



INTRODUCTION

Education is critical for enabling the population of the Western Cape to access employment and improve the quality of their lives. Education enables citizens to contribute to building a productive, democratic and sustainable province. Equitable education, of a high standard, is also essential for reducing the inequalities in the South African labour market. Formal education in South Africa is categorised according to three levels:

- The General Education and Training (GET) band consists of the Reception Year and Grades 1 to 9. This level also includes equivalent Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) qualifications.
- The Further Education and Training (FET) band consists of Grades 10 to 12 (or the equivalent National Qualifications Framework levels two to four) and the National Technical Certificates one to three in FET colleges.
- The Higher Education (HE) band consists of degrees, diplomas and certificates, up to and including post-doctoral degrees.
- In addition to this are a vast range of informal training and skills development institutions and programmes.

Some of the most pressing challenges in education include efficiency and stability in the education system, high drop-out rates, discipline, entrenched gangsters and gang violence, teacher training, management and governance issues, numeracy and literacy levels, and the quality and appropriateness of education.

The three priority educational issues, reported on for the Western Cape, are:

- Adult literacy and levels of education;
- Access to basic education; and
- The quality of education.

DRIVERS AND PRESSURES

Some of the driving forces and pressures that influence education in the Western Cape include:

Population growth, migration and urbanisation patterns

The Western Cape's population growth rate is estimated at 1.8% per annum (81 000 people) and studies indicate that about 48 000 people migrate into the Western Cape per year, mostly from the Eastern Cape (Bekker, 2002). This influx of people, combined with the changing and unplanned urbanisation, makes it difficult and costly to plan effectively for the provision of sufficient schools.

The apartheid education legacy

While generally more affluent than most of the other provinces in South Africa, the Western Cape reflects extremes of wealth and poverty. The enormous disparities between educational facilities, learning environments, support structures and teaching standards places pressure on budgets and education standards.

Limited budgets

Since the transition to democracy, resources devoted to school education have increased considerably and large resource shifts have taken place to poorer schools (Western Cape Provincial Treasury, 2003). The Western Cape previously had the highest spending per learner of all the provinces in South Africa. This has subsequently been reduced and the real decrease in available funding for education has added to the challenges of providing enough schools and teachers in the Western Cape.

Poverty – Poverty in the Western Cape limits the options available to learners and results in high drop-out rates. Learners from poor families often bear greater responsibilities at an early age such as supporting the family and caring for younger siblings. They have less access to educational resources and often come from illiterate and resource- and text-poor families.

HIV/AIDS – The prevalence of HIV/AIDS amongst school children and the increasing number of AIDS orphans is resulting in greater drop-out rates and less time and energy available to learners for focussing on schooling.

The cost of higher education – In poorer communities there is little money to invest in higher education and the cost of higher education or further training is often a limiting factor for students from poor and middle income homes. Lack of funds is often the cause of students not graduating or dropping out of tertiary education.

ISSUE: LITERACY AND LEVELS OF EDUCATION

Internationally, education has been highlighted as a key priority by the World Bank and a number of other international development and environmental organisations. One of the eight United Nation's Millennium Development Goals is to: "achieve universal primary education" (UNDP, 2000).

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Percentage Change in Adult Literacy

The Western Cape has the highest adult literacy rate in South Africa (94%)³³. However, Figure 11.1 below shows that the Western Cape has had a 1.13% decline in the adult literacy rate between 1996 and 2001. This can be attributed to the migration of illiterate people into the Western Cape and the pressures on the education system due to the increase in the population. The highest levels of illiteracy in the province are in the West Coast District Municipality and the Cape Winelands (Boland) District Municipality (around Worcester, Ceres, and Touwsriver) (Stats SA, 2001).

Senior Certificate Percentage Pass Rate

The Western Cape has made steady progress in the percentage pass rate for senior certificates from 1999 to 2003, increasing by 8.3% during that period. The Western Cape has also consistently been well above the national

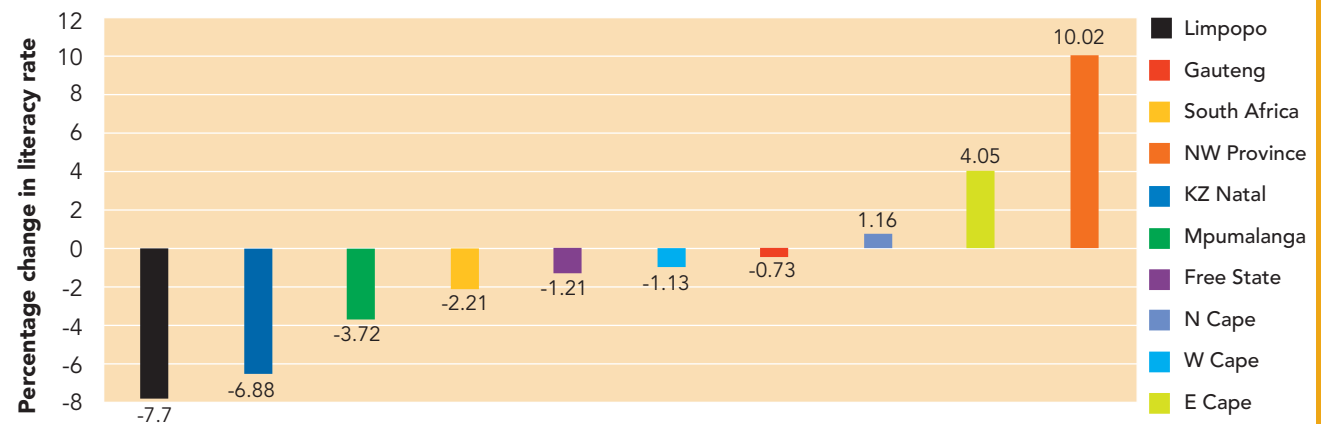


Figure 11.1: Change in Adult Literacy Rate 1996 to 2001 (Source: Stats SA, Census 1996 and 2001 In: Gauteng SoER, 2004)

33. This literacy rate is sourced from Statistics South Africa's Census data. The Western Cape Education Department estimate the literacy rate to be around 80% in the Western Cape.

Table 11.1: Senior Certificate Results 1999 to 2004³⁴ (Source: WCED, 2004)

Senior Certificate Results 2001 to 2004						
Category	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Percentage pass rate in Western Cape	78.8%	80.6%	82.7%	86.5%	87.1%	85.0%
National percentage pass rate.			61.7%	68.9%	73.3%	70.7%
Percentage of candidates who wrote Mathematics Higher Grade					11.5%	13.1%
Percentage of candidates who passed Mathematics Higher Grade					10.5%	10.9%

average. Last year saw a slight drop in the percentage pass rate, both nationally and in the Western Cape. Overall, the Census data reflects that 23.4% of the population of the Western Cape (aged 20+) has a Senior Certificate (Grade 12), which is an improvement of 5.4% from the 1996 census data, when 18% of the population had passed Grade 12 (Stats SA, 1996 and 2001).

Number of Senior Certificate Maths and Science Passes by Race

Despite this improvement in overall results, the consistently low percentage of Senior Certificate passes in the subjects of mathematics and physical science remains a concern in the Western Cape. Mathematics and physical science

are critical subjects for further education and are essential in many fields, such as commerce, medicine, engineering, the natural sciences and others. As illustrated in the table 11.1 and the graph below, there has been only a very marginal improvement in number of passes in these subjects over the last two years. This means that many pupils are leaving schools with a Senior Certificate but will not easily access further education and employment or their options will be limited. According to the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), this could be in the order of 10 000 learners each year over the next five years (WCED, 2005).

Additionally, school results are still strongly aligned to race, reflecting that inequalities in the schooling system have not yet been resolved. Figure 11.2 shows Senior Certificate maths and science results for 2003 by race, compared to the total number of Senior Certificate candidates in 2003.

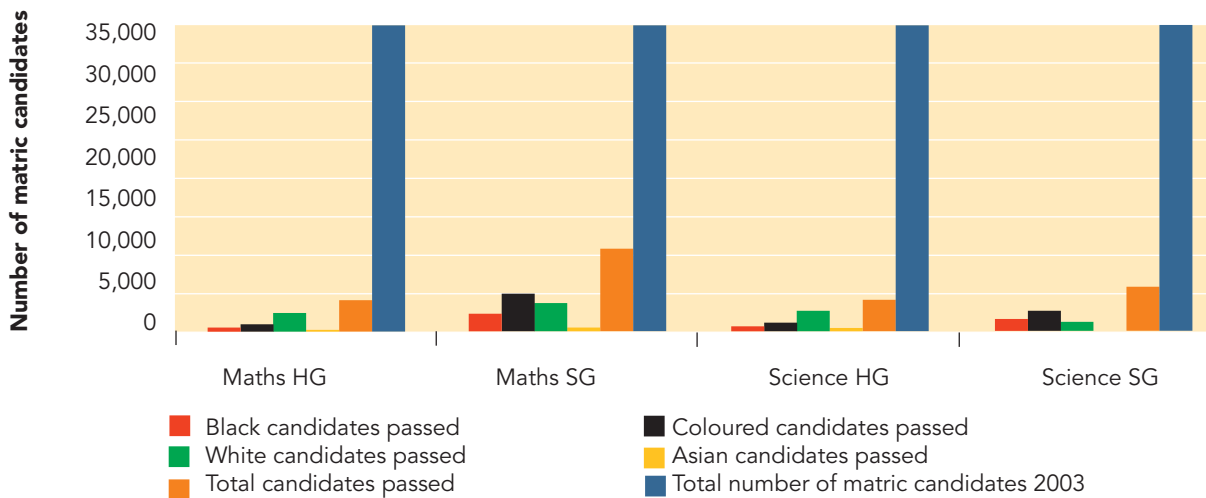


Figure 11.2: Western Cape Senior Certificate Maths and Science results for 2003 (Source: WCED, 2005)

IMPACTS

Illiteracy and low levels of education result in the following consequences:

- Restricted job opportunities and increased unemployment occurring simultaneously with a skills shortage result in poverty and a decline in the economic growth in the province.
- Reduced capacity for people to participate meaningfully in civil society.
- Reduced ability to access information and difficulty in understanding and using services and facilities such as banks, medical aids etc.
- Low levels of education and a limited percentage of the population with tertiary qualifications lead to greater inequalities in the distribution of wealth.

ISSUE: ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION

Access to good quality education is of fundamental importance in the Western Cape. One of the strategic goals of the WCED, in support of iKapa Elihlumayo, is to “ensure access to quality education for all children living in the province” and another is to “improve access to Adult Basic Education and Training and adult skills development”. Access to basic education is analysed in the following section, while the quality of education is dealt with separately in the next section.

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For the past five years there has been almost universal enrolment in Grade 1 in the Western Cape and universal participation is maintained in the primary school. In other words, the overwhelming majority of Western Cape children between the ages of seven and fourteen are enrolled in the education system at more or less the appropriate grade level. This suggests that access to primary schooling in the Western Cape is good. The quality of the education available at schools is however unevenly distributed throughout the province, as is shown in the data on results and throughput rates in the following section.

Number and distribution of educational facilities (primary, high, tertiary, adult and pre-school)

Whilst the majority of the population has access to primary schooling, there are concerns within the province specifically regarding the availability of educational facilities for five year olds (Early Childhood Development) and for adult education. There are currently 944 schools and community centres that offer Early Childhood Development (ECD) facilities in the province. The provision of ECD and exposure to pre-reading and pre-numeracy skills is regarded as an important target, particularly in communities where parents

Table 11.2: Enrolment in Grade R classes in Western Cape, 2001 to 2004 (WCED, 2005)

	2001	2002	2003	2004
Grade R community sites	16 000	18 000	20 000	25 000
Grade R classes at public schools	10 794	27 215	31 092	30 246



are illiterate. The WCED aims to provide high quality Grade R learning programmes to all five year-old children by 2010. To achieve this 5 000 to 6 000 additional children need to be provided with access to ECD programmes per annum (WCED, 2004). As illustrated in the table below, the Western Cape has been making good progress in this regard.

The province currently has 112 adult education facilities. All of these are subsidised private institutions (WCED, 2004).

In addition to the ECD and Adult Education facilities, the Western Cape has approximately 1464 public ordinary schools, 76 schools for learners with special needs, six Training Colleges and three Universities. The Western Cape's six new Further Education and Training Colleges became operational in 2003, following a long process of merging with the 13 Technical Colleges in the Western Cape (WCED, 2004). The distribution of these facilities is indicated on the map Figure 11.3. Most tertiary education facilities are situated in and around the Cape Metropolitan Area.

IMPACTS

Poor access to education results in the following consequences:

- Higher failure and drop-out rates.
- Lack of adult educational facilities results in a decrease in literacy and reduces people's access to employment opportunities.
- Lack of Early Childhood Learning facilities results in a large disparity in the abilities of Grade 1 pupils.
- Pupils that have to travel far distances to school have less time available for school preparation and after school activities.
- The cost of transport to good quality education facilities places a financial burden on middle and low income families.
- The cost of schooling at good quality education facilities places a financial burden on middle and low income families.





Figure 11.3: Distribution of Education Facilities in the Western Cape (Source: Stats SA, Census 2001)

ISSUE: QUALITY OF EDUCATION

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Quality in education is a function of human and material resource. Thus classroom size, teacher - pupil ratios, teaching material and teacher qualifications are all factors which influence the quality of the education being received by learners.

Research done by Van der Berg and Burger (2002) shows that in the Western Cape differences in educational outputs still follow racial patterns, with large discrepancies existing in the quality of education. Predominantly white schools still out-perform other schools, with very few A-aggregates (a measure of quality of the pass) being obtained at other schools.

Matric endorsement as a percentage of pass rate

A matric endorsement is widely regarded as a proxy for the quality of matric passes, as the learner is required to study at

least four subjects on the higher grade. Matric endorsements are also important for attaining entry to tertiary education facilities.

The graph below reflects that matric pass rates have generally been improving over the last few years. However, the percentages of matric endorsements have remained relatively static, especially in the Western Cape. Thus, while the Western Cape averages have been consistently better than the national average, the quality of education is not improving.

The Number of Enrolments per Grade

In order to assess the quality of education, pass rates also need to be considered in conjunction with drop out rates. A critical indicator for the success of education in the Western Cape is the number of Grade 1 learners who reach Grade, 12 i.e. the throughput of learners in the education system.

Figure 11.5 shows a dramatic drop off in enrolment after Grade 8 and more recently Grade 10. Quantitative analysis

of the Western Cape school enrolment figures by various researchers indicates that only 45 - 52% of learners who enrol in Grade 1 reach Grade 12. (Crouch, 2002). Current enrolment figures for public schools suggest that the worrying situation described above will not change substantially in the foreseeable future. The enrolment figures for the period 1999 - 2004 show that only 50% of learners who enrolled in Grade 1 reach Grade 12. The drop-out rate in schools is also highly correlated with race. While enrolment in school up to the age of 17 is almost 100% amongst Whites, enrolment is lower among Africans and even lower among Coloured adolescents (WCED, 2005).

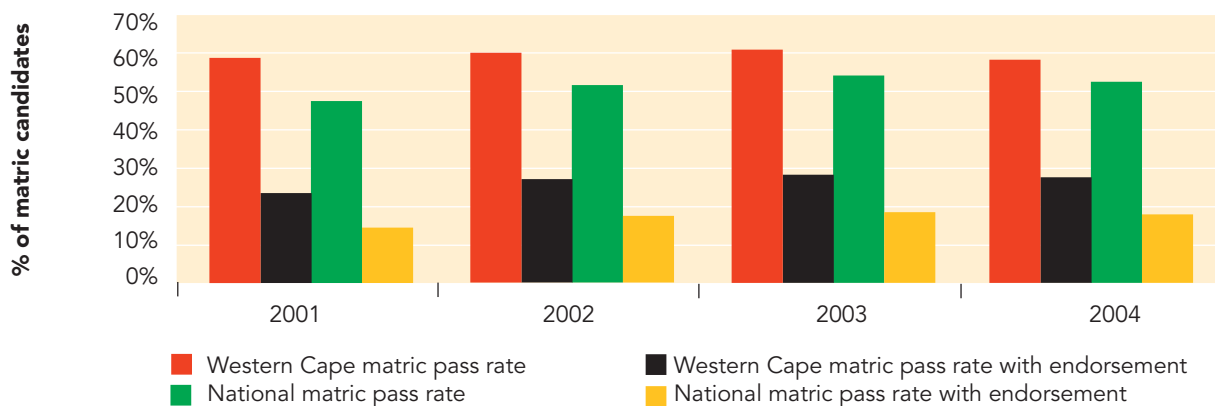


Figure 11.4: Matric pass rate compared to Endorsement rate (WCED, 2004)



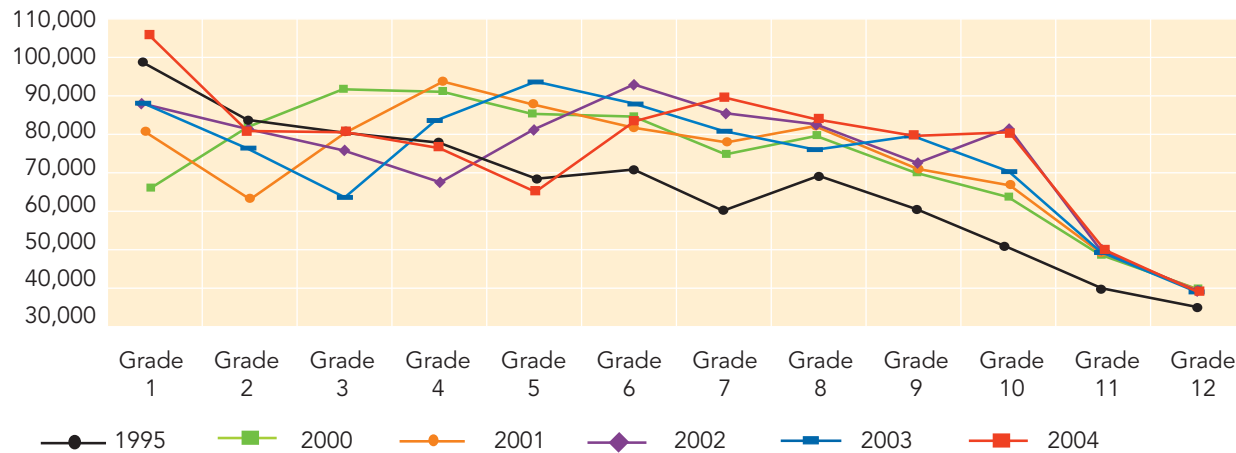


Figure 11.5: Enrolment by Grade for the Period 1998 – 2001 (Source: Crouch 2002 In: WCED: 2005).

Performance at a Grade 3 Level

Recent studies conducted in the Western Cape indicate that the throughput and output in the school system can be traced to the early years of the school system. The results of reading and mathematics tests conducted at the grade 3

and grade 6 levels indicate that the vast majority of learners from low income homes are achieving two to three years below expectation on the national curriculum.

Table 11.3 shows that in a study of a representative sample of Grade Three learners from all schools (over 30 000 learners),

Table 11.3: Grade 3 Reading and Numeracy Results (Source: WCED, 2005)

Skill	Actual corresponding skills level of learners in Grade 3:			
	Below Gr. 1	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Numeracy (2002)	15%	37%	11%	37%
Reading (2002)	10%	12%	41%	37%
Numeracy (2004)*	N/A	72%	48%	37%
Reading (2004)*	N/A	87%	63%	40%

*Note: In the 2004 study, learners who passed, for example, Grade 1 and Grade 3 tests were counted in both categories. Percentages therefore add up to more than 100%.

37% were reading at Grade Three level; 41% at Grade Two level, 12% at Grade One level and 10% at below Grade One. In this same sample of children 37% of the children were found to be calculating at the Grade Three level, 11 % at Grade Two level; 37% at Grade One level and 15% at below Grade One. This means that 63% of the children tested were performing below the standard expected of Grade Three pupils. The same worrying trends were shown in similar tests done with Grade Six pupils in 2003 (WCED, 2005).

The 2004 results of the same study on Grade Three learners showed a slight improvement in the reading skills at Grade Three level. There was no significant improvement in numeric skills (see Table 11.3).

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- Racial and socio-economic differentials in the quantity and quality of education make it difficult to achieve equality in the labour market.
- Inequalities in teaching standards, teacher qualification and resources limit poorer pupils' access to good quality further or tertiary education.
- A poorly educated population increases unemployment problems and limits individual's options and opportunities.

Summary and Status of Indicators Used in this Chapter

Education Indicators	How we are doing?	Comments
Percentage change in adult literacy	😊	The Western Cape has the highest literacy in the country (94%)
Senior certificate percentage pass rate	😊	The percentage pass rate has been steadily increasing and the Western Cape is above the national average.
Number of senior certificate maths and science passes by race	😞	Maths and science results are still strongly aligned to race and few students take and pass these subjects on higher grade.
Number and distribution of educational facilities	😊	Access to basic education in the Western Cape is good.
Matric endorsement as a percentage of pass rate	😐	The % of Matric passes with endorsement, has remained constantly low, but is above the national average.
The number of enrolments per grade	😞	There is a high drop out rate in schools after Grade 8. This trend has not shown much improvement.
Grade three reading and numeracy results	😞	63% of the Grade 3 pupils in the Western Cape are performing below a Grade 3 level. This trend has shown little improvement between 2002 and 2004.



RESPONSES

The table below summarises some of the legislation and other initiatives that have been implemented in response to the education issues discussed above:

National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) • The Tirisano Plan • The South African Schools Act 84, 1996 • National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) • The Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) Act No 52, 2000 • The establishment of the National ABET Board, as an advisory body to the Minister • The establishment of the South African Literacy Agency to reduce adult illiteracy • The National Early Childhood Development (ECD) Pilot Project. • Dinaledi Project (Mathematics and Physical Science initiative – there are 10 Dinaledi schools in the Western Cape) • National audit of 23000 Early Childhood Development sites (2001)
Provincial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of Education Management and Development Centres (EMDC) which help to bring development support closer to schools and other education institutions • WCED Service Delivery Improvement Plan • Provision of good quality pre-fabricated and/or mobile classrooms • The WCED's early enrolment campaign • Khanya Project (The Western Cape's project to introduce technology-based curriculum programmes and teacher training) • The WCED's Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST) Strategy • The Centre for Science and Technology (COSAT) – specialised tuition in Science Mathematics and Information Technology for Grade 10-12 learners • The Cape Academy of Mathematics, Science and Technology; • The WCED's Safer Schools Programme • The WCED's initiative to identify dysfunctional schools

LINKS

Education links to all other chapters as education is fundamental to the sustainable use of our natural environment, to social upliftment and to economic growth. This chapter has the strongest links to:

- **Economics (poverty and unemployment)** – poor education reduces the chance of finding employment,

entrenches the cycle of poverty and exacerbates inequalities between rich and poor.

- **Health (HIV/AIDS, and substance abuse)** – HIV/ AIDS and substance abuse affect the ability of learners to focus on schooling and increases drop-out rates. Education also has a significant role to play in reducing HIV/ AIDS and substance abuse. There is currently a drive within the WCED to educate learners about HIV/AIDS.



- **Biodiversity (environmental education and conservation)** – environmental values and recognition of the importance of biodiversity and the biophysical environment depends on exposing learners to positive experiences of the environment, together with giving them with good environmental education.



CONCLUSION

While the Western Cape is making steady progress in the field of education, the province is still struggling to substantially reduce the inequalities in educational output and there are many challenges the province faces in trying to achieve quality education for all.

Compared to the other provinces in South Africa, the Western Cape has relatively high levels of education. However, the number of literate adults in the province is decreasing, with the worst areas being the West Coast and Cape Winelands districts. The province is making encouraging progress in the number of matriculants passing their senior certificate, but the low number of candidates passing mathematics and physical science remains a concern.

A large percentage of South Africa's national budget is devoted to education, placing South Africa near the top of the international league of the proportion of national resources devoted to education spending. Despite this, however, the percentage of passes with matric endorsement within the country and the Western Cape seems to be stagnating and results still follow racial lines.

Good education is a critical part of the solution to many of the economic and social challenges the province is facing. While the Western Cape can be commended for its good progress in maintaining the highest levels of education in South Africa, the decrease in educator numbers, education budgets and decreasing literacy levels are cause for concern and will require active and creative solutions.