5%	-12.9%	-13.6%	-13.6%	-14.3%	-14.5%	-13.7%

Source: Annual School Survey (2015-2024) & 2022 Stats SA MYPE

In 2024, boys constituted 48.4% of the total Grade 8 and 9 enrolments. This is 2.3% lower than the 50.7% of boys enrolled in primary school. The share of girls was 51.6%. The School Realities report by DBE had a similar finding (School Realities,2022). Boys in SNE schools dominate, with 60.6% of boy enrolments constituting the total SNE enrolments.

From Table 14:

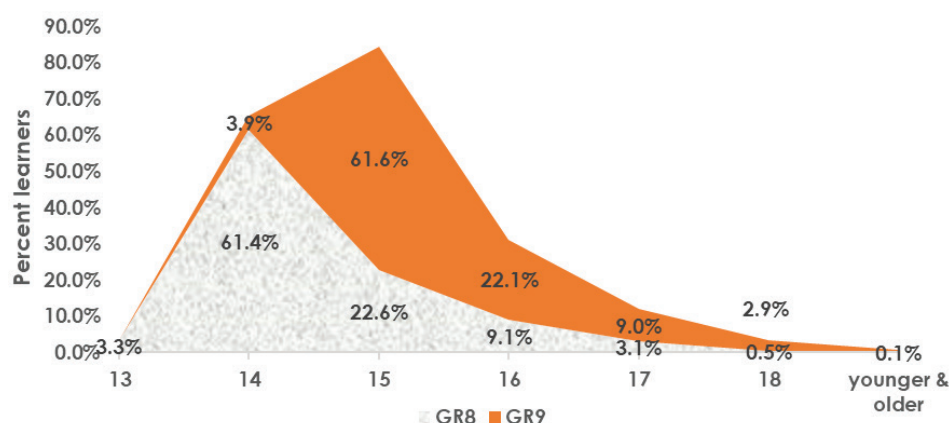
- The GER of both boys and girls decreased between 2015 and 2024 and were lowest in 2022 for boys at 79.6% and 88.1% for girls in 2021.
- The 2024 GER for girls is 89.5% compared to the 82.7% of boys, a difference of 6.8%. The NER for girls is 71% compared to the 57.3% of boys, a difference of 13.7%.
- When the NER of boys and girls are compared, girls tend to remain at school more than boys,
- For both genders, there is a significant drop when the GER is compared to the NER which might be attributed to high repetition rates and school dropout.
- Grades 8 and 9 are an important phase of schooling for young boys and girls as they are at the most vulnerable stage of their development.

Grade 9 is specifically important as it is the exit Grade of the basic or compulsory education and marks the end or completion of compulsory education, hence it is important that learners are protected and encouraged to reach and complete Grade 9 at all costs.

Also, the Western Cape is one of the provinces recording high crime rates (SAPS, 2024). The low school attendance by boys as well as their high repetition rate compared to girls is worrisome as they might be tempted to participate in illegal activities if they are not attending school. The School Safety will possibly explore methods of engaging and addressing this looming risk of a missed opportunity by the boy child. The distribution of the 2024 compulsory school enrolments by age and grade, including younger and older learners is presented in Figure 31.

Compulsory or Lower Secondary School age distribution in 2024

Figure 31: 2024 Compulsory school enrolments by age and grade



Source: Annual School Survey, 2024

Figure 31 shows the 2024 compulsory school enrolments by age and grade, including younger and older learners.

- In 2024, there is a wide age-range in Grades 8 and 9, from 13 to 18 years and older.
- 61.4% (65 596) of the learners enrolled in Grade 8 are age-appropriate, the rest are either younger or older.
- The age-appropriate enrolment in Grade 8 is low by 3.6% towards the 65% target of 2019. Grade 9 is low by 3.4%.
- Between 38.4% and 38.6% learners are older for the grade they are attending. This is concerning as children who are older are at a risk of not completing school, especially children at the adolescent stage.
- In Grade 9, 38.4% (32 821) learners not in the appropriate grade.
- Statistics presented in Table 15 suggested that boys are more at risk compared to girls. This calls for a need to develop policies or measures to decrease the missed opportunity.

Non-Compulsory Secondary School

School attendance is not compulsory for learners beyond age 15. However, in South Africa, youth aged 16-18 years is expected to be at school completing the last leg of their basic education, or the FET phase.

Non-Compulsory Secondary School Enrolment Rates and Gender Equity

Table 15: Non-Compulsory Secondary school absolute enrolments against the population aged 16 to 18 years

Noncompulsory Education Statistics (Gr 10-12)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Population aged 16-18 years	284 659	282 218	287 876	289 817	290 653	295 756	305 659	325 652	342 687	355 200
Gross enrolment Gr 10-12	201 760	199 201	199 681	204 020	205 026	208 983	223 258	232 016	241 901	248 657
Net enrolment Gr 10-12 (16-18 years)	150 922	149 574	153 411	157 097	158 117	163 027	176 299	188 061	198 439	205 511

Source: Annual School Survey (2015-2024) & 2022 Stats SA MYPE

The statistics in Table 15 show that about 42.1% or 149 690 of the population aged 16-18 years was not attending school in 2024. Further, those attending were already older. For instance, the NER was 57.9% in 2024 compared to the GER of 70% of the same year.

Different from the ECD and Primary school statistics, the NER recorded in 2024 was above that of 2015, 57.9% against 53% of 2015 whilst the GER of 70% was lower than the 70.9% of 2015.

The decrease in the GER might be because of interventions aimed at reducing repetition rates.

Whilst there is improvement in both the NER and GER over time, there is a need to account for learners of the SGA that are missing the opportunity. This calls for a plan or policy to collaborate with the latest contenders (online and home schools) to ensure accurate reporting on participation numbers as the current statistics are based on CEMIS data. Table 16 shows the GER and NER by gender to assess the extent of equal access to Non-compulsory School Education.

Table 16: Non-Compulsory or Upper Secondary School Enrolment Rates and Gender Equity

Enrolment Rates	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
GER boys	63.4%	63.4%	62.5%	63.5%	63.4%	63.2%	66.0%	64.6%	64.4%	63.5%
NER boys	46.3%	46.3%	46.7%	47.7%	47.4%	47.8%	50.4%	50.6%	50.9%	50.6%
diff boys (GER-NER)	17.1%	17.1%	15.8%	15.8%	16.0%	15.5%	15.6%	14.0%	13.5%	13.0%
GER girls	78.4%	77.7%	76.3%	77.3%	77.7%	78.1%	80.1%	77.8%	76.8%	76.5%
NER girls	59.7%	59.7%	59.9%	60.8%	61.4%	62.5%	65.0%	64.9%	64.9%	65.2%
diff girls (GER-NER)	18.6%	18.1%	16.4%	16.6%	16.3%	15.6%	15.1%	13.0%	11.9%	11.3%
diff NER boys-girls	-13.4%	-13.3%	-13.1%	-13.1%	-14.0%	-14.7%	-14.6%	-14.2%	-14.0%	-14.6%

Source: Annual School Survey (2015-2024) & 2022 Stats SA MYPE

In 2024, girls in Grades 10-12 constituted 54.6% of total enrolments including LSEN. Girls from PO schools constituted 51.5% of the total enrolments. Participation of girls in LSEN is concerning as they constituted 35.6% of the total enrolments in the FET SNE sector. The proportion of girls and boys suggests that once learners reach secondary school, they are unlikely to drop out compared to primary school.

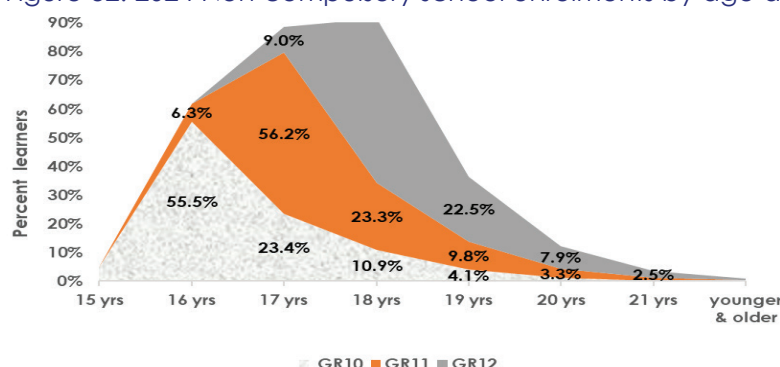
From Table 16:

- The enrolment rates suggest that between 2015 and 2024, there has been an increase in the number of learners enrolled in the appropriate grade (NER) in non-compulsory education, 4.3% for boys and 5.5% for girls.
- Whilst there is improvement in the number of learners that do not leave school at the FET level, the proportion of learners not in school is still significantly high.
- The data further suggest that most of the learners that complete or reach compulsory education (Grade 9), are less likely to dropout.
- When the participation rates of boys and girls are compared, the 2024 GER for girls is 76.5% compared to the 63.5% of boys, a difference of 13%. The NER for girls is 65.2% compared to the 50.6% of boys, a difference of 14.6%.

Online and home schools might be contributing towards the low participation numbers which calls for a need to find innovative ways of incorporating them when accounting for participation rates as the NDP target is to have all boys and girls participating in some form of education or learning by 2030.

Non-compulsory secondary school age distribution in 2024

Figure 32: 2024 Non-compulsory school enrolments by age and grade



Source: Annual School Survey, 2024

Figure 32 shows the 2024 non-compulsory school enrolments by age and grade including the younger and older learners.

- In 2024, there was a wide age-range in the FET band. Between 14% to 36% learners were older for the grade they are attending.
- The age-appropriate enrolment across Grades 10 – 12 was lower than the 65% target set for 2019, 11.9% in Grade 10, 10.8% in Grade 11 and 10.4% lower in Grade 12.
- At least 40% of learners were older for the grade they were enrolled in. This is concerning as children not in an age-appropriate grade are at a risk of not completing school. From Figure 27, the risk increases as the grade increases and, is highest in Grade 12 with 10.4% (6 952) learners aged 19-21 years.

The most prevalent feature in the analysis of the enrolment rates and age composition in Grades 1-12 highlights the challenge of delayed attendance in Grade 1 and repetition, specifically primary school grade repetition. This consequently leads to overaged learners and later these learners dropping out of school. The current focus on the Foundation Phase by WCED if planned and implemented properly might be a breakthrough to eliminate the problems experienced by the late starters at school and those that repeat as early as Grade 1. Also, the schools of skills programmes are designed to assist learners with barriers, so that they have the requisite skills to be successful in their lives and contribute to the economy.

4.8 System efficiency

Enrolment rates for the period under review 2015 to 2024 suggest that WCED is approaching the universal statistics especially primary school education. The delivery of poor-quality education translates to inefficient use of resources. Potential inefficiencies include high repetition rates, low throughput rates and high dropout rates. It is important for WCED to understand the trends related to systemic efficiencies so that they are mitigated against (de Clercq, 2024). Hence forth, this section focuses on system efficiencies in particular learning outcomes.

Table 17: Tracking the 2014 Grade 1 through the system for period 2014 - 2024.

2014 GR1 Cohort	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Grade 1	106 929										
Grade 2		89 587									
Grade 3			79 333								
Grade 4				73 220							
Grade 5					65 649						
Grade 6						60 932					
Grade 7							57 539				
Grade 8								51 008			
Grade 9									46 994		
Grade 10										48 275	
Grade 11											41 331
Moved to LSEN		64	74	125	189	229	213	175	94	44	524
Attending School of Skills							1	49	46	98	3 119
Repeating a grade		12 446	20 060	24 329	30 194	31 737	31 844	30 182	28 093	29 594	28 106
Other		4 832	7 462	9 255	10 897	14 031	17 332	25 515	31 702	28 918	33 849
2014 Grade 1 Cohort total	106 929	106 929	106 929	106 929	106 929	106 929	106 929	106 929	106 929	106 929	106 929
Primary & compulsory secondary school progression rate		83.8%	74.2%	68.5%	61.4%	57.0%	53.8%	47.7%	43.9%	45.1%	38.7%
Primary & compulsory secondary school Retention rate		95.5%	93.0%	91.3%	89.8%	86.9%	83.8%	76.1%	70.4%	73.0%	68.3%
Primary and compulsory secondary school repetition rate		11.6%	22.4%	30.7%	41.2%	48.3%	52.3%	52.5%	55.1%	63.0%	58.2%
Other		4.5%	7.0%	8.7%	10.2%	13.1%	16.2%	23.9%	29.6%	27.0%	31.7%

Source: Annual School Survey, 2014-2024

System efficiency as defined by the throughput rate

Considering the current unemployment rates and consequently high poverty rates, improving learner success and ensuring that they complete school as quickly as possible has become a national priority (Watson, 2008). The throughput rate is calculated by dividing the total number of learners who moved to the next grade without repeating by the total number of learners in Grade 1. From Table 17:

- Of the 106,929 learners in Grade 1 in 2014, 83,8% (89,587) progressed to Grade 2 in 2015. By 2020, 53,8% (57 539) learners passed without repeating a grade.
- In 2024, 38.7% (41 331) of the 106 929 learners flowed through the system without repeating a grade.
- The data suggests that throughput rate decreases as the grade level increases with the highest rate recorded in Grade 1.

There is a need for the system to investigate the reason for the low throughput rate so that age-appropriate learners are motivated to stay at school. The increase in the number of learners attending the Schools of Skills from 1 in 2020 to 3 119 and those moved to special needs schools suggests attempts for the province to encourage learners to stay at school and to equip them with skills other than the academic ones.

System efficiency as defined by the repetition rate

Repeating a grade does not only lower the self-esteem or motivation of learners, but it can also result to learner drop-out and possibly, social exclusion (Van der Berg et. al, 2019). Also, considering the current financial constraints, repetition is costly to the system (A 25 Year Review of progress in the basic education sector, DBE, 2019).

- Of the 106,929 learners in Grade 1 in 2014, 11.6% (12,446) did not progress to Grade 2.
- The number of learners repeating Grade almost doubled in 2015, 22.4% (20 060).
- In Grade 4, more than a third of the learners repeated the Grade. Grade 4 is a transit Grade with learners switching from their mother tongue or home language. This calls for systems to prepare learners for this transition.
- Primary school repetition rate increased as the grade level increased with the highest rate recorded in Grade 7, 53.8% (31 644).
- The highest repetition rate is recorded in Grade 10 with 63% (29 594) learners repeating.

Clearly, there is a need to address the issue of repeating learners particularly in Grades 7 to 10. The four grades seem to be critical where repetition is closely linked to dropout rates, especially by Grade 9. This finding is also supported conducted by the World Bank analysis conducted in 2022 (World Bank, 2024).

System efficiency as defined by the retention rate

The retention rate is the extent to which children are kept in school and progress to complete the full cycle of basic education without dropping out. The retention rate is covered for 3 levels and assesses the 2014 cohort of learners who complete school in Grade 9

- The primary school retention rate for the 2014 cohort is 76.1% (81 414) when all the learners still in the system are considered. Survival until Grade 9 is 70.4% (75 227) at lower secondary school.
- Whilst the retention rates are high, the high repetition rate of 11,6% as early as Grade 1 is a concern. Also, the increase in the percentage of learners repeating indicates inefficiencies, particularly in classroom practice.
- Ideally, the consistent monitoring of grade repetition and learners who leave the system should reduce the prevalence of both incidents as learners progress to the higher grades. Hence WCED is currently collaborating with DBE to track learners that are not in the system.

Learner tracking system

WCED has embarked on a learner tracking system in collaboration with DBE and other stakeholders in fulfilment of the NDP goals and the constitution that all children aged 7 to 15 should be at school and, to inform reform systems of how best to improve internal efficiency both from the view of inclusive access and the achievement of learning outcomes.

The study will address hindering issues such as equity, inequality and inclusiveness when dealing with access, repetition rates, throughput rates and the achievement of learning outcomes.

The data for the period reviewed in this document suggest that a significant number of learners start Grade 1 late and that there are learners that are not attending schools when the participation rates are observed.

Many learners are older than the Grade they are in, which might be attributed to the late start or repetition. This is a risk and has potential to learner demotivation and later dropout.

Regarding access and participation, the data also suggests that there are disparities between boys and girls and that boys tend to repeat more compared to girls.

The review of the SNE data suggests that SNE enrolments constitute about just over thirty percent of the total SNE enrolments whilst boys are over 60%. This might be a societal challenge over time, hence the learner tracking system will also deep dive into the SNE sector to unpack those attending by gender, quintile race and other important variables to inform the system and therefore proper planning.

The analysis of the 2014 Grade 1 cohort suggests that about 34.7% of the learners are no longer in the system. This occurrence is usually misinterpreted as dropping out, meanwhile there is a possibility that some have either relocated to other provinces or are elsewhere. The learner tracking system study will make it possible to identify these learners by tracing their whereabouts.

The recent study by the World Bank revealed that disparities exist across socio-economic quintiles, with only 4% of learners from the highest quintile being overage in grades 8 to 12, compared to 12% in lower quintiles. Rural districts face greater challenges than urban areas, and there is a noted negative correlation between over-age learners and alignment between home language and language of instruction by Grade 9. Additionally, older learners perform worse in mathematics and science (World Bank, 2024).

The learner tracking system study will cover this in detail building on the findings of the World Bank and further.

4.9 Curriculum Coverage

The Covid-19 pandemic has severely disrupted public schooling systems and created substantial learning losses due to loss of instructional time, given the widespread closure of schools. A 2023 World Bank study (Schady et al. 2023) proposes a list of actions to remedy or arrest learning losses associated with the pandemic. These include,

1. Keeping schools open and restoring or increasing instructional hours
2. Focusing on foundational learning and streamlining the curriculum
3. Providing incentives for at-risk students to remain in school
4. Generating political commitment for learning recovery.

The report further suggests that middle-income and low-income countries must do more than recover COVID-19-related learning losses. This report suggests focussing on long-standing learning deficits and the report posits that a child's family background remains the most important predictor of learning outcomes, including parents' income and education levels, as well as a child's nutrition, health, and cognitive and socio-emotional development in the early years of life. It suggests though that once children get to school, no single factor is as critical as the quality of their teachers (Bétéille and Evans 2021; Bruns and Luque 2015).

In the WCED, Programme 7 focuses on the curriculum aspects of education delivery and especially learning outcomes. The WCED 2021 systemic test results confirmed that the Covid-19 pandemic caused devastating learning losses in the Western Cape across grades with the most severe losses being in the Foundation Phase (WCED, 2022). The WCED continues to pursue ways to reverse learning losses, and its initiatives are guided by the 2021 Report of UNESCO/UNICEF, entitled "State of the Global Education Crisis: A Path to recovery".

4.10 Learning Outcomes

The performance of the WCED needs to be understood against the background of the targets that were set in the NDP in 2011 for 2030 and adopted by the Department of Basic Education in the same year. In terms of these:

"The Department of Basic Education aims to increase to 90 percent the number of learners in Grades 3, 6 and 9 who have mastered the minimum competencies in language and numeracy by the end of each year. The Commission proposes that the required competency levels be defined as 50 percent and above. In other words, 90 percent of learners in Grades 3, 6 and 9 must achieve 50 percent or more in the annual national assessments in these subjects", (NDP, Page 305).

The NDP is one of the South African government's responses towards eliminating poverty and inequality by 2030. However, for the plan to achieve the set targets of 2030, the monitoring and evaluation of its implementation should be informed by reliable data and evidence. Table 18 captures the basic education-focused indicators and targets of the NDP.

Table 18: NDP indicators and targets

NDP 2030	2010 Baseline	2015 target	2030 target
Percentage learners in Grade 3 who achieved 50% or more in the new National Assessment in Literacy & Numeracy/Mathematics	Grade 3 (2012) Literacy 56% Numeracy 36.6%	60%	90%
Percentage learners in Grade 6 who achieved 50% or more in the new National Assessment in Literacy & Numeracy/Mathematics	Grade 6 (2012) Language 38.7%, Mathematics 10.6%	60%	90%
Percentage learners in Grade 9 who achieved 50% or more in the new National Assessment in Mathematics & Science	Grade 9 (2012) Language 38.9%, Mathematics 2.3%	60%	90%
Number of matric pass Mathematics above 50%	50 195	198 000	No target developed
Number of matric pass Science above 50%	37 853	186 000	No target developed
Completion rate of youth for any qualification equivalent to Senior Certificate	47%(2014)		45 000
Learners eligible for bachelor's programme	126 371	205 000	425 000

Source: NDP 2030, NPC 2012; ANA 2015

The WCED position in respect of the NDP indicators and targets

Although the ANAs were discontinued, the WCED has GET assessments in the form of the Annual Systemic Testing Programme. The province therefore can report on these elements as reflected in Programme 7. It needs to however be raised that the NDP 2030 targets are aspirational and considering unpredictable events such as COVID-19, it is challenging to achieve the NDP 2030 targets. All the NSC targets are annually monitored and reported on with the organisation having set targets for each of these elements. It needs to be repeated that the NDP 2030 targets may be challenging to achieve.

4.10.1 Degree of progress towards the achievement of learning outcomes in compulsory education

Since 2002, the WCED has been conducting the Systemic Testing Programme to monitor progress toward the delivery of quality education. Through the Systemic Testing Programme, WCED has been able to identify areas of concern that the system needs to address to improve performance levels. Starting as a pilot in 2002, full cohort participation in Grades 3, 6 and 9 started in 2010. The results of the tests for years 2013 to 2023 are captured in Table 19:

Achievement of learning outcomes in Grades 3, 6 and 9

Table 19: Progress towards achieving Education Outcomes

Year	Grade 3 Literacy	Grade 6 Language	Grade 9 Language	Grade 3 Numeracy	Grade 6 Mathematics	Grade 9 Mathematics
2012	38.9	36.9	48.2	51.5	26.4	13.9
2013	37.0	29.7	47.8	55.0	20.3	14.3
2014	42.4	37.9	47.6	54.0	30.4	14.9
2015	42.4	36.8	53.0	57.6	37.7	22.2
2016	42.5	40.1	55.1	57.7	40.1	23.6
2017	46.6	38.7	53.0	59.3	38.6	22.0
2018	45.8	38.5	52.6	56.6	42.4	23.0
2019	44.9	42.8	53.6	58.1	44.4	22.7
2020						
2021	36.9	39.4	50.1	44.3	37.3	21.6
2022	38.5	36.1	50.2	47.3	39.4	18.8
2023	42.5	37.5	51.6	51.6	40.4	20.5
2024	45.4	41.5	48.8	55.9	41.5	23.4
MTEF 2025/26	43.5	38.5	52.6	52.6	41.4	21.5
NDP 2030	90	90	90	90	90	90

Source: WCED Grade 3, 6 & 9 Systemic Testing Programme, 2013-2024

Table 19 assesses the progress towards the set targets in Grades 3, 6 and 9 using the Systemic Testing Programme results. The trends suggest that performance varies by grade:

- Compared to 2023, the Grade 3 Language pass percentage improved by 2.9 percentage points in 2024. The results suggest that attempts to arrest the COVID_19 impact are bearing fruits as the performance surpasses that of 2019 by 0.5 percentage points. Mathematics improved by 4.3 percentage points when 2024 is compared to 2023. Different from Language, more is needed to arrest the COVID-19 impact as the results are lower by 2.2 percentage points when compared to 2019.

- Compared to 2023, the Grade 6 Language pass percentage improved by 4 percentage points in 2024. Although there is progress, more needs to be done to arrest the COVID_19 impact as the performance falls short by 5.3 percentage points when 2024 is compared to 2019. Mathematics improved by 1.1 percentage points when 2024 is compared to 2023. Like Language, more is needed to arrest the COVID-19 impact as the results are lower by 2.9 percentage points when compared to 2019.
- Compared to 2023, the Grade 9 Language pass percentage decreased by 1.3 percentage points in 2024. More needs to be done to arrest the impact of COVID_19 as the performance falls short by 2 percentage points when 2024 is compared to 2019. Different from Language, Mathematics improved by 2.9 percentage points when 2024 is compared to 2023. The results suggest that attempts to arrest the COVID-19 impact are working as the results surpass the 2019 results by 0.7 percentage points.
- The 2025_26 MTEF targets were realised in the Grades 3 and 6 Mathematics and Language and in the Grade 9 Mathematics.
- Excluding the Grade 9 Language, the MTEF targets are at least 2 times lower than the NDP 2030 set target of 90%.

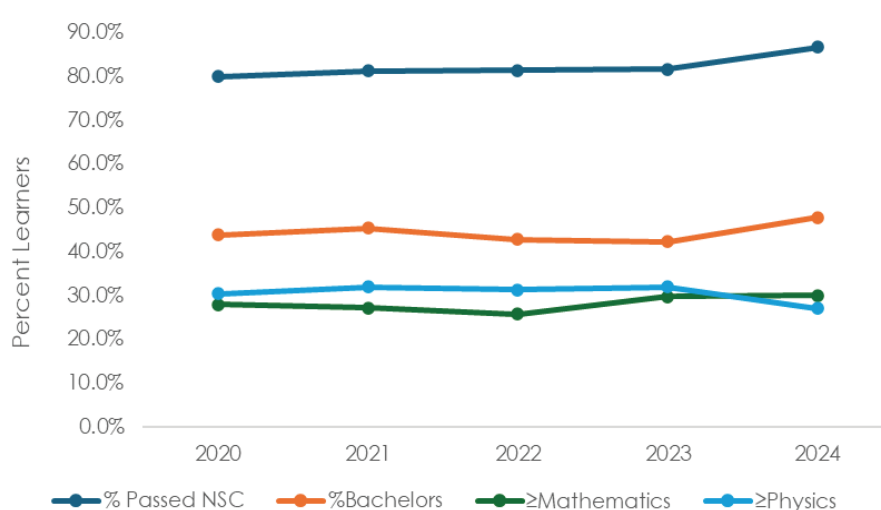
4.10.2 Achievement of learning outcomes in Grade 12

The Programme 7 targets focus on examinations and education-related activities, particularly improvement in Grade 12 learning outcomes and the GET Systemic Testing Programme.

The SDGs and the NDP advocate for an increase in the number of learners taking and passing Physical Science and Mathematics, informed by low enrolments and declining number of learners and to enable the country to achieve its developmental objectives. This section assesses the progress towards achieving the standardised Sector Output Indicators (SOIs) in the National Senior Certificate (NSC).

It is worth mentioning that the 2024 NSC class was different as these are learners that were in Grade 8 in 2020 during the heart of COVID-19. They were in Grade 9 in 2021, a year in which many countries were sceptical about opening schools hence there was a lot of anticipation on how this group would perform compared to the previous years.

Figure 33: Achievement of learning outcomes in the NSC



Year	Wrote NSC	Passed	Bachelors	Mathematics	Physical Science
2020	51 633	41 250	22 634	14 324	9 463
2021	57 709	46 875	26 125	15 219	9 801
2022	60 338	49 102	25 761	15 616	9 818
2023	62 077	50 620	26 182	15 524	10 082
2024	62 863	54 414	30 031	14 979	9 998

Source: Department of Basic Education, 2020-2024

Figure 33 shows the performance of Grade 12 learners over five years. The 2024 number of passes increased significantly by 0.1 percentage points compared to 2023. There was also a significant increase in the quality of passes as the province, a 5 more percentage points in Bachelors. Learners passing gateway subjects (Mathematics and Physical Science) with at least 60% increasing by 5.6 and 1.7 percentage points respectively. The increase in the number of learners passing the gateway subjects with quality marks is confirmation that the investments in those subjects are rewarded. The WCED will monitor the minimal gains in Physics for further improvement.

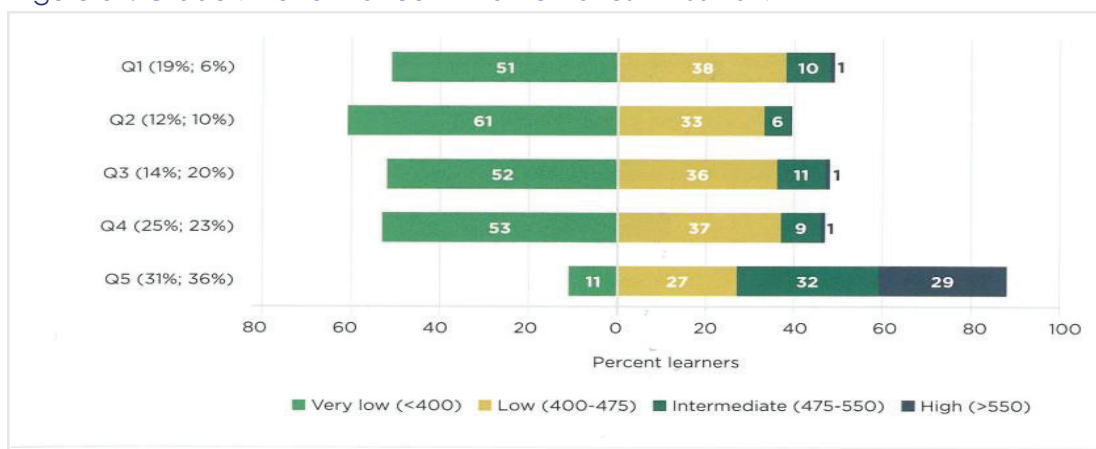
4.10.3 Inequality in the achievement of learning outcomes

Goal 4.5 of the SDGs advocates for the elimination of inequality including children in vulnerable situations, (World Bank, 2017).

Inequality is a challenge with many learners attending schools located in poor communities performing poorer compared to learners from elite environments. Support like the nutrition and no-fee policies amongst others, are aimed at closing some of the gaps so that learners can focus on their learning. The National Quintile is used to compare the performance of learners attending public and independent schools.

The Western Cape participates in internationally benchmarked assessments, PIRLS, SEACMEQ and TIMSS. Whilst the Western Cape is one of the best-performing provinces in South Africa, there are disparities when performance by socio-economic status. Figure 34 shows the performance of the Grade 9 learners in TIMSS 2019.

Figure 34: Grade 9 Performance in Mathematics TIMSS 2019

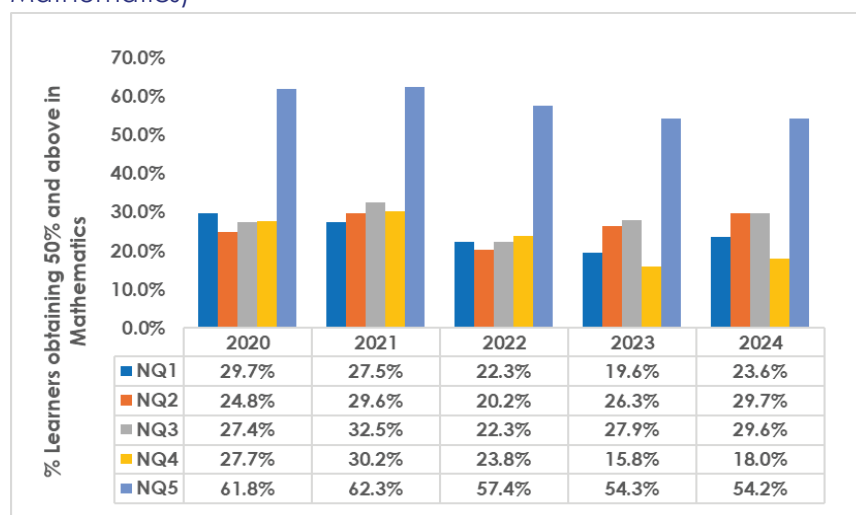


Source: HSRC, TIMSS 2019

From Figure 34, The provincial average score is boosted by quintile 5 learners:

- More than 50% quintile 1-4 learners are in the lowest performance category whilst 11% fall in this category.
- Compared to 29% quintile 5 learners that obtained the highest performance category whilst none from quintiles 1-4 fall in this category
- The performance of quintile 5 learners in the intermediate category is at least three times that of learners from quintiles 1-4.

Figure 35: Comparison of NSC performance by socio-economic status (≥ 50 Pass% in Mathematics)



Source: NSC results, IS 2020-2024

A total 6 584 or 44% of the 14 979 learners who wrote Mathematics in 2024 obtained at least 50%. The number includes learners from Special Schools. Of these learners, 14 427 were designated to quintiles 1 to 5. Figure 35 shows the performance of learners in NSC Mathematics aggregated by quintile.

- Like the TIMSS Mathematics performance, at least 50% quintile 5 learners who write Mathematics reach the 50% pass percentage.
- Differently, the percentage of quintile 1-4 learners reaching the 50% is mostly below 30% in the period under review.
- The percentage of schools reaching 50% in Mathematics increases in 2024 for quintiles 1 to 4 with quintile 3 exceeding the 30% mark for the first time during the period under review.

4.11 SWOT Analysis

Below is the SWOT analysis emerging from the trends observed in sections 4.1 to 4.10

4.11.1 Strengths

Access to basic education by all

The Western Cape province has made additional efforts, beyond national policy, to support learners who tend to be from socio-economically disadvantaged households and are attending Quintile 4 and 5 schools. It does this in three ways,

- some Quintile 4 and 5 schools elected to become “no-fee” schools, all learners in these schools do not have to pay fees and the WCED transfers resources to schools at the same rate per learner as for Quintiles 1 to 3 schools.
- To address this, the WCED provides financial support for fee reductions or exemptions to learners attending fee-charging public Quintiles 4 and 5 schools.
- Low-fee and no-fee independent schools received subsidies from the government to support over learners. (World Bank Group: 2024, P. 15).

Special Needs Education

Statistics suggest that WCED is giving the SNE space attention as it spends more than the average compared to the country. The plan is to spend about 6% of the 2024/25 compared to the average 4% of the other provinces (The World Bank report). Research suggests that the SNE space is still fragile. For instance, millions of children in Africa with severe impairments do not have access to education despite the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities where persons with disabilities must have access to inclusive, quality and free primary and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live (McKenzie et al., 2018).

Learning Outcomes

The WCED is the only province conducting a yearly census on learner performance. The annual Systemic Testing Programme conducted by the Western Cape is a reliable tool to regularly monitor learning performance and to inform the system.

According to international assessments, the Western Cape has higher achievements in learning outcomes compared to the other provinces in South Africa, This is due to a combination of factors which include: 1) concerted effort to provide school subsidies and other support to learners from disadvantaged households above and beyond what is required by national policy, 2) the province spends a significant amount on transport for learners to get to school and for students with special needs compared to other provinces, 3) the Western Cape is the only province in South Africa that consistently administers learning assessments on an annual basis to track learning progress, and 4) the province is currently implementing its own targeted and comprehensive programme to respond to learning losses as a result of COVID-19-related school closures. (World Bank Group: 2024, P. 7).

4.11.2 Weaknesses

Access and participation

A learner enrolment formular research is required to predict the future numbers that are inclusive of the online and home education learners.

Further there is a need to follow the boy child in mainstream schools who seem to be either repeating more compared to girls to ultimately dropout.

The low attendance by girls in SNE schools also to needs further exploration to understand the real causes.

Improved Education outcomes and skills

The recently released report on the Western Cape Education sector suggests that much still needs to be done to achieve the desired educational outcomes. Only 1% of 16–18-year-old learners were enrolled in Technical Vocational Education and Training (GHS average for 2019 to 2022).

Monitoring and Evaluation

While the Schools Evaluations Authority (SEA), supports school-level evaluations, the department needs to conduct more internal evaluations. These evaluations seek to strengthen institutional systems, to support operational efficiency and effectiveness. These evaluations could seek to support learning, curriculum other resource support strategies.

The outcome of the testing could be beneficial for policy and planning purposes if used more effectively. There is a need to review the current processes used and to use the Systemic Testing Programme as a tool to make amends in the system such that a full monitoring and evaluation cycle is completed. This has potential towards improving learning conditions and learning outcomes on yearly small wins.

Interventions to transform the delivery of education in the province are being implemented, such as those linked to improve learning outcomes and reading but there is minimal to no monitoring and evaluation taking place to either track progress or to assessing the impact of these interventions will allow WCED to improve the learning outcomes.

Aging workforce- institution-based educators

The aging educator workforce and the projected growth in learner enrolments create a need to strengthening teacher effectiveness by providing training and support to new and experienced teachers.

4.11.3 Opportunities

Monitoring and Evaluation

According to the Western Cape Education Sector Analysis (World Bank, 2024), the WCED needs to invest to improve its data collection, monitoring, research and evaluation capacity. A lack to evaluate these interventions is a missed opportunity because it prevents the understanding of whether the desired changes in the system were achieved.

Partnerships and Collaborations

WCED as an institution

WCED has an opportunity to foster innovation through effective collaborations with higher learning institutions and other organizations to tap into the collective knowledge and creativity to swiftly find solutions to complex education problems. Furthermore, utilizing Public-private partnerships (PPPs) models in the education are becoming increasingly effective in enhancing access, quality by involving the private sector.

Early Childhood Development

Partnerships with other departments and role players will be used to ensure the development and sustainability through a social compact in order to improve ECD services. The monitoring of programme improvements as well as compliance with norms and standards is key.

Learner support and wellness

To effectively address child poverty and stunting, interventions will focus on improving socio-economic conditions, enhancing parental support and education, and ensuring access to nutritious food and health services. A comprehensive approach engaging both social and health sectors is necessary to break the cycle of poverty and improve outcomes for vulnerable children in the region (World Bank, 2024).

4.11.4 Threats

Strategic risks

The Provincial Top Management of the Western Cape Government has adopted the Provincial Enterprise Risk Management Policy and Strategy (PERMPS). The PERMPS sets out the province's overall intention in respect to the principles of good enterprise risk management practises. It spells out the objectives of the Provincial Risk Management Process to ultimately strengthen decision making at various levels of accountability.⁸

The WCED, furthermore, adopted an Enterprise Risk Management Policy on 30 May 2020 for the 5-year strategic period 2020/21 – 2024/25. This policy articulates the Department's risk management philosophy and captures, on a high-level, the roles and responsibilities of the different role players. It provides the basis for the risk management process and how its principles are imbedded in the department.

Table 20: Key Departmental Risks

Inability to maintain the financial viability of WCED	
Mitigating Factors	• Active participation in the WCG budget bidding process to ensure that the educational priorities are fronted and funded efficiently within the provincial fiscal limitations. • Enforcement of consequence management for irregular and unauthorized expenditure. • Internal financial communication regarding budget and financial austerity. • Issuing of allocation letters to Programme Managers for Programme priorities. • Stringent budget monitoring mechanisms for spending and spending performance across WCED.

⁸ WCED Enterprise Risk Management Strategy and Implementation Plan 2022/23

Ineffective school governance	
Mitigating Factors	• Revision of the financial management manual to align with the latest legislation. Continuous training provided to all stakeholders. • Training and awareness – roles and responsibility, support by school finance and records officer from District and Head Office. • Training is provided in recruitment and selection. Various circulars issued by recruitment and selection. Guidelines for recruitment and selection provided by the Department. All members must sign a conflict of interest as well as confidentiality disclosure. Recuse SGB member from the process. • Training, monitoring and support to schools. Consequence management, internal audits, Provincial Forensic Services investigations. • Schools' Business Continuity Plan execution. • Training, monitoring and support to schools. Consequence management, internal audits, Provincial Forensic Services investigations.
Limited ability to improve school sustainability	
Mitigating Factors	• Competency based testing for principals. • CTLI training course for the development of principals. • Refined recruitment process to improve the selection and appointment of school principals.
Increased learning-centred opportunities	
Mitigating Factors	• Dedicated reading strategy implemented. • Strengthened mathematics strategy implemented. • Phase specific improvement plans implemented. • Incremental increase of access to Technical/Vocational learning. • Participation in national policy development for the introduction of the 3 streams in the Basic Education Sector. • eLearning thrust consisting of 3 subdivisions: 1. Enabling environment consisting of access to connectivity, teacher and learner devices. 2. Culture change within the classroom and teacher professional development. 3. Digital resourcing and systems.

Source: WCED Risk Register, 2024/25

4.12 Budget Allocation

The Western Cape's provincial budget reveals a strategic allocation of limited resources, with education receiving the lowest share among South Africa's provinces at 37%, despite a gradual increase in funding. Overall, the budget demonstrates a balanced approach, addressing immediate needs while gradually enhancing educational funding. (Western Cape Education Sector Analysis, The World Bank, 2024).

The department's budget is spread across 7 programmes with sub-programmes, and these are:

Table 21: WCED Programme Structure

Programme	Sub-programme
1: Administration	1.1: Office of the MEC 1.2: Corporate Services 1.3: Education Management 1.4: Human Resource Development 1.5: Education Management Information System (EMIS) 1.6 Conditional Grants
2: Public Ordinary schools	2.1: Public Primary Level 2.2: Public Secondary Level 2.3: Human Resource Development 2.4: Schools sport, culture and media service (this resides with DCAS) 2.5 Conditional grants
3: Independent School Subsidies	3.1: Primary Level 3.2: Secondary Level
4: Public Special School Education	4.1: Schools 4.2: Human Resource Development 4.3: Schools sport, culture and media service (this resides with DCAS) 4.4 Conditional Grants
5: Early Childhood Development (ECD)	5.1: Grade R in Public Schools 5.2: Grade R in Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centres (ECD) centres 5.3: Pre-Grade R in Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centres (ECD) 5.4: Human Resource Development 5.5: Conditional Grants
6: Infrastructure Development	6.1: Administration 6.2: Public Ordinary Schools 6.3: Special Schools 6.4: Early Childhood Development (ECD)
7: Examination and Education Related Services	7.1: Payments to SETA 7.2: Professional Services 7.3: External Examinations 7.4: Special Projects 7.5: Conditional Grants

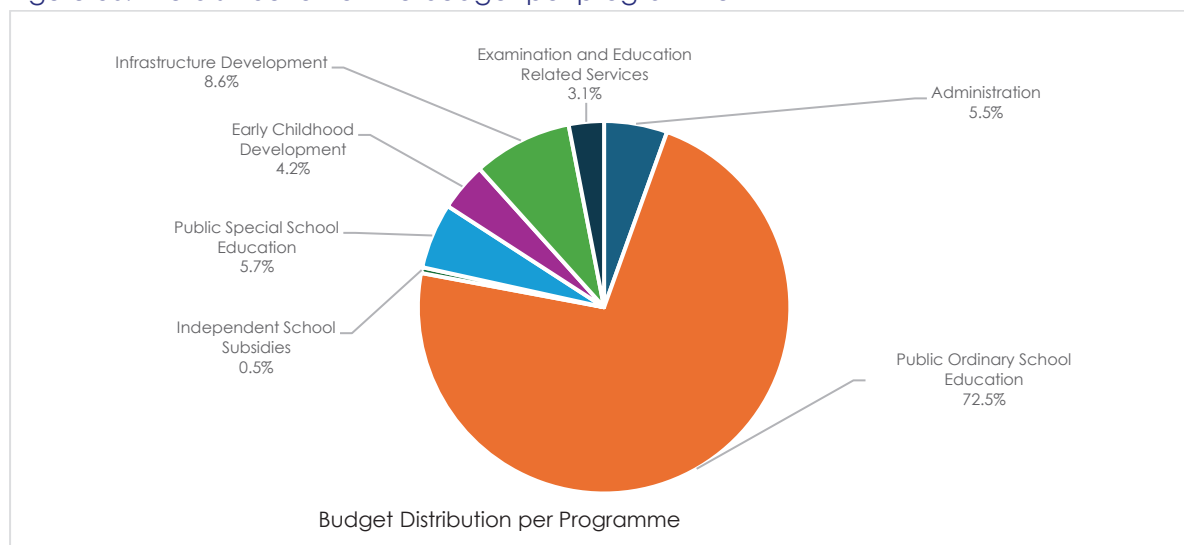
Sources of funding

The total provincial receipts, fundamentally, is made up of transfer receipts from the national government i.e. equitable share and conditional grants, as well as provincial own receipts. The greatest source of provincial funding is the equitable share, which is a fair and reasonable method of dividing the total revenue within the province.

Programme specific budget distribution

The current budget distribution per programme is provided in Figure 36. A lion's share or nearly 83% of the WCED budget is allocated to the front-line service delivery, that is Programme 2 to Programme 5. The afore mentioned programmes are the essential functions of the department.

Figure 36: The distribution of the budget per programme



Source: EPRE, 2024/25

To this end, the budget for the department considers learners from disadvantaged backgrounds, with about 507 000 learners enjoying a healthy meal daily at schools through the National School Nutrition Programme

Approximately R113.535 million was prioritised for the new Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI) to fight the scourge of youth unemployment.

Summary of payments and estimates

Table 22: Summary of payments and estimates

Programme R'000	Outcome						Medium-term estimate			
	Audited 2021/22	Audited 2022/23	Audited 2023/24	Main appro- priation 2024/25	Adjusted appro- priation 2024/25	Revised estimate 2024/25	% Change from Revised estimate			
							2025/26	2024/25	2026/27	2027/28
1. Administration	1 332 420	1 456 507	1 580 637	1 720 894	1 670 739	1 670 739	1 826 861	9.34	1 908 943	2 006 844
2. Public Ordinary School Education	18 940 004	20 004 427	21 631 113	22 795 028	23 048 214	23 048 214	24 097 649	4.55	25 113 175	25 989 373
3. Independent School Subsidies	130 508	143 544	145 282	159 850	153 355	153 355	167 043	8.93	174 560	182 415
4. Public Special School Education	1 443 830	1 507 392	1 618 647	1 812 152	1 815 481	1 815 481	1 892 584	4.25	2 015 859	2 118 216
5. Early Childhood Development	1 006 473	986 010	1 206 715	1 197 446	1 282 463	1 282 463	1 395 289	8.80	1 461 119	1 532 312
6. Infrastructure Development	1 722 172	2 539 794	2 699 134	2 300 344	2 562 570	2 562 570	2 861 837	11.68	2 679 306	1 494 594
7. Examination and Education Related Services	1 176 773	1 491 257	1 462 593	864 669	864 572	864 572	1 017 640	17.70	956 553	1 004 465
Total payments and estimates	25 752 180	28 128 931	30 344 121	30 850 383	31 397 394	31 397 394	33 259 103	5.93	34 309 515	34 328 219

Source: EPRE, 2024/25

Table 22 shows payment and estimates. The department will continue to fund its key priorities namely, online digital and blended learning, foundation phase learning for language and mathematical literacy and the well-being and psycho-social support for learners and staff.

Summary of payments and estimates by economic classification

Table 23: Summary of payments and estimates by economic classification.

Economic classification R'000	Outcome						Medium-term estimate			
	Audited	Audited	Audited	Main	Adjusted	Revised	% Change from Revised estimate			
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2026/27	2027/28
Current payments	21 447 042	22 980 076	25 167 989	25 771 580	26 112 507	26 100 081	27 290 273	4.56	28 333 345	29 327 375
Compensation of employees	18 785 640	19 878 969	21 745 601	22 308 352	22 714 202	22 712 349	23 736 654	4.51	24 805 681	25 741 216
Goods and services	2 661 402	3 101 107	3 422 388	3 463 228	3 398 305	3 387 732	3 553 619	4.90	3 527 664	3 586 159
Transfers and subsidies	3 548 264	3 672 338	3 857 694	3 683 000	3 823 692	3 837 850	4 106 918	7.01	4 263 283	4 276 558
Provinces and municipalities		6 000	14 000	23 600	23 600	23 600	35 040	48.47	36 347	37 621
Departmental agencies and accounts	10 856	11 312	16 889	12 465	17 474	17 474	18 034	3.20	18 620	19 232
Non-profit institutions	3 428 579	3 566 355	3 732 207	3 520 748	3 657 162	3 658 443	3 921 882	7.20	4 070 417	4 075 600
Households	108 829	88 671	94 598	126 187	125 456	138 333	131 962	(4.61)	137 899	144 105
Payments for capital assets	754 948	1 471 426	1 314 438	1 390 687	1 446 240	1 444 508	1 855 026	28.42	1 705 691	716 766
Buildings and other fixed structures	710 795	1 401 792	1 207 471	1 271 165	1 360 391	1 358 527	1 733 085	27.57	1 593 940	599 988
Machinery and equipment	43 479	69 045	106 779	117 772	84 498	84 630	120 424	42.29	110 167	115 122
Software and other intangible assets	674	589	188	1 750	1 351	1 351	1 517	12.29	1 584	1 656
Payments for financial assets	1 926	5 091	4 000	5 116	14 955	14 955	6 886	(53.96)	7 196	7 520
Total economic classification	25 752 180	28 128 931	30 344 121	30 850 383	31 397 394	31 397 394	33 259 103	5.93	34 309 515	34 328 219

Source: EPRE, 2024/25

The table below shows the alignment of WCED's budget priorities to national and provincial priorities. Whilst the priority 2 speaks directly to education delivery, it is not isolated or independent of the other priorities hence the need for WCED to collaborate with government institutions, businesses and the private sector towards the realisation of the National Development Plan targets. The department strives to achieve the outcomes as contained in the WCED Strategic Plan for period 2025-2030. This is in line with the department's vision of quality education for every child, in every classroom in every school in the province.

Table 24: Mapping of 2024 WCEDs budget to national and provincial priorities

Not isolated to Priority 1	Education Specific Priority 2 Outcomes and Action Statements					Not isolated to Priority 3
	MTDP Strategic Priority 2	Priority 2 outcomes	National Priority 2 action statements	WCG	WCED	
Inclusive Growth and Job Creation	Reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living	Improved education outcomes	Put clear and measurable plan to achieve universal access to ECD by 2030	Build a solid foundation of Early Learning	Early Learning Programme	A capable, ethical and development state
			Implement reforms to modernise management systems and reduce the red tape for the mass registration			
			Expand vocational and technical training in schools and post-school institutions	Improve learning outcomes across Grades	Special Needs Programme	
			Implement best-practices such as lesson plans, graded reading blocks, individualized coaching of teachers and other innovations to ensure that all learners can read for meaning by Grade 4		Improve learning outcomes through #BackOnTrack	
				Invest in School Infrastructure	Learner placement through the Rapid School-Build Programme	
				Develop public-private partnerships	Public Partnerships Programme	
				Support evidence-based policy development/ policy making	Policy Development Programme	

Source: MTDP 2024-2029, DPME, 2024; Departmental Strategic Plan 2025-2030: Proposed Process, WCED, 2024

Women, youth and people with disabilities.

Many education systems have historically overlooked the unique needs and challenges faced by women, youth, and individuals with disabilities within the school environment. To remedy this longstanding inequity, the education department must take a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach to promote equity and inclusion for these marginalized groups.

Furthermore, the World Bank report (2024) indicates that The Western Cape spends more on learners with special needs than the average for the country. In 2024/25, the Western Cape is expected to spend 6 percent of its education budget to support learners with special needs whereas the average for other provinces is 4 percent of the respective education budgets.

Social cohesion in education refers to creating a learning environment where all members feel valued, respected, and connected, regardless of their diverse backgrounds. In the Western Cape, this is crucial given the province's history and diverse population (Greenberg, 2023).

The Western Cape Education Department's (WCED) 2025-2030 strategic plan prioritizes developing inclusive school communities that foster social cohesion, as outlined in the 2030 Agenda. This involves ensuring equitable access to quality education, implementing policies to bridge socio-economic divides, and celebrating diversity through multilingualism (Mensah and Baidoo-Anu, 2022; Probyn, 2019).

Cultivating inclusive learning spaces where every student feels welcome and has equal opportunities is central to social cohesion. Educators must be equipped to foster a sense of belonging for all learners (Brckalorenz, Haeger and Priddie, 2021; Beets, Schalkwyk and Kirsten, 2022).

Social cohesion is also linked to community development, with schools serving as hubs for social integration. Developing students' conflict resolution skills and encouraging community engagement are key aspects of this approach (Muzenda, 2022; Housel, 2020).

Ultimately, the WCED's focus on social cohesion requires a multifaceted strategy to address inequalities, promote diversity, and strengthen community bonds, while also integrating civic education and social-emotional learning (Beets, Schalkwyk and Kirsten, 2022; Antoninis et al., 2020; Sayed et al., 2016).

5. Strategic focus 2025 to 2029

The Medium- and Long-Term Policy Environment

The strategic plan outlined in this document aim to be responsive to the local context and needs of the community, while also aligning with the overarching vision and strategic direction of the department, province, and national government. The plans demonstrate clear linkages to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the National Development Plan (NDP), the GNU Manifesto, the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP), the Basic Education 7th Administration priorities, and the Western Cape Government's provincial priorities. This multi-layered alignment ensures a cohesive and coordinated approach to development and service delivery that can effectively address the unique challenges and opportunities present in the local setting.



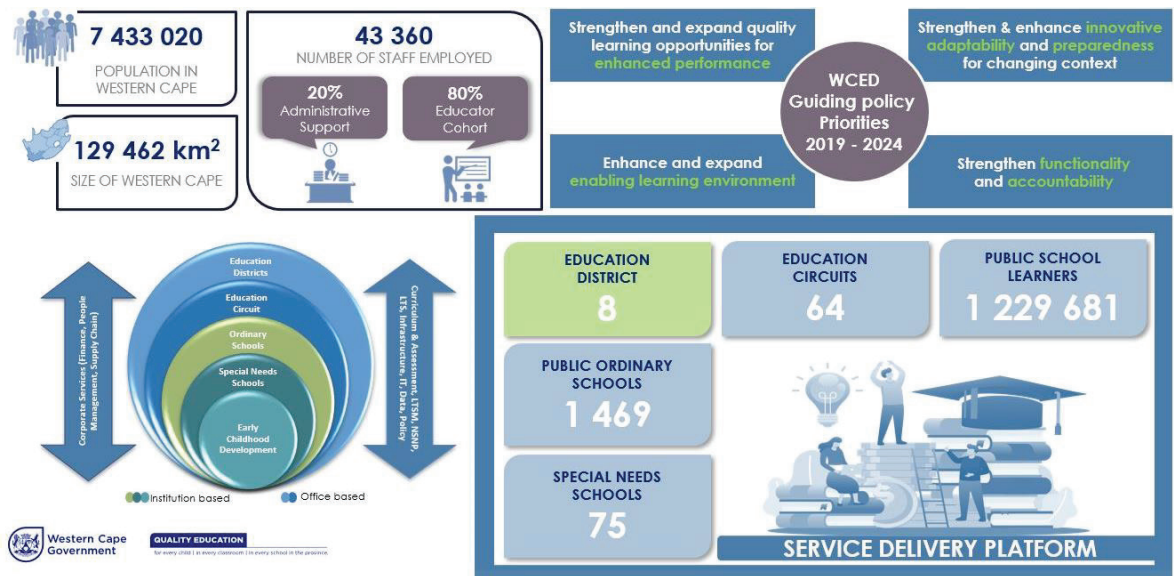
The strategic plan outlined in this document is developed in alignment with the key provincial strategic portfolios of the Western Cape Government.

The four strategic portfolios are:

	Growth for Jobs	The Western Cape achieves breakout economic growth generating confidence, hope, and opportunities to thrive.
	Educated, Healthy, and Caring Society	Every person has access to the opportunity to live a healthy, meaningful, and dignified life in an inclusive society
	Safety	The Western Cape is a resilient and safe society.
	Innovation, Culture, and Governance	The WCG is a people-centred institution that innovatively, efficiently, and collaboratively mobilises resources for service delivery

By ensuring our plans are responsive to and coordinated with these overarching provincial priorities, the Western Cape Education Department can maximize its impact and contribution towards the collective vision for the Western Cape. This multi-faceted alignment allows the WCED to leverage synergies, share resources, and work collaboratively across the different spheres of government to deliver the best possible outcomes for learners, educators, and communities throughout the province.

As the WCED looks towards the next strategic planning period from 2025 to 2030, the department is building upon the progress and lessons learned from our 2020-2025 cycle.



As the department moves from its current strategic plan into the new strategic phase it will operate within the policy frames of the province, which aligns with the updated provincial priorities set forth by the Western Cape Government - priorities that focus on safety, Wellbeing, Growth for Jobs, and the enabler of Innovation, Culture & Governance.

These focus areas will guide the WCED's strategic direction and initiatives over the coming years. By centring our plans around enhancing safety in schools, promoting the holistic wellbeing of learners and staff, driving economic and skills development for job creation, and fostering a culture of innovation, we aim to deliver even greater impact for the learners and communities we serve.

This 2025-2030 strategic cycle represents an exciting new chapter built on a foundation of progress, adaptability, and a steadfast commitment to transforming education in the Western Cape.

The institution's strategic focus

The education department has obtained valuable information of the key priorities and challenges that must be addressed following the comprehensive sector analysis of the education system recently concluded by the World Bank. While the department recognizes the importance of supporting the diverse needs, it also acknowledges the practical limitations in what can be realistically achieved within the upcoming 5-year planning cycle. The department's approach will therefore focus on strategically addressing the most critical findings from the World Bank's assessment during this current period, while understanding that certain longer-term, systemic changes may require additional time and resources to implement fully, extending beyond this initial 5-year window. By outlining this pragmatic perspective, the department aims to establish a clear and transparent framework for how it will work to improve educational outcomes and equity across the system.,

Improve the foundations of learning by strengthening ECD service provision, particularly for poor households, and improve literacy and numeracy levels in the early grades of primary.

The importance of quality ECD services in preparing children to learn when they enter school and throughout life, cannot be overestimated. During the critical period from conception to the start of school, children need secure relationships with parents/primary caregivers, they need adequate and appropriate nutrition, access to healthcare, and opportunities to play and learn. Nutrition and stimulation are especially important during the first 1,000 days, while from age three, opportunities to socialise with other children and for organised learning become increasingly important to ensure that children are ready to learn once they start school. Access to quality ECD services is linked to improved emotional readiness for school and equips children with the emergent language, numeracy, and cognitive and non-cognitive skills that enable learning during the foundational phase of school.

Despite this overall understanding of the importance of ECD services, many children start primary school without the required skills. According to 2021 Thrive by Five Index, 34 percent of children aged 4-5 years attending early learning programmes in the Western Cape were falling behind expected levels of learning already before starting Grade R. In addition, 41 percent had not achieved the expected level of emotional readiness for school. This will place these children on a lower learning trajectory compared to their peers who start school with the skills required to learn during the early grades of primary.

Data on access to centre-based services is more readily available than data on parenting support programmes or non-centre-based early learning and nutrition services. In the Western Cape, 85 percent of children aged 6 are enrolled in Grade R (either in a primary school or ECD centre). Among children aged 0 to 5 years old, 42 percent are enrolled in ECD centres, which are all privately run. Of the remaining children in the 0 to 5 age group, about 10 percent are attending Grade R in primary schools; around 6.5 percent benefit from some type of parenting support programme with elements of early learning; and about 1.4 percent benefit from non-centre-based services. Of pressing concern, is the finding that an estimated 40 percent of children in this age group have no access to services that support early learning, and who tend to be those who would benefit the most from access to these services.

The quality of services in ECD centres varies. There are challenges around inadequate practitioner qualifications and training, certain infrastructure lacking or being in poor condition, not enough and varied play materials, and low practitioner salaries contributing to high staff turnover. Effective quality assurance and improvement systems are necessary to address these challenges, with efforts underway at both national and provincial levels to enhance data collection and support quality improvements in ECD centres. For non-centre-based early learning services and parenting support programmes with early learning elements, data to assess their quality is partial at best, or completely lacking.

The World Bank report (2024) asks “How can the Western Cape Government support improvements in learning while also expanding access to education?”

The WCED has a progressive funding model which supports fees for learners from disadvantaged families and learners who have special needs. Based on national funding policy, only 40 percent of learners in the Western Cape are eligible to go to school without paying fees, but the province has made exceptions at the school and individual learner level, and in 2022, 68 percent of learners attended school at no fee or a provincially supported reduced fee. The province also spends a greater proportion of its education budget on special needs education compared to other provinces.

The Western Cape is also the only province to regularly monitor learning performance through the annual Systemic Testing Programme, but this data could be more effectively used to target resources to learners who need additional support. The results of the Systemic Testing Programme could be used more effectively for policy and planning purposes if more variables related to a learner's socio-economic status were included in data collected through the Test, or if the Test data could be linked to socio-economic status variables for each learner captured through the Central Education Management Information System (CEMIS). This level of analysis is important in the context of the Western Cape given the wide differences in learning levels between learners in the same classroom.

The Government of the Western Cape is under pressure to improve learning outcomes across levels of education and at the same time expand primary and secondary education to accommodate a growing number of new learners entering the education system because of population growth and migration into the province. In addition, the province is committed to improving access to quality early learning services for children, particularly 3- to 6-year-olds. But the public budget for education is not growing fast enough to accommodate the increase in enrolment of an estimated 201,200 new learners by 2032 which will necessitate increases in budget to build additional classrooms, hire additional educators, pay a range of enrolment-linked subsidies as well as operations and maintenance costs for new schools.

The Western Cape Government's support of improvements in learning while also expanding access to education can be supported by the premise that additional funds may be needed to accommodate the growing number of learners entering the education system, the funds that are allocated to the sector need to be utilised more efficiently and effectively. Overall, South Africa spends a significant amount of its government budget on education services (21 percent of public expenditure and a little over 6 percent of GDP), but education outcomes in terms of learning are weak and the efficiency of spending, related to repetition and drop-out rates from school, could be improved. The education sector in South Africa has encouraged a diverse array of interventions at the local level, sometimes recycling largely the same inputs – without collaborative leadership to intensely discuss and agree on the priority problems it

wants to address and learn from past lessons and experiences from other countries. This is evident in the multiple ECD and parenting programmes that are contracted out to service providers with weak monitoring systems and little accountability for improved outcomes. In early grade reading for example, there are about 24 different programmes being implemented across the country but very little movement towards consolidation of lessons learned and which ones need to be phased out and those which should be scaled up.

The World Bank report reflects that the leadership of the WCED are committed to taking this challenge on and working with relevant stakeholders to ensure that existing funds are appropriately utilised through better coordination, monitoring and evaluation of results and iterative feedback loops to continue to improve implementation of programmes.

Strengthening teacher effectiveness at the instructional core.

The Western Cape's aging teacher workforce and projected enrolment growth create a significant opportunity for strengthening educator effectiveness. As indicated above, teachers are relatively well-paid in South Africa, including in the Western Cape, and the wage bill dominates public spending on education in the province. It is thus critical to ensure that all teachers, supported by their managers and instructional leaders, are effective in their work in the classroom. The sizable turnover expected in the educator workforce in the coming years offers a unique opportunity to do so. In 2021, an estimated 42 percent of all educators on the government payroll (and 73 percent of senior educators)¹⁹ were 50 years old or older, (Böhmer and Gustafsson 2023); moreover, during 2012 to 2021, teachers younger than age 50 had been resigning from public schools at a significant rate of about 6 percent per year. While the retirement wave may have peaked in the Western Cape, the province will need to replace those expected to retire or resign from the service, at a projected rate of about 3200 new staff annually between 2025 and 2030, either through freshly recruited young teachers or current educators promoted to senior positions.²⁰ The educator workforce in public schools – which were around 36,000 educators paid by the WCED in 2021 (of whom around 6,300 were senior educators) – will thus become younger and hence less experienced.

Enabler: Invest in innovative education reforms, particularly Public Private Partnerships (PPPs).

The demand for education is high, evidenced by a growing enrolment and the number of new schools; but the average cost of schooling is not enough to guarantee acceptable levels of learning.

In a context of rising enrolment and tight budgets and learning negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, implementing cost-effective strategies to expand the education system while improving learning outcomes is more important than ever for the Western Cape. Also, average school fees at high-performing public and independent schools are unaffordable for most parents. For these reasons, alternatives are needed that will lower costs, offer differentiated instruction, and scale up teacher supply, while at the same time using new models of instruction.

PPP alternatives can be leveraged to address the increasing demand for education while fostering education quality through outcomes-based accountability, especially to target the disadvantaged.

Independent schools are among the learning top-performers in the Western Cape, although 60 percent of these schools cater to learners in areas classified as Quintile 1 and 2. Before COVID-19, school learning in South Africa was on its way to reach the TIMSS international average by 2051, while the Western Cape would do so by 2035. Within the province, independent schools are set to reach the international mean even faster, by 2027. Therefore, if public schools improved at the same pace as independent schools, then the Western Cape would surpass the global mean by 2027. This would be feasible by leveraging PPPs, which have shown to be a cost-effective alternative (Muralidharan and Sundararaman 2015).

The potential for increasing partnerships between the WCED and non-state suppliers of education services in the Western Cape is significant. Independent schools have increased from 116 to 302 schools over the last 13 years and there is an opportunity to partner with private providers of education services to address key enrolment and achievement challenges. On average, globally, 19 and 27 percent of enrolments at the primary and secondary level are private. This is higher in lower-middle income countries, where enrolment in private primary and secondary schools amounts to 27 and 40 percent; and lower in upper middle-income countries at 12 and 17 percent.

Among upper middle-income countries there is a range; for example, private secondary enrolments are 25 percent in Argentina, 15 percent in China, 10 percent in Georgia, and 7 percent in Turkey. The scope of growth of different partnership models in the Western Cape, similar to Gauteng, is significant.

The total enrolment in independent schools in both provinces is below the global and upper-middle income country average. In the Western Cape, 5 and 6 percent of primary and secondary enrolments are in independent schools, whereas the enrolment in non-state schools in Gauteng increases to 14 and 13 percent, respectively.

The Western Cape is already experimenting with one PPP education service delivery model, under Collaboration Schools, where a public school is run by the WCED in partnership with a private, not-for-profit School Operating Partner (SOP). The Collaboration School model differs from the charter schools model found in the United States, as it supports poorly performing existing schools, known as transition schools with a turnaround model, and new schools, while charter schools typically support new schools. Collaboration schools are more similar to the Academies in England which are conversions of previously state schools, but the Academies have significantly more autonomy than do Collaboration Schools.

The collaboration schools programme began with five schools in 2016 and expanded to 13 primary and secondary schools and seven operating partners in 2019, with a target of covering up to 15 percent of all public schools in the province (WCED 2020). Apart from certain exceptions, collaboration schools are subject to the policies and provisions governing ordinary public schools.

The funding model borrowed policy elements from India and the United Kingdom and there is heavy community involvement in these schools. Participating schools are paired with a SOP, which has 50 percent representation on the School Governing Body (SGB) and assists with management and governance, introduces a range of innovations to improve teaching and learning, and manages donor funding. The SGB has the authority to hire, dismiss and set the conditions of employment for any teachers that are hired through the SGB. The WCED transfers money to transition and new schools under the collaboration schools' model to pay staff and run the school.

Enabler: The WCED needs to invest in better data collection, research and monitoring and evaluation capacity.

While the Western Cape province has some of the best data sets for education compared to the rest of South Africa, this data could be better utilised to align relevant stakeholders toward a common goal and to track performance of various policy reforms. To start with, political leadership in the province could communicate an ambitious goal to be achieved to the education community and broader population. The goal should be simple and easy to communicate as was the case in Mississippi (described above) or in Sobral, Brazil where the commitment was for every child to be able to read and write by the end of second grade. In addition, adequate data (formative and summative assessment data, teacher performance in the classrooms, implementation of various interventions, etc.) should be collected and analysed in a timely manner to support monitoring of achievements and failures. Regular data collection and analysis will help in prioritising, adapting and iterating various policy reforms/interventions to achieve the established goal. Lastly, anonymised data from the Central Education Management Information System (CEMIS), Systemic Tests and others should be made publicly available so that it can be linked with other relevant data by researchers in the province to analyse progress in the education system so that interested stakeholders are part of the reform process.

A comprehensive system to monitor and support the quality of early learning services does not yet exist. There is a lack of comprehensive, regular data on early learning outcomes and service access and quality, which hinders effective planning, programming and quality assurance and support. There is no database of NPOs providing early learning services in the province that includes key data such as beneficiary numbers, geographic scope, contents and child outcomes. Data to capture key characteristics of ECD centres, including different aspects of quality is not regularly collected.

For children in Grade R and children of pre-Grade R age who are not enrolled in ECD centres, there is no measurement of early learning levels except some small-scale studies. For children aged 4 to 5 years who attend ECD centres, early learning levels were measured for the first time in 2021 by the Thrive by Five Index, and data will be collected again in 2024 and every three years thereafter.

Challenges that the department has experienced in the performance environment and how it will address these over the medium-term period.

The World Bank report (2024) suggests that the challenge for the Western Cape is not only to expand the network of schools to accommodate new learners, but also to hire more educators to replace anticipated retirements, departures from the educator workforce, as well as additional educators for the additional learners. While many countries face similar challenges currently, the Western Cape faces additional needs to expand education provision considering four pressures: population growth, migration, increasing retention and existing classroom availability constraints. Additional classrooms will be needed to accommodate the additional learners in the education system.

Compulsory Grade R, if enacted, could also require more classrooms - there were over 100 public schools in the Western Cape that had Grade 1 enrolment without Grade R in 2022, though Grade R could also be expanded by continuing to subsidise fees for children to attend private ECD centres.

Spending on education is significant though there's room for better targeting of resources

The WCED's share of the provincial budget is significant but risks are emerging as the province struggles to contend with the tight fiscal envelope amid pressing current and future demands for education in the province. The 2024/25 Provincial Government budget for the WCED totals R30.85 billion. The WCED's share of the provincial budget is steady at 37 percent despite the shift of financing for the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI), which funds teaching assistant stipends from provinces to the national unemployment insurance fund. This share is the second lowest among the nine provinces in their initial 2024/25 budgets. The Western Cape spent comparatively more on health and the local government and infrastructure sector, which includes critical infrastructure.

Recent WCED non-wage recurrent budget and capital budget allocations have fallen in real terms, whereas the overall compensation of employees' allocation has increased. There were large reductions to infrastructure spending during the 2023/24 budget year, largely to accommodate centrally mandated wage increases.

The World Bank report (2024) addresses various policy priorities the WCED intends to focus on over the 5 years and acknowledging that education outcomes cannot easily be attained over the short term the department is cognisant that it may overlap into the following 5-year period.

The report suggests that WCED pursue the following four priority areas to improve access to quality education services. The following four priority areas to improve access to quality education services.

- First, since learning is cumulative, the WCED should improve the foundations of learning by strengthening ECD service provision, particularly for poor households, and learning in the early grades of primary education. Foundational literacy and numeracy are prerequisites for subsequent learning, and development of higher-order skills which are required for an individual to reach their full potential in professional, civic, and social life. Existing evidence shows that investments in child development during the early years provide an exceptional rate of return as well as higher returns than investments in human capital at later stages.
- Second, improve teaching and learning by strengthening educator effectiveness in the classroom, where the 'instructional core' – comprising an educator, learners in the class and the curriculum – determine the quality and impact of a teachers' instructional practices. The focus should be on four avenues to strengthen the instructional core: (a) recruitment of new educators; (b) support for educators already in the system; conditions for teaching and learning; and (d) performance management for learning outcomes, all of which are described in more detail below.
- Third, now is the time to invest in innovative education reform, particularly Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) to address the learning challenge, recover from the COVID-19 related learning losses, and realise the high returns to education. PPPs are not new to the province, with the government supporting school choice, encouraging innovation through the provincial investment promotion body Wesgro, subsidising some independent schools, and investing in collaboration schools. An expansion of the innovative partnership experience is timely given the pressure to expand the education system while improving learning outcomes simultaneously.

- Fourth, the WCED needs to invest to improve its data collection, monitoring, research and evaluation capacity. While the Western Cape province has some of the best datasets for education compared to the rest of South Africa, some key data gaps remain, and the existing data could be better utilised to align relevant stakeholders toward a common goal and to track performance of various policy reforms.

These priority areas are not exhaustive, but if implemented well, have the potential to transform the education landscape in the province and achieve the desired outcomes of increasing access to quality education services. An important part of the reform process will be strong leadership, coordination, focus on data, research, monitoring, evaluation, and iteration.

Inclusive and Specialised Education Support:

From 2019-2023, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) experienced a 6.4% increase in Special Schools enrolment, demonstrating its commitment to expanded educational access. This growth stems from improved early identification processes, enhanced School Based Support Teams, and increased Full-Service Schools.

The province supports learners with special educational needs in public ordinary schools through Inclusive Education Outreach Teams, Learning Support Teachers, and Circuit-Based Support Teams. The WCED maintains a citizen-centric approach, employing innovative assistive technologies and teaching methodologies to ensure educational services meet diverse learner needs.

The intended focus over the strategic term include:

- Expansion of Inclusive Education and Specialised Education Support
- Strengthening of Special Schools, Resource Centres and Special Care Centres
- Strengthening inter-sectoral collaboration and stakeholder engagements
- Providing Care and Support for Teaching and Learning, HIV and TB
- Wellbeing and psycho-social support

The Inclusive Education and Specialised Education Support program focuses on strengthening inclusive practices through annual training and expanding access to therapeutic, nursing, social work, and psychological services. School Based Support Teams are being transformed into functional support structures, while Circuit Based Support Teams provide multidisciplinary assistance to school clusters, prioritising those with greatest needs.

Special Schools are being enhanced as Resource Centres, providing outreach to neighbouring schools and ensuring appropriate resources and curricula. Emphasis is placed on implementing skill orientated multi certification programmes and the development of exit plans for learners not following the National Senior Certificate, particularly focusing on work readiness and support for learners with intellectual disabilities.

Intersectoral collaboration is strengthened through partnerships with disability organisations, government departments, and higher education institutions. Well-being support is provided through social workers and psychologists in Circuit Based Support Teams, offering social-emotional learning, positive behaviour programmes, and mental health resources.

Back on Track

Curriculum delivery and learning outcomes is contained in programme seven (7), with particular focus on reversing learning losses, consequence by the pandemic, which was identified in the 2021 systemic tests, especially in the Foundation Phase. The [Back on Track](#) intervention, which added extra hours for reading and mathematics in Grades 1-3, showed positive results according to both the University of Stellenbosch's RESEP report and 2024 Systemics, prompting its continuation into 2025 despite budget constraints. The WCED commits R200 million annually over the MTEF period to support this initiative. The Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute (CTLI) intends to adapt its Continuous Professional Development programmes to incorporate emerging educational trends, including AI-driven personalized learning, blended learning approaches, gamification, extended reality technologies, and micro-learning modules. Given fiscal constraints, the WCED plans to prioritize AI investments strategically and seek partnerships with tech companies while maintaining its focus on strengthening curriculum delivery and teacher development.

Enabling the digital transformation strategy

The departmental transformation strategy emphasizes quality education for all children, supported by its Digital Transformation Strategy (DTS) and eVision initiative. The DTS adopts a learner-centric approach, focusing on enhancing teaching, learning, and assessment through technology while considering special needs students. IT has been integrated into core departmental processes, with the eVision guiding the education system's digital evolution.

The WCED ensures alignment between IT and organizational needs through continuous assessment of its eVision and Digital Transformation Strategy (DTS) against business objectives, prioritizing integrated horizontal solutions over fragmented vertical applications

The IT Operational Plan aligns with the department's eVision, DTS, Implementation Plan, and strategic Plan to provide measurable IT management benchmarks, ensuring structured implementation with consideration for available time, resources, and budgets.

Early Childhood Development (ECD): Over the next 5 years the WCED will continue with the registration of ECD facilities utilising the eCares system. The nationally driven eCares system is a management system for ECD. Furthermore, the department intends to engage with various forums to improve and enhance registration processes which is paramount in the delivery of services to young children.

This intention includes the improvement in the quality of programmes, monitoring and evaluation of the offering of services to young children. The mixed provisioning of services which includes:

- In- centre and out -of- centre ECD facilities
- playgroups
- home based care
- toy libraries

These will be aimed at servicing children in the various settings within the Western Cape.

The South African ECD strategy encourages a social compact which is defined as partnerships with other departments, social sector, civic society, donors and Private Public Partnerships (PPP). The partnerships would ensure the development and sustainability through a social compact to improve ECD services. The monitoring of programme improvements as well as compliance with norms and standards will be a key driver.

The focus over the next five years will specifically link to the prioritisation of conditionally registered ECD partial care facilities for minor infrastructure and maintenance through the conditional grant.

WCED will continue to target ECD facilities in poor municipalities, where children are accessed, by qualified practitioners (OT, Speech Therapists) as part of the intervention targeted to reduce developmental delay, improve the nutritional needs of the child and engage parents in a parenting programme.

Blocks for Growth Programme	Step Up Programme
The programme targets children aged 3-4 years in under-resourced communities. Occupational Therapists assess learners and develop tailored intervention programmes, providing support throughout the year. Children who remain in the same institution often progress from Blocks for Growth to the Step Up programme.	This initiative focuses on children aged 5-6 in disadvantaged communities who need additional preparation for Grade 1. The programme is part of the province's wellbeing reporting framework and has dedicated budget allocation.

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) targets Early Childhood Development (ECD) facilities in poor municipalities. Qualified practitioners, including Occupational Therapists and Speech Therapists, assess children and implement interventions designed to:

- Address developmental delays
- Improve children's nutrition
- Engage parents through dedicated parenting programmes

Furthermore, at a provincial level the department contributes to the Western Cape's Growth for Jobs Strategy 2035 which calls for faster economic growth to address issues of unemployment, poverty and crime. Among the host of challenges identified in the Strategy, school leavers/graduates lacking basic competencies, including literacy and numeracy skills, was raised as a key issue. In addition, the Strategy states that businesses in the formal economy are being held back by a critical shortage of skilled workers and the informal economy is constrained by a lack of growth-oriented entrepreneurs.

A priority focus area in the Strategy is improving pathways for learners, entrepreneurs and aspirant job seekers through improved school pathways, improved post-school and tertiary pathways, improved work-place productivity pathways, bringing opportunities closer to communities and enhancing entrepreneurship success.

The World Bank report (2024) further suggests that the mechanism by which education accelerates economic growth is by strengthening learning and skills acquisition. International evidence shows that what matters for economic growth is less the years of education completed, but rather the knowledge and skills that learners acquire while in school. Years of schooling in itself does not predict economic growth, but learners' test score performances do (World Bank 2018).

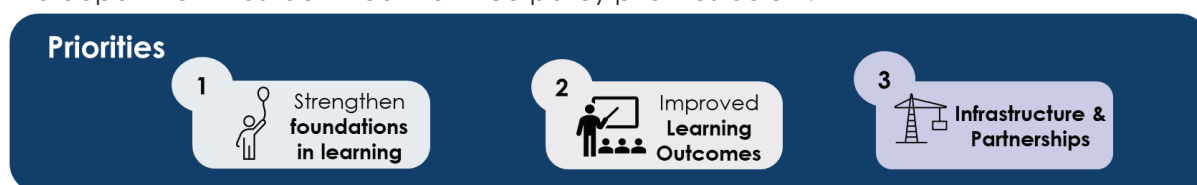
Education is a basic human right, and its benefits hinge on the skills that learners acquire in school. Employees require cognitive, socio-emotional, and technical skills to be productive and innovative; parents require literacy and numeracy skills to, for example, read to their children or budget for their futures; citizens of a country require literacy and numeracy as well as higher-order reasoning skills to evaluate politician's promises; and community members require a sense of agency that comes from mastery of foundational skills.

These capabilities do not automatically flow from simply attending school. Skills beget skills – having a solid foundation in learning is a prerequisite to acquiring higher level and socio-emotional skills that are needed to improve labour productivity and spur economic growth.

The education department has obtained valuable insights from the comprehensive sector analysis of the education system recently concluded by the World Bank. In response, the department has outlined its priorities.

WCED Policy and Strategic Priorities

The department has identified the three policy priorities below:



The Western Cape Education Department's (WCED) Strategic Plan for 2025-2030 outlines six core outcomes that directly align with the policy priorities of the Provincial Minister of Education, as well as the broader departmental strategic priorities. Outcome 1 focuses on *Improved Early Childhood Development (ECD) coverage*, reflecting the emphasis on *building a solid foundation of early learning*. *Improved learning outcomes across all grades*, as championed is encapsulated in Outcome 2. Outcome 3 centres on *Improved professional development of educators*, a key priority for enhancing school performance. *Promoting social cohesion through multi-stakeholder collaboration*, as highlighted in the provincial frameworks, is embodied in Outcome 4. Outcome 5 addresses the need to *Improve school infrastructure and related facilities*, aligning with the focus on improving the learning environment. Finally, Outcome 6 is dedicated to *strengthening corporate governance and accountability*, supporting the overarching aim of ensuring stable, sustainable education systems. By embedding these priorities across its strategic outcomes, the WCED demonstrates a comprehensive, systemic approach to driving meaningful and lasting improvements in the Western Cape education system.

WCED's capacity to deliver on its mandate.

To effectively implement its 2025-2030 strategic plan, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) has developed a stakeholder matrix. This matrix maps the key roles, responsibilities, and engagement strategies for diverse groups. The WCED can ensure targeted, meaningful collaboration that supports the successful delivery of its six strategic outcomes. This stakeholder-centric approach is crucial for aligning priorities, securing buy-in, and mobilizing the collective resources and expertise needed to drive sustainable improvements across the education system.

Cross functional Team (CFT)

In response to the opportunities for improvement identified during the 2021/22 audit findings relating to Audit of Predetermined Objectives (AOPO), the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) demonstrated proactive leadership by implementing an innovative interim solution. This solution took the form of a Cross Functional Team (CFT), bringing together diverse expertise from across the department to enhance the coordination and compliance of all Programme Performance Information.

Recognizing that the department's organizational structure does not currently include a dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) unit, the WCED has entrusted the Cross-Functional Team with key responsibilities for monitoring and tracking Programme Performance Information processes. This strategic approach envisages to ensure continuous quality assurance of performance information while the department works toward developing and implementing a more permanent institutional arrangement.

Stakeholders which contribute to the institution's achievement of its planned outcomes.

WCED Stakeholder Matrix		
High Interest	Key Players ▪ WCED Staff & Management ▪ Executive Authority (EA) ▪ School Principals ▪ Teachers ▪ Western Cape Government	Keep Satisfied ▪ Department of Basic Education (DBE) ▪ Department of Monitoring, Planning and Evaluation (DPME) ▪ Teacher Unions ▪ Employees/School Communities
	Minimal Effort ▪ Textbook publishers ▪ Technology Service Providers ▪ Media ▪ Higher Education Institutions	Key Players ▪ Learners, Children ▪ Parents and guardians ▪ School Governing Bodies (SGB) ▪ NGOs and community organisations
Low Influence		High Influence

- Key Players should be fully engaged and consulted regularly.
- Those in the Keep Satisfied quadrant should be kept content and their needs addressed.
- Stakeholders in the Keep Informed quadrant should receive regular updates and communication.
- Those in the Minimal Effort quadrant should be monitored but may require less active engagement.

In aligning its strategic plans, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) has carefully considered the broader ecosystem of educational priorities and frameworks, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the National Development Plan (NDP), the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP), and the specific provincial portfolios. Crucially, the department has also incorporated the valuable insights gleaned from the recent World Bank sector analysis, as well as the priorities outlined by both the Provincial Minister of Education and the Head of the Department.

Part C: Measuring our Performance

6. Institutional performance information

The 2025-2030 Strategic Plan for the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) focuses on providing access to quality education that improves life outcomes by reducing poverty and inequality, enhancing employability, and promoting social cohesion.

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) aims to develop a comprehensive strategic framework by aligning national, provincial, and educational strategies through data-driven decision-making and collaborative planning. This approach emphasizes evidence-based interventions, adaptive scenario planning, and resource optimization while engaging stakeholders across management levels. The department will focus on technological integration, skills development for 21st-century workforce preparedness, and building organizational resilience, drawing lessons from pandemic experiences to create a more flexible and robust educational ecosystem.

6.1 Measuring our impact

Impact Statement

The Western Cape Education Department intends to empower every learner with quality education, skills, and opportunities to thrive in a rapidly evolving world, fostering innovation, resilience, and inclusivity within our education system.



Economic Growth and Opportunity

Equipping learners with future-ready skills to drive innovation and entrepreneurship



Social Resilience and Safety

Creating safe, supportive learning environments that nurture well-rounded individuals capable of contributing positively to a resilient and harmonious society.



Dignity and Inclusivity

Ensuring equitable access to quality education for all, regardless of background or circumstances, promoting dignity, social mobility, and an inclusive society



Efficient and Innovative Governance

Leveraging technology and best practices to deliver education services efficiently, collaboratively, and innovatively, setting a benchmark for people-centred public institutions.

6.2 Measuring outcomes

Outcome	Outcome Indicator Number	Outcome indicator IN STRATEGIC PLAN	Baseline	5-year Target
Outcome 1: Improved Early Childhood Development (ECD) coverage	OCI: 1.1	Increased number of ECD Centres to establish a strong educational foundation by 2030.	750	810
Outcome 2: Improved learning outcomes across grades.	OCI: 2.1	Improved access to quality education and holistic support for learners with specialised support needs	36 288	42 000
Outcome 2: Improved learning outcomes across grades.	OCI: 2.2	Improve the proportion of grade 3 learners obtaining acceptable outcomes in language by 2030.	45.4%	50.4%
Outcome 2: Improved learning outcomes across grades.	OCI: 2.3	Improve the proportion of grade 3 learners obtaining acceptable outcomes in mathematics by 2030.	55.9%	60.9%
Outcome 2: Improved learning outcomes across grades.	OCI: 2.4	Improve the proportion of grade 3 learners obtaining acceptable outcomes in reading for meaning by 2030.	52.8%	57.8%
Outcome 2: Improved learning outcomes across grades.	OCI: 2.5	Improve the proportion of grade 6 learners obtaining acceptable outcomes in language by 2030.	41.5%	46.5%
Outcome 2: Improved learning outcomes across grades.	OCI: 2.6	Improve the proportion of grade 6 learners obtaining acceptable outcomes in mathematics by 2030.	41.5%	46.5%
Outcome 2: Improved learning outcomes across grades.	OCI: 2.7	Improve the proportion of grade 9 learners obtaining acceptable outcomes in language by 2030.	48.8%	53.8%
Outcome 2: Improved learning outcomes across grades.	OCI: 2.8	Improve the proportion of grade 9 learners obtaining acceptable outcomes in mathematics by 2030.	23.4%	28.4%
Outcome 2: Improved learning outcomes across grades.	OCI: 2.9	Improve the proportion of youth (grade 12) learners who passed the NSC by 2030.	86.6	90.0
Outcome 2: Improved learning outcomes across grades.	OCI: 2.10	Improve the proportion of youth (grade 12) learners obtaining 60% and above in Mathematics by 2030.	30.0	35.0
Outcome 2: Improved learning outcomes across grades.	OCI: 2.11	Improve the proportion of youth (grade 12) learners obtaining 60% and above in Physical Science by 2030.	27.0	35.0
Outcome 3: Improved professional development of educators.	OCI: 3.1	Improved number of educators participating in professional development training by 2030.	1 000	1 500
Outcome 4: Promote social cohesion through multi stakeholder collaboration.	OCI: 4.1	Number of school community engagements to combat racism, sexism, hate speech, GBV and other forms of intolerance and address inter-generational violence and trauma across society	0	4
Outcome 4: Promote social cohesion through multi stakeholder collaboration.	OCI: 4.2	Percentage of Public Schools that have Contingency Plans	70%	90%
Outcome 5: Improved school infrastructure and related facilities	OCI: 5.1	Increased number of new schools that have reached completion by 2030.	4	11
Outcome 5: Improved school infrastructure and related facilities	OCI: 5.2	Increased number of new classrooms provided by 2030.	320	450
Outcome 6: Improved corporate governance and accountability	OCI: 6.1	Improved corporate governance and accountability by 2030.	-	Clean Audit

6.3 Explanation of planned performance over the five-year planning period

The South African Department of Basic Education's National Development Plan 2030 outlines a strategy for Early Childhood Development (ECD) that targets universal access and two years of quality preschool education by 2030. This initiative requires innovative collaboration models across government departments, the ECD sector, businesses, donors, and communities, establishing a unified social compact to align resources and efforts toward these goals.

6.3.1 Strategic Outcomes Contribution Analysis

The Western Cape Education Department's (WCED) Strategic Plan 2025-2030 is meticulously designed to address critical educational challenges and align with the broader national and provincial development objectives. Each outcome is strategically crafted to contribute to comprehensive educational transformation and social cohesion.

Alignment with Medium-Term Development Plan	
	Improved ECD Coverage ▪ Expand access to quality education ▪ Address systemic inequalities ▪ Support vulnerable children
	Improved Learning Outcomes ▪ Enhance educational quality ▪ Improve learning achievements ▪ Develop human capital
	Educator Professional Development ▪ Support HR development ▪ Enhance professional capabilities ▪ Promote lifelong learning
	Social Cohesion Collaboration ▪ Encourage inclusive governance ▪ Build cross-sector partnerships ▪ Support nation-building
	School Infrastructure Improvement ▪ Develop educational facilities ▪ Ensure safe learning environments ▪ Address infrastructure backlogs
	Corporate Governance & Accountability ▪ Enhance administrative efficiency ▪ Promote transparency ▪ Support ethical leadership

6.3.2 Specific Considerations for Vulnerable Groups:

Promoting Gender Equality and Disability Support: In a world where diversity is increasingly recognised as a cornerstone of innovation and growth, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) stands firm in its commitment to promoting gender equality and inclusivity. The WCED acknowledges the invaluable contributions of women in senior management positions and the necessity of employing people with disabilities.

Empowering women for senior management roles: Women bring a wealth of talent, resilience, and creativity to the workplace. In senior management positions, they play crucial roles in shaping policies, driving organisational success, and fostering inclusive environments.

The WCED is dedicated to improving female representativity, in both senior and middle management positions, through affirmative action measures as outlined in its Employment Equity Plan. These measures are designed to address historical imbalances and create opportunities for women to thrive in leadership roles.

Women who serve as school principals play a pivotal role in the education system. They are not only leaders but also mentors and advocates for both students and teachers. Female principals often bring a unique empathetic perspective to their leadership, fostering environments where students feel supported and encouraged to excel. Their presence in these roles also emphasizes the importance of gender equality in education, showing learners that leadership is accessible to everyone, regardless of gender.

Currently, women account for 37.5% of Senior Management Service (SMS) positions and 37.3% of middle management positions (Deputy Directors and Chief Education Specialists) within the WCED, reflecting a substantial presence in high-level decision-making roles. Additionally, 27.8% of school principals, 33.3% of deputy principals and 69% of departmental heads are women, showcasing their significant contribution to the education system's leadership.

Supporting employees with disabilities: The WCED remains steadfast in its commitment to increasing support for employees with disabilities. Although the department has not yet met the national disability targets, it strives towards an inclusive environment. The WCED continues to seek ways to encourage the disclosure of disabilities and to raise awareness about disability through affirmative action measures. These efforts reflect the WCED's dedication to supporting employees with disabilities and ensuring that their unique needs are acknowledged and met.

The WCED's commitment to promoting women to senior management roles and employing individuals with disabilities underscores its dedication to equality and inclusivity. These initiatives are essential in creating a diverse, dynamic, and innovative workforce that is equipped to address future challenges.

The strategic outcomes explicitly support gender equity through:

- Early Childhood Development (ECD) interventions
- Professional development opportunities which include female educators
- Infrastructure improvements ensuring safe learning environments
- Office based female managers

The plan directly benefits youth by:

- Improving overall educational quality
- Supporting continuous professional development
- Creating collaborative learning ecosystems

People with Disabilities: The outcomes address inclusivity through:

- Infrastructure improvements considering accessibility
- Multi-stakeholder collaboration to support integrated education
- Comprehensive approach to learning outcomes that considers diverse learning needs

Provincial Priorities Integration:

The strategic plan is carefully aligned with Western Cape Government priorities, focusing on:

- Skills development
- Social infrastructure improvement
- Economic opportunity creation through quality education
- Promoting social mobility and cohesion

It represents a comprehensive, integrated approach to educational transformation. By strategically linking outcomes to national, provincial, and institutional priorities, the plan ensures a holistic response to educational challenges while maintaining a strong commitment to equity, quality, and continuous improvement.

6.3.3 Rationale for the choice of outcome indicators:

Integrated Impact

The outcomes are interconnected, creating a comprehensive approach to educational transformation. By addressing access, quality, professional development, collaboration, infrastructure, and governance simultaneously, the WCED intends to:

- Reduce educational inequality
- Enhance human capital development
- Promote social mobility
- Support economic competitiveness
- Build a more inclusive and responsive educational system

The strategic plan recognizes that educational transformation is a complex, multifaceted process requiring holistic intervention. Each outcome is designed not just as an isolated goal, but as a critical component of a broader vision for educational excellence and social progress which extend beyond the next 5 years.

The intended impact extends beyond immediate educational metrics, targeting fundamental societal transformation through strategic, sustained, and integrated educational development.

6.4 Explanation of enablers to achieve the five-year targets:

The key enablers that will drive the achievement of WCED's strategic outcomes:

Technological Innovation Enablers	Human Resource Development Enablers
▪ Data-driven decision-making systems ▪ Digital infrastructure for teaching and learning ▪ Integrated management information systems ▪ Technology solutions for administrative efficiency	▪ Teacher professional development programs ▪ Leadership capacity building ▪ Change management support ▪ Skills enhancement initiatives ▪ Centre for Teaching and Leadership Institute realignment
Financial Optimization Enablers	Infrastructure Development Enablers
▪ Alternative funding models (e.g., Edu Invest initiative) ▪ Public-private partnerships ▪ Resource allocation optimization ▪ Budget Facility for Infrastructure (BFI) funding ▪ Strategic reprioritization frameworks	▪ Rapid Build School Build Programme ▪ Infrastructure resilience planning ▪ Maintenance and restoration programs ▪ Climate-adaptive facility designs ▪ Strategic facility placement planning
Governance and Process Enablers	Educational Program Enablers
▪ Clear accountability frameworks ▪ Performance monitoring systems ▪ Multi-stakeholder collaboration platforms ▪ Risk management processes ▪ Policy alignment mechanisms	▪ Back on Track intervention program ▪ Enhanced LITNUM (Literacy and Numeracy) focus ▪ Extended learning time initiatives ▪ Curriculum strengthening through trimming and consolidation ▪ Learner-at-risk mitigation strategies
Each enabler is designed to	
▪ Support systematic transformation ▪ Ensure measurable progress ▪ Facilitate adaptive responses to challenges ▪ Drive sustainable improvements ▪ Create resilient educational systems	

The intention is that these enablers work together to create an integrated support system that powers the achievement of WCED's strategic outcomes.

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) will achieve its strategic outcomes through a comprehensive, integrated approach that leverages strategic enablers, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and targeted interventions. By aligning technological innovation, human resource development, financial optimization, and robust governance frameworks, the department will systematically address educational challenges. This will involve implementing data-driven strategies, enhancing professional capabilities, mobilizing resources effectively, and creating adaptive mechanisms that respond to dynamic educational needs. The focus will be on holistic transformation, ensuring that each outcome is supported by concrete action plans, clear accountability measures, and continuous performance monitoring across Early Childhood Development (ECD), learning outcomes, educator development, social cohesion, infrastructure improvement, and organizational effectiveness.

School Infrastructure Development

Numerous shocks have placed the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) in the spotlight with regards to existing and future education provisioning. The condition of education facilities continues to decline, while the need for additional classroom space continues to grow. Historic funding shortfalls for Infrastructure Development, have severely restricted the responsiveness demanded from the WCED, in an increasingly difficult operating context. This is characterized by the risks of shocks and chronic stresses such as violence, crime, climate change, water scarcity, and extreme weather and continuous pressures such as overcrowded classrooms and worsening learner to teacher ratios.

At this juncture, identifying how education infrastructure can be delivered differently and strategically, to have the greatest impact in support of departmental policy priorities, is needed. Infrastructure investment is facing two challenges, namely the need to give more thought to how and where we invest, and secondly the current infrastructure financing model limits our ability to scale solutions effectively and achieve the transformative impact needed in our schools to move in the direction in which the province needs to go.

While the WCED's infrastructure budget remains under pressure, the department needs to balance competing demands against available resources whilst maintaining the required levels of service at education facilities. For purposes of educational infrastructure planning and delivery, a new path called the [Rapid Build School Build Programme](#) has been implemented in the 2022/23, to respond strategically to competing demands.

Increased population growth, in-migration and improved learner retention are all factors contributing to the year-on-year increase in the learner enrolment figures which is considered as part of the planning rationale. However, the funding requirements does not often support the planning rationale due to budget constraints, which has resulted in many schools being oversubscribed and stretched beyond capacity. The importance around ensuring structural integrity of existing schools is also a pivotal aspect to consider and often competes with new growth.

The approval of additional funding, in the form of [BFI funding](#) to the WCED's Infrastructure programme, allows for investment in new capital projects, which will expand good quality education provisioning in the Western Cape. One of the many challenges faced by the WCED, is the consistent increasing number of new learners wanting to access good quality education within the Western Cape. This includes a large proportion of learners migrating from neighbouring provinces.

On the other hand, the WCED's Infrastructure approach remains focussed on strengthening the capacity for [resilience of existing schools](#), allowing our existing schools to survive, adapt and thrive in the context of chronic stresses and the risk of shocks (e.g., rampant urbanisation, climate change, natural disasters). Despite this strategic intention, the WCED's portfolio of schools remains at risk of failure to a degree where entire facilities, or parts thereof, would be rendered unsafe, dysfunctional and or not suitable to be utilized for education. These compounded crises and the resultant widening gap between existing and optimal asset requirements represent an opportunity for the WCED to critically review its approach to the maintenance of its infrastructure portfolio, arrest its continuing downward spiral and initiate a process where its deterioration is incrementally reversed.

For purposes of achieving resilient growth, the strategic focus for the next 5-year period, is to stabilize the condition of the existing infrastructure portfolio to, as far as possible, enable school facilities to continue to be fully utilized. The focus shall therefore be to restore school facilities, or parts thereof - in the worst condition - to a functional, secure, safe condition representing the required minimum level of functionality whilst continuing to expand access to good quality education.

Edu Invest

Edu Invest aims to stimulate private sector investment in education infrastructure through focused promotion and facilitation activities. The initiative conducts market research, marketing campaigns, and stakeholder engagements to identify investment opportunities, while undertaking outward promotion missions to attract independent school groups and funders to establish no-fee/low-fee schools in the Western Cape. The team provides ongoing support and monitoring to these new investment leads.

The department under the leadership of the Executive Authority, outlined four strategic priorities for the Edu Invest initiative:

- investing in school infrastructure with emphasis on new no-fee/low-fee independent schools; funding education support programmes including teacher training and technology services;
- facilitating corporate social investment in education;
- fostering public-private sector collaboration through structured engagement between education stakeholders and provincial government.

These priorities aim to address admission challenges and enhance educational quality across the Western Cape.

Back on Track

In 2022, two extra hours per week were allocated to reading, with one extra hour per week allocated to Mathematics for all Grade 1 to 3 learners in the province – amounting to an increase of at least 60 learning hours per learner in these subjects as part of the emergent Back on Track learning recovery programme. Teachers in the province supported this move as a recent survey showed that, 94% of teachers would welcome the continuation of the additional time in 2023. Many teachers indicated that the additional time allocation was beneficial for learners, with 96% indicating that they could integrate Life Skills into Languages with ease. The allocation of extra time was adopted nationally.

The systemic tests released in March 2023, showed that positive gains were made to reverse learning losses in some Grades and areas, particularly at the Foundation Phase, though more work needs to be done to reach the results achieved in 2019. It is for this reason that the learning recovery programme was further extended as the Back on Track intervention to accommodate learners in Grades 4,7,8,10 with a learners-at-risk risk mitigation approach in Grade 12. WCED invested R118 million over the MTEF towards the Foundation Phase Reading and Mathematics interventions (WCED, 2023).

The Back on Track intervention is set to receive a minimum of R399 million per year over the MTEF, including Foundation Phase. It should be noted that the intervention is at risk due to the recently introduced budget cuts which might delay the extension of the Back on Track to other grades. Notwithstanding the fiscal constraints, the 2023 Systemics released in February 2024, showed further gains in Foundation Phase as well as Grades 6 and 9, across Languages and Mathematics. Whilst these gains confirm a positive trend, some distance from the performance indicators prior to the Covid-19 pandemic still need to be covered. The department continues its LITNUM focus, seeks to influence national discourse on strengthening the curriculum through trimming and consolidation, as well as maintain a focus of re-aligning its Centre for Teaching and Leadership Institute, to improve continuous professional development of our teachers, as well as develop a leadership framework to make our workforce more resilient over time.

3. Outcomes' Contribution to Strategic Impact



Outcome 1: Improved Early Childhood Development (ECD) coverage

Directly addresses educational inequality from its foundational phase

- Breaks the cycle of intergenerational poverty
- Provides critical developmental support for children from vulnerable backgrounds
- Ensures early intervention and holistic child development
- Lays the groundwork for future academic success and social mobility



Outcome 2: Improved Learning Outcomes Across Grades

- Enhances overall educational quality and learner performance
- Reduces educational disparities
- Prepares students for future economic opportunities
- Builds a strong human capital foundation for provincial and national development
- Increases competitiveness in a knowledge-based economy



Outcome 3: Improved professional development of educators

- Elevates the professional status and capabilities of educators
- Creates a dynamic, responsive educational workforce
- Ensures ongoing skills enhancement and educational innovation
- Supports teacher retention and job satisfaction
- Directly impacts the quality of student learning experiences



Outcome 4: Promote Social Cohesion Through Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

- Breaks down systemic barriers between different social sectors
- Creates integrated approaches to educational challenges
- Builds collaborative networks across government, private sector, and communities
- Promotes shared responsibility for educational development



Outcome 5: Improved School Infrastructure and Related Facilities

- Creates conducive learning environments
- Addresses historical infrastructure inequalities
- Supports effective teaching and learning processes
- Ensures student safety and well-being
- Demonstrates commitment to equitable educational resources



Outcome 6: Improved Corporate Governance and Accountability

- Ensures transparent and ethical educational management
- Builds trust in public educational institutions
- Optimizes resource allocation and utilization
- Supports evidence-based decision-making
- Creates a responsive and efficient organizational culture

7. Key Risks

The Provincial Top Management of the Western Cape Government has established an Enterprise Risk Management Policy aligned with strategic planning periods. This policy outlines the department's approach to risk management and broadly defines stakeholder responsibilities. It establishes a framework for risk management processes and their integration within departmental operations.

The department *faces significant fiscal sustainability challenges* due to ongoing system expansion pressures and the impact of budget reductions, which have necessitated extensive reprioritization measures.

Admission Equilibrium: The WCED is currently under severe strain to mitigate the impact of the continuous year-on-year learner growth, exacerbated by provisioning for possible late influx in Jan – Feb each year.

Learner growth numbers for 2025, and over the MTEF, remain uncertain. If learner placement challenges are not resolved, the pressure of unplaced learners may persist throughout the school year, exposing the department to litigation and serious reputational damage.

Over-crowded classes continue to place a strain on effective teaching and learning. Improving learning outcomes across the system is highly dependent on successful delivery of the early learning strategy. If this is not achieved, general education outcomes will not improve.

There is still a substantial *gap to reach universalisation for early learning*, with Grade R participation at approximately 85% and approximately only 55% of children aged 3-5 enrolled in Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centres. This is exacerbated by the Basic Education Law Amendment Bill. There is currently very limited funding to increase the footprint in these sectors.

Unstable infrastructure budget compromises long-term asset provisioning planning. WCED is highly dependent on the mobilisation of alternative financing through its application submitted for the Budget Facility for Infrastructure (BFI). WCED faces the stark reality that parts of the school infrastructure system could collapse, given the history of under-maintenance, accelerated by social and environmental factors such as vandalism and climate change.

WCED Strategic Risks

Budget Volatility

Risk: Unpredictable or decreasing budget allocations due to economic challenges.

Impact: Inability to maintain current programmes or invest in necessary improvements.

Technological Disruption

Risk: Rapid technological changes outpacing the education system's ability to adapt.

Impact: Learners lacking relevant skills for the evolving job market.

Demographic Shifts

Risk: Rapid urbanisation and migration patterns changing the distribution of learners.

Impact: Overcrowding in urban schools and underutilization of rural facilities

Teacher Attrition

Risk: Loss of experienced educators due to retirement, burnout, or better opportunities elsewhere.

Impact: Decline in education quality and institutional knowledge

Policy Inconsistency

Risk: Frequent changes in national education policies or political leadership.

Impact: Difficulty in long-term planning and consistent implementation of programmes.

Social Unrest

Risk: Protests, strikes, or community tensions disrupting educational activities.

Impact: Lost teaching time and unstable learning environments

Climate Change Impact

Risk: Increased frequency of extreme weather events (droughts, floods).

Impact: Disruption to school operations and strain on infrastructure

Health Crises

Risk: Pandemics or widespread health issues affecting learners and staff.

Impact: Disruption to traditional learning models and increased absenteeism.

Digital Divide Widening

Risk: Increasing gap between tech-enabled and under-resourced schools/learners.

Impact: Exacerbation of educational inequalities.

Skills Mismatch

Risk: Education system not aligning with rapidly changing economic needs.

Impact: Exacerbation of quality of life

Outcome	Key risk	Risk Mitigation
Outcome 1: Improved Early Childhood Development (ECD) coverage	▪ Universal access gap (Grade R at 85%, ECD at 55%) ▪ Limited funding for expansion ▪ Basic Education Law Amendment Bill implications	▪ Strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships for resource sharing ▪ Implement phased expansion prioritizing high-need areas ▪ Explore alternative funding models for ECD centres
Outcome 2: Improved learning outcomes across grades	▪ overcrowded classrooms impacting teaching quality ▪ Skills mismatch with economic needs ▪ Widening digital divide ▪ Early learning strategy dependencies	▪ Implement targeted interventions in overcrowded schools ▪ Align curriculum with future skills requirements ▪ Develop blended learning approaches ▪ Strengthen early learning foundations
Outcome 3: Enhanced professional development of educators	▪ Teacher attrition and burnout ▪ Rapid technological changes ▪ Loss of institutional knowledge	▪ Design comprehensive retention strategies ▪ Implement continuous professional development programs ▪ Create knowledge management systems

Outcome	Key risk	Risk Mitigation
Outcome 4: Promote Social Cohesion Through Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration	▪ Social unrest and community tensions ▪ Fragmented stakeholder engagement ▪ Limited resources for community programs ▪ Safety and security concerns in schools ▪ Varying levels of parental involvement ▪ Language and cultural barriers	▪ Establish formal collaboration frameworks with stakeholders Community Engagement by: ▪ Create school-community liaison programs ▪ Develop cultural exchange initiatives ▪ Support parent education programs ▪ Facilitate community dialogue forums ▪ Implement school safety committees
Outcome 5: Enhanced school infrastructure and facilities	▪ Unstable infrastructure budget ▪ System collapse risk from under-maintenance ▪ Climate change impacts ▪ Vandalism ▪ Demographic shifts affecting facility utilization	▪ Pursue Budget Facility for Infrastructure funding ▪ Develop preventive maintenance programs ▪ Implement climate-resilient design standards ▪ Enhance security measures ▪ Flexible infrastructure planning for population shifts
Outcome 6: Strengthened corporate governance and accountability	▪ Budget volatility ▪ Policy inconsistency ▪ Fiscal sustainability challenges ▪ Admission equilibrium pressures ▪ Uncertain learner growth	▪ Develop robust financial planning models ▪ Create adaptive management frameworks ▪ Strengthen data-driven decision making ▪ Implement early warning systems for placement challenges ▪ Build contingency plans for growth scenarios
Cross-Cutting Risks Requiring System-Wide Response	▪ Health crises (pandemics) ▪ Social unrest ▪ Digital transformation challenges ▪ Climate change impacts	

Each outcome's success depends on effectively managing these interconnected risks through coordinated, system-wide responses. The department must maintain flexibility to adapt strategies while ensuring consistent progress toward core objectives.

8. Public entities

The Department does not have public entities

Part D: Technical indicator descriptions (TIDs)

Outcome Indicator (OCI)	
Indicator Number	OCI: 1.1
Indicator	Increased number of ECD Centres to establish a strong educational foundation by 2030.
Definition	The indicator measures the quantity of registered Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres in the Western Cape that are actively implementing structured early learning programmes that meet WCED's prescribed quality standards.
Source of data	ECD centre registration database Quarterly progress reports from registered ECD centres WCED monitoring and evaluation reports ECD programme implementation assessment forms Annual ECD census data Quality assurance inspection reports
Assumptions	Adequate funding and resources will be available for programme implementation Qualified ECD practitioners will be available Communities will support and participate in ECD initiatives ECD centres will maintain minimum norms and standards Infrastructure and facilities will meet basic requirements
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for Women: 60% of ECD practitioner positions Target for Youth: 40% of ECD practitioner positions Target for People with Disabilities: 2% of total staff complement Children aged 0-4 years: Coverage across all income quintiles Geographic distribution: Urban, peri-urban, and rural areas
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Desired performance	Higher than target
Indicator responsibility	Directorate: Early Childhood Development

Outcome Indicator (OCI)	
Indicator Number	OCI: 2.1
Indicator	Improved access to quality education and holistic support for learners with specialised support needs
Definition	This outcome indicator measures the number of public ordinary schools that receive outreach support from inclusive education outreach teams. inclusive education outreach teams are based at Public Special School serving as resource centres. Public Ordinary Schools mentioned here refers to those designated as full-service or inclusive schools who will provide low to moderate levels of support. And Number of learners enrolled in public special schools. Special school: Schools resourced to deliver education to learners requiring high-intensity educational and other support on either a full-time or a part-time basis. The 5-year target is in line with the target in the APP regarding the number of learners in the Special Schools whilst a steady increase over the 5-year period will enable Inclusive Education (IE) Teams support broader than just Full Service Schools and the strengthening of the School Based Support Teams (SBSTs). This would enable the department to improve access to quality education and holistic support.

Outcome Indicator (OCI)	
Indicator Number	OCI: 2.1
Source of data	Annual School Survey for the Special School Sector and School visit report and attendance registers from inclusive education outreach teams Disability screening and assessment reports
Assumptions	Learners with disabilities are enrolled in special schools and are receiving quality education LSEN learners are properly assessed to identify their needs Support by inclusive education outreach teams can be provided to identified PO schools to assist them in creating an inclusive environment and rendering support to learners with low to moderate support needs.
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for women: n/a Target for youth: n/a Target for people with disabilities: Target for older persons: n/a "None of the above"
Spatial transformation	N/A
Desired performance	Higher than target
Indicator responsibility	Directorate: Inclusive and Specialised Education Support

Outcome Indicator (OCI)	
Indicator Number	OCI: 2.2
Indicator	Improve the proportion of grade 3 learners obtaining acceptable outcomes in language by 2030.
Definition	This measures the proportion of learners participating in the Grade 3 Systemic Diagnostic Assessment (Language), who pass the assessments. The pass mark for the assessments is 50%
Source of data	The basic data source is the report that is prepared by independent external service providers appointed to administer the assessment. Directorate: Research It is extracted from the final report that is submitted by the independent external service providers appointed to administer the systemic tests. The information content and learner information are highly confidential and is treated in the strictest of confidence given that it is used for systems assessment purposes.
Assumptions	Performance in Language is an important indicator of how effective our teaching and learning systems are.
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for women: n/a Target for youth: n/a Target for people with disabilities: n/a Target for older persons: n/a "None of the above"
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Desired performance	Higher than target
Indicator responsibility	Directorate: General Education and Training

Outcome Indicator (OCI)	
Indicator Number	OCI: 2.3
Indicator	Improve the proportion of grade 3 learners obtaining acceptable outcomes in mathematics by 2030.
Definition	This measures the proportion of learners participating in the Grade 3 Systemic Diagnostic Assessment (mathematics), who pass the assessments. The pass mark for the assessments is 50%

Outcome Indicator (OCI)	
Indicator Number	OCI: 2.3
Source of data	The basic data source is the report that is prepared by independent external service providers appointed to administer the assessment. Directorate: Research It is extracted from the final report that is submitted by the independent external service providers appointed to administer the systemic tests. The information content and learner information are highly confidential and is treated in the strictest of confidence given that it is used for systems assessment purposes.
Assumptions	Performance in Mathematics is an important indicator of how effective our teaching and learning systems are
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for women: n/a Target for youth: n/a Target for people with disabilities: n/a Target for older persons: n/a "None of the above"
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Desired performance	Higher than target
Indicator responsibility	Directorate: General Education and Training

Outcome Indicator (OCI)	
Indicator Number	OCI: 2.4
Indicator	Improve the proportion of grade 3 learners obtaining acceptable outcomes in reading for meaning by 2030.
Definition	This measures the proportion of learners participating in the Grade 3 Systemic Diagnostic Assessment (Language), who attain acceptable outcomes in Reading for Meaning which is the Reading and Viewing area of the assessment. The pass mark for the assessments is 50%; acceptable outcome for the area is 50%.
Source of data	The basic data source is the report that is prepared by independent external service providers appointed to administer the assessment. Directorate: Research It is extracted from the final report that is submitted by the independent external service providers appointed to administer the systemic tests. The information content and learner information are highly confidential and is treated in the strictest of confidence given that it is used for systems assessment purposes.
Assumptions	Performance in Reading and Writing is an important indicator of how effective our teaching and learning systems are
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for women: n/a Target for youth: n/a Target for people with disabilities: n/a Target for older persons: n/a □ "None of the above"
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Desired performance	Higher than target
Indicator responsibility	Directorate: General Education and Training

Outcome Indicator (OCI)	
Indicator Number	OCI: 2.5
Indicator	Improve the proportion of grade 6 learners obtaining acceptable outcomes in language by 2030.
Definition	This measures the proportion of learners participating in the Grade 6 Systemic Diagnostic Assessment (Language), who pass the assessments. The pass mark for the assessments is 50%
Source of data	The basic data source is the report that is prepared by independent external service providers appointed to administer the assessment. Directorate: Research It is extracted from the final report that is submitted by the independent external service providers appointed to administer the systemic tests. The information content and learner information are highly confidential and is treated in the strictest of confidence given that it is used for systems diagnostic assessment purposes.
Assumptions	Performance in Language is an important indicator of how effective our teaching and learning systems are
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for women: n/a Target for youth: n/a Target for people with disabilities: n/a Target for older persons: n/a ☐ "None of the above"
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Desired performance	Higher than target
Indicator responsibility	Directorate: General Education and Training

Outcome Indicator (OCI)	
Indicator Number	OCI: 2.6
Indicator	Improve the proportion of grade 6 learners obtaining acceptable outcomes in mathematics by 2030.
Definition	This measures the proportion of learners participating in the Grade 6 Systemic Diagnostic Assessment (mathematics), who pass the assessments. The pass mark for the assessments is 50%
Source of data	The basic data source is the report that is prepared by independent external service providers appointed to administer the assessment. Directorate: Research It is extracted from the final report that is submitted by the independent external service providers appointed to administer the systemic tests. The information content and learner information are highly confidential and is treated in the strictest of confidence given that it is used for systems diagnostic assessment purposes.
Assumptions	Performance in Mathematics is an important indicator of how effective our teaching and learning systems are
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for women: n/a Target for youth: n/a Target for people with disabilities: n/a Target for older persons: n/a ☐ "None of the above"
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Desired performance	Higher than target
Indicator responsibility	Directorate: General Education and Training

Outcome Indicator (OCI)	
Indicator Number	OCI: 2.7
Indicator	Improve the proportion of grade 9 learners obtaining acceptable outcomes in language by 2030.
Definition	This measures the proportion of learners participating in the Grade 9 Systemic Diagnostic Assessment (language), who pass the assessments. The pass mark for the assessments is 50%
Source of data	The basic data source is the report that is prepared by independent external service providers appointed to administer the assessment. Directorate: Research It is extracted from the final report that is submitted by the independent external service providers appointed to administer the systemic tests. The information content and learner information are highly confidential and is treated in the strictest of confidence given that it is used for systems diagnostic assessment purposes
Assumptions	Performance in Language is an important indicator of how effective our teaching and learning systems are
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for women: n/a Target for youth: n/a Target for people with disabilities: n/a Target for older persons: n/a "None of the above"
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Reporting cycle	Annual progress against the five-year target
Desired performance	Higher than target
Indicator responsibility	Directorate: General Education and Training

Outcome Indicator (OCI)	
Indicator Number	OCI: 2.8
Indicator	Improve the proportion of grade 9 learners obtaining acceptable outcomes in mathematics by 2030.
Definition	This measures the proportion of learners participating in the Grade 9 Systemic Diagnostic Assessment (mathematics), who pass the assessments. The pass mark for the assessments is 50%
Source of data	The basic data source is the report that is prepared by independent external service providers appointed to administer the assessment. Directorate: Research It is extracted from the final report that is submitted by the independent external service providers appointed to administer the systemic tests. The information content and learner information are highly confidential and is treated in the strictest of confidence given that it is used for systems diagnostic assessment purposes.
Assumptions	Performance in Mathematics is an important indicator of how effective our teaching and learning systems are
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for women: n/a Target for youth: n/a Target for people with disabilities: n/a Target for older persons: n/a ☐ "None of the above"
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Desired performance	Higher than target
Indicator responsibility	Directorate: General Education and Training

Outcome Indicator (OCI)	
Indicator Number	OCI: 2.9
Indicator	Improve the proportion of youth (grade 12) learners who passed the NSC by 2030.
Definition	This indicator measures the total number of learners who passed in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination expressed as a percentage of the total number of learners who wrote the National Senior Certificate.
Source of data	National Senior Certificate database
Assumptions	Learners enrolled for the NSC examinations have undergone sufficient and appropriate preparation
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for women: n/a Target for youth: n/a Target for people with disabilities: n/a Target for older persons: n/a "None of the above"
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	NSC examinations are written in designated examination centres across districts. Centres are accessible to learners with disabilities.
Desired performance	Higher than target
Indicator responsibility	Branch: Curriculum and Assessment Management

Outcome Indicator (OCI)	
Indicator Number	OCI: 2.10
Indicator	Improve the proportion of youth (grade 12) learners obtaining 60% and above in Mathematics by 2030.
Definition	Number of Grade 12 learners passing Mathematics with 60% and above in the NSC examinations expressed as a percentage of the total number of learners who wrote Mathematics in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations
Source of data	National Senior Certificate database
Assumptions	Learners enrolled for the NSC examinations have undergone sufficient and appropriate preparation
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for women: n/a Target for youth: n/a Target for people with disabilities: n/a Target for older persons: n/a □"None of the above"
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	NSC examinations are written in designated examination centres across districts. Centres are accessible to learners with disabilities
Desired performance	Higher than target
Indicator responsibility	Branch: Curriculum and Assessment Management

Outcome Indicator (OCI)	
Indicator Number	OCI: 2.11
Indicator	Improve the proportion of youth (grade 12) learners obtaining 60% and above in Physical Science by 2030.
Definition	Number of Grade 12 learners passing Physical Sciences with 60% or more in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations expressed as a percentage of the total number of learners who wrote Physical Sciences in the NSC examinations.
Source of data	National Senior Certificate database
Assumptions	Learners enrolled for the NSC examinations have undergone sufficient and appropriate preparation

Outcome Indicator (OCI)	
Indicator Number	OCI: 2.11
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for women: n/a Target for youth: n/a Target for people with disabilities: n/a Target for older persons: n/a ☐ "None of the above"
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	NSC examinations are written in designated examination centres across districts. Centres are accessible to learners with disabilities.
Desired performance	Higher than target
Indicator responsibility	Branch: Curriculum and Assessment Management

Outcome Indicator (OCI)	
Indicator Number	OCI :3.1
Indicator	Improved number of educators participating in professional development training by 2030.
Definition	The indicator measures the number of teachers who receive professional training and development through various WCED-approved programs
Source of data	CTLI Monitoring System
Assumptions	Available training budget Qualified trainers and facilitators Teacher willingness to participate Release time for training Adequate training facilities Support from school management Access to training resources Effective training program
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for women: n/a Target for youth: n/a Target for people with disabilities: n/a Target for older persons: n/a ☐ "None of the above"
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Desired performance	Higher than target
Indicator responsibility	Directorate: Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute

Outcome Indicator (OCI)	
Indicator Number	OCI: 4.1
Indicator	Number of school community engagements to combat racism, sexism, hate speech, GBV and other forms of intolerance and address inter-generational violence and trauma across society
Definition	School Community Engagements are open dialogues with school community stakeholders such as Educators, Learners, Parents, Education Officials, SGBs, Civil Society Organisations and other organisations support schools in programming for the prevention and management of gender inequality, violence, discrimination, prejudice and related intolerances.
Source of data	Information is obtained through the implementation of social cohesion and equity activities in the Provincial Education Departments. Any given School Community Engagement will count as one if: The session was officiated by the MEC or his/her designate in which case, such participation must state "on behalf of the MEC" in the school community engagement session materials, e.g. Programme, Speech, etc

Outcome Indicator (OCI)	
Indicator Number	OCI: 4.1
	There was participation of any group among the target audiences listed under the Definition above The engagements cover one or more of the thematic areas below: Racism, Sexism, Hate Speech, Gender-based Violence (GBV), Intergenerational Violence, and Intolerance.
Assumptions	Willing partnership participants Available resources for collaboration Stakeholder commitment Shared objectives Community support Sustainable funding Effective coordination Clear governance structures
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for women: n/a Target for youth: n/a Target for people with disabilities: n/a Target for older persons: n/a "None of the above"
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Desired performance	Higher than target
Indicator responsibility	Chief Directorate: Districts

Outcome Indicator (OCI)	
Indicator Number	OCI: 4.2
Indicator	Percentage of Public Schools that have Contingency Plans
Definition	A strategic management process designed to assess potential threats or emerging situations that may impact schools. It establishes proactive measures and prearranged responses to ensure timely, effective, and appropriate action when such events arise. Contingency Plans forms part of the Education Continuity at Public Ordinary and Special Schools (excl. Independent Schools and ECD facilities) A contingency plan outlines the procedures and actions to be taken before, during, and after an emergency.
Source of data	Contingency Plan per school Education District database
Assumptions	All schools have functional Governing Bodies
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for women: n/a Target for youth: n/a Target for people with disabilities: n/a Target for older persons: n/a ☐ "None of the above"
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Desired performance	Higher than target
Indicator responsibility	Chief Directorate: Districts

Outcome Indicator (OCI)	
Indicator Number	OCI: 5.1
Indicator	Increased number of new schools that have reached completion by 2030.
Definition	This indicator measures the total number of public schools built, which includes: • Schools developed on single plots of land, • Schools developed on large tracks of land, where multiple schools can be developed to ensure economical and efficient use of the scarce land resource, • A school built on a portion of land, relinquished by a school that has surplus unused land, or • The acquisition of a building (Leased or Purchased) for the establishment of a school, which includes the repurposing and refurbishment of the building. It excludes replacement schools but includes mobile schools
Source of data	Source of data: Provincial infrastructure database
Assumptions	Budget for the plan of work will be available for the duration of the period. High in-migration numbers drive needs to provide new schools speedily.
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for women: n/a Target for youth: n/a Target for people with disabilities: n/a Target for older persons: n/a ☐ "None of the above"
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Desired performance	Higher than target
Indicator responsibility	Chief Directorate: Physical Resources

Outcome Indicator (OCI)	
Indicator Number	OCI: 5.2
Indicator	Increased number of new classrooms provided by 2030.
Definition	To measure access to education by increasing the accommodation available to learners through the provision of more schools to expand learning opportunities for enhanced performance.
Source of data	Source of data: Provincial infrastructure database
Assumptions	Budget for the plan of work will be available for the duration of the period. High in-migration numbers drive needs to provide new schools speedily
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for women: n/a Target for youth: n/a Target for people with disabilities: n/a Target for older persons: n/a "None of the above"
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Desired performance	Higher than target
Indicator responsibility	Chief Directorate: Physical Resources

Outcome Indicator (OCI)	
Indicator Number	OCI: 6.1
Indicator	Improved corporate governance and accountability by 2030.
Definition	The indicator measures the extent to which the Western Cape Education Department implements and maintains effective corporate governance structures and accountability mechanisms.
Source of data	Auditor General Audit reports Annual Reports Annual Performance Reports Compliance monitoring reports
Assumptions	Stable regulatory environment Adequate resources for governance systems Competent staff in key positions Management commitment to good governance Access to required expertise
Disaggregation of beneficiaries (where applicable)	Target for women: n/a Target for youth: n/a Target for people with disabilities: n/a Target for older persons: n/a ☐ "None of the above"
Spatial transformation (where applicable)	N/A
Desired performance	Higher than target
Indicator responsibility	Branch: Corporate Services

Annexure A: District Delivery Model: Infrastructure Projects

Project Name	Project Description	District municipality	Location: GPS Coordinates	Project Leader	Social Partners
Cathkin SS	Upgrade and Additions	City of Cape Town	-33,9631; 18,5485	Dir: Physical Resource Planning and Property Management	SGB, Municipalities, Department of Infrastructure
Lwandle PS 1	New School Primary	City of Cape Town	-34,1144; 18,86921		
Lwandle shared facilities	New School Primary	City of Cape Town	-34,1144; 18,86921		
Lwandle Pre-PS	New School Primary	City of Cape Town	-34,1144; 18,86921		
Delft JHS	New School Secondary	City of Cape Town	-33,9608; 18,6357		
Vuyiseka HS 2	New School Primary	City of Cape Town	-34,012736; 18,607619		
Darling HS NEW	New School Secondary	West Coast	-33,3821; 18,383		
Blue Downs HS	New School Secondary	City of Cape Town	-33,9981; 18,69012		
Blue Ridge PS	New School Primary	City of Cape Town	-33,8552; 18,7381		
Blue Ridge THS	New School Secondary	City of Cape Town	-33,8552; 18,73961		
Blue Ridge shared facilities	New School Secondary	City of Cape Town	-		
Lwandle Technical HS	New School Secondary	City of Cape Town	-34,1144; 18,86921		
Belhar No2 HS	New School Secondary	City of Cape Town	-33,953107; 18,653722		
Brackenfell No2 HS	New School Secondary	City of Cape Town	-33,876642; 18,67992		
Tygerhof HS	New School Secondary	City of Cape Town	-33,884624; 18,502236		
Khayelitsha HS	New School Secondary	City of Cape Town	-34,0519; 18,6978		
Sunningdale Full Service PS	New School Primary	City of Cape Town	-33,8053; 18,50375		
Blueberry Hill HS	New School Secondary	City of Cape Town	-34,00638; 18,698409		
Tafelsig HS No2 (Kilomaniaro)	New School Secondary	City of Cape Town	-34,0641; 18,628		
Coniston Park HS	New School Secondary	City of Cape Town	-34,078229; 18,474552		
Delft Hague	New School Secondary	City of Cape Town	-33,964199; 18,64581		
Malmesbury HS	New School Secondary	West Coast	-33,4612; 18,6989		
Panorama PS N2	Inappropriate structures - Primary School	West Coast	-32,9184; 17,9991		
Sir Lowrys Pass SS	New School Secondary	City of Cape Town	-34,1236; 18,90466		
Dal Josaphat PS	Inappropriate structures - Primary School	Cape Winelands	-33,6939; 19,0161		
Mvula PS	Inappropriate structures - Primary School	City of Cape Town	-33,9868; 18,5891		
Manenberg SOS	New School of Skills	City of Cape Town	-33,987152; 18,56065		
Somerset West HS	New School Secondary	City of Cape Town	-34,054992; 18,814292		
Abbotts HS	Upgrades and Additions	City of Cape Town	-33,881966; 18,518749		
Tokai HS	New School Secondary	City of Cape Town	-34,051922; 18,448928		

Project Name	Project Description	District municipality	Location: GPS Coordinates	Project Leader	Social Partners
Durbanville / Bellville HS	New School Secondary	City of Cape Town	-33,846199; 18,635791	Dir: Physical Resource Planning and Property Management	SGB, Municipalities, Department of Infrastructure
George HS	New School Secondary	Garden Route	-33,96223; 22,490679		
New Ashton HS	New School Secondary	Cape Winelands			
Dafur HS	New School Secondary	City of Cape Town	-33,961354; 18,629978		
Jagtshof HS	New School Secondary	City of Cape Town	-33,9405; 18,6987		
Mfuleni HS	New School Secondary	City of Cape Town	-34,010575; 18,686096		
Pacaltsdorp HS (replacement school)	Inappropriate structures - Secondary School	Garden Route			
Dagbreek LS	Inappropriate structures - Primary School	Cape Winelands	-33,9635; 18,5556		
Lwandle No2 PS	New School Primary	City of Cape Town	-34,1144; 18,86921		
Donor / Partnership	New School Secondary	Western Cape			
Donors/Discretionary (School Hall & Labs)	Infrastructure Transfers	Western Cape			
Autism	Upgrade and Additions	City of Cape Town			
LSPID	Upgrades and Additions	Western Cape			
E.P.W.P.	Preventative Maintenance	Western Cape			
Hotspot Mobiles (Learner Placement)	Upgrade and Additions	Western Cape			
Hotspot Mobiles (Learner Placement)	Upgrade and Additions	Western Cape			
Expansion Classrooms	Upgrades and Additions	Western Cape			
Emergency Maintenance	Emergency Maintenance	Western Cape			
Emergency Maintenance	Emergency Maintenance	Western Cape			
Preventative Maintenance	Preventative Maintenance	Western Cape			
Preventative Maintenance	Preventative Maintenance	Western Cape			
Fencing	Upgrade and Additions	Western Cape			
Fencing	Upgrade and Additions	Western Cape			
E.C.D.	Preventative Maintenance	Western Cape			
Green Initiatives (Sustainability Projects - Electricity Efficiency -LED)	Upgrade and Additions	Western Cape			
Green Initiatives (Sustainability Projects - Electricity Efficiency - Solar)	Upgrades and Additions	Western Cape			
Human Resource Capacity	Non-Infrastructure	Western Cape			
Human Resource Capacity	Non-Infrastructure	Western Cape			
MOD centres	Upgrade and Additions	Western Cape			
Provision for Office Buildings	Upgrade and Additions	Western Cape			
Outstanding Final Accounts / Retention	New Schools Primary & Secondary	Western Cape			
Aurecon PSP	Preventative Maintenance	Western Cape			

Annexure B: Strategic Digitalisation Interventions

Strategic Outcome		Description of the Digitalisation Intervention	Responsible Lead
Outcome 1:	Improved Early Childhood Development (ECD) coverage	Implementation of an integrated digital system to register, track and monitor ECD Programmes and bring it into the regulatory framework and ensure proper oversight in out-of-centre and in-centre offerings. Digital interventions that enable data driven decision making in ECD. Inform data driven interventions in poor communities. Ultimately, to ensure that more ECD programmes can apply for ECD subsidy for children from low-income households.	Directorate: Early Childhood Development
Outcome 2:	Improved Learning Outcomes Across Grades	Teachers will form part of a learning journey to discover varying, unique and powerful ways to integrate technology into teaching and learning. eLearning puts the focus on learning through reflecting on how we teach through: - ePedagogy - Building a digital lesson - Integrating digital resources from the ePortal - Ease of access with QR Codes and Bit.ly links - Low tech assessment for Learning	Directorate: eLearning
Outcome 3:	Improved professional development of educators	Migrate current website and Course Application System from external host to WCG hosted environment. Further develop the website and Course Application System to replace the migrated version. Ultimately, transform from a Learning Management System (LMS) to a Learner eExperience Platform (LXP). LMS prioritizes administrative tasks in learning, LXP fosters personalized learning experiences. LMS typically prescribes training courses, whereas LXP empowers learners to choose their content and timing. LMS training often focuses on compliance, while LXP offers tailored, personalized learning content.	Directorate: Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute

Strategic Outcome		Description of the Digitalisation Intervention	Responsible Lead
Outcome 4:	Promote Social Cohesion Through Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration	Several digital interventions have been developed and explored to improve access to information, service delivery and accountability. The AI chatbot on the WCED website provides easy access to information for users, including brief explanations on policies that determine the basic rights of learners. Most queries relate to online admissions information and NSC examinations registration and certification. The online tracking tool allows for the tracking of employee queries in terms of pensions, salaries and service benefits. A communication tool will be launched with the aim to improve communication to staff and parents, particularly in disaster management.	Directorate: Communication
Outcome 5:	Improved School Infrastructure and Related Facilities	WCED will work closer with municipalities to strengthen our spatial planning and identification of suitable locations for new infrastructure investment. Inputs, comments and data collected from other departments will also be considered when decisions are made on optimal locations for new schools. Geographic Information System (GIS) will be used to present data on existing schools, size of enrolment and utilization on a spatial level – allowing for analysis of education data for decision-making in terms of infrastructure investment. A digital platform for schools to report any incident or maintenance need, allowing the WCED to investigate requests and providing feedback to the school.	Chief Directorate: Physical Resources
Outcome 6:	Improved Corporate Governance and Accountability	Deployment of an advanced data analytics platform to optimize resource allocation and improve service delivery efficiency.	Chief Directorate: Business Intelligence Management

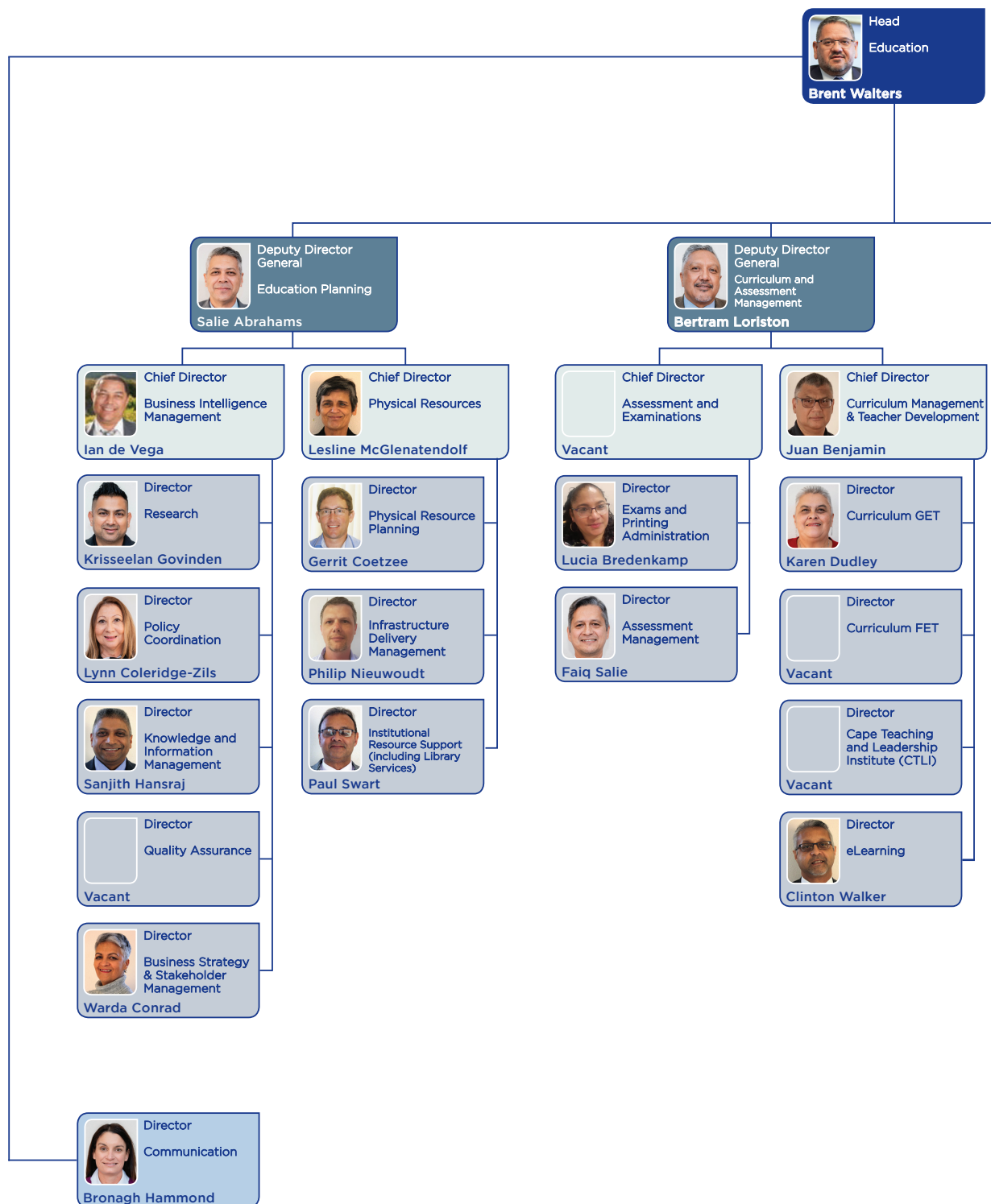
Annexure C: Dictionary of Terms

Term	Definition
Classes:	are defined as "Register Class"
Education Expenditure:	refers to all government non-personnel education expenditure (inclusive of all sub-sectors of education including special schools, independent schools and conditional grants)
Filled:	is defined as having a permanent/ temporary teacher appointed in the post
Formal Courses:	Formal courses are any official courses offered through the CTLI for which the candidate receives a certificate and writes a pre- and post-assessment. It should meet the minimum specified notional hours and can be offered through blended learning approaches
Hospital Schools:	refers to schools catering to learners who have been registered at other schools but, for medical reasons, receive access to learning at medical institutions. All projections will exclude hospital schools as the learners are registered at other public schools
"a learner offers a subject(s)"	The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) applies to public ordinary and independent schools that offer the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12, and which comprises of: • The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) for all approved subjects listed in the NCS; • The National Policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements (NPPPR) of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12; and • The policy document, National Protocol for Assessment (NPA) Grades R – 12. (Standardizes the recording and reporting process.) Chapter 3 of the NCS reflects the approved subjects and provides the programme requirements for all grades and uses the word "offer" in the following sentence, "A learner in grade R in the Foundation Phase must offer the following three (3) subjects listed in Table 1-3.". This sentence is repeated in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 at various points. Further references to the word "offer" being used in the same context could be found in the NPA, Chapter 5, section 17 (6).
LSEN Schools:	refers to schools catering to learners with special needs.
"offer" and "sit"	"offer" means to enter for, and "sit" to write the examination for a subject
Additional Classroom	These are classrooms that are added to an existing school and could be constructed using various materials.
Grade R classroom	A classroom built specifically to accommodate the teaching and learning of Grade R learners.
Mobile Classroom	A mobile classroom is a functional classroom built using relocatable units. These could be placed at existing schools as expansion classrooms.
Mobile School infrastructure	A mobile school infrastructure is a fully functional school built using relocatable units

Replacement School Infrastructure	A replacement school infrastructure is school that has a building to be replaced when the planning commences. It could include an existing school built with inappropriate materials, including asbestos, wood, or iron, which poses a safety risk to learners. It could also comprise replacement of a mobile school. The important defining fact is that when the planning commences, the school already exists, and the project is centred around replacing the existing school.
New School infrastructure	A new school infrastructure is a school planned to be built on a site where no other school exists which includes: • a school built on a large track of land, where multiple schools can be developed, • a school built on a portion of land, relinquished by a school that has surplus unused land, or • the acquisition of a building (Leased or Purchased) for the establishment of a school, which includes the repurposing and refurbishment of the building, which is not intended to replace an existing school. In the case of a large track of land it should not be assumed that the first school established, is entitled to the sole use or ownership of the land. Several new schools may be developed on a large track of land and each school is only allocated its portion of land within its fence or boundary. If during planning or construction, the WCED is compelled to place mobiles to accommodate enrolment pressure, it does not change the definition to a replacement school. The strategic brief describing the project scope and outline is issued at the outset of the planning phase.
Specialist Schools	A classroom is built specifically for the teaching and learning of a specific subject, that requires a specialised space, such as a workshop, science laboratory or multi-media centre.
Placed:	is defined as, securing appointment at a school in a permanent. Temporary, probationary capacity. In the WC, new entrants are appointed in temporary posts and on probation before the post is converted to permanent or the appointee is appointed in a permanent capacity after a probationary period.
Professional non – educator:	refer to personnel who are classified as paramedics, social workers, therapists, nurses but are not educators.
Public Ordinary Schools:	refers to ordinary schools only and excludes LSEN schools and excludes independent schools
Public schools:	refers to public ordinary schools and LSEN schools but excluding independent schools i.e. a combined total
Sanitation facility:	refers to all kinds of toilets such as pit latrine with ventilated pipe at the back of toilets, Septic Flush, Municipal Flush, Enviro Loo, latrine and Chemical Pit
SA SAMS:	refers to a product specific school administration and management system. This version of SA SAMS is off-line. The WCED uses an automated, on-line system and can provide real time data namely Centralised Educational Management Information System (CEMIS)

Schools with electricity	refers to schools that have any source of electricity including Eskom Grid, solar panels and generators.
Smart classrooms:	refers to a classroom with identified technological resources. These classrooms may have WiFi access based on eLearning category and availability at the school.
Special School:	refers to schools resourced to deliver education to learners requiring high intensity educational and other support on either a full-time or a part-time basis.
Specialist Classroom	A classroom is built specifically for the teaching and learning of a specific subject, that requires a specialised space, such as a workshop, science laboratory or multi-media centre
Standard Classroom	A standard classroom is a classroom, used for teaching and learning. This could also include Multipurpose classrooms e.g. Computer room, LSEN, etc.

Annexure D: Organogram





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